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Journal of Transnational American Studies

Title

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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/56x2n418>

Journal

Journal of Transnational American Studies, 15(1)

Author

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Publication Date

2024

DOI

10.5070/T815158795

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Re-Animating Europe: Mapping the Transnational Visual Grammar of “Zeichentrück” in Marshall Plan Propaganda

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The Marshall Plan is mostly remembered for its allegedly stimulating impact on the economic recovery of Western Europe. While scholars have questioned this aspect,¹ the effects of soft power, however, cannot be overestimated for a young generation of Europeans. If we agree with David Ellwood that “nothing like culture adds value—and values—to power,”² then travelling exhibitions, photographic stories, poster competitions, radio reports, and documentary films represent a powerful arsenal of multimedia productions persuading European audiences to a) embrace ideas of democracy; b) foster intra-European collaboration; and c) recognize the benefits of a free-market consumer society via modern productivity American-style.³ Transnational studies have long emphasized processes of mediation, migration, hybridization, and circulation as key elements of international and transcultural encounters and confrontations.⁴ European complicity in producing, disseminating, and circulating iconic images helped to create the myth of the Marshall Plan, whose repercussions are still evident today. Renewed calls for new Marshall plans to solve major crises from Covid to climate change and most recently the recovery of war-torn Ukraine abound.⁵ What is missing in the sociocultural discourse about a kind of Marshall Plan 2.0 Reloaded is the question of how to translate abstract concepts into a framework of easy-to-understand signs and symbols to reach citizens and a new generation of Europeans: children. In the following article, I will take a close look at a special dimension of the Marshall Plan propaganda that has often been pushed to the margins, the visual grammar of animation films, to map a transnational grammar of “Zeichentrück” in Marshall Plan propaganda.⁶



Figs. 1–3: Opening credits, *Hugo am Trapez*, dir. Harold Mack, prod. ECA-W Germany by Marten Toonder Film, Netherlands, 1952.

At the center of my investigation will be six short, animated films from 1952 collectively known as “Hugo at the Circus.” Financed by US Marshall funds based in Paris, the films aimed at educating young West German audiences about the strategic goals of the European Recovery Program and persuading them to adopt a new European identity. The series was produced in Amsterdam by an international team of artists in the Dutch animation studio Toonder on behalf of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA).⁷

The artists who worked on the *Hugo* films included the Danish animators Børge Ring and Bjørn Frank Jensen and the British animator Harold Mack supported by his wife, Pamela. Ideas, concepts, and story outlines were provided by the British animator Philip Stapp, who had won a Guggenheim fellowship and in 1949 was invited to join the ECA in Paris. Tracing the circulation of images and identifying its visual grammar helps us to better understand the transformative cultural power of the US recovery program on a regional, national, and transnational level.

This article is structured into three parts. First, I will outline my approach to the visual grammar of Marshall Plan images by laying the groundwork for inter pictorial clusters in transnational contexts. I will then analyze the *Hugo* films and identify key images and visual leitmotifs within the so-called European circus of Hugo. Third, I will map inter pictorial clusters that will allow me to compare the visual grammar of the *Hugo* films with a) the Marshall Plan booklet by Jo Spier, b) Marshall Plan posters, and c) travelling exhibitions. In my conclusion I will evaluate the strategy of the animation films within the transnational media program of the Marshall Plan.

ERP Visual Grammar: Mapping Inter pictorial Clusters in Transnational Contexts

When the Marshall Plan was initiated in 1948, Alfred Friendly, a future editor of the *Washington Post*, became the mastermind behind the newly established Marshall Plan Information Program in Europe, with headquarters in Paris. He and the director of information, Roscoe Drummond, supported animation films. The medium was ideally suited to effectively use the simplified codes of graphical communication to reach out to audiences and also, in the interests of intra-European cooperation, to reanimate a sense of trust between former enemies. In making my argument, I follow media theor-

etician W. J. T. Mitchell, who called for a critique of visual culture “that is alert to the power of images for the good and evil and that is capable of discriminating the variety and historical specificity of their uses.”⁸ Animation films are striking examples since they engage in intermedial dialogues with several graphic media designed to translate complex and difficult abstract economic or political concepts for a large variety of people in different European countries. These media include advertisements, poster competitions, travelling exhibitions, banners, logos, and political decorations.

When discussing a visual grammar of the Marshall Plan propaganda,⁹ I am referring to the realm of image concepts, such as mapping as material form, knowledge representation, and practical applications.¹⁰ One method to recognize trends in image creation, utilization, reinterpretation, and distribution is by identifying inter pictorial clusters, a term introduced by German American Studies scholar Udo Hebel.¹¹ He emphasizes the importance of considering the contexts and political implications surrounding images, the often-concealed motivations behind their creation, the intermedial environments in which they circulate, and the cultural perspectives through which they are perceived. To grasp what Hebel refers to as the “implicit or explicit interplay between pictures,” especially in political photography but also in other visual mediums, it is crucial to have a clear understanding of the semiotic structure of images charged with inter pictorial significance.¹² Photographs and films should be viewed as hybrid systems serving both referential and symbolic purposes.¹³ As Mitchell and Gabriele Rippl assert,¹⁴ media are never purely singular but always blend various forms.¹⁵ They are mixed media.

The Marshall Plan animation films are no exception. They blend moving images, maps, and sounds with language and music. Hebel claims that the concept of inter pictoriality is particularly suited to the agendas of American Studies (related to the analysis of contexts, functions, and national narratives as well as sociopolitical and cultural implications) to “interact with the concerns of Art History, *Bildwissenschaft*, and visual culture studies with iconographic conventions, traditions, and repertoires.”¹⁶ The Marshall Plan animation films and the visual material produced by the Marshall Plan to persuade European citizens to embrace the American vision of a new Europe offer the opportunity to test this proposition from a transnational American studies perspective.

This leads us to the question of the special appeal of animation films. This mode of film production differs from live action in a substantial fashion. Rather than capturing real motion and physical transformations via twenty-four frames per second, which the mind of the spectator reconstructs during a film projection, animation films are based on a completely different process. As Yuri Lotman explains, “the animated cartoon is not a variety of the feature cinema but represents a quite independent form of art, with its own artistic language, opposed in many ways to the language of the feature cinema or the documentary. There is no movement that can be captured. Rather, animators create images that are lined up in a specific order to form the illusion of motion.”¹⁷ Thus, it is important to look at animation films separately when we speak

of the Marshall Plan film program. The Scottish Canadian animator, director, and theoretician Norman McLaren rightly suggested: “Animation is not the art of drawings that move but the art of movements that are drawn.”¹⁸

The creative, limitless potential of animation makes it particularly suited to create fictional worlds and characters, to visualize data, concepts, and political visions in commercial and educational films. Therefore, it is no surprise that the Marshall planners encouraged directors to produce animation films, *tekenfilms* (the Dutch term), and *Zeichentrickfilme* (the German term) for their respective young audiences in different national environments. In the comprehensive Marshall Plan film program, consisting of about two hundred films, only a few films belong to the genre of animation. Why is this the case? With the Marshall Plan being limited to four years, film productions had to be as easy and simple as possible to produce a large amount over the time of funding. Animation films, by nature, are much more complicated and time-consuming to produce. On the upside: Since animation films were often translated into different languages, some of them became the most successful and popular examples of Marshall Plan film productions. Three films were produced in France, including *Histoire d’une Sauvetage* (1949; *Story of a Rescue* in the UK and *Freundschaft ohne Grenzen* in Western Germany);¹⁹ *Productivité* (1951);²⁰ and *Transatlantique* (*Transatlantic*, 1953).²¹ Two more came from the UK: *The Shoemaker and the Hatter* (1950)²² and *Without Fear* (1951).²³ Of the nine different types and techniques of animation, all of the Marshall Plan animation films belong to that most classic type perfected by Walt Disney: hand-drawn animation.²⁴

Having said that, the Dutch cartoons are unique in two aspects. First, they were produced by a specific country with the intention of being screened in another country for educational purposes. In this case, the Dutch created Marshall Plan propaganda with American financing for the country which had invaded, occupied, and destroyed large parts of the Netherlands. Second, the Dutch cartoons differ in tone, style, and density of Marshall Plan metaphors from other animation films. As mentioned, the six Dutch cartoons are collectively called *Hugo at the Circus* (1952). None of them, however, have been studied in detail with a specific focus on their visual grammar.²⁵ In the following, I will turn to cartoons produced in the Netherlands which have only recently been discovered. Two of the series are yet still unlocated, but sketches have survived in archives.²⁶ The cartoons are not only perfect examples to show that film outrivals all other Marshall Plan media.²⁷ I will show that animation films also encompass all other major visual and acoustic activities associated with the Marshall Plan.²⁸

Most recently, Benn Steil argued in his monumental study *The Marshall Plan: Dawn of the Cold War* that the Marshall Plan worked because of its combination of realism and idealism, from which both the United States and the European countries receiving Marshall aid benefitted tremendously.²⁹ The idealistic dimension is most pronounced in the soft power of the Marshall Plan. While there has been a move towards analyzing the visual dimension of the Marshall Plan since the late 1980s, the peculiar potential of animation films has not yet been grasped. In general, the scholarly work

on texts, photos, and films surrounding the Marshall Plan has already yielded several fascinating insights and publications. Ellwood is one of the pioneers to turn the spotlight on the medium of film to define the power of the Marshall Plan in terms of soft power. He aptly called it the “largest peacetime propaganda effort directed by one country to a group of others ever seen.”³⁰ Others have followed suit. Hans-Jürgen Schröder approached exhibitions, posters, and films in Germany and Austria;³¹ Victoria DiGrazia’s *Irresistible Empire* shows how the rise of consumerism in the West has been tied to issues of creative cultural appropriation³² that Winfried Fluck in another context has identified as self-Americanization.³³ Jack Masey and Conway Lloyd Morgan have investigated the setup of Marshall Plan exhibitions³⁴ within the wider framework of cultural confrontations in the Cold War. While they concede that the influence is difficult to precisely map, the exhibitions’ importance for the cultural and political landscape cannot be denied. Günter Bischof and Hans Pestschar have offered a visually rich overview of the Marshall Plan at work in Austria with a focus on photography (2017).³⁵ The role of documentary film in the creation of the idea of Europe and European identities in the 1950s and 1960s has been the center of *Werben für Europa* with several contributions on Marshall Plan films (2016).³⁶ A comprehensive overview of the Marshall Plan documentary films has been offered by Maria Fritsche in 2018.³⁷ Among the many books that investigate the continuity of the Marshall Plan as a metaphor and symbol, John Agnew’s and J. Nicholas Entrikin’s anthology *The Marshall Plan Today: Model and Metaphor* (2004)³⁸ and Barry Machado’s monograph *In Search of a Usable Past: The Marshall Plan and Postwar Reconstruction Today* (2007) are for the sake of brevity only briefly mentioned here.³⁹ The Berlinale retrospective on Marshall Plan films, organized under the title *Selling Democracy* by the Zeughauskino of Deutsche Historische Museum Berlin in collaboration with Sandra Schulberg, daughter of the Marshall Plan filmmaker Stuart Schulberg, between 2004 and 2006 was a watershed moment to draw attention to the soft power of the Marshall Plan among the wider public.⁴⁰

As I pointed out in my previous investigation of the Marshall Plan film propaganda as a vision of a new United States of Europe, the efforts of forging a new cosmopolitan society after the disaster of World War II placed special emphasis on modern educational methods and innovative school concepts. I argued that young boys and girls from all over Europe played a double role in the Marshall Plan films: First, they acted in documentary films, embodying a future generation according to American democratic ideals. Their screen presence suggested that they represented the living proof of the motto *e pluribus unum*. Second, in the Marshall Plan films, young people also served as a commodity of modern entertainment for audiences hungry for innovative success stories in postwar Europe. The “new Europe” would therefore also be a “young Europe” anticipated via child actors on the screen. The animation films are different from, for example the black-and-white documentary *Frischer Wind in Alten Gassen* produced in Germany and directed by Fritz Peter Buch in 1951 about schoolchildren taking over political roles in a small German village.⁴¹ *The Story of Koula*

(1951) by Stephen L. James tells the story of a young Greek boy who yokes a large American mule from the harbor to his tiny village. Or *Bergbauern von Morgen* (1950) by Victor Vacas in which a young farmer's boy raises a prize calf. *Let's Be Childish*, a black-and-white film produced in France by George Freedland (aka Georges Friedland, 1910-1993) in 1950 offers an innovative approach to multilingual understanding. With a group of children from different European countries and unusual camera work, Freedland translates the idea of a New Europe into striking visual imagery. In *Wie die Jungen Sungen* (1954), Austrian director Georg Tressler focusses on the pupils at the international Lycée Français in Vienna to tackle three different themes at the same time: first, the future of a new transnational Europe; second, multilingualism vs. French as a new European lingua franca; and third, redirecting prewar racial prejudice towards a climate of racial tolerance in the future.⁴²

Although targeted at a young audience, Marshall Plan animation films, unlike their black-and-white documentary counterparts, do not feature children as protagonists. Rather, they translate key themes of the Marshall Plan of productivity, consumer society, interdependence, intra-European collaboration, multilingual understanding, and a new European identity into a colorful language of simplified forms and signifiers. In the following, I will first analyze the four surviving Dutch animation films on the German protagonist Hugo and identify several key motifs the animators selected to tell their story of European recovery. Then, I will create inter pictorial clusters by comparing the visual grammar with other Marshall Plan media such as posters, drawings, graphic design, photography, puppet theater, and the setup of travelling exhibitions.

