

From Trade Cards to the Internet: Depiction of Germans and Germany in American Advertising

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Preface

“Though advertising is widely acknowledged as having an impact on 'society,' most people claim to have acquired personal immunity from its 'effects.'”¹

This dissertation sets out to discover how the world of American advertising depicts Germans (and German-Americans for that matter) and Germany. As this topic has not received any notable previous attention, the following analysis is bound to enter new territory. As the research progressed I noticed that an abundance of these particular advertisements existed beyond my initial expectations or hopes.

The following dissertation works on two levels: while some parts are descriptive-cumulative overviews that reflect and portray the rich materials I found, others contain analyses of certain exemplary aspects and highlights that are indicative of reoccurring themes. Thus the following thesis should not be regarded as a complete overview but rather as an introductory work that sparks further discussion and analysis. Further research might deal with a closer look at certain time periods or particular images and stereotypes.

The dissertation is divided into two parts: the first chapter gives an overview of background information and theoretical concepts pertaining to the analysis. The second part deals with the analysis of a wide variety of advertisements that are related to Germans and Germany. The material is drawn from several sources, ranging from academic publications, videotapes, newspapers and magazines, online databases and websites to privately collected print and video advertisements.²

The search criteria include at least one of the following two conditions: Firstly, images of Germany or Germans are displayed in pictorial, musical, or textual form. This includes any kind

¹ Robert Goldman, *Reading Ads Socially* (London: Routledge, 1992) 1.

² Some ads in private collection may lack complete quotation information, such as exact date and publication information. Please also note that many academic texts do not quote analyzed advertisements. In many cases the only way to include certain advertisements is to rely on those texts' analyses and descriptions without using the primary sources. Please also note that the source of TV commercials without specific reference to day, month, and station (e.g.: Mercedes “Toaster,” advertisement, 2004.) is the online database found under <<http://ad-rag.com/>>, the date of reference being April 5, 2005. Advertisements in the *New York Times* from before the year 2001 were retrieved from the digital archive “New York Times Historical (1851-2001)”. This database under the web address <<http://proquest.umi.com/>> has restricted access. Some page numbers or newspaper sections of cited advertisements retrieved from this digital source may not appear fully, indicated by “XX” used in the electronic document and in the citation.

of reference, however small, that can be identified as having an implicit or explicit reference to Germany and/or its people. Secondly, the sample also includes advertisements by German companies, even when no explicit reference to their origin is made. It has been shown that companies and products are an important part of modern consumer and popular culture and that businesses and products are identified with their country of origin. References may include firstly Germany as a country, nation, and society, secondly the people of Germany, and thirdly German-Americans.

The advertisements discussed only constitute a part of those that I found in the course of my research. Too many ads, however, depict very similar aspects and images, for example the frequent display of the castle Neuschwanstein. Furthermore, the sheer abundance of advertisements and the limited scope as well as the broad approach of this dissertation made it necessary to refrain from discussing each in detail. Thus some exemplary advertisements are discussed, while others are merely mentioned, briefly quoted, or even left out. The progression of the chapters and sections is organized according to the following pattern: after an introductory section, the ads are grouped in clusters according to content and message. Some exemplary advertisements are analyzed in more detail. At the end of each chapter, the findings are summarized and evaluated.

With this dissertation I seek to find answers to the following questions: which themes are common and which are neglected; for which types of products are these depictions used and by which companies; which appeals are the most frequent and to whom do these advertisements and depictions appeal; and have these representations changed over time and can certain periods be identified?

In this dissertation I am less interested in empirical data than in the aesthetical, structural, and cultural depiction and reception of such national stereotypes and images. It is also the goal to portray the historical development of changing depictions in American advertising and document and organize the large number of advertisements.

1. Underlying Concepts: Culture, Stereotypes, and Advertising

Advertising is ubiquitous in America: wherever you turn, you are bombarded with an abundance of persuasive messages, phrases, and images. We are so used to this phenomenon in the 21st century that it is difficult to imagine that this has not always been the case. Examining the roots and development of advertising and consumer culture in America can help us understand the present stage of American culture. It has often been claimed that advertisements reflect society, thus enabling the researcher to come to conclusions about past and present states of a society. Warlaumont, among others, invokes the image of the “social mirror”:

Motivated by a desire to communicate successfully with their audiences, advertisers³ no doubt realized early in their history the importance of associating their selling messages with consumers’ values and the culture in which they’re created – giving them an important role in our society as ‘social mirror and communicator.’⁴

The term “mirror” is misleading, because it assumes a realistic reflection, an exact image. That can hardly be true when one knows about the selective, simplifying, and usually exaggerating nature of advertising. Sometimes the modified “distorted mirror,” or *Zerrspiegel*, is used when referring to advertising’s reflective characteristics. But even that term is not sufficient because, despite distortion, this *Zerrspiegel* “nevertheless provides some image of everything within its field of vision. Advertising’s mirror not only distorted, it also selected. Some social realities hardly appeared at all.”⁵ Usually a more positive picture is presented while less appealing aspects are left out. Generally, more members and images of the middle and upper classes are shown

³ Advertisers: I use this term more broadly, following Marchand’s view including “all those people who conceived, executed, and approved advertising content, whether they worked in corporate advertising departments, in advertising agencies, or on contract.” (Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985) xvii.)

⁴ Hazel G. Warlaumont, *Advertising in the 60s: Turncoats, Traditionalists, and Waste Makers in America’s Turbulent Decade* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001) xiii.

⁵ Marchand xvii.

because the advertisements and commercials⁶ are aimed at these groups or those aspiring to move up into those social classes.

Referring to advertising as a social communicator seems more appropriate. Advertisements can also be regarded as historical artifacts and a crucial element of American cultural history. They are part of shared social knowledge: “It [advertising] has become part of [...] cultural literacy, maybe not what every American *Needs* to Know, but, worse, What Every American *Does* Know.”⁷ In 1998, about \$200.3 billion were spent on advertising in the U.S., compared to \$218.4 in all other countries combined.⁸ But besides the economical side, the study of advertising can give important insights into social structures, taboos, values, collective memory, fears, and aspirations as well as reveal structures of dominance and social roles.

After giving background information on the history of advertising, its cultural significance and its forms of appeal, an overview of the previous research on stereotypes and images will be presented.

1.1 History of Advertising in the United States

The emergence and development of advertising is a vast field of study that goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.⁹ Thus only a short and concise overview will be given here to show the links between advertising and America throughout different time periods.¹⁰

Public announcements and ads luring immigrants to the U.S. are often seen as the starting point of the connection between America and advertising. They often consisted of lies or half-truths, promising abundance that only few would find. The historian Daniel J. Boorstin poses the question: “How has American civilization been shaped by the fact that there was a kind of

⁶ Usually the term *commercial* is used for television and radio advertising and *advertisement* is used for print advertising and for the industry. However, *advertisement*, or *ad*, is also often used instead of the term *commercial*.

⁷ James B. Twitchell, *20 Ads That Shook the World: The Century's Most Groundbreaking Advertising and How It Changed Us All* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2000) 193.

⁸ Arthur Asa Berger, *Ads, Fads, and Consumer Culture: Advertising's Impact on American Character and Society*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield 2004) 101.

⁹ On history of advertising see e.g.: Atwan, McQuade, and Wright; S. Fox; Goodrum and Dalrymple; Jackall and Hirota; Lears, *Fables of Abundance*.

¹⁰ For analyses of certain time periods, see: Post-Civil War to World War I: Norris; Leach. Spanish-American War and WWI: Richard 29-46. World War I: Pope 4-25. The 1920s and 1930s: Marchand. Exploring the roots of consumer culture with an emphasis on first decades of 20th century: Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness*. World War II: F. Fox. The 1960s: Warlaumont; Dobrow.

natural selection here of those people who were willing to believe in advertising?”¹¹ He does acknowledge the existence of certain links and influences:

Advertising has remained in the mainstream of American civilization – in the settling of the continent, in the expansion of the economy, and in the building of an American standard of living. Advertising has expressed the optimism, the hyperbole and the sense of community, the sense of reaching which has been so important a feature of our civilization.¹²

From the Beginnings to the End of the 19th Century

The first ad in a newspaper on the new continent appeared in 1704. During pre-Civil War years, advertisements were rare and did not resemble their modern counterparts. Printing technology was not sophisticated enough to create visually appealing ads. Advertisements of the time consisted only of printed text, which was more informative than persuasive, containing information of the advertised product, such as price, description, areas of use, purchase location, etc. Pictures were not part of these advertisements, which made it difficult to distinguish them from the actual articles in newspapers or magazines.

Furthermore these ads were not created professionally; the shop or company owner simply submitted the information to the newspaper. The first advertising agency, Volney B. Palmer in Philadelphia, did not open until 1843.¹³ But more and more such agencies emerged in the decades to come. The importance of this new trend is that these middlemen were independent brokers that were placed between the advertisers and the newspapers (and later other forms of media)¹⁴, increasing the spread, proper placement, and quality of advertisements. Advertising was, however, not regarded as a highly esteemed business. Quite the contrary, it was seen as a necessary evil and an “embarrassment.”¹⁵ Another important factor in the development of advertising was the emergence of the 'penny press' during the 1830s, which was mainly financed through advertisements made possible by new advances in printing technology. Previously,

¹¹ Daniel J. Boorstin, “Advertising and American Civilization,” *Advertising and Society*, ed. Yale Brozen (New York: New York University Press, 1974) 12.

¹² Boorstin, *Advertising and American Civilization* 12.

¹³ Stephen Fox, *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and its Creators* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997) 14.

¹⁴ Goodrum and Dalrymple 21.

¹⁵ S. Fox 15.

newspapers, journals, and magazines had been mostly financed by subscriptions and thus did not rely on the financial contributions generated by paid advertisements.

During the decades following the Civil War, several changes took place that enabled and fostered the rise of advertising in America. A fast-growing population and the resulting higher population density in the eastern part of the country caused more settlers to move to the sparsely populated West. This movement was made possible by the quickly expanding railroad networks. Passengers and goods could be transported on a previously impossible scale. Growing cities fostered urbanization and resulted in changes in the lifestyle of a society that increasingly depended on professional specialization and division of labor.

