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The United States—South Africa—Germany: Reflections on a Triangular Transnational Relationship

Greg Cuthbertson and Chris Saunders*

ABSTRACT

This paper draws on ideas advanced by Jane Desmond and Virginia Dominguez to explore the triangular relationship between the United States, South Africa, and Germany, focusing in particular on race and racial problems and how these countries have dealt with their pasts. While there has been much comparative work on the United States and South Africa, the inclusion of Germany adds value to the comparative exercise and engages the question of exceptionalism. The paper reflects the wide intersections in the respective national historiographies to note some areas for future research.

1. Introduction

For some time 'transnational' has been one of the key buzz words in American Studies (e.g., Fishkin; Struck et al.) and it has attracted a large body of literature.[1] It is now abundantly clear how limited American Studies is if focused on the United States alone, and how greatly enriched the field can be by wider contexts and internationalization. This ongoing process reflects a continued need, in one formulation, to "deprivilege the United States as primary interlocutor in US American studies" (Sadowski-Smith 284). But transnational studies in relation to the United States have typically involved either the comparative study of the United States and one other case, or the study of links and influences between the United States and one other country or region. Only relatively recently has an attempt been made to conceptualize a broadening of transnational studies to include more than two cases. Jane Desmond and Virginia Dominguez, the co-founders of the International Forum for United States Studies (IFUSS) at the

* We both participated in the International Forum for U.S. Studies (IFUSS) at the University of Iowa between 2002 and 2005, run by Jane Desmond and Virginia Dominguez. Saunders was invited to go with an IFUSS team to India for a conference on U.S. studies in Hyderabad. Cuthbertson picked up the idea of 'triangulation' in Iowa and discussed it with Udo Hebel in Regensburg at the end of 2009. Saunders explored related ideas in two lectures he was asked to deliver in Regensburg in 2010. We would like to acknowledge our debt to Professors Desmond, Dominguez, and Hebel for their intellectual inspiration, and we thank them for their splendid hospitality in Iowa and in Regensburg.

[1] *The Journal of Transnational American Studies* can be accessed at http://escholarship.org/uc/acgcc_jtas. The relevant literature is much too large to cite here, but recent important works include *Re-Framing the Transnational Turn in American Studies* (ed. Winfried Fluck, Donald E. Pease, and John Carlos Rowe: Dartmouth College Press, 2011) and Hebel, ed., *Transnational American Studies*.

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University of Iowa, introduced the concept of 'triangulation' to American Studies in 1996.[2] After their joint paper argued for situating American Studies in what they called "a critical internationalism," Desmond went on to develop the concept of triangulation, which she describes as "a method of geographic location utilizing multiple points of reference at once." According to Desmond, the concept and term "triangulation" could also be used in a "more metaphorical sense to indicate modes of analysis that draw on multiple nodes of comparison." Such modes of analysis, she points out, "can generate unexpected delineations of questions and the foregrounding of different social structures, divisions, and modes of making meaning" (12). These would not emerge from bi-nodal transnational studies.

Desmond also develops notions of "reciprocal" or "prismatic" American Studies, which reject an unproblematized notion of 'Americanization' as a one-way cultural conquest devoid of agency on the part of those to whom it is directed. European Americanists have likewise repudiated such a view of 'Americanization,' a term that has lost currency in recent years. 'American-ness,' in contrast, suggests cultural identities and identity constructions that travel easily and are permeable. A prismatic approach allows one to explore American-ness through the movement of ideas, organizations, commodities, and people, and to detect it in the quotidian. Desmond gives practical content to her thoughts by building a team of IFUSS project researchers made up not only of American Studies scholars based in the United States, but also from South Africa, India, and other countries. This multi-continental triangle of people and interests, Desmond writes, "continually undermined any preconceptions about similarities and differences which might have been developed in a bi-nodal relationship." This is because, she claims, with a triangular perspective "the terms of engagement with 'American Studies'—its institutionalization and its use value on each continent—were profoundly different" (12). More recently, Udo Hebel of Regensburg has joined Desmond in writing of "transnational multi-perspectivism" (Hebel, *Transnational* 6). No scholar has, however, developed the idea fully with regard to the case we discuss here, that of the United States, Germany, and South Africa.

