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The American Marshall Plan Film Campaign and the Europeans: A Captivated Audience?, by Maria Fritsche, Bloomsbury, 2018, 369 pp.

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The Marshall Plan film campaign navigated many cultural, political, and socio-economic contexts to present one of the largest economic aid programmes in history, and weaponised films during the Cold War. In her groundbreaking book, *The American Marshall Plan Film Campaign and the Europeans: A Captivated Audience?*, Maria Fritsche details how a network of government, commercial, and noncommercial institutions built a large media infrastructure to produce and distribute films that facilitated cultural transmission, propaganda and policy. The goal of this film network was to encourage Europeans to trade with the US and to reform policies according to American standards. The Norwegian film historian's analysis extends far beyond most previous work that focused on individual national studies and examines multiple national contexts to explore the cultural and social dimensions of the Marshall Plan and the Cold War. This interdisciplinary monograph contributes to the fields of film history, cinema and reception studies, transnational studies, cultural and social history, as well as Americanisation and cultural diplomacy studies and, therefore, will likely become a key resource for scholars of the Cold War.

The theoretical framework of Fritsche's analysis derives from the field of Americanisation studies. Rather than engaging in a discourse on cultural imperialism, which typically focuses on unidirectional transmission, Fritsche analyses the transfer and adaptation processes of American products, culture and practices in multiple national contexts. As she explains, the Marshall Plan films encourage "cross-cultural fertilization", a process of interaction that appropriates, adapts or rejects the transfer among parties with imbalanced power dynamics (9). This analysis combines the national, transnational, and transatlantic contexts to offer a complex picture of the early Cold War, and reveals how American agents negotiated with the European filmmakers and audiences to spread Marshall Plan policies.

A key concept at the core of Fritsche's analysis is "cultural transfer", a multidirectional process of appropriation, adaptation or rejection of products, cultures, practices and norms (9). In telling the story of Marshall Plan films, Fritsche analyses the various interests of US policymakers, US information officers, European filmmakers and European audiences. Fritsche notes that American agents' goal was to promote social change and to advocate the idea of a united Europe in order to generate growth and peace. To communicate their ideas, US agents hired European filmmakers with intimate knowledge of local audiences, who could more effectively align the messages to European culture. These filmmakers also gave the illusion of a decreased American role. To make sure that the interests among these different groups and nations intersected,

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European filmmakers functioned as the cultural transmitters to transform US policy and messages about the dangers of communism, benefits of modernisation, capitalism and productivity into films. However, it was not easy to customise films according to the tastes and interests of audiences in different national contexts. To better address this issue, US agents researched new distribution and exhibition practices. They compiled surveys to identify which films successfully communicated US policies and were popular among different audiences. While Americans aimed to gain political and economic goals via their exhibitions of Marshall Plan films, European filmmakers (e.g. John Ferno and Victor Vicas) established international careers and European audiences were targeted to think about economic modernisation. The concept of cultural transfer was essential for the scholar to shed light into the Marshall Plan film propaganda campaign by explaining the clashes and convergences of interests from multiple parties.

Fritsche's methodology is film historiography, namely the study of visual, audial and textual materials. She conducts archival research using primary materials from the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) at College Park, Maryland, various European film archives and libraries as well as online platforms. The scholar conveys a close analysis of 167 Marshall Plan films. Her close readings of paratextual materials include film catalogues, film reviews, press reports, dubbing scripts, policy papers, meeting notes, letters, country studies, audience surveys, distribution statistics and records from the various institutions. The study of archival materials offers a new dimension to the history of the Marshall Plan by showing the power of film in convincing the Europeans to follow the US economic model during the Cold War era. Additionally, the focus on film-related media shows how audiovisual materials are important in writing new histories.

One challenge Fritsche indicates during her archival research is that the European governments did not extensively document the Marshall Plan propaganda activities. Instead, the scholar must extrapolate the European influences from a core group of materials that originated in the US. These materials are clearly biased and contain self-promoting perspectives on the Marshall Plan campaign. Indeed, she is cautious in her reading of these materials and observes them through a critical lens. She also acknowledges that the lack of necessary sources needed to further explore the Marshall Plan films and their reception in all seventeen countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and West Germany) restricts the analysis to primarily focus on the cases of France, Greece, Italy and West Greece.

This book maps a network of institutions that used films to spread American propaganda, information and policies. Included in this network are the US Office of War Information, the US Psychological Warfare Branch, Office of Military Government of the US, US Central Intelligence Agency and US Information Services. Fritsche's detailed map traces the changing programmes and institutions involved in this network. For example, the Marshall Plan was originally known as the European Recovery Programme (ERP), but gained its well-known denomination following Secretary of State George C. Marshall's speech at Harvard University in 1947. This plan was an essential component of the Truman Doctrine (TD), presented by President Harry S. Truman earlier that year to the US Congress. Ultimately, the Marshall Plan, ERP and TD all had the same goal of implementing the US government's economic plan to rebuild the economies of several countries. This network map also allowed Fritsche to trace the process by which Marshall Plan media

operations changed hands from the Economic Cooperation Administration (1948–1951) to the Mutual Security Agency (1952–1953) and then to the US Information Agency (1953–1999). Identifying the connections and changes in the network offers a roadmap to trace the developments in a complex infrastructure and provides a valuable resource for film historians.