Because more and more people, especially in the highly populated eastern urban centers, did not produce their daily commodities themselves, they had to buy their goods in stores. This led to the emergence of department stores, which needed to advertise to attract enough customers and had the financial power to do so. Stores became more spacious and were able to lower prices because advances in mass production enabled sellers to offer larger quantities of goods. For example, products could now be packaged at the plant. Commodities, such as dry goods, prepared foods, soap, clothes, and drugs, were among the first to be mass-produced. The distinguishable package became quickly widespread in the post-war era, replacing uniform, unidentifiable and generic cartons, boxes, jars, barrels, etc. This allowed producers to let their products appear different compared to those of other companies and to be able to profit from this contrast. This advancement allowed for the emergence of trademarks, branding, and company and product images. Many companies that changed their packaging in this era are still widely recognized in America: Heinz, Quaker, Post, Levi Strauss, Goodyear, etc.¹⁶

The open-door and open-shelves policy in department stores enabled customers not only to freely examine the offered goods, but also gave them more choices and stimuli, resulting in higher sales of well-marketed products. Greene sees an emerging equality among consumers as a result of this policy,¹⁷ which resulted in a rise of advertising: if consumers have various choices, they can or have to be persuaded or convinced to buy one brand rather than the other.

¹⁶ Goodrum and Dalrymple, 23. In order to successfully market a product, it also had to have a distinguishable name. Legislation to safeguard brand names and trademarks was passed in 1870, with a final codification in 1905. (Jib Fowles, *Advertising and Popular Culture* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1996) 34-35.)

¹⁷ Greene remarks that previously “shops were small and presided over by ever watchful owners who would file away their best items until ‘good customers’ came to view them.” (Stephen L.W. Greene, “Advertising Trade Cards:

Several technological advances during the second half of the nineteenth century led to a growth and modernization of advertising. Between 1880 and 1910, photographic technology and color lithography became available and the resulting changes in the graphic arts and photography made it possible to create visually appealing ads. Reproduction of images became cheap and abundant.¹⁸

The emergence of the national market increasingly put pressure on local and regional ones. Selling products beyond the region required companies to expand their markets and create new ones. Norris sums up the pre-conditions for the rise of modern advertising:

Between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the century, conditions in the American economy and in society merged to satisfy the necessary pre-conditions for advertising to play a very powerful role in creating national markets for consumer goods. Among these pre-conditions were a breakdown of localism, a collected audience and a concentrated market, an educated citizenry, an industrial structure characterized by oligopoly, the potential for mass production, a growth in per capita income, and a culture that valued consumption.¹⁹

In post-Civil War years a number of innovations allowed entrepreneurs to make their products known throughout the nation. In the 1860s the first advertisements were distributed nationally via monthly magazines. E.C. Allan started the *People's Literary Companion* in 1869, marking the beginning of the "mail-order" periodical, and three years later Montgomery Ward began a mail order business with the issue of its first catalogue. Sears, Roebuck & Company followed in 1886. The growth of periodical and magazine marketing was facilitated by the new postal regulations of 1885, which reduced the cost of second class mailing to one cent per pound, allowing an almost immediate increase in the number of new subscription-based periodicals. The number of ads in newspapers also increased significantly in the last decades of the 19th century. "Until the late 1800s," Croteau and Hoynes remark, "U.S. newspapers had been largely funded and controlled by political parties, politicians, and partisan organizations. Then the news shifted

Nineteenth Century Showcases," *Advertising and Popular Culture: Studies in Variety and Versatility*, ed. Sammy R. Danna (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1992) 66.)

¹⁸ Leach 50.

¹⁹ Norris xv-xvi.

from a partisan, politically based press to a commercially based press.”²⁰ It also is during this time period that advertising became a profession and the very meaning of the word “advertising” itself changed, acquiring its now common commercial connotation,²¹ reflecting the growing importance of this trade.

The first form of advertising I found during my research that uses images of Germans are trade cards, which were promotional tools featuring two distinct sides. One side usually featured an appealing image generally not directly connected to the advertised product or business. Customers often collected trade cards because of these images, much like stamps or coins. The aspect of collecting these cards was very powerful, as people frequently and carefully examined their collections and actively sought to accumulate more trade cards.²² On the other side of the trade card, the advertiser could place an individual message, which generally included prices and short descriptions of sales items, a store location, special offers, etc. This versatile advertising form was used by both larger and smaller businesses. Even though American trade cards have been in use from the 1730s, this advertising trend did not reach its height until the 1880s and 1890s.²³ Several factors led to the emergence of trade cards, their success, and their widespread use at the end of the 19th century.²⁴ The technology of lithography, which has arrived in America in the 1820s and allowed the use of several colors²⁵ and a more consumption-oriented society, led to the rise of the trade card. In addition, advertisers did not have editorial constraints in contrast to advertising in newspapers and magazines, which led to a wider variety of possible themes and subjects.

The important aspect for our purposes are the graphic, collectible sides, which were often connected by and grouped into popular themes, such as flags, images of children, vehicles of any sort, factories and company buildings, animals, short narratives, and people of different

²⁰ David Croteau and William Hoynes, *Media Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences* (Thousand Oakes: Pine Forge Press, 2003) 69. See also: Baldasty.

²¹ Boorstin, *Advertising and American Civilization* 13-14.

²² The trade card coincided with the hobby of collecting, which emerged in the nineteenth century. Stewart remarks that collecting shows the wish to control the social and natural world around us and a growing relationship to objects and things. (Cf.: Stewart.)

²³ John J. Appel, “Trade Cards,” *Exhibition Catalogue: Ethnic Images in Advertising* (Philadelphia: Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, 1984) 3-6.; also: Greene 64. Despite their huge popularity in the United States during the last decades of the nineteenth century, trade cards went out of fashion rapidly in the beginning of the new century.

²⁴ “At the height of its popularity in the 1880s,” Robert Jay remarks, “the trade card was truly the most ubiquitous form of advertising in America.” (Jay 3.)

²⁵ Jay 1.

ethnicities. African Americans, Chinese, and Native Americans²⁶ were the groups predominantly displayed, more stigmatized, exoticized, and prejudiced against. European immigrant groups were also shown, but usually the caricatures were less harsh and comparatively mild as well as “generally good-natured parodies, usually lampooning language more than physical appearances...”²⁷ Jay also asserts that references to specific groups of European immigrants were not very many: “This is undoubtedly due in large part to the fact that such immigrants made up a considerable part of the consumers that advertisers were trying to attract.” However, caricatured images of “the occasional rotund German” were used in trade card imagery.²⁸ Appel reports of trade cards depicting “fat, beer-swilling Germans with absurd accents.”²⁹ Another reason that not very many of those images were found, beside the fact that these depictions would have deterred potential German consumers, is that by the turn of the century, more and more trade cards and other lithographic products, such as posters, labels and post cards, actually came from Germany.³⁰

This early example of modern advertising is exemplary in that it shows that majority groups in a culture are not depicted stereotypically as often as minorities are. As Germans constitute a large part of the American population, they have not been depicted in a negative way as often as other groups have. Furthermore, the example shows that images of economically important groups, such as exporting nations, are generally depicted in a more favorable light.

The First Half of the Twentieth Century

New inventions of the late 1800s such as the automobile and discoveries such as aspirin did not reach their full impact on advertising until the twentieth century, but would become major players in the ad world.³¹ Products, such as telephones, cameras, electric phonographs, and

²⁶ “Having only briefly interfered in the great western expansion, the Indian had duly disappeared, and in doing so had once again become exotic. This exotic appeal in turn made the Indian a natural vehicle for advertising.” (Jay 71.)

²⁷ Jay 75.

²⁸ Jay 75.

²⁹ Appel 6.

³⁰ Jay 102.

³¹ The automobile industry first needed to create a market for its revolutionary product; and while aspirin was competing with the previously heavily advertising patent medicine producers, this successful drug forced a drastic decrease in patent medicine advertising. (Goodrum and Dalrymple 35. See also on patent medicine advertising: 24-29.)

radios, became available for private people and their home use.³² The spreading of self-service stores also fostered an increase of the importance of brand-name products and hence advertising; customers faced more and more choices where they previously had had none. In the twentieth century also a growing number of grocery stores started to offer this self-service.³³

The invention of the radio had a considerable impact on the development of advertising. The first radio ad in the U.S. aired in 1922, and by the 1930s this technology and the use of it as an advertising medium had become common. According to Croteau and Hoynes, it was during the 1920s that advertising emerged as a mass phenomenon, “when leaders of the business community began to see the need for a coordinated ideological effort to complement their control of the workplace.” They view the changes during this decade as more than merely economical: “Advertising would become the centerpiece of a program to sell not only products but also a new, American way of life in which consumption erased differences, integrated immigrants into the mainstream of American life, and made buying the equivalent of voting as a form of commitment to the democratic process.”³⁴ Women, who had entered the workforce during World War I, were the main target audience of advertising as they made up the majority of consumers.

The Depression brought about a decline in advertising due to bankruptcy and more cautious spending. During times of financial depression, companies had to reduce costs as much as possible. If companies were to invest money in advertising, it would have to have a positive enough effect on sales. Thus many advertisers started to research sales and purchases, and it was during these years that George Gallup started to offer polling services.

The political world as well started to notice the power of advertising, also referred to as public relations in this context, in the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1914, World War I broke out in Europe, but the United States did not enter the war until 1917. The American public was sceptical about sending troops to faraway Europe and many Americans did not see the need for drastic action against Germany. To overcome this reluctance, the Committee on Public

³² Goodrum and Dalrymple 39.

³³ The first larger grocery stores emerged in the late 1800s in the United States, which began to experiment with self-service. The origin of self-service supermarkets (although not called so until the 1930s) can be traced back to the opening of the first Piggly Wiggly store in 1916. It was so successful that 3 years later its founder Clarence Suanders had opened 125 stores. (Richard Pillsbury, *No Foreign Food: The American Diet in Time and Place* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998) 103.)

³⁴ Croteau and Hoynes 187; see also Ruth Mayer, “‘Taste It!’: American Advertising, Ethnicity, and the Rhetoric of Nationhood in the 1920s,” *Amerikastudien* 43 (1998): 131-141.

Information, or CPI, headed by George Creel, was initiated by President Woodrow Wilson.³⁵ The so-called “four-minute men” traveled around the United States to increase public support for the war. “Their talks often contained inflammatory and false information about rumored atrocities committed by the Germans,” Lester remarks. “The efforts were successful as American citizens learned to hate the Germans and enlisted in the military in great numbers. Because of the massive outpouring of public opinion, journalists of the day simply were not permitted to write anything critical about the nation's propaganda campaign.”³⁶ The use of public persuasion and propaganda was, of course, nothing new, but it was the first time that it was employed in this concentrated and coordinated manner in conjunction with the new technical possibilities and it showed the effectiveness of such actions. Such depictions of the Germans as the enemy, analyzed in chapter 5 below, are likely to have made an important impression on the American public and not only helped build up pro-war, but also anti-German sentiment.