There is now a sizeable corpus of literature on United States-South Africa comparisons and connections, and that literature has a relatively long history. Substantial scholarly work began in the 1970s, some time before the internationalization of American Studies took off. In 1998 Andrew Offenburger, a young American scholar, had the idea of starting an online journal in the field of comparative American/South African studies (Lee and Offenburger). Having read the works of the American pioneers in this field—Stanley Greenberg, George Fredrickson, and John Cell—Offenburger saw the potential for creating a vehicle for new work in this comparative field. Since then, his journal, subsequently given the name *Safundi*: *The Journal of South African and American Studies*, has appeared regularly. Now published by Taylor and Francis, it remains the leading journal for articles on the relationship between the United States and South Africa.

[2] The idea of triangulation, which originated in astronomy and surveying (see Everest), was introduced into the social sciences by the 1970s (see Denzin) and has been used recently inter alia in Woodard's *The America That Reagan Built*, one chapter of which is entitled "triangulation."

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The study of German/South African relations is much less well developed. Germany entered Southern Africa through its acquisition in 1884 of what became known as South West Africa. German colonization provoked Herero and then Nama resistance from 1904 to 1907, and in response the Germans under military commander Lothar van Trotha perpetuated genocide against the Herero and, to a lesser extent, the Nama. What happened in South West Africa increased race feeling in Germany itself, as seen, for example, in the *Leipzig Neuste Nachrichten,* which wrote in 1906, under the influence of Social Darwinism, that the "German Empire will have many colored subjects in the future, but colored Germans there will never be, since color and other signifiers mark the human bastard with the inextinguishable sign of its descent…" (qtd. in El-Tayeb 229). White South Africans did not need to learn anything about race prejudice from the Germans—genocide had been practiced against the indigenous population in the Cape in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (e.g., Adhikari)—but German rule of South West Africa was more violent than contemporary practices in South Africa. Even the much criticized concentration camps that the British introduced during the South African war of 1899-1902,[3] in which tens of thousands died, did not see death rates that even approached the scale as that which took place in German South West Africa. When South Africa took over this territory from the Germans in 1915, they chose to continue the harsh practices they inherited. The indigenous people of the territory, who initially welcomed the new South African rulers as liberators, were soon disillusioned. South Africa ruled the indigenous population of Namibia even more harshly than it did its own black population (see, e.g., Melber, "Namibia's Past," "Betrayed Trust"; Soggot). While a number of attempts have been made to link German racial policy in South West Africa with the holocaust (e.g., Kössler; Grosse; Olusoga and Erichsen), there has been no attempt so far to assess the impact of German policy either on later segregationist policy in that territory when it was under South African rule from 1915 or on South Africa itself.

We present this particular case of triangulation as historians and will therefore use historical methodology and examples instead of drawing upon a range of different modes of analysis. Through our case study of three countries on different continents, we aim to show how it is possible to transcend the usual bi-nodal approach inherent in most comparative studies and open up new perspectives. Although we are not the first to consider these three countries together, we know of no other attempts to survey this particular triangular field of scholarship, to consider where it may go in the future, or to conceptualize how it may add new perspectives to American Studies. We realize that the discussion that follows is far from comprehensive, and we hope other scholars will explore this particular triangular relationship in greater depth in the future. As few scholars are competent to analyze multiple sites, populations, and cultural practices in depth, we see the need for collaborative research efforts to take the study of this triangular relationship forward. In South Africa there was a temporary period of interest in American Studies in the early 1990s, when an American Studies Association

[3] For the definitive account on the South African camps, see van Heyningen.

was formed and flourished (see Le Cordeur, esp. 96; Saunders, "Rediscovering"), but there is now, regrettably, little interest in American Studies at South African universities.[4] In short, if our proposed project is to make headway, we will need to involve American Studies scholars both in the United States and in Germany.