The six films by Toonder Studios about Hugo and his self-inflated German ego consisted of *Hugo am Trapez* (Hugo in the Circus), *Hugo macht Musik* (Hugo and the Harp), *Hugo baut auf* (Hugo and the House of Europe), *Hugo als Kleingärtner* (Hugo's Garden), *Hugo als Kraftmax*, and *Hugo als Dompteur*. I will investigate the grammar of graphics employed in the films by creating inter pictorial clusters based on the rich corpus of visual sources of the Marshall Plan information campaigns between 1948 and 1952.⁴³ Contrary to the assumption that Marshall Plan filmmakers in the seventeen ERP countries had a lot of freedom in framing their stories of intra-European collaboration, the case of the *Hugo* films shows how Americans helped to shape the animation sequences in the Dutch animation studio. By uncovering the strategies behind the animation program and mapping the Euro-American imagery used to educate West German audiences, this article will reveal the carefully constructed use of soft power to exert influence and redirect German self-interest towards transnational goals.

Hugo's Little Fairy-Tale World: Mapping the Visual Grammar of the European Circus

One of the most entertaining and visually creative animated films to promote the theme of European integration for West Germans was the series of six Marshall Plan cartoons focused on the satirical figure of *Hugo*—a stereotypical German citizen trying

to outdo all other European citizens in terms of strength, creativity, and productivity. As the off-screen narrator frames the action using humorous German rhymes, the audience is led to believe they are being introduced to a funny German character in a fictional fairy tale circus world. This begs the question: Why were these films produced outside of Germany? One of the guidelines of the American coordinators of the Marshall Plan information section in Paris was to coordinate the production of films for specific countries. The strategy was to employ, wherever possible, creative talents before and behind the camera from the country for which the film was produced. However, in the case of the *Hugo Zeichentrick* films, German audiences were to a certain degree tricked in more ways than one.

The US information staff of the Marshall Plan headquarters were doubtful as to the degree German artists in the film industry could be reliable collaborators. The head of the Documentary Film Unit, Information Services Division, OMGUS, Berlin, Stuart Schulberg declared that Germans lacked both the skill and the mindset to actively engage in democratic educational films. Schulberg located the reason in the “long isolation and ... their unfamiliarity with the basic idea that we are trying to put across, not to mention the spirit and technique.” Germany represented a special case for the film program. Therefore, Schulberg argued, German artists needed “more guidance than in any other country.”⁴⁴

Marten Toonder’s Dutch animation company was an ideal choice for the Marshall planners in Paris. Toonder had successfully produced a large number of advertising clips before and during the war for Philips and other companies, including *In Holland staat een huis* (1945, for Herman Jansen Distillery), *The Haunted Castle* (1948), *The Magic Music* (1948), and *Dreamland* (1949, all three films for Philips).⁴⁵ Toonder’s ambitious goal was to create a unique visual approach to animation aesthetics that could stand on its own compared to American pioneers and market leaders Walt Disney and Tex Avery productions. How did Toonder get involved with the Marshall Plan? Toonder’s animation film *De Gouden Vis* (1951), inspired by ancient Chinese drawings, offered a compelling narrative about living in harmony with nature using unusual nonwestern imagery. The film played successfully in art cinemas in the United States and came to the attention of the Marshall Plan information unit in Paris. The producer N. P. Rathvon helped to distribute *De Gouden Vis* internationally and was approached by Ring and Jensen with the offer to produce animation films for the Marshall Plan. The two Dutch animators had recently joined the Toonder international creative team along with Harold and Pamela Mack from England. This led to Stuart Schulberg suggesting that Toonder Studios produce six cartoons for West German audiences teaching them about intra-European collaboration and integration. While *De Gouden Vis* was a creative success, it failed to recuperate the production costs of forty thousand gulden.⁴⁶ In turn, the financial support from the European Recovery Program of one hundred fifty thousand gulden—almost four times as much as Toonder’s previous ambitious short film cost—helped Toonder Studios to thrive.

The Dutch cartoons for West German audiences were produced in 1952, the last year before the Marshall Plan would end and the Europeans could—according to the plan—stand on their own feet. To this day, only the first four films have been located. They offer a unique perspective on the use of animation for selling democracy and integration Marshall Plan-style. Each film is about four minutes long and consists of a one-minute introductory sequence which sets the tone for the educational message and visual aesthetics: the slightly overweight circus artist Hugo climbs up a ladder, suggesting progress, happiness, and the stimulus to actively engage in the reconstruction of Europe (see Fig. 4). In the animation films, this powerful metaphor for a higher standard of living for those who embrace the ideas of the Marshall Plan resonates throughout. Even the letter “H,” depicted in the colors of the German flag, red, black, and yellow (or “gold” in German), has been transformed into a kind of ladder.

Hugo is introduced as a character who struggles to find his place in a new European landscape. The opening reference to the distributor Deutsche Reportagefilm GmbH is followed by a credit sequence with Hugo holding on to colorful balloons as he flies in from the sky. His shorts in black, red, and yellow, the colors of the German flag, identify the protagonist as a German. In addition to this dense visual layer of animated signs and symbols, a voiceover uses easy-to-remember rhymes and introduces the metaphor of Europe as a kind of fairy-tale circus to the film audience.



Figs. 4–5: Each credit sequence opens with Hugo on a ladder. *Hugo baut auf* (Hugo and the House of Europe) (top); *Hugo am Trapez* (Hugo in the Circus) (bottom).

In this opening sequence of *Hugo baut auf* we see Hugo on a ladder juggling with four rings color-coded with the colors of the German flag (see Fig. 5). He will magically transform these shapes into the letters of his name. In *Hugo am Trapez*, a sequence with a ladder involves Hugo climbing towards the trapeze at the top of the circus tent. The rhymes conflate Hugo’s little fairy-tale world with Europe’s circus arena:

Dies ist Hugo, den wir fanden,
Irgendwo in unser'n Landen.
Hugos kleine Märchenwelt
Ist Europas Zirkuszelt.

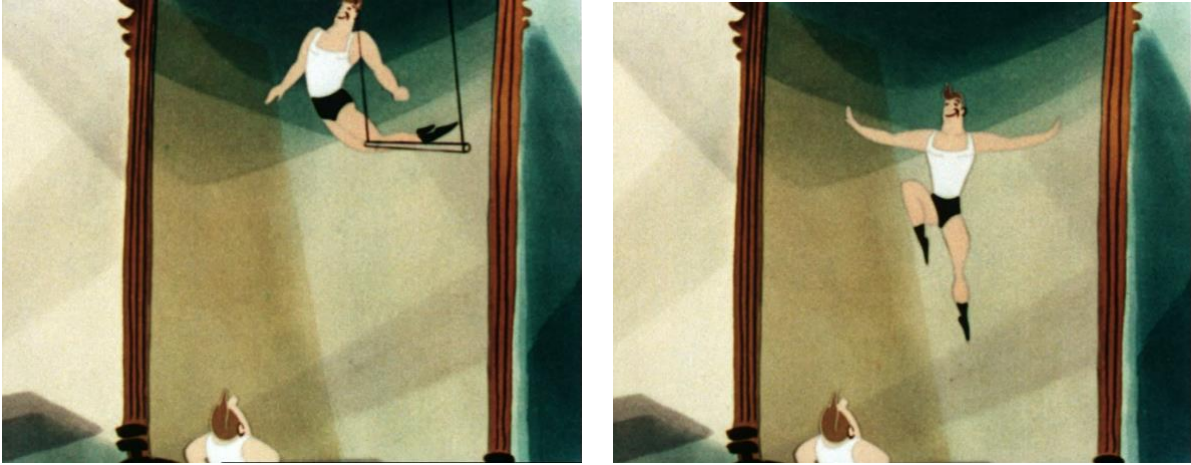
This is Hugo, whom we found
Somewhere in our land.
Hugo's little fairy-tale world
Is Europe's circus tent.⁴⁷

Following this introductory sequence, the individual *Hugo* films zoom in on the specific narrative in which Hugo learns that he can achieve more in life if he collaborates with the other actors of the circus, be it in lifting weights, balancing delicately high up in the air on a tightrope, building a sturdy house, planting a garden, training circus animals, or playing together in an orchestra. In each film, a warm, smooth tenor voiceover explains the premise of the new story, in which Hugo projects himself as a kind of “super Hugo.”



Figs. 6–7: Hugo as Herman and as Superman, from *Hugo am Trapez* (Netherlands, 1952).

The reflection in a large mirror transforms Hugo's small round body into a heroic athletic figure (see Figs. 6–7) or, in the case of *Hugo macht Musik*, into a virtuoso harp player. The white T-shirt features the capital letter “H.” This iconic feature resonates with young viewers familiar with American “Superman” comics that had become popular in the Netherlands after World War II. The comic book reference is even more pronounced in the film *Hugo am Trapez*. Here, his mirror image transforms



Figs. 8–9: Flying through the air: Hugo sees himself as a grand trapeze artist. *Hugo am Trapez*.

the rather small, chubby German into a larger-than-life athlete with pronounced muscles who can fly through the air, seemingly defying gravity—with or without a trapeze (see Figs. 8–9).

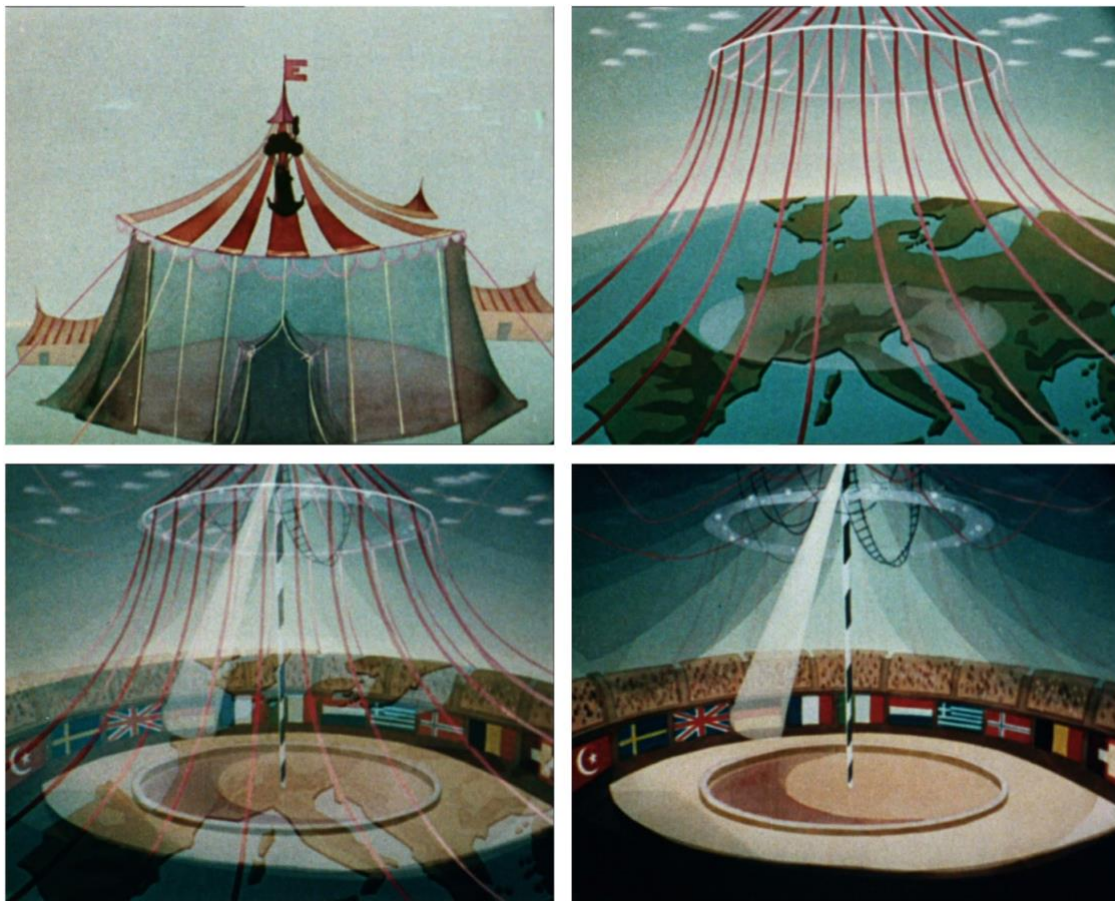
In *Hugo macht Musik*, the German musician is a cross between the American superhero and the German mythological warrior Arminius (or “Herman” in German) (see Fig. 10), who plotted a Germanic revolt against Roman rule. The battle culminated in the ambush and destruction of three Roman legions in the Teutoburg Forest, where a giant statue of Arminius (“Herman”) was erected. The Hugo figure (see Fig. 11) shares not only the first letter but also the mythological self-aggrandizement of the national



Figs. 10–11: “Hermann als Sieger” (Herman as Victor) (left). Painting, c. 1839, by Wilhelm Lindenschmit. Oil on paper, 51.5 x 28.5cm. Reference to Armin, chieftain of the Cherusci, known as Arminius; 16 BC – 21 AD. Permanent loan of the Speck von Sternburg Stiftung. Leipzig, Museum der Bildenden Künste. “Hugo” in the mirror with angelic wings and Cherusci helmet (right), from *Hugo am Trapez* (Netherlands, 1952).

figure. Curiously, this nationalist symbol, which the Nazis exploited for propaganda, was omitted from West German textbooks after World War II. The Dutch animation films, however, play on the power of the memory of “Herman,” now in the guise of Hugo, who—after the racist indoctrinations of the Nazi period—needs to be reeducated.