Advertising was used both in mass persuasion concerning the war as well as in elections. “To be sure, political candidates had been advertising since at least the 1890s,” Lears points out, “and political parties had been hiring advertising agencies since Theodore Roosevelt's administration. But the world war [I] was the first time that government policy itself had been systematically promoted through commercial techniques of mass persuasion.”³⁷

By the Second World War, advertising had become more professional and widespread. The change from a peacetime to wartime economy caused many problems and resulted in a paradox for the advertising industry: “the dissonance between the wartime spirit of self-denial and the advertising spirit of self-indulgence.”³⁸ Many consumers were absent or had worries other than material gratification. Commercial advertising seemed to be expendable during these times:

³⁵ On George Creel and his commission see also: Jackall and Hirota 13-35.

³⁶ Paul Martin Lester, *Visual Communication: Images with Messages*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2000) 68. Nelson refers to World War I propaganda as “blatant manipulation of news and public opinion during World War I through persuasive campaigns by government and various special interests” (Richard Alan Nelson, “Propaganda,” *Handbook of American Popular Culture*, 2nd ed. Vol. 3, eds. Thomas M. Inge and Dennis Hall (New York : Greenwood Press, 2002) 1327.)

³⁷ Lears, *Fables of Abundance* 219. On differences between commercial and political advertising, see: R. J. Harris 180-185.

³⁸ F. Fox 10.

[A]dvertising costs should be deleted as a deductible business expense, or at least reduced, because there was no need to advertise. [...] As a consequence, the agencies offered to turn their attention elsewhere. The War Advertising Council encouraged the purchasing of war bonds, the donation of blood, the thrill of enlistment, and, most interesting in terms of how they later behave, the encouragement of women to enter the workforce.³⁹

Many of these advertisements sent out a powerful message, not only in commercial terms, but also in terms of perception of the evil Germans. With the end of the war and the transformation back in a peacetime economy, advertising quickly changed back to more positive images of the Germans and negative connotations were replaced by those of the new enemy, the Soviet Union.

Post-World War II

The most important development of the post-war years that had an impact on advertising was the invention and spread of television. During the 1950s, TV became more popular and widely available and thus was used increasingly by advertisers. The combination of pictures and sound made ads more appealing and more likely to draw the consumer's attention. The use of color in television increased these effects, making TV images more realistic and persuasive. Television – and commercials – became a dominating factor in American culture, influencing people's lives, choices, and values.

During the 1960s, many people, especially the younger generation, questioned and turned against existing conservative values and attitudes. Among these were the consumer culture, which indulged in an abundance of goods and offerings, and the advertising industry, which preserved and fueled the underlying forces. In his book *The Waste Makers*, which was published in 1960, Vance Packard attacked the industry for not working for the public's good, for pushing consumption needlessly due to selfish and personal interests, and for wasting and destroying the country's resources. The book sparked further accusations towards the advertising industry, which was on defense after these attacks and devised new strategies to win back consumer trust

³⁹ Twitchell 82.

by utilizing a more “humanistic approach, softer sell, and more honesty and humor.”⁴⁰ Several legislative efforts have been made since to reduce some of the harmful and despised effects of advertising, for instance a 1971 ban on cigarette advertising for broadcasting companies and a 1990 rule that television stations have to include a block of children’s programs and limit commercials during those programs to 12 minutes per hour.

The following decades brought about an increasing specialization and segmentation of advertising. During the late 60s and early 70s, magazines increasingly targeted different consumer groups, and cable TV gained popularity in the 70s and 80s. By 1993, 65% of all households had cable television, which offered a hundred or more channels. This made niche marketing more effective and allowed for tailoring messages to specific target groups. This trend, also called “narrowcasting,” has continued until today.⁴¹

During the 1980s, advertisers faced new problems from video recording devices and the rapid changing of channels, commonly known as flipping channels or zapping, enabled by the advent of cable television and the widespread use of remote controls. Several stations, such as CNN Headline News and MTV, turned to only showing short, complete segments between commercial breaks, which seemed to be more appropriate for the changing viewing habits. This increased the trend of the viewers changing channels at the beginning of the advertising segments. These problems led advertisers to alter traditional forms of advertising, such as the increased use of embedded advertising, the hiring of image-building celebrities, new techniques,⁴² and media such as internet advertising. The advertising industry continues to grow⁴³ and it can be estimated that its social implications and importance will do so as well.

⁴⁰ Warlaumont 187. Also changes in the advertising companies’ structure modernized the older system and hierarchy to foster creativity (169-70).

⁴¹ Croteau and Hoynes 74-75.

⁴² "The reduction of viewer attentiveness brought about a frenzy of innovation as advertising agencies sought to break through the barriers of indifference with humor and special effects. The creative execution of ads, particularly of commercials, became more and more directed at grabbing attention rather than communicating a product's advantages." (Leo Bogart, *Commercial Culture: The Media and the Public Interest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 77.)

⁴³ The money spent on advertising at the end of the 1990s is estimated to have been 150 or even 200 billion dollars. (Marc Oxoby, *The 1990s* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003) 47.)

1.2 Advertising and Culture

This chapter sets out to explore the cultural significance of advertising. Huxley already looked at advertisements as “one of the most interesting and difficult of modern literary forms.”⁴⁴ Lears sees advertisements as “fables of abundance,” which have shaped American culture since their emergence:

During the last two hundred years, in the capitalist West and increasingly elsewhere as well, advertisements have acquired a powerful iconic significance. Yet they have been more than static symbols: they have coupled words and pictures in commercial fables - stories that have been both fabulous and didactic, that have evoked fantasies and pointed morals, that have reconfigured ancient dreams of abundance to fit the modern world of goods. By the late twentieth century, these fables of abundance - especially the ones sponsored by major multinational corporations - had become perhaps the most dynamic and sensuous representations of cultural values in the world.⁴⁵

Advertising and its role in culture have been analyzed by scholars of various schools of thought and cultural theories. The structuralist Barthes read advertisements as modern myths. Myths, in his view, are systems of communication, which naturalize and purify social phenomena and thus become eternal and unquestionable. Advertising can, if we follow these views, give us an insight into at least certain aspects of American culture.

Advertising, as Goldman and Papson argue, “feeds postmodern cultural tendencies: fragmented meaning, the celebration of surface, the substitution of fascination for meaning, cynicism, the breakdown of narrative.”⁴⁶ Such postmodernist views are, in my opinion, reflected in the fragmented images and seemingly disconnected and random stereotypes used in advertising. The rapidly changing depictions foster the distorted picture the American audience receives of its own and other societies.

⁴⁴ Aldous Huxley, “Advertisement,” *Essays Old and New* (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1968) 131. (first published in 1927.)

⁴⁵ Lears, *Fables of Abundance* 2.

⁴⁶ Robert Goldman and Stephen Papson, *Sign Wars: The Cluttered Landscape of Advertising* (New York: Guilford, 1996) 140.

Popular Culture

Today, advertising is often seen as an important aspect of popular culture. According to Muskerji and Schudson, popular culture “refers to the beliefs and practices, and the objects through which they are organized, that are widely shared among a population.”⁴⁷ Williams distinguishes between four possible meanings of the term *popular* in popular culture. In an earlier sense it described “inferior kinds of work.” Brown and Brown comment on this largely abandoned view:

[...] popular culture has nothing to do with so-called quality, with the ‘good and beautiful’ in life as distinguished from those elements which are considered neither good nor beautiful. Some aspects of culture are positive, some negative, some beneficial, some detrimental. Popular culture, especially in a country like the United States, is the total of all ways and means of life, for better or worse, desired or undesired.⁴⁸

A more modern view as described by Williams is that of “work deliberately setting out to win favour” and that it is “well-liked by many people.” A fourth possible meaning of “popular” concerns work that is “actually made by the people for themselves, with which of course, in many cases, the earlier senses overlap.”⁴⁹

Storey adds two other possible definitions of popular culture, one as a “residual category, there to accommodate cultural texts and practices which fail to meet the required standards to qualify as high culture,”⁵⁰ and another as mass culture because it is “a hopelessly commercial culture.”⁵¹ Inge proposes a broad, but very feasible definition for our purposes:

⁴⁷ Chandra Muskerji and Michael Schudson, “Introduction: Rethinking Popular Culture,” *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*, eds. Chandra Muskerji and Michael Schudson (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991) 3.

⁴⁸ Ray B. Brown and Pat Brown, introduction, *The Guide to United States Popular Culture*, eds. Ray B. Brown and Pat Brown (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 2001) 2.

⁴⁹ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) 237.

⁵⁰ John Storey, *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1993) 7.

⁵¹ Storey 10.

[P]opular culture is what we do by choice to engage our minds and bodies when we are not working or sleeping. This can be active – playing baseball, driving an automobile, dancing – or passive – watching television, sunbathing, or reading a book. It can be creative – painting a portrait, writing a poem, cooking a meal – or simply responsive – playing a game, watching a circus, or listening to music. While highly inclusive and perhaps imprecise, such a definition allows for the great diversity of form and wide degree of latitude for engagement of mind and body necessary for any discussion of popular culture in this century.⁵²

As the abundance of definitions and views makes it difficult to define the role of advertisements in popular culture, I conclude the following: advertising is part of popular culture mainly because its purpose is to win the consumers' favor. For one, it is neither *necessarily* liked by a majority of people (even though it is admired by some): "Nicht alles oder sogar nur sehr wenig von der populären Kultur ist Ausdruck populären Bedürfnisses. Worauf es ankommt, sind bestimmte wiederkehrende zentrale Motive oder Handlungskonfigurationen."⁵³ It is exactly these central images that are at the core of this dissertation's analysis.

Advertising is also not made by the people themselves: advertisements are carefully produced, analyzed, researched, crafted. Advertising is also insofar tied to popular culture as it touches many of its subjects, which the second part of this dissertation reveals: television, fairs, architecture, the automobile, business, catalogues, children's literature, ethnic minorities, fantasy, fashion, film, food, toys, housing, magazines, collecting, music, newspapers, propaganda, radio, science, and, of course, television.⁵⁴

Fluck addresses the crucial popular culture phenomenon of escapism, which advertising also utilizes and is closely analyzed in chapter 4 of this dissertation: "populäre Kultur erlaubt eine zeitweilige Regression vor den Problemen der Wirklichkeit, weil sie diese oft ignoriert oder fiktiv auflöst. [...] Populäre Kultur kann so zu einer Form des Eskapismus werden."⁵⁵

⁵² Thomas M. Inge, introduction, *Handbook of American Popular Culture*, 2nd ed, eds. Thomas M. Inge and Dennis Hall (New York : Greenwood Press, 2002) xx.