The focus here will mainly be on formative ideological influences: notions of racial engineering; democratic rule and political struggle against authoritarian regimes; memory and forgetting in relation to individual and societal trauma; circuits of intellectual power; cultural agencies; and the transmission of American cultures through the movement of people from one continent to another. Our aim is to begin to write about the interconnected flows of American, German, and South African ideologies, discourses, and migrations in globalized exchanges. We are interested in what happens to 'American-ness' as it moves from the United States to Germany and to South Africa, how it is modified, contested, translated, and 'repackaged' in those countries, and how it then flows back to the United States, or travels elsewhere. Such transactions are necessarily shaped by the particular European and South African contexts in which they operate, while at the same time they are part and parcel of broader processes of globalization. One cannot understand the impact of American culture in South Africa, for example, without analyzing how it is often filtered through a European lens. That filtering may help to explain opposition to 'Americanization,' which, at times, takes the form of stubborn resistance.

As Rita Barnard, originally from South Africa but currently living and teaching in the United States, reminds us in regard to South Africa/United States comparisons, comparative history has many pitfalls. One such pitfall is the temptation to stress similarities and to play down, if not ignore entirely, significant differences. Where triangulation is involved, this danger is magnified. We are, of course, fully aware that the United States, South Africa, and Germany have very different histories, but they are not so totally different that no comparisons between the three countries can be made. As we shall see, various links and influences involving all three deserve exploration, but they need to be contextualized, and careful attention must be paid to the nuances of similarity and difference. While a number of historians have pointed to, say, the similarities in the histories of slavery and the frontier in the cases of the United States and South Africa (e.g., Cuthbertson; Lamar and Thompson), it is difficult to extend such comparisons to include Germany, though one brief attempt to do so has been made (Guettel). In the case of race and racial policies and their legacies, the similarities and links are much more obvious. It is therefore appropriate for us to begin there, considering both comparisons and influences, before we turn to other aspects of this particular triangular relationship.[5]

[4] This in part reflects disillusionment with the United States, in part a continuing anti-Americanism and a failure to distinguish American Studies from the policies of the United States government.

[5] Anthony Marx has led the way in exploring race in relation to another such triangular relationship, that of the United States, South Africa and Brazil. To date no one has produced such a full study of the United States, South Africa, and Germany. For a literary consideration of a triangular relationship, see McKay.

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2. Focal Areas in Scholarship on the Triangular Relationship

Race and Racial Policies

It was George M. Fredrickson, one of America's greatest comparative historians, who did more than anyone else to open up the comparative history of the United States and South Africa (see *White Supremacy*; *Black Liberation*). He followed that by suggesting, in his *Racism: A Short History*, a brief comparison of the racial systems of the southern United States, South Africa, and Germany. Fredrickson argues that Nazism was by far the most brutal of the three systems, but that apartheid was the most systematic form of legalized racial discrimination ever practiced anywhere. Other scholars have considered two of the three cases, but not all three, despite the scope for comparison and the investigation of three-way influences. The triangular relationship between the United States and Germany in the development of racial segregation and apartheid in South Africa calls out for analysis, as does the relative impact of German and American ideologies and social policy in South Africa.

That segregation in the southern United States could serve as a comparative model for South Africa was suggested by the South African Maurice Evans before the First World War. Through the 1920s and 1930s parallels were often drawn between segregation in the two countries, with some emphasizing the differences and others the similarities (e.g., Saunders in Berg and Wendt). Other scholars, however, have pointed instead to German influences. Historian Patrick Furlong, for example, has argued that South Africa's segregation of the 1930s and 1940s drew some of its origins from a European radical Right, Nazi-inspired anti-semitism. Hendrik Verwoerd, the leading ideologist of apartheid, went to Germany in 1925 and studied at the universities of Hamburg, Berlin, and Leipzig. Furlong's emphasis on the links with Germany and Nazism has been challenged by the leading historian of the Afrikaners, Hermann Giliomee, who downplays the Nazi influences on Afrikaner nationalism and looks instead for the origins of apartheid to the relatively less brutal white supremacism of the Cape.[6] German influences on apartheid are again emphasized in German scholar Christoph Marx's study of the far-right, semi-military *Ox-wagon Sentinel* (Ossewabrandwag), which flourished in South Africa in the early 1940s. Marx examines how leading Afrikaner proponents of racial separation embraced an organic conceptualization of the nation derived in part from Germany. South African Nazi sympathizers were not only influential in elaborating the ideology of apartheid from the late 1930s, they also helped put apartheid into practice after the National Party came to power in South Africa in 1948; a number of scholars have suggested that South African racial policy after 1948 was essentially fascist, if not similar to that of the Nazis (e.g., Bunting; Simson). To our knowledge, however, only Juliette Peires, a South