What follows is a stunning sequence of crossfades, beginning with a European landscape fading into the circus tent, which in turn dissolves so that the tent poles become visible, each pole representing an individual Marshall Plan country and superimposed on a world map, fading to the tent interior where the ERP flags are seen (see Figs. 12–15 below).



*Figs. 12–15: Sequence blending a European map with a circus tent encircled by European flags. From *Hugo am Trapez* (Netherlands, 1952).*

This is followed by a zoom in on the German flag, out of which Hugo majestically breaks free. In *Hugo macht Musik* (*Hugo and the Harp*), the didactic voiceover emphasizes the correlation between nations, the setting of the circus, and the misguided individualism of Hugo:

Viele Länder, viele Zungen
Hält das Zirkuszelt umschlungen.
Als der erste Mann im Chor
Stellt sich unser Hugo vor.

Many countries, many tongues
Embrace the circus tent.
Our Hugo introduces himself
As the choir's lead male singer.



Figs. 16–18: Sequence with Hugo breaking through the German flag on stage. From *Hugo macht Musik* (*Hugo and the Harp*), (Netherlands, 1952).

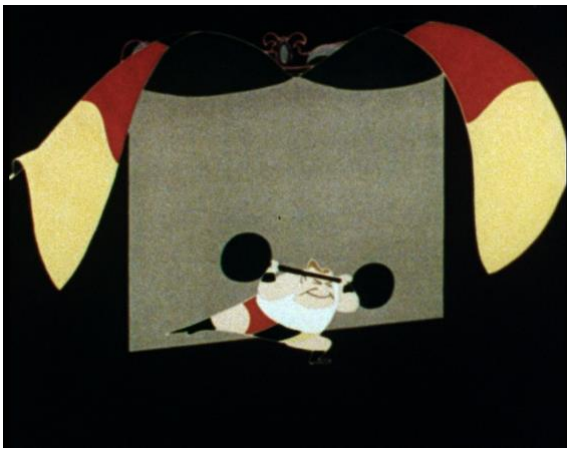
The production of the cartoons was designed to be lean and effective. Less than four weeks went into the making of each film.⁴⁸ Therefore, specific background images, sequences, and animation cels were reused in different films to lower production costs and be time efficient. In addition to the credits and opening sequence, the moment that Hugo breaks through the German flag to present his latest stunt to the circus audience was only slightly modified to fit the individual narratives (see Figs. 16–24).



Figs. 19–21: Sequence from *Hugo am Trapez* (Hugo in the Circus) (Netherlands, 1952).

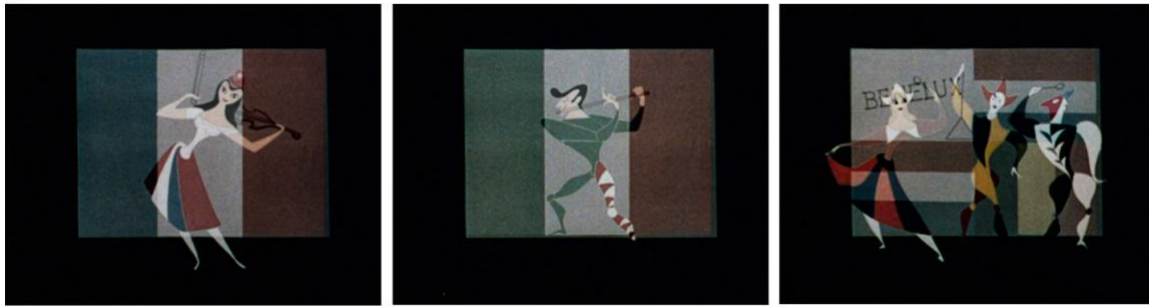


Figs. 22–24: Sequence from *Hugo baut auf* (Hugo and the House of Europe) (Netherlands, 1952).



Figs. 25–27: Sequence from *Hugo als Kraftmax* (Netherlands, 1952).

The animation aesthetics rely on stereotypical representations of European countries via dress codes, body gestures, and national iconographies. The creative use of flags, European maps, and images suggest European unity. Let us take a closer look at the film *Hugo macht Musik*. Here, the theme of music is central for the message of European integration. As a matter of fact, in all of Toonder's films, music plays an important role, be it *Serenata Nocturna* (1942, for Philips), *Das Musikalische Auto* (1944, produced for the UFA in Berlin during the occupation), or one of the earliest Philips radio commercials, *The Magic Music* (1948). Hugo Godron, who also contributed a score to the internationally acclaimed short *De Gouden Vis* (1952), suggested that each of the European circus actors would have an identifiable sonic DNA. Like a Wagnerian leitmotif approach, the main character of Hugo could be identified by a waltz, the Italian by a serenade, the French by a minuet, the Brit by a jig and the Benelux by the clear sounds of three triangles. The result is quite different and shows how American Marshall Plan staffers intervened in the creative process. Godron's approach was considered too "romantic." The composer was replaced and the task was given to Gijs Reijns and Lex van Delden.



Figs. 28–30: Representations of circus musicians in *Hugo macht Musik* showing their instruments as part of national culture (Netherlands, 1952).

Visually, the different nations were associated with cartoon-like figures in the colors of the respective flag (see Figs. 28–30). For example, the United Kingdom was represented by John Bull (albeit in a much more slender version than he was known for in traditional political cartoons, to make him fit for acrobatic sequences in the circus). The figure of Tijl Uilenspiegel was selected for Belgium. Marianne functioned as the national personification of the French Republic on the violin. Italy was featured by a Papageno-like flutist. The Dutch figure is a girl in a white bonnet and national costume (albeit without the wooden shoes to adapt her costume for the trapeze).



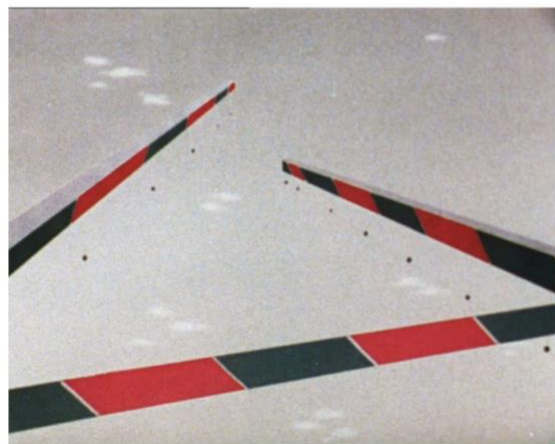
Figs. 31–33: Circus artists in *Hugo baut auf* reveal their blueprints for the new “House of Europe.” From *Hugo baut auf* (Hugo and the House of Europe, Netherlands, 1952).

In order to visualize the change from an anarchic cacophony to a harmonious concert, the film relies on a powerful symbol that features prominently in many other Marshall Plan propaganda tools such as photography and political posters. The national representatives are shown playing individually in their own space, demarcated by barriers which are raised the very moment they decide to play in unison.⁴⁹ The ingenious combination of visualizing national borders as a sign for sonic tensions in the orchestral sound in *Hugo macht Musik* suggests that harmony can only be achieved by listening to each other and modifying performances to play together in a kind of

European symphony. The rhyme adds another textual level to get the message across to the young viewers:

Im Orchester muss vor allem
jede Grenze einmal fallen.
Eingeengt in starre Bande
kommt kein schönes Lied zustande.
...
und es hat die Melodie,
die sie spielen Harmonie.

In the orchestra, above all
every boundary must once fall.
Constricted in rigid bands,
no beautiful song comes into being
...
and it has a melody
which they play in harmony.



Figs. 34–37: Circus musicians in *Hugo macht Musik* (Netherlands, 1952) playing in disharmony and then in harmony, leading to the raising of the barriers.

The theme of mutual interdependence and cooperation is also reflected in the rhymes and the soundtracks of the films. For example, when Hugo realizes that he cannot reach the trapeze by himself, the narrator gives the German antihero a clue:

Die Kollegen sind gecheiter
einer hilft dem andern weiter
und gemeinsam zeigen sie
ihre Künste voll Genie.

...

Was nun neue Form annimmt
hat man vorher abgestimmt.
Und gemeinsam ist die Freude
am vollendeten Gebäude.

...

Kann es einer nicht allein
geht es sicher im Verein
Alley Hepp! Man zieht und drückt
und schon ist der Akt geglückt.
Leicht wird schliesslich jede Last
die gemeinsam angefasst.

The colleagues are smarter
one helps the other
and together they show
their artistry full of genius.

...

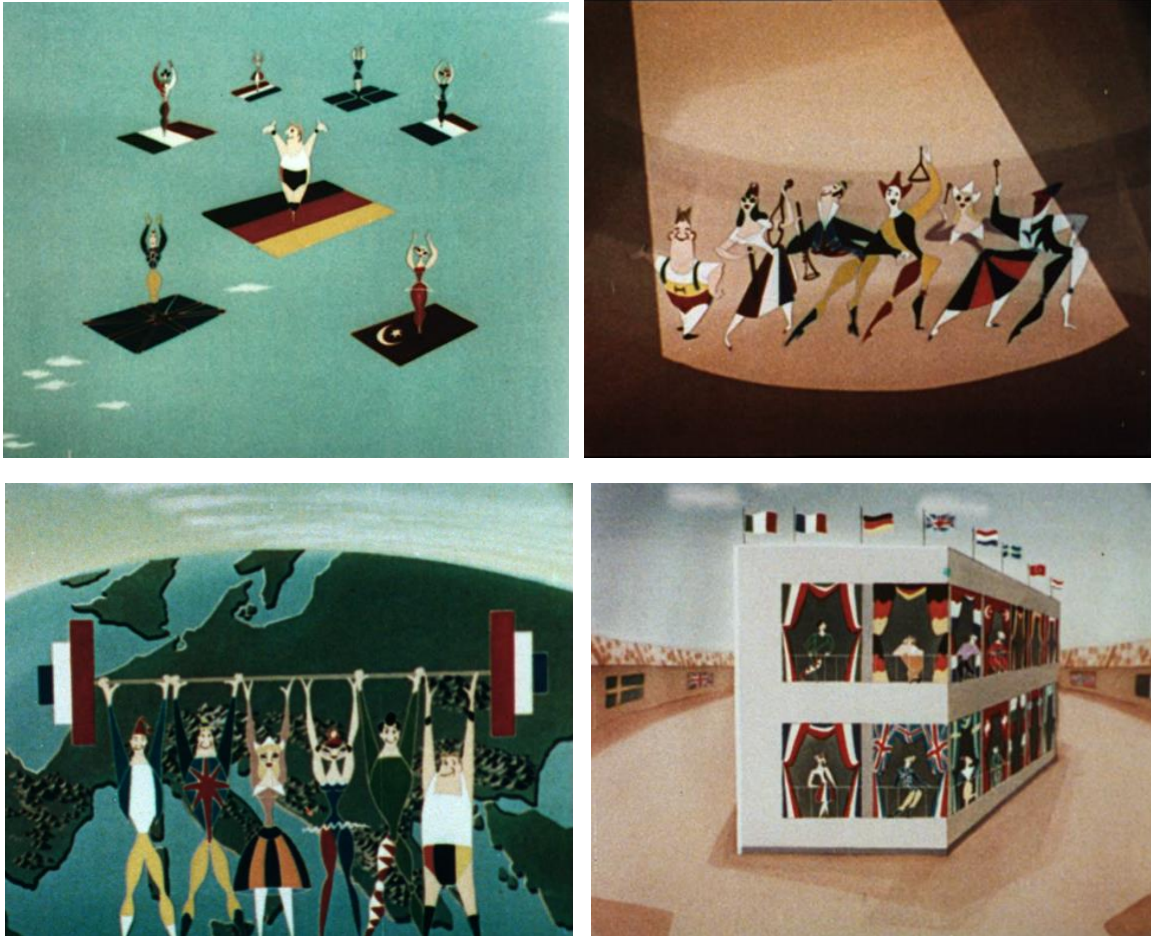
What now takes on new form
has been agreed upon beforehand.
and all share in the joy
of the completed building.

...

If one can't do it alone
it's assured in a team
Alley Hopp! One pulls and pushes
and right away the act is successful.
Eventually every load becomes easy
That is lifted in a team.⁵⁰

In line with the rhymes of the voiceover and the visual narrative of intra-European collaboration as a solution to Hugo's problems, the sonic framing is also consistent in the films. The climax of the cartons is usually layered with a combination of a fanfare-like major chord and drum rolls accompanied by a sound effect: We hear applause from an invisible audience.⁵¹ Thus, the experience of watching the Hugo films becomes immersive. The intended affective response of the young audience is suggestive. The invisible circus audience merges with the audience in the movie theater. The applause for the representative Europeans who successfully solved a problem by working together invites the "real" audience to follow suit and become complicit in the action.

After having looked at the various sequences in the cartoon, we can deduce that the narrative of the *Hugo* films follows a clear structure. The protagonist Hugo is singled out as a somewhat awkward, often comic character who observes himself in a mirror showing his self-inflated ego. He enters the stage of the circus tent to show off his allegedly superhuman skills but realizes that he cannot accomplish what he set out to do. After a moment of tension with the other European artists, the problem is solved by a coordinated effort to engage with each other, recognize individual strengths, join forces, and accomplish something greater than the individuals would have been able to. The final sequence brings the protagonists together on the circus stage, suggesting that a new European identity can be achieved by intra-European cooperation in which the individual players do not need to give up their national identities. In the next step, I will map, describe, and analyze inter pictorial clusters with references to the most successful Marshall Plan information booklets, posters, and photographs of Marshall Plan events tied to travelling exhibitions.