⁵³ Winfried Fluck, *Populäre Kultur: Ein Studienbuch zur Funktionsbestimmung und Interpretation populärer Kultur* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1979) 37.

⁵⁴ See: Inge and Hall.

⁵⁵ Fluck 43.

Whether advertisements are inferior to “high culture” or not is a widely debated topic. Concerning their purpose and intention, however, they are “not avenues of public enlightenment or cultural enhancement.”⁵⁶ An important characteristic is their intended contemporary nature. They are only created for the fleeting moment, and only a few ads remain as cultural knowledge, historical artifacts of popular culture. The messages, images, logos, tunes, and jingles, which are constantly repeated, are common cultural knowledge. Popular culture, and in many ways advertising, however, becomes more and more a global phenomenon that loses its national ties and becomes transnational:

Whatever its political orientation, whether created by people chanting ‘freedom’ or consumed by couch potato masses, popular culture is now fully enmeshed in transnational globalized technoculture. It makes sense, then, to see it as plural, as negotiating among diverse communities involved in a conflictual process of production and consumption.⁵⁷

Consumer Culture

Advertising is also often associated with a culture of consumerism, which is “a particular kind or degree of consumption; it is consumption that is based upon perceived (psychological) need rather than actual (physical) need.”⁵⁸ Twitchell puts this more bluntly: “Once we are fed and sheltered, our needs are and have always been cultural, not natural.”⁵⁹ Bogart even goes as far as to make advertising a central focus of American commercial and consumer culture: “Advertising epitomizes the spirit of American commercial culture, which ranks material possessions high and assigns them a prominent place in everyday life.”⁶⁰ Mamiya argues similarly as she asserts that “[i]t is through advertising that the ideological claims of consumption are reinforced. Moreover, advertising has become one of the most representative

⁵⁶ Bogart 69.

⁵⁷ Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 340.

⁵⁸ Heather Addison, “Hollywood, Consumer Culture, and the Rise of ‘Body Shaping’,” *Hollywood Goes Shopping: American Cinema and Consumer Culture*, eds. David Desser and Garth S. Jowett (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) 4.

⁵⁹ Twitchell 15.

⁶⁰ Bogart 65.

institutions of American consumer culture.”⁶¹ Material success was, after all, a major motivation for many immigrants and has been and still is a crucial part of the so-called American Dream.

First signs of this fairly new cultural phenomenon surfaced in the late nineteenth century but were mainly shaped during the twentieth century. Fox and Lears argue that the “search for the origins of consumer culture should begin by concentrating on the activities of urban elites during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.”⁶² Advertising played an important part in this emergence and development of consumer culture as it helped to create, shape, persuade, and influence the consumer. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the United States saw a proliferation of amusement parks, an unprecedented show of wealth, and newly emerging department stores, which were referred to as cathedrals of consumption. Other scholars see the 1910s and 1920s as the time of transformation to a consumer culture.⁶³ New consumer-oriented experiences, whose only goal was commercial gain, were offered during this time, such as automobiles, ever larger and more luxurious department stores that offered a growing variety of goods, motion pictures, and increasingly sophisticated advertising campaigns.

Advertising is largely dependent on consumer culture and is aimed at creating needs. “Whether or not ads are successful at selling particular products – some ad campaigns succeed and others fail – the underlying message in advertising, which permeates our media culture, is the importance of the values of consumerism.”⁶⁴ There is an ongoing debate whether needs are created by advertising or whether advertising simply brings out inherent needs and wishes that already exist. In this thesis, however, it is more important that viewers “learn and internalize some of the values, beliefs, and norms presented in media products.”⁶⁵ Every notion generated by advertising can influence the perception of people, including the presentation of ethnic groups or the promotion of “a culture of consumption, normalizing middle- or even upper-middle-class lifestyles and making buying power a measure of both virtue and freedom.”⁶⁶

One phenomenon of particular interest is the Super Bowl, which not only offers the most expensive commercials but also attracts much attention from the media and consumers. The

⁶¹ Christin J. Mamiya, *Pop Art and Consumer Culture: American Super Market* (Austin : University of Texas Press, 1992) 16.

⁶² Richard Fox and Jackson Lears, introduction, *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*, eds. Richard Fox and Jackson Lears (New York: Pantheon, 1983) xi.

⁶³ E.g.: Addison 4.

⁶⁴ Croteau and Hoynes 186.

⁶⁵ Croteau and Hoynes 15.

⁶⁶ Croteau and Hoynes 186.

spots shown are usually very innovative and are aired for the first time during this spectacle, which Twitchell refers to as the “Advertising Bowl.”⁶⁷ The price tag alone reveals the scope of this phenomenon, as a 30-second spot in the recent 2005 Super Bowl cost 2.4 million US Dollars.⁶⁸ It epitomizes the very core of commercial culture as Bogart suggests:

Our culture is commercial because of the central place in it of material goods and their symbols. But the term ‘commercial culture’ can be used in another sense, as well, when applied to the flow of ideas and expression that shapes national character and outlook. By this narrower definition, contemporary American culture is commercial because, overwhelmingly, it is produced for sale to meet marketing requirements. In this respect it differs from the cultures of other places and times, in which expression has been valued either as an end in itself or because of the ability to please a patron. Commercial culture assigns no value or meaning to communications apart from their market value – that is, the price that someone is willing to pay.⁶⁹

According to many people, including many scholars, advertising corrupts society or is simply unimportant and a nuisance. “Those working within the mass culture perspective,” Storey states, “usually have in mind a previous ‘golden age’ when cultural matters were very different. This usually takes on two forms: a lost organic community or a lost folk culture.”⁷⁰ Others argue that advertisers dictate the content of the media,⁷¹ including entertainment and news.⁷² As the viewer is not only the consumer of a media product (a TV show, a magazine, etc.), he or she is also a commodity that can be sold to advertisers. In this sense it can be argued that media products are designed to bring the highest profit possible, which almost exclusively comes from advertisers. During the 1980s and 1990s television culture changed into the now common tabloid

⁶⁷ Twitchell 190. See also: George F. Will, “The Real Game: The Commercials,” *Washington Post* 28 January 1990: C7.

⁶⁸ Stuart Elliot, “Ad Reaction Claims Super Bowl Casualty,” *New York Times* 3 February 2005: C1.

⁶⁹ Bogart 66.

⁷⁰ Storey 10.

⁷¹ “The original modern sense of ‘media’ dates, interestingly enough, from its use in advertising trade journals of the 1920s – as in ‘advertising media.’” Today many explanations and definitions exist, for example the depiction of nonprint forms of communication, or “the larger realms of entertainment and showbusiness.” (Daniel Czitrom, “Dialectical Tensions in the American Media Past and Present,” *Popular Culture in America*, ed. Paul Buhle (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) 7.)

⁷² See: Collins. Also: Baker.

TV culture. Many TV formats, including talk shows, “investigative” journalism, reality TV, and news shows, are often criticized as superficial entertainment, edutainment, infotainment, or simply as trash TV.⁷³

The relationship between advertising and culture is not stagnant; quite to the contrary, it is changing quickly as new forms of media, such as the internet⁷⁴, create new opportunities and challenges with profound consequences and influence on American popular, consumer, and mass culture.

1.3 The Appeal of Advertising

Advertising can be defined as a form of communication with certain characteristics: it is paid communication; the advertiser is identified; advertising is not a form of personal communication; it is persuasive; and it is delivered through various media, which are often but not necessarily mass media (for instance billboards or mail advertising). Advertisers range from large corporations to small businesses operated by a single person, but also include governments, political parties, special interest groups, institutions, and individuals.⁷⁵ Advertisements usually target certain audiences (individuals, retailers, other businesses, special interest groups) to market products (commodities, services, locations where to buy products, ideas, ideologies, and political goals), create attention and raise awareness of products or issues, and reinforce existing brands and images. Advertising appears in many different formats in order to reach certain groups or to fit the advertiser’s budget. Print advertisements and radio and television commercials are certainly the most common formats, but companies and institutions also make use of infomercials and advertorials, sponsoring, billboards, product placement, logos, promotions, and internet advertising.

I follow the view that advertisements should be seen as texts or discourses. They tell us a very short narrative, however trivial it may be. Stories have a long history in all cultures and this

⁷³ See: Glynn.

⁷⁴ Low costs and increasing accessibility to non-professionals revealed, for example, the power of this new form of mediating information recently during the 2004 presidential election campaigns in the U.S. The web logs, also known as blogs, not only played an important role but also challenged and influenced some of the mainstream media coverage.

⁷⁵ Advertisements by individuals are in most cases referred to as classifieds.

is why advertisements are often generally accepted or even liked. Pateman suggests that people enjoy advertisements for two reasons: they are “visually pleasurable” and “pleasurable as discourses (both verbal and visual), partly because they call upon some of our *more* sophisticated linguistic and cognitive competences.”⁷⁶ He compares their intellectual pleasures with those provided by crossword puzzles.

As different types of stories are embedded in different cultures, advertisers have to acknowledge the background of the addressees: ads try to “fuse a company’s brand with the target group’s values and valued images.”⁷⁷ That is why advertisements often do not work in different countries or even regions. Different value systems in each culture and subculture create the necessity to make ads in specific context of place and time. Many themes, however, are of universal human nature and can appeal to a worldwide audience. Advertisements tailored towards an international market are rather uncommon, though, and need to be carefully crafted to avoid any cultural problems.⁷⁸

Pseudo-Events

Daniel J. Boorstin argues that advertisements are, among many other phenomena in American culture, “pseudo-events.” As people demand more and more things to happen, to be possible, to excite them at ever shorter intervals, such “pseudo-events” are created to satisfy these needs, and ads can show perfect images that appeal to them and court them.⁷⁹

A number of characteristics constitute this allure of advertisements: Firstly, they are generally neither true nor false but somewhere in-between. Ads can state obvious things that are not obvious to the consumer, such as production processes that tend to impress the layperson. Statistical data that ostensibly show the advantage over competitors’ products are frequently used to create credibility. This data is verifiable but usually does not state all the facts or is presented in such a way that it seems better than it actually is. Another example is the use of comparative adjectives, a technique that might use a rival’s product as comparison or not. For example, an ad might state that “product A is better than product B,” that “product A is better than all the

⁷⁶ Trevor Pateman, “How is Understanding an Advertisement Possible?” *Language, Image, Media*, eds. Howard Davis and Paul Walton (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983) 201.

⁷⁷ John O’Shaughnessy and Nicholas Jackson O’Shaughnessy, *Persuasion in Advertising* (London: Routledge, 2004) 64.