[6] There is no evidence that the writings of the pro-Nazi Heinrich Krieger had any impact on South Africa. His books included *Das Rassenrecht in Südafrika: Ein rechtspolitischer Überblick auf rechtsgeschichtliche Grundlagen, zugleich Anwendung einer neuen Systematik des Kolonialrechts* (Berlin: Junker u. Dünnhaupt, 1944).

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African scholar much influenced by the Truth and Reconciliation process in that country, has systematically compared apartheid atrocities with those of the Nazi holocaust.[7]

All such work concerns two cases, not three. What is needed now is an examination of the relative significance of influences from the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and from Nazi Germany.[8] The racial policies of the three countries developed in different ways in part because only in South Africa did those imposing racial policies rule over an indigenous majority population: until the effective transfer of power from the white minority to the black majority in 1994, South Africa was a colonial society in a way that the United States and Germany were not. Yet such differences are rarely drawn out. For example, at a 2008 conference on the international history of lynching, held in Heidelberg, Germany, American historians not surprisingly dominated proceedings and a South African speaker sought to explain why lynching was rare in his country (Saunders in Berg and Wendt), but no reference was made to lynching in Germany (perhaps because it was too sensitive a topic to raise). And we may notice that in some cases when comparisons have been made between aspects of South African and American racial policies, a transnational approach has been used to reinforce the 'national,' i.e., to emphasize 'South African-ness' in contrast to the experiences, memories, histories, and politics of the United States. Although the term 'apartheid' has been employed to help understand American racial practice (e.g., Massey and Denton), a transnational approach may, ironically, serve to reinforce, rather than counter, the idea of exceptionalism. Jacques Derrida suggested that Americans were so fascinated with apartheid because an unconscious psychological motivation was involved—a need to put apartheid "at some remove, expulsed, objectified, held at a distance, prevented from returning (as a ghost returns), parted with, treated, and cured over there, in South Africa" (qtd. in Duck 41). In this way, South Africa's racialized policies are distinguished as exceptional despite the universalizing of 'apartheid' across borders in order to highlight segregationism in other colonial and national contexts.

The triangular relationship between South Africa, Germany, and the United States can be seen clearly in the example of the Namibian struggle for independence from the 1970s. The United States and West Germany both played key roles as members of the Western Contact Group that interacted with South Africa as occupier of Namibia; extensive interaction continued well into the 1980s (see

[7] While it is an exaggeration to suggest that South Africa's apartheid regime from 1948 took over and continued Nazi practices, connections can be found between the Nazi regime and the later apartheid one. A chemical technique developed by two German scientists, Franz Fischer and Hans Tropsch, to convert natural gas and coal into liquid fuels was used by the Nazis to help fuel the Wehrmacht and the Luftwaffe, then taken over and further developed by the apartheid state from 1950 in the face of its increasing isolation. Huge new oil-from-coal complexes were built on the South African highveld at Sasolberg and Secunda (see Gross). Sasol is now one of South Africa's largest employers, producing about 38 percent of the country's fuel needs and accounting for about 4.4 percent of the country's GDP.

[8] In August 2011 an exhibition opened at the Holocaust Museum in Houston, Texas, entitled *Racist Ideologies: Jim Crow and the Nuremberg Laws*. See Turner.

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esp. Weiland and Braham; Vergau). The United States and South African governments colluded over the invasion of Angola in 1975 (e.g., Graham), and the Reagan administration worked closely with the South African authorities in the 1980s to ensure that there was no premature grant of independence to Namibia (e.g., Crocker; Davies). The West German government's interest in Namibia is, in part, explained by the presence of a sizeable German community in South West Africa/Namibia. While there are general studies of the work of the Western Contact Group (e.g., Karns; Jabri), and separate works on American and German involvement on the Namibian issue (Crocker; Vergau), no one has focused directly on the triangular relationship as such.