Figs. 38–41: Images of intra-European cooperation among circus artists. From left to right, top to bottom: *Hugo als Kraftmax*, *Hugo am Trapez*, *Hugo macht Musik*, and *Hugo baut auf* (all Netherlands, 1952).

Mapping Interpictorial Clusters 1: The Marshall Plan Booklet

Al Hemsing, Schulberg's and Nils Nilson's successor as head of the Marshall Plan film unit, commented that the national film production teams had a lot of creative freedom in the conception and production of their films. This seems only partially true when we look at the *Hugo* films. The American team in Paris did not leave it to the creative talents at Toonder Studios to frame the narrative. Schulberg sent the British animator and art director Philip Stapp, who produced educational animation films such as *Boundary Lines* (1945) and *Picture in Your Mind* (1948) about the terror of World War II and later the classic parable *Animal Farm* (1954), to Toonder Studios. He then controlled and shaped the creative approach of how to best captivate the young German audience via the *Hugo* films.

Stapp was the one who came up with the circus metaphor for the European political and cultural theater in which different people need to trust each other, work together, and form a strong unit. One could argue that the staff at Toonder's anima-

tion production studio resembled in itself such a European theater with a creative team from the Netherlands, Denmark, and Great Britain.⁵² The artistic approach to the challenge of approaching German audiences to encourage them to embrace the political, cultural, and social visions of the Marshall Plan for West Germany was tongue-in-cheek. Humor functioned as a central ingredient that is reflected in the visual construction, the sonic framing, and the voiceover. The Americans knew that a light-hearted approach to frame national agendas could be quite effective. For example, *The American Scene* documentary series, produced between 1943 and 1945 by Robert Riskin as part of the Bureau of Motion Pictures (BMP), was a case in point. As a counterpart to the direct, in-your-face propaganda of Frank Capra's *Why We Fight* series, *The American Scene* documentaries were screened in the Allied countries and in the Netherlands in liberated areas. They revealed in a nuanced, light-hearted, and humorous fashion what it would be like to live in America, with an emphasis on American democratic, economic, and educational values.⁵³ For example, the film *The Autobiography of a Jeep* featured the success story of a typical American vehicle during the war and liberation of Europe. The creative artistic device the filmmakers used to provide a humorous approach to win the hearts and minds of Europeans relied on the humanization of the car. In an autobiographic fashion, the jeep narrates its unlikely story from an ugly duckling to a heroic liberator with a warm and friendly voice. "Looks more like a four-wheel Beetle one of them said," the jeep tells the audience on the reaction of Americans when it was first seen on the streets. "I wasn't too proud of myself."⁵⁴ The jeep remembered episodes from the US production plants and invited its audience to see how it survived and mastered the challenging terrain in different European war settings. Based on its experience with light-hearted narratives, the Toonder Studios, with its tradition of humorous animation films, was certainly a promising candidate to produce films that could touch the hearts and minds of a young German audience. It also shows that the American Marshall planners in Paris had a



Fig. 42: Jo Spier's well-known graphic design with a Dutchman climbing up a ladder in front of a stylized dollar sign.

Jo Spier, *Het Marshall-Plan En U's*-Gravenhage: Persdienst van het Ministerie van Economische Zaken/Regeeringsvoelichtingsdienst, 1949. Unpaginated.

clear idea about how films should be produced, what kind of visual rhetoric is useful, and how animators could best strike an emotional chord.

The symbol of an ordinary citizen climbing up a ladder, which features prominently in all *Hugo* cartoons, is reminiscent of one of the most successful Marshall Plan drawings, by the Dutch graphic artist Jo Spier. On the iconic cover of the booklet *Het Marshall Plan en U* (1949), published by the Press Office of the Ministry of Economic Affairs in cooperation with the Government Information Service, we see a man dressed in typical Dutch clothes, who is climbing a ladder.⁵⁵ This publication was so successful that it was translated into English and distributed widely to not only win the hearts and minds of Europeans but also those citizens in the US who were critical of the American investments in Europe. The ingenious cover transforms the ladder on which the Dutch figure is climbing up into a dollar sign. A note in the English edition states that the original Dutch version was distributed to employers and employees, professional associations, teachers, students, and other groups in the Netherlands. It reached 2.5 million readers out of a total population of ten million, a quarter of the nation.⁵⁶

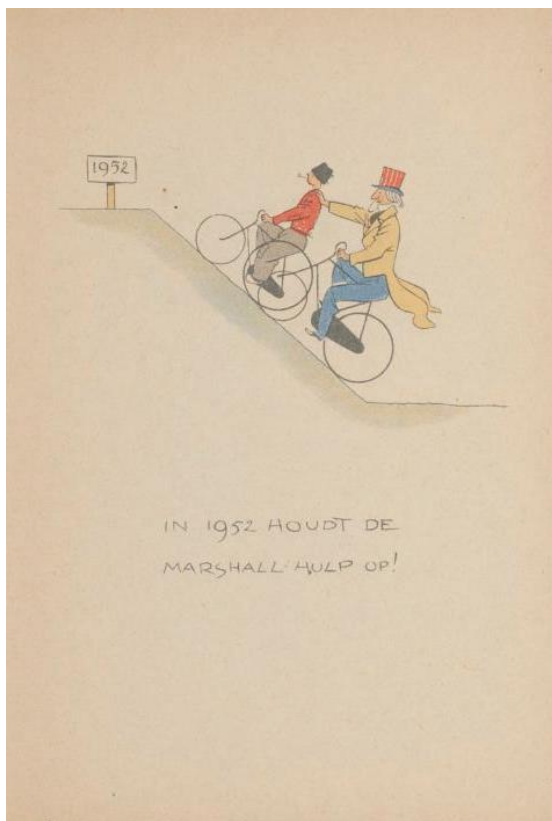


Fig. 43: Uncle Sam pushing the Dutchman up a dike so that by the end of the Marshall Plan in 1952 he can continue easily by himself (Jo Spier, *Het Marshall-plan en U*, 1949).⁵⁷

Although the booklet effectively emphasizes Dutchness with references to Dutch history and culture, including the construction of dikes, a habit of dressing in the national colors, and the popularity of bikes, the visuals also worked well in transna-

tional settings. For example, the Dutchman's clothing evokes a regional costume that, according to Mathilde Roza, had specific connotations for Dutch viewers.⁵⁸ They most likely recognized the Volendam fishing communities, northeast of Amsterdam, as a kind of cherished national heritage which referred to a fantasy of “true and ‘authentic’ Dutch identity” under threat of disappearance due to modernization, urbanization, and new technologies.⁵⁹ Others, however, could grasp the general uplifting message of how the Marshall Plan matters to everyone, implying that you, too, could climb up the ladder of success via the US-American recovery program—hence the clear reference in the title *Het Marshall Plan en U*, the Marshall Plan *and you*.

Considering the incredible success of the booklet and its iconic cover, it is hardly surprising that the Toonder team would open their *Hugo* cartoons with a stereotypical German character climbing up a ladder to show why Marshall Plan concepts could also help this nation to thrive and be successful. While in the 1949 Dutch version of the booklet, the Marshall Plan and Uncle Sam (e.g., gently pushing the Dutch biker up a dike) were referenced repeatedly, in the *Hugo* films, the American presence is invisible and stays behind the scenes. Instead of making the American icon the motor of upward mobility and turning the Dutch character into a rather passive biker, the *Hugo* films give credit to the Europeans to achieve exactly what United States foreign policy wants. The films suggest that Europeans will figure out themselves what is best for them. This is almost a textbook definition of cultural diplomacy and soft power. As Joseph Nye has explained, soft power means getting others to want the outcomes that you want by coopting people rather than coercing them.⁶⁰

Mapping Interpictorial Clusters 2: Marshall Plan Posters



Fig. 44: The winning Dutch poster from the ERC poster contest on Intra-European Cooperation with image by Dutch graphic designer Reyn Dirksen.

One of the overall messages of the Hugo films is the idea that only through cooperation can artists in a circus undertake their challenging and sometimes dangerous acrobatics and performances. What is true for the circus is, as the metaphor implies, also important for the Europe. The filmic references to the idea of a “new postwar Europe” build on a visual rhetoric that had been circulating via travelling exhibitions such as the *Europazug* and poster competitions. For example, the well-documented ECA poster contest of early 1950 focused on the theme “Intra-European Cooperation for a Better Standard of Living.” From ten thousand submissions a jury selected twenty-five prize-winning posters which were displayed in shop windows, incorporated into exhibitions, and widely published in newspapers and magazines. The posters utilized the very same graphic grammar that would also feed into the *Hugo* films. For example, the Dutch winning poster “All Our Colours to the Mast” by the graphic designer Reijn Dirksen utilizes the signifier of a large schooner. The national flags of the Marshall Plan countries are all on display on the ship, suggesting that the strong wind coming from across the Atlantic can only be turned into speed towards a better future if all the countries form part of a new transnational unity.⁶¹ The body of the ship is composed of the letters forming the word “Europe.” A simplified German version made the importance of the European reconstruction program explicit by adding a cartoonish rendition of wind blowing into the flags, over which the blurry letters ERP appeared.



Fig. 45: Fireworks show in Enschede ending on the climax: The illumination of the Dutch graphic designer Reyn Dirksen’s winning poster “All Our Colours to the Mast.”

The Toonder team could not escape the media stunt created in the context of a travelling exhibition that visited the Netherlands in 1950. On October 30, in the city of Enschede, the Cooperation Caravan “Europe Builds” stopped and offered a spectacular forty-five-minute fireworks display. With previous stops in the Netherlands attended by ninety-seven thousand visitors, the show in Enschede welcomed forty-five thousand visitors, including the Queen’s Commissioner J.B. Ridder, the mayor Mr. M. van Veen, and the chief of the ECA missions in the Netherlands, Clarence Hunter. The fireworks with magnesium flares spelling out Marshall Plan themes such as “Cooperation is Progress” or “Economic Cooperation for Europe’s Trade” ended on the giant illuminated image from Reyn Dirksen’s winning poster as a special gesture for all the Dutch people in attendance.⁶² The title of the travelling exhibition *Europe Builds* might also have been the blueprint for the animation film *Hugo baut auf*, which translates into “Hugo builds.”



Figs. 46–47: Winning posters from the ERC poster contest on Intra-European Cooperation. “Cooperation Intereuropeenne” (The George C. Marshall Foundation, Fabien Vienne). “Samen werk samen sterk” (J. F. Nettes).

The theme of European integration and mutual interdependence in the *Hugo* films can also be found in many of the prize-winning posters. A French entry, for example, uses the metaphor of different hands clasped together as if forming a pact to stabilize each other. The colorful flags of the eighteen Marshall Plan countries emerge from the blue-tinted image as reference to what is made explicit in the title printed in

capital letters underneath: “cooperation intereuropeenne.” Another creative inspiration for the designers at Toonder Studios might have been the Dutch poster entitled “Samen werk samen sterk.” The idea that only together is Europe strong is identified by an Atlas-like figure shouldering the globe with Europe at its center. Like Hugo trying unsuccessfully to lift extremely heavy weights alone, the poster shows a similar solution as in the circus arena: Only if different nations collaborate harmoniously can they muster up enough strength to achieve great things such as creating a unified Europe. In stark contrast, the Atlas figure is split into two: a colorful right side consisting of the flags and a black left side signifying those countries that do not embrace the message of the European Recovery Program. This darker message behind the Marshall Plan propaganda is consciously left out of the *Hugo* films to keep the message short, simple, and unambiguous for the young audience, with an emphasis on the humorous actions of Hugo trying to fit into the circus team.



Figs. 48–49: Winning posters from the ERC poster contest on Intra-European Cooperation. Kurt Krapeik, “Wir bauen ein neues Europa” and Erik Oelmeleo, „Samarbete For Fredbihet-Hogre Levnadsstandard” (both The George C. Marshall Foundation).

Other posters reference the image of a cook mixing all sorts of flavors to create a truly European meal and entitled “Inter-europäische Zusammenarbeit für bessere Lebensbedingungen.” The leitmotif “only together can we be strong” or “build a new Europe” is also captured in the German poster “Wir bauen ein neues Europa” or the Swedish poster “Marshallhjälpen: samarbete för fred-frihet-högre levnadsstandard.”

The image shows two arms with the sleeves decorated with the flags of the eighteen allied nations pulling on a rope. The Toonder team could, for example, have seen the posters in the windows of the KLM Royal Dutch Airlines hub at nearby Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (see Fig. 50)⁶³ or at a travelling exhibition that I will discuss in more detail in the next section.



Fig. 50: Poster exhibition at KLM at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam. Poster exhibition at KLM at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam displaying winning posters. National Archives and Records Administration, MP 286, NL 1121 (detail).

As to the powerful final sequence of *Hugo macht Musik* in which musicians can finally play together in harmony because barriers between them are metaphorically lifted, German audiences might have associated this metaphor with a famous Marshall



Fig. 51: Marshall Plan poster, 1950, West Germany. Deutsches Historisches Institut. Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

Plan poster from 1950 in which the expression “Freie Bahn” rhymes with the term “Marshall Plan.” We see a delivery truck adorned with the flags of Western European nations approaching a border. Thanks to the collaboration of Marshall Plan countries, the barrier is lifted, and the truck is free to go its European destinations.⁶⁴ The animation art director Philip Stapp used the same visual approach in his previous British animation production *Without Fear* (1951), where barriers and stop signs in different languages limit the free flow of traffic and goods. At the end of the film, Europeans agree to work together while the barriers open up with a musical fanfare. In only four minutes, the Dutch-made Hugo films sell the message of democracy, collaboration, peace, and freedom in a unified new Western European conglomerate of Marshall Plan countries in a nonconfrontational, humorous fashion to West German audiences, both young and old.