As Fritsche argues, films were powerful weapons because they offered a multisensory experience to effectively reach mass audiences. Films were effective tools in carrying messages to communities that were illiterate or with little formal education. Moreover, films were more impactful than other media (radio, newspapers, art exhibitions and posters) at communicating the MP ideals. In the case of the Marshall Plan, films were exhibited in many different sites including movie theatres, schools, union halls and villages to reach mass audiences. The use of mobile film units also expanded the number of audiences as exhibitors entered rural areas with no cinemas and equipment.

Fritsche uses both the terms propaganda and information to describe how US agents used Marshall Plan films to spread information to persuade publics about the sponsor's propagandistic goals. Indeed, Marshall Plan strategists produced two hundred films between 1948 and 1954. The most common MP film subjects were modernisation, rebuilding infrastructure and increasing industrial and agricultural production. In detail, films were the containers of "unambiguous ideological messages about the superiority of the liberal capitalist model" (12). For instance, some films made clear distinctions between capitalism (superior and good) and communism (inferior and bad) using binary oppositions. The ultimate message in these films was to communicate the American belief in productivity to European audiences to solve economic and social issues, promote international trade and support freedom and security.

Fritsche delineates a framework to analyse several facets of the Marshall Plan film network, including the transformation of policy into film, the relationships between US government agents and European filmmakers, the audience reception, film production methods, and film distribution practices. Fritsche explores these topics in eight main chapters. Chapter 1 examines the visual and narrative methods used in films to promote the Marshall Plan in different countries. In Chapter 2, Fritsche explores how these countries worked with the local Marshall Plan film production to generate an infrastructure that shaped the local social and political situations as well as the US government's interests. Chapter 3 focuses on the Cold War to provide context for the function of Marshall Plan films, and Fritsche studies how the US strategy shapes particularly after the Korean War. Chapters 4 highlights the notion of "productivity" as a key aspect of many Marshall Plan propaganda films. In Chapter 5, Fritsche describes how the integration of Europe was another key strategy of the Marshall Plan programme to promote the US as a global power. Chapter 6 concentrates on the European filmmakers and information officers who work as cultural transmitters attempting to reconcile their goals as creative industry workers and government-sponsored agents. In Chapter 7, Fritsche analyses audience reception of the Marshall Plan films collected by US government agents. Chapter 8 is about the infrastructure that the US built via the Marshall Plan film distribution and exhibition practices in participating countries. The overall structure of the book is comprehensive and effective, but some of the countries that are less covered could have received more attention.

In the conclusion, Fritsche draws attention to Hollywood as a strong industry that promoted the American culture around the world. Initially, the US government agencies collaborated with Hollywood industry workers to disseminate American propaganda via newsreels and information films. However, once Hollywood sustained a profitable business overseas, it did not need to work with the US government and deal with their bureaucratic demands. Here, Fritsche claims that both Hollywood films and the Marshall Plan films essentially served the same purpose of Americanisation, even though they had a different function. For instance, Hollywood glamourised American social norms and prioritised building a demand for American way of life. On the other hand, the Marshall Plan films highlighted European modernisation and showed Europeans how to reach American ideals through participating in US-led economic practices. In other words, Hollywood films sold dreams while Marshall Plan films instructed audiences on how to make dreams come true.

As the first complete transnational study of Marshall Plan films, Fritsche's book will be of great interest to scholars and students for at least two reasons. First, Fritsche offers a model for studying media infrastructures built by governmental agencies. This model can be applied to the studies of government-sponsored films in many other geographies, such as the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Indeed, the US Information Services had a vast media presence all over the world. Second, Fritsche's book is a much-needed resource for teaching both advanced undergraduate and graduate-level media and history courses. It is a must-read book in methodology courses for discussing how film historiography is put into action to explore government-sponsored media infrastructures. Moreover, this book is a fantastic resource for learning how to conduct interdisciplinary research that brings together and builds upon the knowledge produced from the individual fields and disciplines.

This compelling book also highlights the importance of preservation practices at libraries and archives. Altogether, the difficulties encountered in Fritsche's analysis bring awareness to the issues of conservation and make a strong case for funding future preservation initiatives. These practices are crucial because accessibility, attainability and scarcity of materials determine our understanding of the past and preservation of textual and audiovisual materials is essential to write more film histories. In conclusion, I strongly recommend this book to all audiences because Fritsche presents her analysis of archival materials very clearly, and the flow of her arguments traces a fascinating history of Marshall Plan films.

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Aysehan Jülide Etem is a PhD candidate at the Indiana University's Media School. Her dissertation project develops a framework to study film diplomacy and media networks focusing on the US–Turkey relations during the Cold War era to analyse how films mediated foreign relations and articulated policies to the public. Some of her writings appeared in *Review of Middle East Studies*, *Rivista Luci e Ombre* and *In Media Res*.