Despite the increasing divergence after the Second World War between the United States and West Germany on the one hand, and South Africa on the other—and even though the Western countries sought to distance themselves from the South African apartheid system—both the United States and West Germany engaged with South Africa in numerous ways, ranging from economic ties and the supply of minerals to diplomacy and cultural cooperation. East Germany, on the other side in the Cold War, had a very different relationship to South Africa. While a small anti-apartheid movement in West Germany achieved little (Kössler and Melber), the East German state lent major support to the African National Congress (ANC) (Schleicher in South African Democracy Education Trust). This led in turn to American interest in the support that the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was giving those fighting apartheid South Africa—an interest that climaxed in March 1982 in the hearings of the security and terrorism sub-committee of the judiciary committee of the U.S. Senate, the well-publicized so-called Denton hearings on "The role of the Soviet Union, Cuba and East Germany in fomenting terrorism in Southern Africa" (see Raditsa). It was with aid from the GDR that the armed wing of the African National Congress staged an attack that caused major damage on the Sasol oil-from-coal plant south of Johannesburg in 1980.

Dealing with the Past

One of the fullest studies to have been written to date on the three countries under consideration here focuses on the way in which past evils had been dealt with in the three countries, in particular through efforts at remembering and memorializing. Donald W. Shriver, an American theologian who spent time in both Germany and South Africa, found that Germany, some decades after the end of Nazism, and South Africa, almost immediately after the end of apartheid, tried to come to terms with their appalling pasts in ways that the United States still has not. As Shriver arguably points out, neither the treatment of Native Americans nor slavery has been addressed in the United States with any seriousness. To date there has been only one attempt at a specific truth and reconciliation process similar to that in South Africa: the hearings held in Greensboro, North Carolina.[9] While Shriver considers each of the three countries in detail, he does

[9] For the report, see <http://www.greensborotrc.org/>.

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not draw direct comparisons between them or explore the triangular relationship as such. Neither does Erna Paris in *Long Shadows: Truth, Lies and History*, which explores the role of memory in relation to human rights abuses after the Second World War and includes Germany, the United States, and South Africa in a nuanced study of holocaust memorialization. As South Africa emerged from its apartheid past, there were those in the African National Congress who called for Nuremberg-style trials of those who had committed human rights violations under apartheid. Yet the new government decided that South Africa could not follow that route because there had been no military victory and therefore there could be no victors' justice (e. g., Asmal et al.). A truth and reconciliation process was put in place instead. The anti-apartheid Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa (IDASA) sent a mission, headed by one of its founders, Alex Boraine, to East Germany, shortly before that country ceased to exist, to study how Germany had dealt with the Nazi past.[10] A few years later it was Boraine who was mainly responsible for setting up South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (see Boraine, *Country; A Life*).

Arthur Neal suggests that national traumas do to a nation what personal traumas do to individuals: alter the sense of stability and replace feelings of security with feelings of crisis and danger. To avoid this potential for moral chaos, Neal argues, nations try to restore a sense of order by creating sacred symbols such as the Arlington National Cemetery and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, or the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, Robben Island in Cape Town, and Freedom Park in Tshwane, South Africa. Memorials represent therapies for collective trauma and often draw on universal symbolisms as they negotiate remembrance, mourning, and commemoration. Few scholars have, however, related museums and memorials that commemorate atrocities committed in the past to one another. What was, say, the influence of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial on the Hector Peterson Memorial in Soweto, or the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, on the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, or the Smithsonian Museum for Native Americans in Washington, DC, on Freedom Park in Tshwane? While American influences on Freedom Park appear to have been minor compared with African ones (Marschall, esp. 169-78; also Verbeeck; Saunders, "Memorializing"), South Africa's premier community museum, District Six in Cape Town, was in part conceptualized by American academics, while European funding, including from Germany, helped make the museum a reality. The concept of a community museum that developed at District Six in turn influenced American museums on the civil rights movement (Rassool and Prosalendis).