Mapping Interpictorial Clusters 3: Travelling Exhibitions

In the following, I turn to photographs that capture events and display devices used in travelling exhibitions of the Marshall Plan. They provide a powerful visual tool to reveal

the intermedial discourse and visual grammar that inform the animation of the *Hugo* films. Photography played a crucial role in Marshall Plan efforts to shape ideas regarding particularly West Germany's future position in a unified Europe rebuilt with aid from the European Recovery Program as well as from the other seventeen Marshall countries. The overall goal was to document how the US State Department used media to ensure that a specific memory of the American intervention in World War II and the recovery of Europe would become part of collective national and transnational consciousness. As I have pointed out elsewhere, photographs played a foundational role in the creation of that kind of positive memory. *A Memory Goes to Work*—the title of an early, unpaginated pamphlet documenting the liberation of Europe, “one of the most brilliant chapters in American history”—represents a prime example of such efforts to produce, shape, and assure public recognition.⁶⁵

From the beginning, as will become clear in this article, the Marshall Plan planners used photographs to make sure that US efforts would be recognized and remembered in a specifically positive fashion. Thus, we need to remember that the photographs do not merely document a specific event but also frame it to shape political sensibilities. To gain knowledge from looking at photographs, Alan Trachtenberg pointed out, one must understand the process involved in making the photos suitable for display and distribution, or in his phrase, to understand them as “worked-over objects or as pointed images.”⁶⁶ The Marshall Plan photographs were distributed by the European Cooperation Administration for a variety of purposes: (1) to be hung in any public place where a sizable number of people could see them; (2) to be distributed in sets with accompanying captions to newspapers, press associations, and magazines; and (3) to be used to illustrate exhibitions, publications, Marshall Plan calendars, and school textbooks. The photos followed a clear agenda, showcasing predefined topics and subjects, although in many cases the images seem to be transcriptive insofar as they are shot in a straightforward fashion. Yet these photographs also translated abstract ideas into personalized narratives, or picture stories—a strategy that would soon inform the psychological warfare of the Cold War.⁶⁷

After the credit sequence, Hugo descends from the sky towards the circus tent by holding on to a bunch of colorful balloons. There is a magical moment when the sequence with Hugo closes in on the top of the tent and, after an edit, seems to have permeated the membrane of the tent to softly land in Hugo's circus dressing room. With this moment, the credit sequences—which are similar in all the surviving Hugo films—end on the rhyme “Hugos kleine Märchenwelt/ Ist Europas Zirkuszelt” (Hugo's fairy-tale world / is Europe's circus tent) and the specific narratives can unfold. The

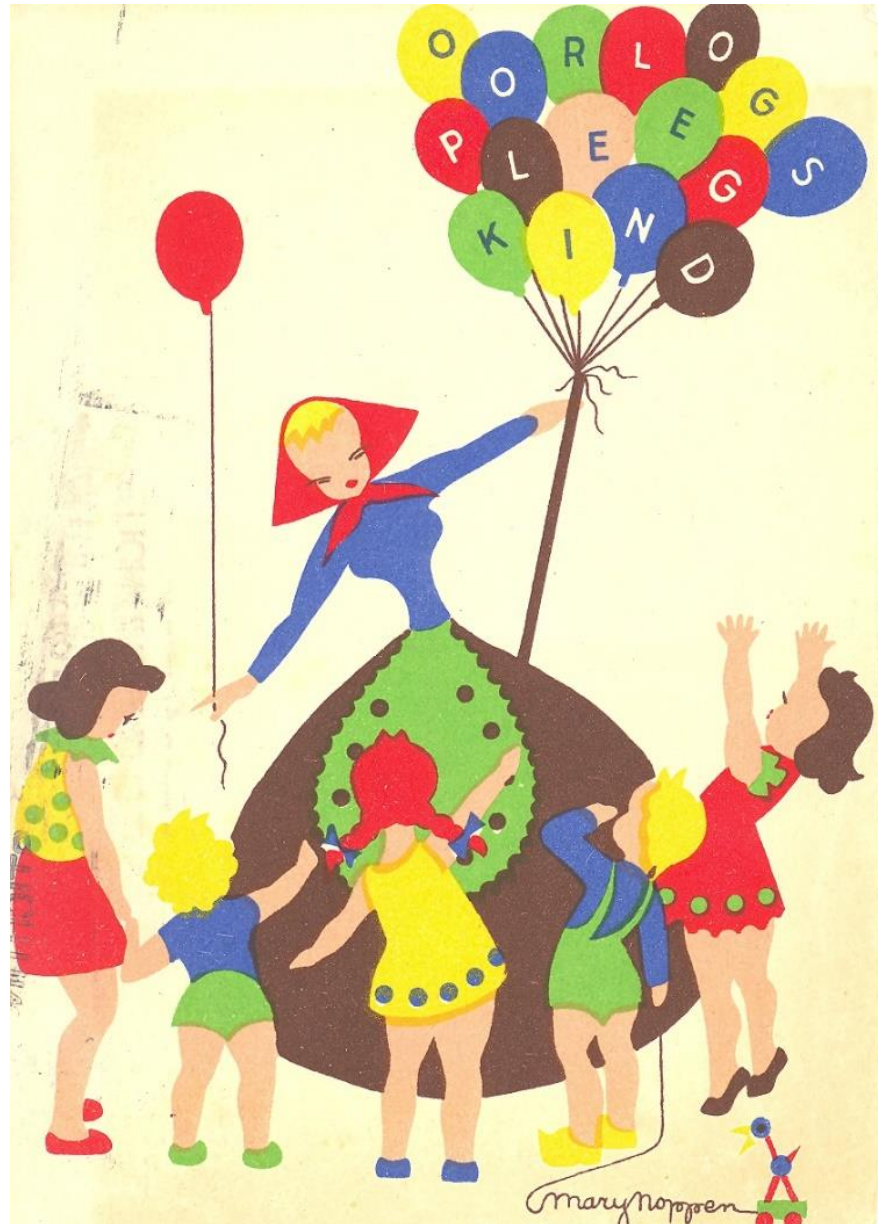


Fig. 52: Mary Noppen postcard with balloons spelling “oorlog pleegs kind” (War Foster Child) for a “Thank You, America.” Private collection.

animators designed their narrative based on images that children can positively relate to from their own experience.

The balloons connect earlier efforts of the Marshall Plan in a different medium with the Dutch animated films. For example, the 1950 travelling exhibition *Europe Builds* toured West Germany and Austria under the title *Europa baut auf*. Here, balloons played an important role to engage with children. For example, balloons were handed out to the youngest visitors and came with a card on which children were encouraged to write a message to a finder far away, perhaps in another European country. In



Fig. 53: Young Austrian girl receiving a Marshall Plan balloon says thank you and asks if she could have a second one.

addition to photographers who were particularly keen on photographing children from different nations engaging with great excitement with the Marshall Plan projects, there is documentary footage in the *ERP in Action* films—a monthly newsreel about the European Recovery Program. In *ERP in Action No. 11* we see the launching of five hundred thousand so-called “Friendship Balloons” with greetings for all Americans. Thus, the film functions as both an extension of the experience children might have had in an earlier encounter with the European reconstruction theme and at the same time continues the work of shaping a specific memory that connects colorful balloons with a Marshall Plan success story.

Mary Noppen illustrated a series of Marshall Plan-related postcards on behalf of organizing fighting tuberculosis. One of the cards shows a Dutch woman in folk cos-

tume with a bonnet handing out colorful balloons to young children. Each of the balloons features a letter which spells out as “oorlog pleeg kind” (war child). The cards were addressed “[t]o one of the children of the U.S.A.” as a kind of thank you for American Marshall aid. On the back, the “thank you” was printed in Dutch with an English translation under which the child could sign his or her name.

Amerika, dat grote land
 We groeten U van over de zee
 Zonder Uw helpende hand
 Zouden wij no zo hongerig zijn.
 THANK YOU, AMERICA!

America, that great big land
 We wave to you across the sea
 Without that great big helping had
 We'd be hungry as can be.
 THANK YOU, AMERICA!⁶⁸

The *Hugo* films rely on a powerful emotional connector that was largely absent from the Marshall Plan propaganda: humor. Particularly in Germany, the issue of reeducation and countering Communist propaganda was too serious an undertaking to make fun of the European reconstruction program. One exception is the puppet shows dedicated to children. They were part of what the Marshall planners in Paris such as director of information Alfred Friendly and Friendly's successor Roscoe Drummond considered to be an effective way to reach out to citizens of the Marshall Plan countries, namely, travelling exhibitions. Peter Harnden became head of exhibits. He was responsible for designing the various exhibits that toured Europe. They took different shapes over the years depending on the theme and location. For example, in

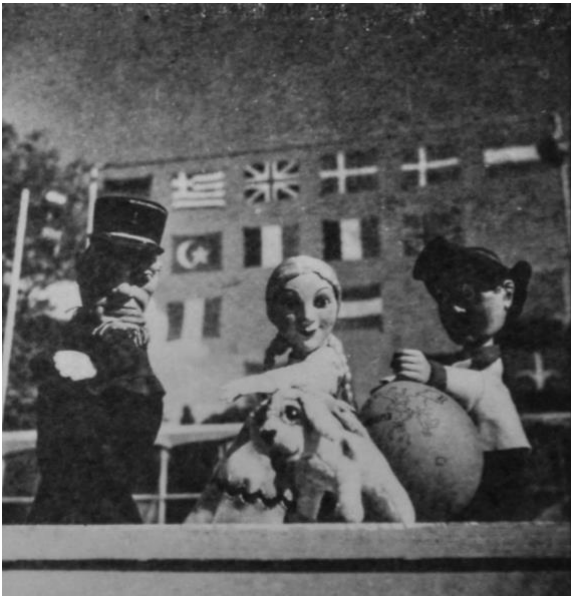


Fig. 54: Marshall Plan puppet show. Marshall Plan, Paris, United States Agency For International Development (USAID), United States Information Agency (USIA). National Archives and Records Administration. 1950. 286 MP, Gen 186, Gen 131, Gen 207, Gen 220.



Figs. 55–56: Young audiences watched but also interacted with the puppet shows. Photograph of the Marshall Plan Caravan in the Netherlands, “Europe Builds,” Summer 1950. Photo: H. Wild. National Archives, 286 MP, captions, Gen 131.

the Netherlands, exhibits were mounted on barges. The *Europazug* presented Marshall Plan information from photographs and films via posters, charts, and interactive communication media such as telephones to get ideas across. In addition, “caravan” tents and Deplirex trucks with foldout walls toured Europe. These travelling exhibitions represented a key venue in which multiple media converged.

As far as simplified messages via short media demonstrations are concerned, the *Hugo* cartoons come closest to puppet shows which formed a part on the 1950s train “Europe Builds.” According to the Marshall Plan files, they were among the most popular features of the project telling stories about the problems and first achievement of the Marshall Plan. The story would slightly change depending on the national audience the exhibit was catering to. The show was set in a cartoon-like “typical” European village to showcase the solutions the European Recovery Program could offer to enhance the living situation of the inhabitants. How do we have to imagine the practical setup? The puppet theater was placed outside the inner circle of the exhibition in an open space. In front of the exhibition tent, two display trailers provided the background for the puppet players. In addition, children were handed out free balloons, ball games and other attractions to win their hearts and minds for the ideas of the Marshall Plan.⁶⁹ The shows and follow-up events relied on interactivity. One of the photographs by H. Wild shows how children give advice to the puppets about show to engage with a particular problem (see Figs. 55–56).⁷⁰ At the end of the puppet show, the children were encouraged send of a balloon with cards on which they wrote their names followed by a “message of goodwill.”⁷¹ A still photograph from one of the puppet shows offers a rough idea of the character configuration and the setting. We see a



Figs. 57–59: Photo documentation of Colin Drake’s ECA puppet show performed in Paris about a village facing postwar economic shortfalls. Marshall Plan, Paris, United States Agency For International Development, United States Information Agency, USAID, USIA. National Archives and Records Administration. 286 MP captions, Par 00460, Par 00461, Par 00463, Par 00464, Par 00465, Par 0048.

smiling blond girl with braids, a boy with a hat holding a globe. They stand next to a rather serious-looking adult in a kind of uniform. Rather than the typical animal of the simple “Kasperl and Seppi” puppet shows in the German-speaking countries, the scene features a friendly little dog. The open-air background consists of a steel construction on which the flags of the seventeen Marshall Plan countries were on display.⁷²

The puppet shows in different countries were well documented by photographers with a particular focus on young children whose eyes were transfixed on the only thinly veiled Marshall Plan narratives. We know of at least one plotline that was created and performed in Paris by an American ECA puppeteer, Colin Drake from Miami, Florida. The plot takes place in the “Village of Europe” with generic figures: the village baker, a mother, her son, and their dog. The mother comes to get bread. Alas, the baker is out of bread. Every day, it is something new that is problematic. Either the price has gone up or there is no bread. The mother is going to do something about it.



Figs. 60–62: The photo documentation highlights the dramatic moments of the ECA puppet show by Colin Drake. Marshall Plan, Paris, United States Agency For International Development, United States Information Agency. National Archives and Records Administration. 286 MP captions, Par 00460, Par 00461, Par 00463, Par 00464, Par 00465, Par 0048.

A photograph of the puppet show shows the mother, the baker, and the boy (called Benjamin) in the tower of the Village of Europe. In the next image, we see the three characters and the mayor discover how to solve their problems: by working together.