⁷⁸ See: Ricks.

⁷⁹ Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Atheneum, 1972) 3-6.

others,” or simply “product A is better.” It is important that the consumer believes the message, even though it does not necessarily have to be true and can in many cases not be verified or falsified, for instance in cases of taste.

Secondly, the technique of the self-fulfilling prophecy creates its own reality. If you create the image that a certain soft drink makes one appear or feel younger and more active, such a message may make this come true because it is perpetuated and conveyed by advertising. Boorstin gives examples of endorsements of products by celebrities, who represent a certain lifestyle. If they endorse the product and the message is carefully planned, these endorsements do not only improve the product’s prestige but also create its own reality. A product and a brand name can even become the same, another type of self-fulfilling prophecy, as can be seen in the terms kleenex, hoover, or xerox. Not only our language is influenced and changed by advertising, our perception of the world around us is changed. The pseudo-event of advertising becomes part of our culture.

Boorstin names the half-intelligible as a third characteristic. Technical specifications as well as newly created or foreign language words create a certain mystique that suggests that we, as consumers, have to keep up with the fast progress. This explains the frequent use of German words and pseudo-terms, such as *Fahrvergnügen* or *Überauto*, which will be discussed below. These half-intelligible terms also create the impression that products are improving, are being refined, perfected, and are generally superior. Since a product such as toothpaste does not significantly change, new characteristics, new images, new “pseudo-events” have to be invented: whitening, different flavors and colors, protection against something that we were not previously aware of, new design, or just a label that states that the product is new and improved. The product is reinvented and soon the consumer gets accustomed to it and the product loses its mystique. Often words that sound scientific, professional, or foreign, impress us, and since we only understand half of the message, it creates a certain appeal. The fourth and last is the appeal of the contrived. We like being courted and flattered, we enjoy the little games that are played with our minds. Most consumers believe they cannot be lured to purchase this product, they think they can resist the message and see through it. Consumers praise their own wit and intelligence when they notice that the people in an ad would never talk about toothpaste in such a

way in reality, but they do not notice that the discourse is carefully planned and calculated. If we even think and talk about an ad, the advertiser has achieved an important goal.⁸⁰

Informative vs. Persuasive Appeal

O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy argue that a system of internal and external shields is raised when audiences are being persuaded.⁸¹ Anything that does not conform with existing beliefs or values, whether personal or social, is less likely to pass those shields. External shields include culture, reference groups, social class, and emotionally grounded experiences, whereas internal shields encompass current beliefs and values. Manipulation, which "also seems to have psychological entailments," differs from persuasion because these entailments "are of a negative kind, namely that the victim of manipulation is unaware of the influences exerted upon him."⁸² The key difference here, then, is that people do not want to be manipulated but do not mind or even like to be persuaded.

As advertisements are usually both informative and persuasive in varying degrees, advertisers balance both types to persuade their audience.⁸³ Information and persuasion are intertwined and cannot be separated from one another.⁸⁴ O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy argue that persuasion is part of our society, not only of marketing attempts: "If we define persuasion as the process of trying to alter, modify or change the saliency of the values, wants, beliefs and actions of others, social life is dominated by conscious or unconscious, forceful or tangential, attempts of persuasion."⁸⁵

Emotional Appeal

But advertisements need to motivate action, not only inform and persuade. Smokers, for example, often know about the negative effects cigarettes have on their health, and yet they are

⁸⁰ Boorstin, *The Image* 211-228.

⁸¹ O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 8-20.

⁸² Rom Harré, "Persuasion and Manipulation," *Discourse and Communication: New Approaches to the Analysis of Mass Media Discourse and Communication*, ed. Teun A. van Dijk (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1985) 126.

⁸³ For example the use of facts and figures may in fact be more persuasive than informative. See: Lars Hermerén, *English for Sale: A Study of the Language of Advertising* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1999) 34-39.

⁸⁴ Persuasion can be rational or emotional, or a mixture of both. Rational strategies and means include descriptions, visual evidence, statistical evidence, comparisons, analogies, definitions, and classifications. Emotional strategies often utilize narrative and (audio-)visual means.

⁸⁵ O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 5.

not persuaded to quit smoking by anti-smoking campaigns.⁸⁶ Likewise, many people may agree that a certain brand of car offers supreme qualities and a rational choice, yet they do favor another brand over this one despite its obvious advantages.⁸⁷

A common advertising technique is to arouse emotion so that an object loses its neutrality and becomes special and memorable.⁸⁸ Emotion is employed in almost all advertisements to a certain degree today, making them both persuasive and enjoyable. Leslie Savan argues that now advertising encompasses all human emotions and aspects of life, which she calls the “sponsored life”:

Virtually all of modern experience now has a sponsor, or at least a sponsored accessory, and there is no human emotion or concern – love, lust, war, childhood innocence, social rebellion, spiritual enlightenment, even disgust with advertising – that cannot be reworked into a sales pitch. [...] In short, we’re living the sponsored life. [...] The sponsored life is born when commercial culture sells our own experiences back to us. It grows as those experiences are then reconstituted inside us, mixing the most intimate processes of individual thought with commercial values, rhythms, and expectations. [...] The viewer – and that is most of us to one degree or the other – is slowly re-created in the ad’s image.⁸⁹

Advertisers tend to use stronger human emotions, which explains why sexual innuendo and exaggerated happiness are so ubiquitous in commercial messages. Humor is used extensively, making ads a form of entertainment. Robitaille distinguishes the following categories of humor used in advertising: grammatical violations, overstatement and

⁸⁶ On the other hand, cigarette advertisers create positive images and associations that create emotions and that often override factual data. For an analysis of cigarette advertising see: Simon Chapman and Garry Egger, “Myth in Cigarette Advertising and Health Promotion,” *Language, Image, Media*, eds. Howard Davis and Paul Walton (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983) 166-186.

⁸⁷ “Since the strength of any motive to act,” O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy explain, “is intimately tied to the level of emotion evoked, the more emotional an issue is made, the more interest (sustained attention) it receives. Hence, advertisers should typically seek messages that resonate with the *values* of their target audience which go beyond mere hedonism.” (O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy 36.)

⁸⁸ Cf.: Margalit.

⁸⁹ Savan 3.

understatement, parody, lexical overloads, poetic patterns, puns, and situational combinations.⁹⁰ Humor can also include ridicule and stereotyping of certain groups, including minorities and nationalities, which is dealt with in chapter 5.5. Nostalgia is a strong emotion particularly important in the use of Germans and Germany in advertising in the U.S. and is discussed in detail in chapter 3 and 4.

Also negative emotions such as anger and fear are frequently used in both political and commercial advertising, suggesting how to cope with and be relieved of those negative feelings. Products are expected to solve our problems, from bad breath to unfashionable clothing: “It’s less important that we purchase any particular product than that we come to expect resolution *in the form of* something buyable.”⁹¹ This is especially visible in World War II advertisements, which displayed the Germans negatively in order not only to build up support for the war effort but also increase sales of war bonds.

Aesthetic Appeal

Advertisements are often aesthetic and visually pleasing. They are carefully designed and tested to meet the majority’s taste. Scores of highly trained professionals leave nothing random in the ads that are meant to please the eye and the ear. The perfected dream or fantasy world presented functions as a form of escapism: “Advertisements cast life in a happy glow. They are not part of the world of violence, anger, depression, and offbeat sex that fills the columns of the press and television’s prime-time hours.”⁹² Leo Bogart continues that commercials “never intrude distracting and unpleasant touches of reality - nor is there any objective reason why they should, either in the advertiser’s interest or in the social interest. In their idealized representation of what the material world looks like, television commercials reinforce the idea that it is the best of all possible worlds.”⁹³ The aesthetic imperative in advertising even extends to the minutest details such as the fonts that are used.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Marilyn M. Robitaille, “Humor in Advertising: It’s Funny Business,” *Advertising and Popular Culture: Studies in Variety and Versatility*, ed. Sammy R. Danna (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1992) 115-123. On humor in advertising, see also: Dana L. Alden, Wayne D. Hoyer and Chol Lee, “Identifying Global and Culture-Specific Dimensions of Humor in Advertising: A Multinational Analysis.” *Journal of Marketing* 57/2 (April 1993): 64-75.

⁹¹ Savan 5.

⁹² Bogart 82.

⁹³ Bogart 83.

⁹⁴ Nowadays generally *Helvetica*. See: Savan 17-22. For typefaces used to depict Germans and Germany see below.

Advertisements also suggest an abundance of goods, as Lears has pointed out, showing us that everything we see is there and only has to be picked up or ordered. Stores, for example, place products in shelves in a way that gives the consumer the illusion that these products are never depleted. Bogart argues that “[c]ommercial culture is inconceivable without an abundance of goods.”⁹⁵

The Appeal of Prestige, Achievement and Group Membership

Advertisements suggest that the purchase of products by certain brands leads to higher prestige on the side of the consumer. Advertisers try to convey that prestige and a favorable image, in contrast to respect, can be acquired by possessions of products.⁹⁶

Images of success and achievement are conveyed by advertisements, making the advertised products embodiments or manifestations of these notions. Role models and certain lifestyles that are presented reflect cultural images of success and achievement. “By presenting us with models whose sexual or financial or other type of success we may wish to emulate,” Messaris asserts, “advertising images draw upon our tendencies for identification in order to strengthen our emotional involvement with ads.”⁹⁷ Advertising suggests that certain consumer behavior will lead to a positive group identification and thus relies heavily on stereotypes.

The Appeal of Repetition

It is a natural mechanism that humans like order, structure, and predictability, as can be seen in the many rituals all cultures have developed. Repetition gives comfort, safety, as well as reassurance, and it is also an energy-saving device, as it does not demand further inquiry or challenge. Advertisers clearly tell consumers over and over again what they already know. For example, even though Coca Cola is a well-known brand and product, it needs to be constantly reinforced, maintaining a constantly positive and slightly updated image of the brand.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Bogart 66.

⁹⁶ “While respect is something demanded by everyone, prestige is something bestowed and, being associated with those on whom it has been bestowed, gives rise to a vicarious satisfaction. This is why all organizations concerned with persuasion look for prestigious spokespersons to endorse their position and thus endow it with something of their own prestige.” (O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy 83.)

⁹⁷ Paul Messaris, *Visual Persuasion: The Role of Images in Advertising* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997) 44.