3. Future Areas of Research

Discourses of political liberation, democracy, constitutionalism, and feminism would be likely to be an essential part of any prospective triangular research project. Theoretical infusions from the United States are significant in each field

[10] Former West and East Germany dealt with the Nazi past in divergent ways: see, e. g., Herf.

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and the literatures are copious. It would be instructive, for example, to examine the reaction in South Africa and Germany to American versions of democracy, especially in the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and of Barack Obama's presidency, as well as the ways in which black South African women have identified with African American womanist traditions (see, e.g., Healy in this issue). It would be useful to measure the extent to which anti-Americanism in Europe and South Africa is a calculated response to imperialized versions of American democracy, while the different ways that antipathy to the United States has been expressed offer significant scope for transnational comparison (see, e.g., Spence).

The South African Democracy Education Trust, a project begun by President Thabo Mbeki, has published two volumes on 'international solidarity' against apartheid in its *Road to Democracy in South Africa* series. They include a short essay on the anti-apartheid movement in the Federal Republic of Germany between 1948 and 1994, a detailed 87-page chapter on "The German Democratic Republic and the South African Liberation Struggle," and a co-authored 78-page history of "Anti-apartheid Solidarity in United States-South African relations: From the Margins to the Mainstream" (677-91, 745-822, 1069-1153). In a separate book, William Minter and others examine grass-roots support for the anti-apartheid campaign in the United States and how it related to the struggle in South Africa itself. Two German scholars, Reinhart Kössler and Henning Melber, explore the anti-apartheid movement in West Germany in the 1970s and 1980s, showing how difficult it was for the anti-apartheid campaigners to influence government policy. One of the great triumphs of the German campaign was to make public documentation from the South African embassy relating to nuclear cooperation between West Germany and South Africa (Rogers and Cervenka). Such work demonstrates that the anti-apartheid movement was indeed both local and global—local in that it could be a means to tackle civil rights issues closer to home, and global in the sense that human-rights networks were cultivated across the international community. Wider cultural histories of the anti-apartheid era, embracing art, music, and literature, still await the same detailed research that the political economy has begun to see.

Transnational religious impulses also provide excellent prospects for triangular research, as German missionaries went to both the United States and South Africa. No one has yet compared their role on the frontiers of the two societies in the early nineteenth century.[11] Wolfram Kistner, a scholar-activist in the South African Council of Churches, argues that

> the views of the German [Protestant] and the English missionaries on the implications of the Gospel for the political power struggle that was going on in Southern Africa differed widely. The English missionaries tended to favour the extension of British influence for the sake of protecting Africans, the German missionaries tended to believe that missionaries should not intervene in the struggle for the control of the interior of Africa. They should rather submit to the authorities that were in power (qtd. in Lessing).

[11] For the role of one remarkable woman on the north-west Cape frontier, the daughter of German missionaries and the wife of a German missionary, see Trüper.

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Much work still needs to be done to test this hypothesis through a detailed examination of the Moravian, Berlin, Hermannsburg, and Rhenish missions in South Africa. There is an obvious point of connection here with German emigrants to the United States, and also with the extensive historiography of the American Board missionaries in Natal as part of the Congregational Church's colonial expansion in South Africa. Settler ideologies around segregation emerged as German missionaries became influential in the formulation of the theology of the Dutch Reformed Church.[12]

Any project about 'American-ness' should consider the impact of such American-based agencies as the Ford, Rockefeller, Mellon, Carnegie and Fulbright foundations, which have long been brokers of American culture through educational sponsorships, exchanges, and programs. Allied with these are United States government institutions that have operated in both Germany and South Africa, such as USAID (see, e.g., Landsberg and Monyae, for its role in South Africa). Smaller organizations also bring people and ideas into particular arenas of South African public life. The African American Institute in Johannesburg, for example, which focuses on black empowerment, draws on American experiences of affirmative action. Post-apartheid South Africa has provided fertile ground for both American and German management consultants. Like the 'scientific' mining engineers of the late nineteenth century, these post-industrial consultants offer a new brand of business knowledge and information "in pursuit of the grail of 'efficiency,'" as James Campbell puts it in his seminal article on the Americanization of South Africa (40). While business links between the United States and South Africa have been explored (Hull), no one has, to our knowledge, investigated the triangular relationship in which German companies such as SAP, co-founded by a woman who lived three months of each year in South Africa (O'Connor), and American companies such as Dell, Microsoft, and Apple help give the South African economy such competitiveness as it has in the global market place.