Other photographs show the characters working together joined by the policeman. The final image shows the mischievous youngster who is indirectly part of finding a solution to the basic problem of cooperation in the village.⁷³ The photographs function like staged film stills that emphasize dramatic moments for the sake of circulating and advertising Marshall Plan efforts to reach out to young audiences.⁷⁴

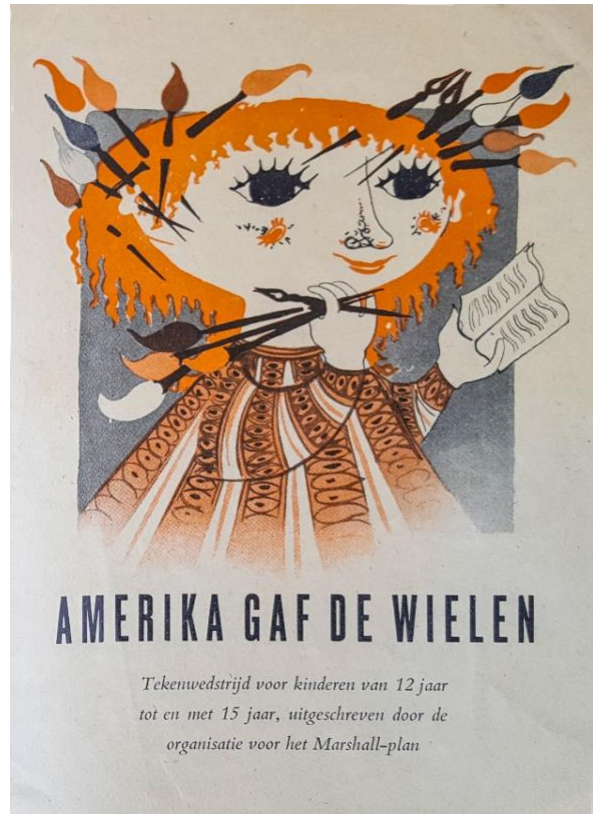


Figs. 63: The child critics debate their choices. Marshall Plan, Paris, United States Agency For International Development, United States Information Agency, USAID, USIA. National Archives and Records Administration. 286 MP captions, Par 02676, Par 02681, Par 02684, Par 0265, Par 02658.



Figs. 64: Puppet show in the Musée des Travaux Publics with the award-winning drawings visible in the background. Marshall Plan, Paris, USAID, USIA. National Archives and Records Administration. 286 MP captions, Par 02676, Par 02681, Par 02684, Par 0265, Par 02658.

The theme of cooperation in the so-called Village of Europe functions as a kind of blueprint for the *Hugo* films. Another project dedicated to children was a German drawing contest called “Auch ihr könnt zeichnen und malen und damit einen schönen Preis gewinnen: Mal- und Zeichenwettbewerb über den Marshallplan” (You, too, can draw and paint and thereby win a wonderful prize: Drawing and Painting Contest about the Marshall Plan) (see Fig. 65) or in the Netherlands called “Amerika gaf de wielen: Tekenwestrijd voor kinderen van 12 jaar tot en met 15 jaar, uitgeschreven door de organisatie voor het Marshall-plan” (America gave the wheels: Drawing contest for children ages 12 through 15, offered by the organization for the Marshall Plan) (see Fig. 66).⁷⁵ Like the poster contest, the winning drawings of each country were sent to Paris where an international jury selected the winners to be put on display in a show. All in



Figs. 65–66: Austrian and Dutch announcements of drawing and painting contests organized under the auspices of the Marshall Plan. Dutch image, private collection.



Figs. 67–68: Six-year-old winner of the junior class competition from France, Alain Cardet is held up by Mrs. Milton Katz, the United States Special Representative in Europe. Cardet is interviewed about his success. Marshall Plan, Paris, United States Agency For International Development, United States Information Agency, USAID, USIA. National Archives and Records Administration. 286 MP captions, Par 02676, Par 02681, Par 02684, Par 0265, Par 02658.

all, children sent in seven hundred thousand drawings, of which art experts selected forty. Afterward, fifteen children between the age of eight and sixteen decided on the winning drawing (see Fig. 63). The event on June 29, 1951, was accompanied by a puppet show (see Fig. 64). The winning drawing showed a large house being built by several people. The drawing prominently features the image of ladders that enable construction workers to build and climb up to the roof of the house. The motif of people climbing up a ladder became a sort of leitmotif. It is, of course, reminiscent of the Dutch graphic designer Jo Spier and his work on the booklet *Het Marshall-plan en U*. The image was also picked up in the opening sequence of the *Hugo* films.

Children were invited to attend the “exposition de dessins d’enfants” (exhibition of children’s drawings) at Paris’s Musée des Travaux Publics in 1950. The event was photographed and recorded so that the visualizations of the new young generation of Marshall Plan children could circulate among the Marshall Plan countries via various audio-visual media.⁷⁶ European audiences could also encounter the poster contest celebrations via film in *ERP in Action No. 5*.

The metaphor of Europe as a circus with many artists gathered underneath the circus tent can be related to the setup of the caravan travelling exhibitions. Here, a colorful tent with the European flags functioned as the center of the shows, with various trucks with foldout displays grouped around it on a square. One of the photographs that circulated in the press in 1950 showed the Marshall Plan exhibition at the Acropolis, the cradle of democracy (see Fig. 69). The caravan is set up on the plaza in front of the Olympic Stadium in Athens. In Naples, the crowds gathered for an exhibit in the Piazza Plebiscito are eager to enter a tent surrounded by the flags of the Marshall Plan countries. Thus, the ERP visual grammar becomes the language of a new

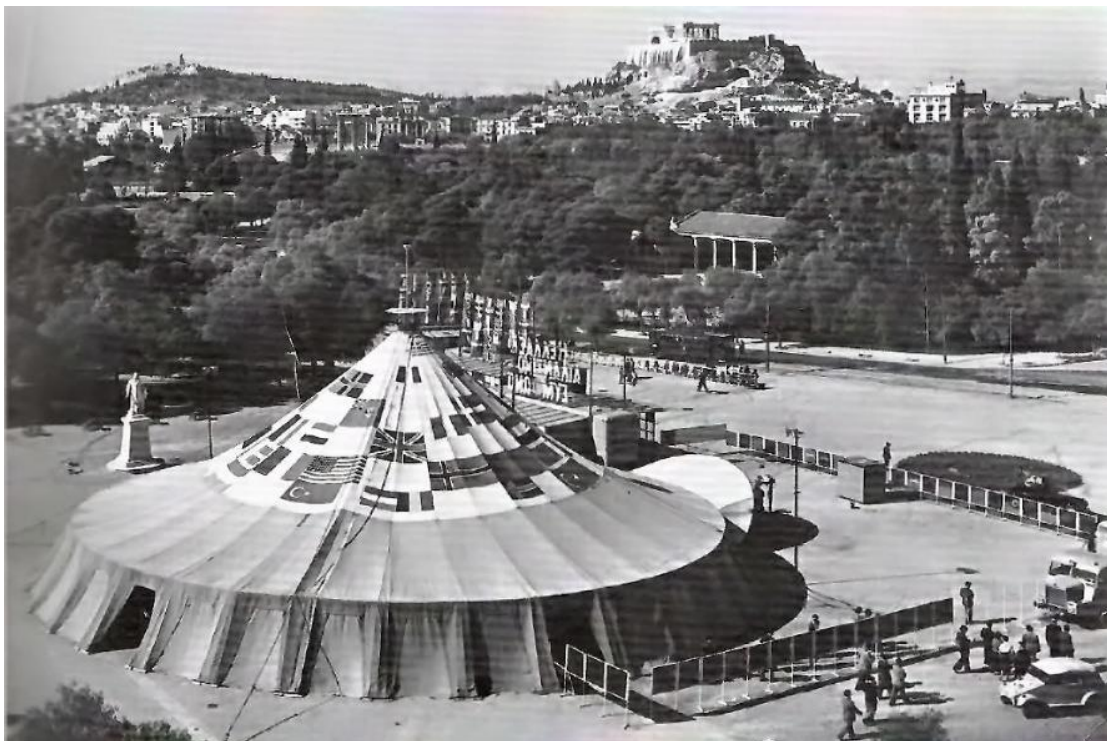


Fig. 69: The Marshall Plan caravan tent set up near the Acropolis in Athens, Greece.

generation who have the cultural literacy to combine national signifiers with democratic, transnational, i.e., European, narratives.⁷⁷

Conclusion

The *Hugo* animation films accomplish something extraordinary that distinguishes them from other media within the ERP propaganda campaign with which they share inter-medial connections: Through the power of animation they breathe new life into the photographic representations and posters of intra-European cooperation. Framed by humoristic audio-visual narratives, the animated films create movement, excitement, add sound effects, music and rhymes, thereby stimulating the imagination of young audiences via iconographic conventions, traditions, and repertoires—both old and new. Via four minute-cartoons, the visual grammar of poster displays, and drawing competitions, the careful design of Marshall Plan travelling exhibitions around a kind of European circus tent as well as what has repeatedly been referred to as one of the main attractions—the puppet shows—merge into an exciting new medium. Thus, the *Hugo* films are a paradigmatic example of the power of “Zeichentrück”—first, the playful approach to combining signs and symbols in animation films; and second, playing a trick on the audience by making them believe in something that is not (yet) there. These examples represent a powerful tool of soft power to literally reanimate the idea of a new Europe in the hearts and minds of a young future European generation.

My mapping may appear as a random play of associations establishing seemingly arbitrary relations and affinities between media connected loosely via the European Recovery Program. However, I hope that the inter-pictorial clusters reveal how the Toonder Studios team remediated narratives and resignified graphics and stereotypical images referring to intra-European collaboration, mutual interdependence, and the free flow of goods in a—at the time still fictitious—United States of Europe. With British animator Philip Stapp installed as a central part of the Toonder team to provide sketches and narrative structures for the *Hugo* films, it is likely that Al Hemsing’s suggestion that the Marshall Plan filmmakers had creative license to suggest and realize film projects independently is too optimistic: “Policy control? I recall no formal policy control mechanism, such as I had known at OWI or was to encounter later at USIA. When a film was in its final cutting-stage, we would show it to one of our Information Division chiefs and read the proposed narration out loud as the film was screened. If the film had been requested by one of our country missions, a representative of that mission was invited. We took reasonable suggestions but, essentially, the die had already been cast.”⁷⁸

It is crucial to consider that the *Hugo* films were produced in the Netherlands. The Dutch Press Service at the National Archives in The Hague reveals that the promotional activities had to consider the cultural differences between the US and the Netherlands. The specific Dutch mentality referred to the need to tone down the dramatic

dimension of propaganda and limit the efforts to put a label on every part of Marshall Plan support. It is striking that the *Hugo* cartoons are full of humor and irony, comprising a showcase of amplification via visual simplification. In addition, there is not a single ERP logo or explicit reference to the Marshall Plan visible. This is remarkable since the rule of thumb of the Marshall Plan–sponsored films was to tone down references to the US sponsor but strategically reference the ERP logo; for example, in documentary films when goods or machinery arrived to provide a solution to a problem.



Fig. 70: Hugo am Trapez: A Dutch circus artist passing balls to the German protagonist after he has learned his lesson of interdependence and cooperation.

While the Dutch animation films make fun of German self-aggrandizement, they also suggest a persuasive future for the stigmatized former enemy among Western Allies. The solution for West German audiences was to embrace a New Europe of opportunities and—for the moment—leave behind issues of guilt, reparation, and trauma. Thus, the interplay with archives of Marshall Plan visual cultures and themes of intra-European collaboration transformed into magical musical signs and symbols to reanimate transnational cooperation as a peaceful, prosperous European community. At the start of the 2020s, Germany was by far the largest European trading partner for the Netherlands and the two countries share commemorations of liberation. On May 8, 2022, for instance, for the first time in three quarters of a century, the Dutch “liberation fire” (“bevrijdingsvuur”) was brought from the Dutch city of Wageningen, where the capitulation of Nazi Germany was signed, to Kleve on the German side of the border, in North Rhine-Westfalia. In the words of the Dutch mayor of Nijmegen,

who spoke in fluent German, it is a small wonder worthwhile mentioning that former enemies can become such good friends.⁷⁹ A similar magical wonder is also suggested in the *Hugo* films. In the short sequence *Hugo am Trapez*, the Toonder animation team has embedded a hidden Marshall Plan message. After Hugo has learned the lesson of interdependence and cooperation in the European circus, the blonde girl representing the Netherlands rewards the German protagonist by passing on the circus balls to him. The balls that Hugo gratefully picks up are color-coded in the colors of the Dutch flag: “rood, wit, blauw” (see Fig. 70). Who would have thought that *Hugo* was a transnational Trojan Marshall Plan horse from the Netherlands sent to educate German children about their future role in a United States of Europe.