⁹⁸ It is, however, not uniformly agreed upon that repetition of short advertising messages is the most successful way of promoting products. Singer, for example, argues that this standard form of today’s advertising may not be

1.4 Stereotypes: An Approach

Stereotypes can help us quickly identify a person's ostensible background, habits, preferences, or character. In his influential work *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport sums up why an assessment of stereotypes is important for understanding depiction and reception of advertisements: "They are socially supported, continually revived and hammered in, by our media of mass communication - by novels, short stories, newspaper items, movies, stage, radio, and television."⁹⁹

National stereotypes in particular are an important part in the field of cultural studies. Nünning precisely sums up: "[Nationale Stereotypen spielen] für die Wahrnehmung und das Verstehen fremder Kulturen deshalb eine große Rolle, weil sie entscheidenden Einfluß darauf haben, was jeweils als das Eigene und was als das Fremde gilt."¹⁰⁰

Walter Lippmann's Public Opinion

The psychological concept of stereotypes was first introduced in 1922 in Walter Lippmann's book *Public Opinion*:

[F]or the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture.¹⁰¹

He saw stereotypes as expectations and beliefs of social groups. His study triggered academic discussion and research continuing until today. Many of his observations were groundbreaking

optimal: "In terms of how well information can be organized by us, *more* is not necessarily *better*. A slower, somewhat repetitive and longer-lasting commercial is much more likely to be susceptible to intelligent processing than a lively, rapid-fire presentation that has passed before one even identifies with it. It is very likely that advertisers who are paying large sums for many 30-second commercials would get more useful effects from fewer but longer-lasting and more clearly delineated content presented in their commercial messages." (Jerome L. Singer, "The Power and Limitations of Television: A Cognitive-Affective Analysis," *The Entertainment Functions of Television*, ed. Percy H. Tannenbaum (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1980) 51.)

⁹⁹ Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1954) 200.

¹⁰⁰ Ansgar Nünning, "Englische Bilder von Deutschland und den Deutschen: Zur Bedeutung von Nationalstereotypen für das kollektive Gedächtnis und das Verstehen fremder Kulturen," *Interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht*, eds. Lothar Bredella and Werner Delanoy (Tübingen: Narr, 1999) 323.

¹⁰¹ Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, 1922 (New York: Free Press, 1965) 54-55.

and some are still strikingly modern and valid. One of Lippmann's major arguments is the existence of a discrepancy between "reality," or the public world, and *our* "reality," as he phrases it, the pictures in our heads.

For our purposes this has several consequences. Firstly, certain patterns of thought are not our own, but are "public," which today one would call social stereotypes as opposed to individual ones. The pictures in our heads are not merely individual thoughts and images, they are to a great extent public ones. Secondly, there is not one but rather many realities. Lippmann states that "for the most part, the way we see things is a combination of what is there and of what we expected to find."¹⁰² This brings up two important points: the human brain is not large enough to cope with the input of information from the exterior world; therefore it has to function efficiently and economically.¹⁰³

Lippmann's assessment also includes an affective component ("stereotypes are loaded with preference, suffused with affection or dislike, attached to fears, lusts, strong wishes, pride, hope"¹⁰⁴) and the resulting necessity of making good judgments in these matters. While criticizing their outcome, he accepts the inevitability of stereotypes in society. An investigation of the necessity and the shortcomings of stereotypes are in my opinion essential to the analysis and discussion of stereotypes and images in advertising.

Katz and Braly's Study

A major shortcoming of Lippmann's work is that it was not founded on empirical data. Katz and Braly's contribution is significant because it was the first study on stereotypes in the field of social psychology. It is also interesting for our purposes because German characteristics, among others, were analyzed.

Katz and Braly administered a checklist to university students, whose task was to assign five characteristics or traits out of a list of 84 to different ethnic groups. One hundred students from Princeton University were given the following instructions:

¹⁰² Lippmann 76.

¹⁰³ "There is economy in this. For the attempt to see all things freshly and in detail, rather than as types and generalities, is exhausting, and among busy affairs practically out of question." (Lippmann 59), and later: "We have to summarize and generalize. We have to pick out samples, and treat them as typical." (Lippmann 95)

¹⁰⁴ Lippmann 78.

Read through the list of words on page one and select those which seem to you typical of the Germans. Write as many of these words in the following space as you think necessary to characterize these people adequately. If you do not find appropriate words on page one for the typical German characteristics you may add those which you think necessary for an adequate description.¹⁰⁵

The results for the German characteristics are the following (in percent): scientifically minded: 78; industrious: 65; stolid: 44; intelligent: 32; methodical: 31; extremely nationalistic: 24; progressive: 16; efficient: 16; jovial: 15; musical: 13; persistent: 11; practical: 11.

While the methodology has been regarded as flawed¹⁰⁶, the results are quite useful and give us a first indication about German characteristics and stereotypes. Furthermore, Katz and Braly come to the conclusion that “the degree of agreement among students in assigning characteristics from a list of 84 adjectives to different races seems too great to be the sole result of the students’ contacts with members of these races.”¹⁰⁷ Therefore their knowledge must stem from sources other than individual ones, a point that Lippmann had already introduced. As a result of their work, the examination of stereotypes has often been seen in connection with the study of prejudice. Katz and Braly conclude that “the knowledge upon which students assigned characteristics to various races has both a private or personal basis and a public or cultural basis.”¹⁰⁸ Schneider regards Katz and Braly’s research as far more important than Lippmann’s

¹⁰⁵ D.Katz and K. Braly, “Racial Stereotypes of One Hundred College Students,” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 28 (1933/34): 282.

¹⁰⁶ It is important to see the background of these results. Firstly, the data was collected about ten years after Lippmann’s studies, at the time of the rise of National Socialism and the end of the Weimar Republic. There is no previous data to compare these results with, but we do have empirical data from following studies. Secondly, it is important to understand the assessment and collection method, because matching certain characteristics with certain groups has advantages and disadvantages. While it is more efficient and statistically easier to document and analyze, this method already limits the possible answers through its prescribed set of traits (even though the students were allowed to add other characteristics) and may even push people towards stereotyping. However, this method, which is more focused on the content of stereotypes, became the accepted and widely used mode in many studies that followed and is still used in a modified way today. (Weakness in character lists, see also: Kurt H. Stapf, Wolfgang Stroebe, and Klaus Jonas, *Amerikaner über Deutschland und die Deutschen: Urteile und Vorurteile* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1986) 52-53.) Thirdly, the group is a limited one and cannot be seen as representative of American society. Not only did the group consist solely of students, but also of students from only one university.

¹⁰⁷ Katz and Braly 288.

¹⁰⁸ Katz and Braly 289.

and describes it as “pathbreaking”¹⁰⁹ because they assumed that stereotype content was provided through one’s culture and that they were shared by a large number of people within a culture.

Stereotype Accuracy and the ‘Kernel of Truth’ Hypothesis

A debate ensued during the 40s and 50s about whether or not there was such a thing as a ‘kernel of truth’ in most or all stereotypes. The problem with this topic is that such a hypothesis is difficult to verify, if at all. Klineberg suggests that although stereotypes *may* have some truth in them, it is only by “chance.”¹¹⁰ Not all stereotypes can be verified, in fact some can be falsified. Allport, who raises the question about the assumed erroneous character of stereotypes in his pioneering work *The Nature of Prejudice*, concludes that “stereotypes may or may not originate in a kernel of truth.”¹¹¹

Today it is disputed whether or not this hypothesis is true. More recent research shows the difficulty of accuracy assessment of stereotypes. Judd and Park conclude that assessment is feasible but far from easy. Even though much research still needs to be conducted, they arrive at a few conclusions: “There seems to be consistent evidence that stereotypes of in-groups are more accurate than stereotypes of out-groups [...]. Compared with in-group stereotypes, out-group stereotypes seem to reflect exaggeration, prejudice, and overgeneralization.”¹¹² Whether there is a kernel of truth in stereotypes is very difficult to assess.¹¹³ Oakes, Haslam, and Turner conclude that

perhaps the most significant message to be gleaned from the researcher into the kernel of truth issue is that it is the social values of the researcher which largely determine both the

¹⁰⁹ David J. Schneider, “Modern Stereotype Research: Unfinished Business,” *Stereotypes and Stereotyping*, eds. C.N. Macrae, C. Stangor and M. Hewstone (New York: Guilford Press, 1996) 420.

¹¹⁰ O. Klineberg, “The Scientific Study of National Stereotypes,” *International Social Science Bulletin* 3 (1951): 505.

¹¹¹ Allport 200.

¹¹² C.M. Judd and B. Park, “Definition and Assessment of Accuracy in Social Stereotypes,” *Psychological Review* 100/1 (1993): 127.

¹¹³ See also: B. Park, C.M. Judd and C.S. Ryan, “Social Categorization and the Representation of Variability Information,” *European Review of Social Psychology*, vol. 2, eds. W. Stroebe and M. Hewstone (Chichester: Wiley, 1991) 211-245.

perceived accuracy of stereotypes and the perceived appropriateness of any measure of accuracy in a given context.¹¹⁴

Walter Lippmann explains why people tend to believe in the truth and accuracy of stereotypes: “For when a system of stereotypes is well fixed, our attention is called to those facts which support it, and diverted from those which contradict.”¹¹⁵ Adorno’s research contributed the idea that stereotypes are mediated and transferred through socialization. Stereotypes are not random and do not change from generation to generation; children learn them from the world around them and accept them as more or less valid. As stereotypes can be rigid, a possible accuracy may also have been lost over time. Nünning stresses the importance of significance and meaning (*Bedeutung*):

Sehr viel wichtiger als die letztlich müßige Frage nach dem (meist mehr als fragwürdigen) Wahrheitsgehalt nationaler Fremd- und Selbstbilder ist daher die Frage, welche Bedeutung Nationalstereotypen für das kollektive Gedächtnis, für das Verstehen fremder Kulturen [...] haben.¹¹⁶

I agree that the mere existence of stereotypes creates a certain truth, even though it may have no factual basis. It has been argued that stereotypes can be self-fulfilling.¹¹⁷ Boorstin argues that advertisers do not display truth but credibility or believability.¹¹⁸ This is certainly valid for stereotypes and images used in advertising as well. Advertisers carefully choose images and stereotypes, and often they “subsist in this new limbo,” which Boorstin calls “neither-true-nor-false.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Penelope J. Oakes, S. Alexander Haslam and John C. Turner, *Stereotyping and Social Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994) 24.

¹¹⁵ Lippmann 78.

¹¹⁶ Nünning 323.

¹¹⁷ See: M. Snyder, "Motivational Foundations of Behavioral Confirmation," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 25, ed. M.P. Zana (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1992) 67-114; M. Snyder, "Self-fulfilling Stereotypes," *Psychology Today* July (1982): 60-68.