An important dimension of the 'traveling' metaphor is the globalization that derives from the movement of people from one continent to another through migration, tourism, and work. Germans were prominent among settlers from Europe in the early days of settlement at the Cape. By the end of the eighteenth century more than half of the white population of the Cape was of German descent, but the German-speaking men who emigrated to the Cape—there were very few women—soon intermarried with Afrikaans/Dutch speakers and were linguistically assimilated. In the middle of the nineteenth century, however, Germans settled in the Eastern Cape en bloc and founded small German-speaking settlements (centered on a church and a school) with names such as Berlin and Potsdam. Americans, on the other hand, came to southern Africa first mainly as traders and then as missionaries until the mineral revolution brought American mining experts and entrepreneurs. Though never numerous, some of them were highly influential (Hull). The comparative history of such immigration remains

[12] Especially the ideas of Johannes Warneck and Bruno Gutmann, and their concept of exclusive *Volkskirchen*.

to be told, as does that of South Africans to the United States and, in far fewer numbers, to Germany.

Americans, Germans, and South Africans encounter mediated forms of cosmopolitanism as they travel to different continents. South Africans and Germans now enroll at American universities and some seek employment in the United States. American students travel to Germany and South Africa on exchange and semester-study abroad programs. Officials of American companies, such as Deloitte & Touche, and agencies such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Union, take up residence in these countries, and their German and South African employees work in the United States. Consultancy, an American export, has undergone various permutations in the South African and German contexts as management cultures are negotiated. The 'people factor' plays an important role in such arrangements, as consultants move from continent to continent and country to country, imparting different incarnations of business practice, entrepreneurship, and human resource management derived from American firms.

At the same time, music and film companies, the media, manufacturing, and business purvey 'American-ness' in many forms. American organizational systems are imported and naturalized through these agencies, combining the global and the local, mutating the original structures to conform to German and South African contexts, and 'indigenizing' or endogenizing these cultural products. In what is arguably the best account of transnational cultural history of the United States and South Africa to date, Rob Nixon shows that "the mutual fascination between America and South Africa has expressed itself in a myriad of cultural transfigurations that have entered literature, music, television, film, photography, art, and theatre on both sides of the ocean" (3). Nelson Mandela was apotheosized as a transatlantic Messiah, and Barack Obama's victory in the presidential election of 2008 was hailed as America's Mandela moment. Desmond Tutu was presented as a symbol of African democracy in the United States (Sparks and Tutu). For a time a bi-national commission (BNC) brought together the American and South African vice presidents in regular meetings and helped develop a range of ties between the two countries. In recent years, however, the BNC has fallen away and the formal links have become weaker.

While Hollywood has recognized South African movies such as *Tsotsi*, which won an Oscar in 2005, Hollywood films have also had an enormous impact on South Africa and on Germany. In the 1950s, Sophiatown writers in *Drum* magazine converted Harlem culture into a cosmopolitan resource that helped contest apartheid's denial of black claims on Johannesburg. These writers 'packaged' how black South Africans transformed the African American experience "into a metaphor for achieving racial progress and success in a white dominated society"' (23), as they revered boxers such as Joe Louis, musicians such as Duke Ellington, and actors such as Paul Robeson (see esp. Edgar 23). The international tributes in memory of Miriam Makeba, who died in 2008, are testimony to the musical transactions of the African, American, and European jazz that characterized her career, both in exile as a member of the ANC and as an African diva on her return to South Africa in 1991. Books on South African music have begun to show

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how profoundly transnational it has become, drawing upon the United States for jazz and hip-hop, but there are also German influences on South African jazz (Coplan; Titlestad; Olwage).