Notes

- ¹ The economic effects of the Marshall Plan help were therefore comparatively small and merely enhanced a trend that was well underway before the first transfer of goods, technology, and know-how in the spring of 1948. West German productivity after World War II showed increases similar to other European countries. Hence, the idea of a specifically German Wirtschaftswunder, or economic miracle, is simply misleading. This insight, in turn, has led to new assessments of the Marshall Plan denouncing it as a myth or even a lie. See, e.g., Alan S. Milward, “Was the Marshall Plan Necessary?” *Diplomatic History* 13 no. 2 (1989): 237–38; Werner Abelshausen, *Deutsche Wirtschaftsgeschichte: Von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2011); and critical assessments such as Barbara Dluhosch and Malte Krueger, “The Marshall Plan as a Development Push? A Cautionary Tale from Germany,” in *Vordenker einer neuen Wirtschaftspolitik. The International Library of Austrian Economics*, ed. Kurt R. Leube (Frankfurt: Frankfurter Allgemeine Buch 2000), 55–69.
- ² David Ellwood, *The Shock of America: Europe and the Challenge of the Century* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.
- ³ Victoria diGrazia would be more careful in the use of the term “consumer society.” See her work on “Visualizing the Marshall Plan: The Pleasures of American Consumer Democracy or the Pains of ‘the Greatest Structural Adjustment Program in history?’” in *Images of the Marshall Plan in Europe: Films, Photographs, Exhibits, Posters*, ed. Hannes Richter, Günter Bischof, and Dieter Stiefel (Innsbruck, AT: StudienVerlag, 2009), 26. I side, however, with David Ellwood who argued that mass consumption was suggested by Marshall Plan films through the theme of growing prosperity, the “revolution of rising expectations” of the new European citizen. See David Ellwood, “Film and the Marshall Plan: The Picture Today,” in *Images of the Marshall Plan in Europe: Films, Photographs, Exhibits, Posters*, ed. Han-

nes Richter, Günter Bischof, and Dieter Stiefel (Innsbruck, AT: StudienVerlag, 2009), 67.

- ⁴ With the efforts of American Studies Association presidents Paul Lauter, Amy Kaplan, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, and Emory Elliott, the internationalization of American Studies has provided the fertile ground for what Paul Giles describes as the analysis of power relationships which help to “empty out the power relations that lurk ominously within these kinds of imaginary identification.” Paul Giles, “Dislocations: Transatlantic Perspective of Postnational American Studies. Transnationalism in Practice,” *49th Parallel: An Interdisciplinary Journal of North American Studies* 8 (2001): 1. Transnational American Studies and a comparative mode such as the one I am proposing with the mapping of Marshall Plan visual culture ties in with what Winfried Fluck identified as a productive approach to “understand how the American system, American culture and the idea of ‘America’ work.” See Winfried Fluck, “Theories of American Culture (and the Transnational Turn in American Studies),” *REAL—Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature* 23 (Tübingen: Narr Verlag, 2007), 74. The recent *The Routledge Companion to Transnational American Studies* (2019) edited by Nina Morgan, Alfred Hornung, and Takayuki Tatsumi shows the potential of how the analysis of transnational image productions, circulations, remediations, and cultural appropriations shape political imaginaries; Nina Morgan, Alfred Hornung, and Takayuki Tatsumi, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Transnational American Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2019). See particularly the contributions by Udo J. Hebel, Karsten Fitz, Kevin Gaines, Rob Kroes, Sebastian M. Hermann, and Liam Kennedy.
- ⁵ See Michael R. Strain, “A Marshall Plan for COVID-19,” *National Review*, August 10, 2021, <https://www.aei.org/op-eds/a-marshall-plan-for-covid-19/>; David Vetter, “G7 Summit: U.K. Calls For Climate ‘Marshall Plan,’ But Will The Meeting Deliver?” *Forbes*, January 9, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidrvetter/2021/06/09/g7-summit-uk-calls-for-climate-marshall-plan-but-will-the-meeting-deliver/?sh=3fefa8a671bf>
- ⁶ Rather than turning to the American term “animation” or the Dutch “tekenfilm,” I am using the German expression for animation films, “Zeichentrick.” It reveals two features crucial for the medium of animation films: first, the term “Trick” in “Zeichentrick” refers to the optical illusion of movement in drawn images. Second, “Trick” means difficult to pull off, complicated. “Zeichentrick” refers to a tricky (sic) combination of signs and symbols.
- ⁷ This article ties in with a larger digital humanities project on documentary images. I suggest exploring the potential of DH by moving away from text-based data mining and turning to analysis based on a combination of texts and images, using

techniques of clustering and semi-automatic computer-assisted reading. To offer a systematic shift from analog to digital archives, I propose a digital photographic grammar in three steps: 1) defining a photographic grammar for the analog world; 2) transferring this photographic grammar to the digital world of archival analyses; and 3) outlining opportunities and limitations of data mining of textual photographs in semi-automatic computer-assisted readings. My examples will come from archives related to documentary political photography, with a particular focus on Marshall Plan photos. For a project description and theoretical background, see Frank Mehring, “Digital Photographic Grammar: Mapping Documentary Photographs,” *Digital Methods in American Studies: Amerikastudien/American Studies* 63, no. 2 (2018): 231–52, <https://amst.winter-verlag.de/article/AMST/2018/2/9>

⁸ W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 2–3.

⁹ I have laid out the groundwork for a visual grammar in Mehring, “Digital Photographic Grammar: Mapping Documentary Photographs.” The following passage and references are based on this article.

¹⁰ To come to terms with the large Euro-American film archive of the Marshall Plan and to understand its visual agenda for communicating ideas, the visual grammar employed will focus on how themes, ideas, and topics cross borders and are appropriated, manipulated, and interpreted in different national and transnational narratives. Largescale film projects such as those of the Marshall Plan utilized visual media to create cognitive maps (published in photographic stories, reports, or displayed in exhibitions) in which Americans and Europeans, respectively, were challenged to identify themselves in regional, national, and (at least in the latter case) transnational contexts. We can understand mapping as: a) material form, b) knowledge(s), and c) practice and performance. The analog materiality of mapping refers to the design or appearance of maps, their mode of production, as well as modes of access and diversity. Mapping as a form of knowledge suggests that maps are not just reflective of knowledge, but also, in the sense of Foucault, actively created knowledge. If we consider maps as “thought out space,” the genealogy of knowledges created in and around mapping exists as networks of power relations. See Michel Foucault, “Space, Knowledge, and Power,” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 244. The presentation and selection of the media framework depends on what kind of knowledge (in the sense of persuasive information) is communicated.

¹¹ Udo Hebel, “‘American’ Pictures and (Trans-)National Iconographies: Mapping Interpictorial Clusters in American Studies,” in *American Studies Today: New*

Research Agendas, ed. Winfried Fluck, Erik Redling, Sabine Sielke, and Hubert Zapf (Heidelberg, DE: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014).

- ¹² Hebel, “‘American’ Pictures,” 104.
- ¹³ Along with Hebel, see Winfried Nöth, “Bildsemiotic,” in *Bildtheorien: Anthropologische und kulturelle Grundlagen des Visualistic Turn*, ed. Klaus Sachs-Hombach (Frankfurt am Main, DE: Suhrkamp, 2009), 235–54.
- ¹⁴ See Gabriele Rippl, “Introduction,” *Handbook of Intermediality: Literature—Image—Sound—Music*, ed. Gabriele Rippl (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 1.
- ¹⁵ See Rippl, “Introduction,” *Handbook of Intermediality*, 1.
- ¹⁶ Hebel, “‘American’ Pictures,” 414.
- ¹⁷ Yuri Lotman, “On the Language of Animated Cartoons,” trans. Ruth Sobel, in *Film Theory and General Semiotics: Russian Poetics in Translation*, ed. Lawrence O’Toole and Ann Shukman (Oxford, UK: Holdan Books, 1981), 36–39.
- ¹⁸ Quoted in Nichola Dobson, et al., eds., *The Animation Studies Reader* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2019), 8.
- ¹⁹ The French film *Histoire d’une Sauvetage* (1949) is a rather heavyhanded narrative about the need to overcome trade barriers to create a new free European economic market. Visually, the film consists for the most part of drawings that were filmed rather than animated. The narrative is told by an off-screen commentator interrupted by a few staged conversations of generic characters such as the farmer, construction worker, baker, and tailor. Director Jacques Asseo found a smart way to showcase the revitalization of European markets and production. The first two thirds of the film show the frustrating economic paralysis in European countries via drawings over which the camera moves with tracking shots to tell the tale. Only the last third of the film is animated with moving figures. These are sequences that show how the arrival of Marshall Plan goods bring new life to the communities and stimulate growth. Thus, the medium of animation translates visually and technically the idea of “re-animating” Europe. *Histoire d’une Sauvetage*, color, 7 min. (prod. ECA by Les Gémeaux, dir. Jacques Asseo, France, 1949).
- ²⁰ Two years after *Histoire d’une Sauvetage*, Asseo produced another five-minute animation cartoon in which the word and message of productivity is central. Hence the title of the film: *Productivité*, color, 4 min., prod. ECA by La Comete, dir. Jacques Asseo, prod. André Sarrut, France, 1951. Taking the French bicycle production as a case in point, the film responds to criticism of the communist-controlled French confederation of trade unions, the Confédération Générale du Travail of a threatening Americanization of French workers, economic exploitation, and low-

quality products. Instead, *Productivité* suggests in an overtly optimistic, partly naïve outlook that the move towards assembly line mass production can raise the standard of living, reduce costs, increase wages, and will ultimately enable French citizens to have better life with more spare time for their families.

- ²¹ The theme of the cartoon *Transatlantique* zooms in on the six hundred-year history of Europe and North America and how they overcame the transatlantic divide. The narrative starts with Columbus's arrival in what is now the Americas, followed by the progress of new means of transport from sailing boats, steamboats, to airplanes, and the intensified exchange of goods, until in the end Europe and North America have become so close to each other that people can reach out hands and live in harmony. This narrative is told in reductionist images, exclusively through sound and animation to appeal to a wide audience beyond children. See *Transatlantique*, dir. and prod. André Sarrut, Jacques Asseo, for MSA by Madeleine Films (Philip Stapp), color, 10 min., France, 1953. As Albert Hemsing would have it: "Americans and Europeans all belong to a single community of nations"; Albert Hemsing, "The Marshall Plan's European Film Unit, 1948–1955: A Memoir and Filmography," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 14 (1994): 295.
- ²² The prizewinning British animation film *The Shoemaker and the Hatter* (1950) is perhaps the most widely distributed Marshall Plan film throughout Western Europe, with translations into eleven different languages. Produced by the same team that later turned George Orwell's *Animal Farm* into a classic of animated storytelling, the cartoon introduces two neighbors, a shoemaker and a hatter, who follow different strategies about how to revive their businesses after the end of World War II. The hatter believes in producing few hats at a high profit per hat. He sides with unions and the guarantee of tariffs. The shoemaker, on the other side, would like to produce as many shoes as possible for those in need. He recognizes the chance to lower production cost through mass production at home and selling large quantities in a "new Europe" without tariffs and borders. After visits of different Marshall Plan countries to learn about the needs and trade opportunities, the shoemaker eventually proves that free trade can bring prosperity to all. While there are no children involved and the topic of free trade vs. protectionism was hardly an easy story for children to follow, the *The Shoemaker and the Hatter* proved to be particularly successful and was translated into eleven different languages. *The Shoemaker and the Hatter*, color, 16 min. (prod. ECAS 1950 by John Halas and Joy Bachelor Ltd., dir. John Halas, UK, 1950).
- ²³ The British animation production *Without Fear* (1951) is perhaps the visually most experimental, emotional, and controversial of all the Marshall Plan animation films. The protagonists often do not possess individual facial markers or are simply

shown as abstract silhouettes. The film thrives on the fear of Communism and dictatorship with animated sequences of invasion, destruction, and death giving way to a more peaceful future of democratic togetherness. The sequences are accompanied by a suggestive soundtrack and an off-screen voiceover that shifts from a soothing, comforting voice to a threatening oracle of doom unless Europeans embrace ideas of the Marshall Plan. *Without Fear*, color, 16 min. (prod. ECA by W. M. Larkins Studio, London and Philip Stapp, dir. Peter Sachs, UK, 1951).

- ²⁴ The other eight types include rotoscoping, cut-out (silhouette) animation, sand animation, direct animation, puppet or model animation, computer animation, pixelation and time-lapse cinematography. See Ülo Pikkov, *Animasophy: Theoretical Writings on the Animated Film*, trans. Eva Näripea (Tallinn: Estonian Academy of Arts, 2010), 19–22.
- ²⁵ Among the animation films, *The Shoemaker and the Hatter* has received particular attention by Hans-Jürgen Schröder, “Visualizing the Marshall Plan in Western Germany: Films, Exhibits, Posters,” in *Images of the Marshall Plan in Europe: Films, Photographs, Exhibits, Posters*, ed. Hannes Richter, Günter Bischof, and Dieter Stiefel (Innsbruck, AT: StudienVerlag, 2009), 69–86; Maria Fritsche, *The American Marshall Plan Film Campaign and the Europeans: A Captivated Audience?* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), and myself, Frank Mehring, “The Promises of ‘Young Europe’: Cultural Diplomacy, Reeducation, and Youth Culture in the Films of the Marshall Plan,” in *Die amerikanische Reeducation-Politik nach 1945: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf “America’s Germany,”* ed. Katharina Gerund and Heike Paul (Bielefeld, DE: Transcript, 2015), 61–92, <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.9701>
- ²⁶ Credit goes to Linda Christenson, the main force behind the comprehensive Marshall Plan filmography, her husband Eric who collaborated with film scholar Maria Fritsche, Lex Van Delden, Jr., and the Toonder Studios expert Jan-Willem de Vries who traced and helped to restore the films in 2009.
- ²⁷ David Ellwood argued that “films functioned integrally and achieved their greatest effects in the presence of all the many other forms of Marshall Plan communication.” See David Ellwood, “Film and the Marshall Plan: The Picture Today,” in *Images of the Marshall Plan in Europe: Films, Photographs, Exhibits, Posters*, ed. Hannes Richter, Günter Bischof and Dieter Stiefel (Innsbruck, Wien, Bozen: StudienVerlag, 2009), 61. See also Ellwood’s comprehensive and pioneering work on the medium of Marshall Plan films such as “‘You too can be like us.’ Selling the Marshall Plan,” and “The Propaganda of the Marshall Plan in Italy in a Cold War Context.”