¹¹⁸ Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Atheneum, 1972) 212-228. (previously published in 1962 under the title *The Image or What Happened to the American Dream?*)

¹¹⁹ Boorstin, *The Image* 214.

Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization

One must distinguish between stereotypes held by individuals and those shared by a number of people.¹²⁰ There are two major approaches in the study of stereotypes: individual and collective/cultural ones. As the focus of individual approaches is intrapersonal and more interested in the process and the learning of stereotypes through direct interaction, it is of only minor importance for our purposes.

Collective (or cultural) approaches see group behavior and values as crucial elements of stereotypes, in which group consensus is a key element.¹²¹ There is an emphasis on the change and development of stereotypes and the learning of stereotypes through indirect sources, including mass media (and thus also advertising). Furthermore, the focus on content rather than process and the broader scope of collective approaches is therefore more relevant for this study. Thus stereotypes that can be found within a majority of a group's members are the main focus of studies within the social field.

The influential theory of social identity was developed by Henri Tajfel, and John Turner continued this research and developed the theory of self-categorization. Tajfel directed attention toward the process and understanding of stereotyping and saw it being linked to the process of categorization. Social Identity Theory emphasizes classification into groups as well as the cognitive aspects of the stereotyping.

During his research, Tajfel found that when individuals were divided into relatively meaningless groups, they still tended to favor their group to the outgroup. Haslam et al. identify "three key *social* functions" that Tajfel saw in stereotypes and stereotyping:

he argued that they (a) help to *explain* large-scale social events (such as war and peace, persecution and tolerance, disadvantage and privilege), (b) serve to *justify* the activities of groups as they relate to those events (e.g. attacking an enemy, funding an aid programme,

¹²⁰ "Individuals and groups can be said to be the central facts of society. Without individuals there could be no society, but unless individuals also perceive themselves to belong to groups, that is, to share characteristics, circumstances, values and beliefs with other people, then society would be without structure or order. These perceptions of groups are called stereotypes." (Craig McGarty, Vincent Y. Yzerbyt and Russell Spears, "Social, Cultural and Cognitive Factors in Stereotype Formation," *Stereotypes as Explanations: The Formation of Meaningful Beliefs About Social Groups*, eds. Craig McGarty, Vincent Y. Yzerbyt and Russell Spears (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 1.)

¹²¹ See: C. Stangor and J. Lange, "Cognitive Representations of Social Groups: Advances in Conceptualizing Stereotypes and Stereotyping," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 26 (1993): 357-416.

collecting and distributing taxes), and (c) contribute to a process of positive intergroup differentiation whereby stereotypers strive to represent their ingroup as different from, and better than, outgroups.¹²²

This last point is of importance for this study. Reicher et al. argue that out-groups, though, can be seen as more positive than one's in-group. This concept of differentiation stresses that groups can acknowledge other groups' more positive aspects, but there must be a certain level of contrast and distinction between the two groups. What is more important than being better than an out-group is that "people will strive to achieve positively valued social identifications."¹²³ Thus the construction of identity (through differentiation from alterity) is crucial to the perception of in-groups and out-groups.¹²⁴

Creating a group identity by contrasting it to other groups functions on all levels: national, regional, social, economic, or gender differences. Studies have shown that even so-called minimal groups develop positive group identities and distinction from others.¹²⁵ We usually tend to see different members of other groups as similar to one another. An American, for example, will see both a person from Berlin and one from Munich as the same, whereas a German will see many differences between the two. This phenomenon is called 'outgroup homogeneity' and has been confirmed in many studies.¹²⁶ Thus outgroups are more likely to be stereotyped and intra-outgroup differences are less likely to be acknowledged.

¹²² Alexander S. Haslam, John C. Turner, Penelope J. Oakes, Katherine J. Reynolds and Bertjan Doosje, "From Personal Pictures in the Head to Collective Tools in the World: How Shared Stereotypes Allow Groups to Represent and Change Social Reality," *Stereotypes as Explanations: The Formation of Meaningful Beliefs About Social Groups*, eds. Craig McGarty, Vincent Y. Yzerbyt and Russell Spears (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 162.

¹²³ Steve Reicher, Nick Hopkins and Susan Condo, "The Lost Nation of Psychology," *Beyond Pug's Tour: National and Ethnic Stereotyping in Theory and Literary Practice*, ed. Cedric Barfoot (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997) 64.

¹²⁴ McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears add that beside distinction from other groups, group members "also engage in processes of social influence within groups so that their members become more similar to each other on relevant dimensions." (McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears 6.)

¹²⁵ For example, Muzafer Sherif has proved this in his famous summer-camp experiment in 1966. Boys in a summer camp were randomly divided into groups and then given certain tasks. The study showed that not only group identities (and with that auto- and hetero-stereotypes) were established quickly, but also that contact between the two groups led to possible conflict. This theory of intergroup conflict shows again that stereotypes are not a result of deficient thinking, but rather represent an intergroup relationship. When the boys were given cooperative tasks and equal status in achieving the goals, relations between the groups improved, even when there had been previous antagonism.

¹²⁶ For example, see Park, Judd and Ryan.

Turner introduced the self-categorization theory on the basis of Tajfel's work.¹²⁷ It is more general than social identity theory and is founded on the assumption that all perception involves categorization. This cognitive process stresses similarities among several stimuli (e.g. social or physical) of the same category on the one hand and stresses differences among stimuli of different categories on the other. Therefore it helps to make the world around us more meaningful. Thus stereotypes are an important factor in categorization processes. Brown and Turner conclude that "stereotyping is the categorical perception of groups," rejecting stereotypes "as fixed prototypes or schemas waiting to be activated."¹²⁸

Groups and Advertising: An Important Relationship

Findings in the field of group research give new insights into not only how stereotypes work, but also into the mechanisms of advertising. Many different stereotypes exist because of every individual's natural and social group memberships: gender, age, class, ethnicity, nationality, religion, language, etc. Individuals commonly desire to belong to certain groups because of higher prestige, status, privileges, etc. Becoming affiliated with these social groups may be possible when certain 'requirements' are met. For example, it is possible to be a member of a higher class or level in society by obtaining an academic degree or a more respected profession.

On the other hand, it is impossible to join natural groups. One is born either male or female, in a certain country, region, generally with one native language, etc. These group affiliations can almost never be influenced, even if one learns a new language, changes citizenship, etc. They constitute an important aspect of our identity, automatically establishing many of one's ingroups, and thus also one's outgroups.

It is important to distinguish between these two types of groups especially when discussing advertising. Advertisers can use and portray certain prestigious groups, and usually most consumers or recipients wish to be affiliated with that group. Natural groups, of course, lack this element: one cannot change these affiliations, they are inherent. Advertisers can make

¹²⁷ See: John C. Turner, "Social Categorization and the Self-Concept: A Social Cognitive Theory of Group Behaviour," *Advances in Group Processes: Theory and Research*, vol. 2, ed. Edward J. Lawler (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1985) 77-122; outline of previous research: John C. Turner, et al.

¹²⁸ Patricia M. Brown and John C. Turner, "The Role of Theories in the Formation of Stereotype Content," *Stereotypes as Explanations: The Formation of Meaningful Beliefs About Social Groups*, eds. Craig McGarty, Vincent Y. Yzerbyt and Russell Spears (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 74.

you feel affiliated with a natural group and make you believe you can share that group's advantages while not having to bother with the disadvantages. "Ads tend to invite us to step into the 'space' of the ad to try on the social self we might become if we wore the product image,"¹²⁹ even if that is not physically possible. Advertising, after all, creates fantasies.

Another possible technique is to show undesired characteristics of an outgroup to raise the level of self-esteem as mentioned above: "Except when they're target-marketed for their 'purchasing-power,' others often function in advertising to make the mainstream look good: The square tells everyone else they're hip, African-Americans certify white soul, the Japanese are machine to American mensch."¹³⁰ Raising the opposition to outgroups by making them look less desirable creates stronger bonding with the ingroup: "By developing and expressing consensual stereotypes of out-groups, individuals may be more readily accepted by other ingroup members."¹³¹ Advertisements readily 'suggest' the means to do so by offering their product.

Advertisements may create their own ingroups and outgroups that have technically not existed prior to the ad campaign, for example drivers of 'German engineered' cars.¹³² In certain situations one identity may be more salient than others. Thus the characteristic "nationality" is subordinate when we see ourselves more as a male or a teenager or a cosmopolitan. "Which identity is salient will determine both who one includes as an ingroup member and who one excludes as an outgroup member. It will also determine the values, beliefs, and understandings which guide one's own action."¹³³ That, of course, can also be purchasing a certain product.

Furthermore, there is a third reason why a national group may be used to advertise products: even if we cannot change our nationality and heritage, we can at least purchase a product. Most people acknowledge that some products from certain countries or regions have advantages compared to those from other places: they may be of higher quality, better design, more economical or practical, have a long tradition of making them, etc. This phenomenon, the "country-of-origin effect," is discussed later. With our global economy we can consume these products without actually having to go to those countries. One can have the world's finest products without having to be from or in a certain country. Advertisements show us these

¹²⁹ Goldman 3.

¹³⁰ Savan 13.

¹³¹ Charles Stangor and Mark Schaller, "Stereotypes as Individual and Collective Representations," *Stereotypes and Stereotyping*, eds. C.N. Macrae, C. Stangor and M. Hewstone (New York: Guilford Press, 1996) 24.

¹³² "Advertisers may go to great lengths to create stereotypes about the users of their products, and what advertising giveth, advertising often taketh away." (Schneider 436.)

¹³³ Reicher, Hopkins and Condo 65.

advantages that certain groups' products have and make them available to the consumer who does not belong to those groups.

Conclusion

To sum up the recent discussion of stereotypes, a few working definitions and guidelines are presented here. McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears summarize the three guiding principles: stereotypes are aides to explanation¹³⁴, energy-saving devices, and they are shared group beliefs.¹³⁵ Cinnirella states that "stereotypes are belief systems which associate attitudes, behaviours and personality characteristics with members of a social category."¹³⁶ Mackie et al. define a stereotype as "a cognitive structure containing the perceiver's knowledge, beliefs, and expectancies about some human social group." The content and organization of stereotypes "are influenced by the separate and combined influences of cognitive, affective, sociomotivational, and cultural factors operating in social settings."¹³⁷ Oakes, Haslam, and Turner assert that "stereotypes are social norms."¹³⁸

Stereotypes may be negative or positive, true or false, very rigid, and they may or may not be shared with other people. Oftentimes they are not related to prejudice and discrimination but must be seen as a necessary and normal part of daily life. It is important to distinguish between the cognitive necessity of stereotyping¹³⁹ and the social and political realm of how to deal with stereotypes, the latter of which is at the core of this analysis:

It is evident that stereotypes are not random or personal; nor is there some universal soul, a black box that generates these categories of difference. Every social group has a set vocabulary of images for this externalised Other. These images are the product of history

¹³⁴ For a review of sense-making approaches see also: McGarty.