Political tourism is another manifestation of the movement of bodies in the process of cosmopolitanism. South Africans in the apartheid era drew inspiration from what they heard of the civil rights struggle by Martin Luther King, Jr. and others, while more recently many Americans who admired the South African liberation movement have visited Robben Island to pay tribute to Nelson Mandela and his colleagues who were imprisoned there. Lynne Duke, an African American journalist for the *Washington Post* who worked in South Africa in the 1990s, writes of how some African Americans visiting South Africa after 1994 "embraced the place for their own sense of freedom, as a place where they should be naturally accepted, as if blackness was their passport" (255). She also quotes an African American from New York then living in South Africa as saying, in the late 1990s: "Where is the hope for us in America? We will never be in charge. We will always be 10 %. We will always be fighting to keep some cop from shooting us in the back. But here [in South Africa] it's worth the battle. You can win this here" (255). This sentiment made Duke cringe, for, in her words, "African Americans in South Africa had to realize: it was someone else's battle. Our color and culture did not give us the right to claim ownership of someone else's victory, of someone else's society" (257). Since 1994 more Americans and Germans have visited South Africa than tourists from any other country besides Britain, and this movement of people is influential in modifying representations on the basis of reception. Science and technology also promote the movement of people, as exchanges take place.[13] A recent study of Volkswagen workers in South Africa and Germany focuses on worker identity and international trade unionism within a transnational corporation from the late 1970s. In terms of the 'traveling' metaphor this study deals not only with the circulation of ideologies and bodies, but also of commodities and technologies in the motor industry (Bolsmann 137-55). In 2010 the United States was South Africa's second largest trading partner, and Germany was its fourth largest.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, celebrated in the United States as the end to the Cold War, had almost immediate repercussions in South Africa. It helped lead President F.W. de Klerk to take his bold move in unbanning the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party, which he thought safe to do because communism seemed, with the fall of the Wall, to be on its way out internationally. Without the dramatic events in Germany it is certainly possible that Mandela would not have been released when he was, and South Africa would have moved into the racial civil war long predicted (Saunders, "Cold War"; Daniel). There were numerous references to Germany as South Africa moved away from apartheid. The Leipzig option—referring to the mass protests in that city before the fall of the Wall—was widely used as a term for the kind of

[13] There are more than 100,000 expatriate scientists from developed countries, including the United States, living in Africa, and an estimated 100,000 African experts working outside the continent (Nell and Teng-Zeng 32).

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protests that many wished to see in 1992, when the South African negotiations collapsed and the anti-apartheid forces decided to put pressure on the regime (Saunders, "Ending"). Both the United States and Germany influenced the drawing up of the new constitution for South Africa, although neither played a direct role in the process (Lyman).[14]

In the late 1990s the newly democratic South Africa had bi-national commissions with both the United States and Germany, but these have lapsed in both cases. Although Germany was one of the countries that supplied weapons to South Africa in the controversial arms deal signed in 1999, the refusal of West Germany to cut ties with apartheid South Africa, and the support given by the United States government to the apartheid regime in the 1980s, still serve to restrain closer ties between both countries and democratic South Africa.

4. Conclusion

This short and highly selective survey has, we hope, shown how broadening the comparison and links from the United States and South Africa to an appropriate third country, (here, Germany), can open up new lines of enquiry. We have also indicated how little has been done to date, and how much remains to be done in exploring this triangular relationship. We have a long way to go to understand fully the complexities of how triangulation works in any particular case. We do not yet have major studies of U.S. American and German influences on South Africa, let alone of South African influences on Germany and on the United States, and the absence of such studies makes exploring this particular triangular relationship especially difficult. We agree, however, with Patricia Clavin that transnational approaches can potentially not only challenge standard chronologies, but also "sharpen the claim to novelty or distinction" (629). We therefore advocate going beyond what Jane Desmond proposed from her vantage point of American Studies. All aspects of triangular relationships should be explored, not only those focused on the United States. In the present article, we could note only a few of the many interconnections and possible lines of comparison between the three countries in our case study. Such a triangular study can throw new light on each of the three countries concerned. It may also prove to be a productive way for American Studies to move forward in the future.

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[14] The influence of the United States was chiefly in the separation of powers and a court to test the validity of laws against the constitution, that of Germany in relation to provincial powers. Delegates from the negotiations in South Africa traveled to Germany to investigate the power of the *Länder.*

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