- ²⁸ This project on mapping animation imagery ties in with a larger DH project called “Photographic Grammar”—a systematic approach to address the opportunities, challenges, and shortcomings of a semiautomatic digital search that investigates the dissemination of photographs. As photographic grammar and the semi-automatic clustering of the Marshall Plan’s visual rhetoric will show, one lesson that needs to be re-learned when we talk about a “United States of Europe” or a new Marshall Plan for Africa or Europe is that it was not only the economic dimension that turned the Marshall Plan into a commonplace myth of success but also the visual narrative that provided its cultural script. See <https://www.ru.nl/rich/our-research/research-groups/cultures-of-war-and-liberation/current-projects/projects/digital-photographic-grammar-mapping-documentary/>
- ²⁹ The exact passage from Steil reads: “The Marshall Plan is remembered as one of the great achievements of American foreign policy not merely because it was visionary but because it worked. It worked because the United States aligned its actions with its interests and capacities in Europe, accepting the reality of a Russian sphere of influence into which it could not penetrate without sacrificing credibility and public support. Great acts of statesmanship are grounded in realism no less than idealism.” Benn Steil, *The Marshall Plan: Dawn of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 404.
- ³⁰ David Ellwood, *The Marshall Plan Forty Years After: Lessons for the International System Today* (Bologna: The Bologna Center of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, 1988), 162. For a broader investigation of the how American culture added value to power in Europe, see Ellwood’s magisterial *The Shock of America*.
- ³¹ At least two publications by Hans-Jürgen Schröder are worthwhile mentioning here: Hans-Jürgen Schröder, “Marshall Plan Propaganda in Austria and Western Germany,” in *The Marshall Plan in Austria*, ed. Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, Dieter Stiefel (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 212–46; nine years later he updated his earlier work with Hans-Jürgen Schröder, “Visualizing the Marshall Plan in Western Germany: Films, Exhibits, Posters.”
- ³² Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).
- ³³ Regarding the impact of popular culture, particularly film on Europe see Winfried Fluck, “The Americanization of Modern Culture: A Cultural History of the Popular Media,” in *Romance with America? Essays on Culture, Literature, and American Studies*, ed. Laura Bieger and Johannes Voelz (Heidelberg, DE: Winter, 2009), 239–

67. Regarding “selective appropriation” cultural transmission and Americanization see also Rob Kroes, Robert W. Rydell, and Doeko F. J. Bosscher, eds., “Introduction,” in *Cultural Transmission and Receptions: American Mass Culture in Europe* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1993).

³⁴ Jack Masey and Conway Lloyd Morgan, *Cold War Confrontations: US Exhibitions and Their Role in the Cultural Cold War* (Baden, DE: Lars Müller Publishers, 2008).

³⁵ Günter Bischof and Hans Petschar, *Der Marshall Plan: Die Rettung Europas und der Wiederaufbau Österreichs* (Vienna: Brandstätter, 2017).

³⁶ Gabriele Clemens, ed., *Werben für Europa: Die mediale Konstruktion europäischer Identität durch Europafilme* (Paderborn, DE: Brill/Schöningh, 2016). While several articles reference the Marshall Plan, one article by Anne Bruch et al. engages with the films explicitly: Anne Bruch, Gabriele Clemens, Jeanpaul Goergen, and Thomas Tode, “‘Cooperation means prosperity’—Das Werben für die Integration Europas in den Marshallplan-Filmen,” in *Werben für Europa: Die mediale Konstruktion europäischer Identität durch Europafilme*, ed. Gabriele Clemens (Paderborn, DE: Brill/Schöningh, 2016), 191–226. “‘Cooperation means prosperity’—Das Werben für die Integration Europas in den Marshallplan-Filmen.”

³⁷ Fritsche, *American Marshall Plan Film Campaign*.

³⁸ John Agnew and J. Nicholas Entrikin, eds., *The Marshall Plan Today: Model and Metaphor* (Los Angeles, CA: Routledge, 2004).

³⁹ Barry Machado, *In Search of a Usable Past: The Marshall Plan and Postwar Reconstruction Today* (Lexington, VA: George C. Marshall Foundation, 2007).

⁴⁰ See my reports on retrospectives of three Marshall Plan films: Frank Mehring, “Ins Lot bringen: Die Filme des Marshall-Plans,” *Filmdienst* 6 (2004): 44–45; Frank Mehring, “Filme als Kulturbotschafter: Selling Democracy II: Zwischen Umerziehung, Umorientierung und Wiederaufbau,” *Filmdienst* 6 (2005): 62–63; and Frank Mehring, “Gefahr über Deutschland? Selling Democracy—Friendly Persuasion: Der Abschluss der Marshall-Plan-Retrospektive,” *Filmdienst* 7 (2006): 12–14. The screening of the films in New York City in 2005 produced a particularly important counterpoint to the Euro-sceptic politics of George W. Bush. See Frank Mehring, “Selling Democracy—Winning the Peace: Die Marshall-Plan-Filme in New York,” *Filmdienst/Rheinischer Merkur Spezial zur 56. Berlinale* (2005): 16–17; “Die Filme des Marshall-Plans,” *Filmdienst* 7 (2006): 42. Many films form part of the open-access database of the Deutsche Historische Museum in Berlin, with an introductory essay by the author (Frank Mehring, “Deutschland und das neue Europa” in den Filmen des Marshall-Plans,” <https://www.dhm.de/zeughauskino/filmreihen/online->

[filmreihen/filme-des-marshall-plans/deutschland-und-das-neue-europa/](#)). See also Frank Mehring, “Propaganda für die Demokratie? Deutschland und das ‘Neue Europa’ in den Filmen des Marshall Plans,” *Glossen* 25 (2007), <http://www2.dickinson.edu/glossen/heft25/mehring.html>

- ⁴¹ It uses schoolchildren as protagonists. Following the motto “young people in charge,” the film shows an unusual experiment in democratic education. To learn about the basic challenges of political life and local government, the city of Eberbach am Neckar hands over its political power to children. The documentary film with its young German lay characters reflects small town life as a basis to educate a new generation of a homogenous group of white children in political life. The town mayor of the tiny village of Eberbach, who steps down to give his position to a young boy, is played by Wolfgang Preiss, who had been cast in Nazi propaganda films in the 1940s such as *Die Grosse Liebe* (1942) and *Besatzung Dora* (1943). His presence provides a comment on the need for new leaders. It also shows how democratic ideas resembled a mask which is put on because it allowed actors to continue their careers. This element of continuity in the history of German film before and after 1945 is problematic. It shows the doubleness of films as providing important lessons in political education and at the same time masking the links to ideologically opposite directions in the not-too-distant past. This is but one example which makes Schulberg’s hesitation about giving German filmmakers too much leeway even more understandable.
- ⁴² This film is one of the few in which we know American censorship was an issue. The daring proposition and images of multiracial encounters caused transatlantic frictions. Al Hemsing, then head of the Marshall Plan film program in Paris, felt obliged to censor the final sequence of Gerti and the black boy playing with each other on the bus. According to Tressler in an interview conducted by Linda and Eric Christenson and Frank Mehring in Berlin on February 12, 2004, the American representative considered the *mise en scène* too provocative. See Mehring, “The Promises of ‘Young Europe.’”
- ⁴³ I will be drawing on Hebel, “‘American’ Pictures and (Trans-)National Iconographies: Mapping Interpictorial Clusters in American Studies” and Mitchell, *Picture Theory*.
- ⁴⁴ Fritsche, *American Marshall Plan Film Campaign*, 175.
- ⁴⁵ Overall, Toonder would produce several hundred advertisement clips and more than a hundred short films. More and more films are digitized and made available to the public. See Jan-Willem de Vries, *Toonder Studio’s Filmcollectie*, published as part of *Toondertijd* 114 (Amsterdam: Eye Film Museum, 2019), 4.

- ⁴⁶ de Vries, *Toonder Studio's Filmcollectie*, 118.
- ⁴⁷ All English translations of scenes by the author.
- ⁴⁸ See newspaper article “Marten Toonder: Experiment met Hugo,” facsimile reproduction in Jan-Willem de Vries, *De Toonder Animatiefilms* ('s-Hertogenbosch, NL: Silvester, 2012), 328.
- ⁴⁹ Due to the limitations of space, the issue of gendering different nations will be discussed in a separate article.
- ⁵⁰ See *Hugo am Trapez, Hugo baut auf, Hugo als Kraftmax*. English translation by the author.
- ⁵¹ Due to the limitations of space, the music and sound effects in the *Hugo* films will be analyzed in more detail in a separate article.
- ⁵² In addition, a chart he drew about the production process of his animation studio clearly features resemblances with the depiction of the European circus in the *Hugo* films. See sketch of the Toonder animation department reproduced in de Vries, 12.
- ⁵³ For an overview of Rifkin's artistic approach see Marja Roholl, “An Invasion of a Different Kind: The U.S. Office of War Information and ‘The Projection of America’ Propaganda in the Netherlands,” in *Politics and Cultures of Liberation: Media, Memory, and Projections of Democracy*, ed. Hans Bak, Frank Mehring, and Mathilde Roza (Amsterdam: Brill, 2018), 17–38, and 21–23.
- ⁵⁴ *The Autobiography of a Jeep* (1943), directed by Joseph Kumgold, Office of War Information, 2:48–2:50.
- ⁵⁵ On the penultimate page, the booklet lists the publisher: “Uitgegeven door de persdienst van het ministerie van economische zaken in samenwerking met de regerings voorlichtingsdienst.”
- ⁵⁶ See <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/marshall/marsh-exhibition.html>
- ⁵⁷ See Jo Spier, *Het Marshall-plan en U* ('s-Gravenhage, NL: Persdienst van het Ministerie van Economische Zaken/Regeeringsvoorlichtingsdienst, 1949).
- ⁵⁸ Mathilde Roza, “Educating the Nation: Jo Spier, Dutch National Identity, and the Marshall Plan in the Netherlands,” in *Politics and Cultures of Liberation: Media, Memory, and Projections of Democracy*, ed. Hans Bak, Frank Mehring, and Mathilde Roza (Amsterdam: Brill, 2018), 39–64.

- ⁵⁹ Roza, “Educating the Nation: Jo Spier, Dutch National Identity, and the Marshall Plan in the Netherlands,” 47. For the function of Volendam fishing communities and traditions as cultural identifiers for Dutchness in visual culture, see also Rob van Ginkel, “De Verbeelding von ‘Hollands’ Visservolk: Visuelle Cultuur en het Cliché vn Marken en Volendam,” *Sociology* 5, no. 2 (2009): 2–26.
- ⁶⁰ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “Soft Power,” *Foreign Policy* 80, Twentieth Anniversary (Autumn, 1990): 167. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1148580>. About twenty years later, Nye conceded that the situation in the new millennium has changed. If a government wants to project soft power in a world where power is more and more diffusing from states to nonstate actors, the “will have to accept that power is less hierarchical in an information age and that social networks have become more important.” Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 101.
- ⁶¹ See the illustration “All Our Colours to the Mast,” Reyn Dirksen, Rotterdam: Kühn and Zoon, est. 1947, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/99406914/>
- ⁶² See MP National Archive, GEN 636.
- ⁶³ See MP National Archives, NETH 1007-1011.
- ⁶⁴ See Deutsche Geschichte in Dokumenten und Bildern (DGDB), https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=2532&language=german
- ⁶⁵ See Frank Mehring, “‘A Memory Goes to Work’: The Visual Promise of the Marshall Plan,” in *The Arts of Democratization: Styling Political Sensibilities in Postwar West Germany*, ed. Jennifer M. Kapczynski and Caroline A. Kita (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2022), 230–50.
- ⁶⁶ Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History* (New York: Hill, 1989), 9.
- ⁶⁷ In “‘A Memory Goes to Work,’” I exemplified the cultural work Marshall Plan photographs were able to accomplish by looking at the Marshall Plan photographers Paul Henning and Todd Webb.
- ⁶⁸ I am grateful to Hugo Keesing for alerting me to this Dutch postcard expressing gratitude for Marshall help by children.
- ⁶⁹ See National Archives, 286 MP, captions, Gen 197.
- ⁷⁰ See National Archives, 286 MP, captions, Gen 131.
- ⁷¹ See National Archives, 286 MP, captions, Gen 207.

- ⁷² See National Archives, 286 MP, captions, Gen 220.
- ⁷³ At other occasions at the Salon d'Enfants in November 1950, Colin Drake offered a musical revue featuring a clown, an opera singer, and an elephant in an entertaining fashion. Here, too, photographs capture children who are in awe of the puppet show.
- ⁷⁴ See National Archives, 286 MP, Par 00460, Par 00461, Par 00463, Par 00464, Par 00465, Par 00468.
- ⁷⁵ Private archive of the author. The term "wielen" (wheels) is probably used as a metaphor for the boost or momentum provided by the ERP.
- ⁷⁶ See National Archives, 286 MP captions, Par 02676, Par 02681, Par 02684, Par 02685.
- ⁷⁷ Image reproduced in Masey and Morgan, *Cold War*, 2, and 29.
- ⁷⁸ Albert Hemsing, "The Marshall Plan's European Film Unit, 1948–1955: A Memoir and Filmography," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 14, no. 3 (1994): 273.
- ⁷⁹ "Die Flamme der Freiheit lodert in Kleve," *Rheinische Post*, May 6, 2022, https://rp-online.de/nrw/staedte/kleve/die-flamme-der-freiheit-lodert-in-kleve_aid-69183899

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