¹³⁵ McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears 2.

¹³⁶ Marco Cinnirella, "Ethnic and National Stereotypes: A Social Identity Perspective," *Beyond Pug's Tour: National and Ethnic Stereotyping in Theory and Literary Practice*, ed. Cedric Barfoot (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997) 37.

¹³⁷ Diane M. Mackie, et al, "Social Psychological Foundations of Stereotype Formation," *Stereotypes and Stereotyping*, eds. C.N. Macrae, C. Stangor and M. Hewstone (New York: Guilford Press, 1996) 42.

¹³⁸ Oakes, Haslam, and Turner 209.

¹³⁹ The view of stereotypes as energy-saving devices was first clearly stated by Allport. It became the most important aspect in cognitive approaches to stereotypes. (Cf. Hamilton.) Research has clearly shown that stereotypes are often unconscious. That is, an individual does not necessarily have conscious control, intention, or awareness of stereotyping processes.

and of a culture that perpetuates them. None is random; none is isolated from the historical context.¹⁴⁰

National stereotypes are an integral part of a nation's psyche, contributing to a notion of self and the Other:

Aufgrund ihrer direkten Bezogenheit auf ein kollektives Selbstbild können nationale Auto- und Heterostereotypen als zentrale Bestandteile des kulturellen Gedächtnisses konzeptualisiert werden. Dies läßt sich zum einen funktional begründen, denn ebenso wie das kulturelle Gedächtnis als Ganzes tragen Nationalstereotypen maßgeblich zur Ausbildung eines Nationalbewußtseins bei.¹⁴¹

1.5 How We Are Seen: Images, Stereotypes and Nationality

So far the focus of the discussion has been solely on the concept of stereotypes. Of course, stereotypes are not the only mode through which others are perceived. There are related and similar concepts which are important for this study of advertisements. Images, for example, certainly share a number of characteristics with stereotypes. The image is also a term frequently used in connection with advertising: the image of a product, a brand, a company, a person, or a country. Related concepts that are discussed include generalizations, national character, national characteristics, and prejudice.

Generalizations

While all stereotypes appear to be generalizations, not all generalizations are stereotypes. While generalizations can deal with any object, stereotypes are only about people. A second attempt at explaining the difference focuses on the content of the generalization: if they elicit controversy, we regard them as stereotypes.¹⁴² We do not argue about the generalization that

¹⁴⁰ Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) 20.

¹⁴¹ Nünning 328.

¹⁴² See: J.C. Brigham, "Ethnic Stereotypes," *Psychological Bulletin* 76 (1971): 15-33.

larger cars are safer than smaller cars, even though we know that it is a generalization that is not always valid. But assigning traits and characteristics to groups of people, to Germans or women or the elderly, may spark discussions or result in humiliation. I argue that the two explanations should not be regarded as separate but as one combined approach. Stereotypes elicit controversy *because* they are about people. Therefore I conclude that stereotypes are generalizations about people that elicit controversy.

Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice is thought to be more affective, while stereotypes are seen as more cognitive. Wright and Taylor argue that stereotypes are “beliefs, shared by members of one group, about the shared characteristics of another group. Prejudice is a socially shared judgment or evaluation of the group including the feelings (affect) associated with that judgment.”¹⁴³ These definitions also encompass the often-mentioned difference of stereotypes as beliefs or belief systems and prejudice as a judgment.¹⁴⁴ While stereotypes may be positive or neutral, another important difference is that prejudice generally has negative connotations and content.

Prejudice can lead to discrimination.¹⁴⁵ This is any kind of action toward the prejudiced group or members of this group. This action need not necessarily be physical but often may be a gesture or verbal action. Ethnophaulisms, or derogatory nicknames, may be such a common means of discrimination. Germans have been called ‘Huns’ due to the ‘Hunnenrede’ of Kaiser Wilhelm II. and the ethnophaulism ‘Krauts’ is still used today. New terms are created during times of tensions, for example ‘Weasel’ on a national or ‘Eurowimps’ on a European level. It has been shown that ethnophaulisms are not only a result of prejudice but also have an effect on prejudice.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Stephen C. Wright and Donald M. Taylor, "The Social Psychology of Cultural Diversity: Social Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination," *The Sage Handbook of Social Psychology*, eds. Michael A. Hogg and Joel Cooper (London: Sage, 2003) 433.

¹⁴⁴ See also: John F. Dovidio, et al, "Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination: Another Look," *Stereotypes and Stereotyping*, eds. C.N. Macrae, C. Stangor and M. Hewstone (New York: Guilford Press, 1996) 276-319.

¹⁴⁵ It must be noted that the term *discrimination* is sometimes used instead of the term *differentiation*. These two concepts must be distinguished, however. Here the term *discrimination* is used as a result of prejudice, not as distinguishing ones group from others (Differentiation).

¹⁴⁶ E.B. Palmore, "Ethnophaulism and Ethnocentrism," *American Journal of Sociology* 67 (1962): 442-445; on size of group and nicknames see: B. Mullen and C. Johnson, "Cognitive Representation in Ethnophaulisms as a Function of Group Size: The Phenomology of Being in a Group," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 19 (1993): 296-304.

National Character

The term ‘national character’ is very problematic because there is no adequate research that supports the existence of such a phenomenon. This concept has been used (and misused) to describe certain cultural traits of a national group, emphasizing differences from other national groups and merging them into one character. Researchers examined ‘high’ and ‘common’ culture or political and social institutions to derive a nation’s character. Inkeles and Levinson argued that national character can be derived from “the relatively enduring personality characteristics and patterns that are modal among the adult members of the society,” but did not claim that such a phenomenon did or did not exist.¹⁴⁷

More modern reviews state that this approach leads to simplifying complex patterns into labels, which have often been confused with stereotypes in earlier stereotype research. The idea of national character, as Reicher, Hopkins, and Condo put it, “illustrates the general failure to explain complex cultural, ideological and structural forms by reductionistic appeals to individualistic psychologies.”¹⁴⁸

Beliefs about national characteristics and differences (“schematisierte und stereotype *Vorstellungen* über die Besonderheiten und Unterschiede von Nationen”) is a more adequate expression than national character, because it implies a plurality of traits and not such wholeness and cohesiveness as ‘national character.’¹⁴⁹ It also gives more credit to the complex and changing nature of a culture.

Haagendorn and Linssen contrast national characteristics with national stereotypes, concluding that “full consensus on the image about a nationality (that is, consensus among all perceivers, including the target population) can be considered as an indication of the ‘veridicality’ or ‘validity’ of the national stereotypes,” and can therefore be referred to as national characteristics.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Alex Inkeles and Daniel J. Levinson, “National Character: The Study of Modal Personality and Sociocultural Systems,” *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, vol 4, 2nd ed., eds. Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1969) 428.

¹⁴⁸ Reicher, Hopkins and Condo 63.

¹⁴⁹ Nünning 323.

¹⁵⁰ Louk Hagendoorn and Hub Linssen, “National Characteristics and National Stereotypes: A Seven Nation Comparative Study,” *Cross-National Perspectives in Nationality, Identity, and Ethnicity*, ed. Russell F. Farnen (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1994) 106.

Images

The concept of images is employed by many academic disciplines.¹⁵¹ “‘Image’ has almost as many meanings as the number of people who use it. It has been used as a synonym for such concepts as message, reputation, perception, cognition, attitude, credibility, belief, communication, or relationship.”¹⁵² Thus two image categories – national images and images of companies, institutions, and products – are given special attention below.

Probably the most striking difference is that images can be altered, but existing stereotypes cannot. Since Lippmann, stereotypes have been described as rigid, and they are consistent over time because their content becomes embedded in a culture. Images, however, are more likely to be directly influenced and altered in various ways, through image campaigns, political actions, and speeches, to name just a few. Stereotypes, though, do not tend to be able to be changed in such a deliberate way.¹⁵³ Images can be planned, molded, updated, and changed if desired. They can create new impressions that stereotypes cannot: “Die Konstruktion von Images läßt sich schließlich instrumentalisieren: Sie können vorsätzlich, kontingent, d.h. je nach Bedarf, kurzfristig und ökonomisch am Reißbrett entworfen und durch geeignete Strategien in die Öffentlichkeit getragen werden...”¹⁵⁴ Böhme-Dürr agrees in that images tend to be more fleeting and reflect the current state of the culture in which they were created more than stereotypes:

Das soziale Gedächtnis erschwert eine Fixierung von Images über lange Zeiträume, denn Wertesysteme können sich ändern. Wenn Images ihre (derzeitige oder zukünftige) Bedeutung verlieren, sollten sie verblassen. Ändert sich das gesellschaftliche Wertesystem, ändern sich auch Images. Der Imagewandel durch den Wertewandel besagt

¹⁵¹ For an interdisciplinary discussion of images see Hebel’s “*Those Images of Jealousie*”: *Identitäten und Alteritäten im puritanischen Neuengland des 17. Jahrhunderts*, especially chapter 2, pages 22-49: “Imagologische Repräsentationen als kollektive Identitäts- und Alteritätskonstruktionen: Ein interdisziplinärer Forschungsbericht und Interpretationsansatz.”); also: James E. Grunig, “On the Effects of Marketing, Media Relations, and Public Relations: Images, Agendas, and Relationships,” *Image und PR: Kann Image Gegenstand einer Public Relations-Wissenschaft sein?* eds. Wolfgang Armbrrecht, Horst Avenarius and Ulf Zabel (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1993) 263-295.

¹⁵² Grunig 263. On different types of images, see also: Jürgen Wilke, “Imagebildung durch Massenmedien.” *Völker und Nationen im Spiegel der Medien* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1989) 14-16.

¹⁵³ “Obwohl die Übergänge zwischen ‘Image’ und ‘Stereotyp’ fließend sind, lassen sich jedoch Unterschiede im Verständniss ihrer Bedeutung festmachen. ‘Image’ scheint wertneutraler und eher ein der Fluktuation unterworfenen Phänomen zu sein, wohingegen ‘Stereotyp’ stark verfestigte Einstellungen bezeichnet und durch die Verwendung in der Vorurteils- und Minoritätenforschung einen negativen Beiklang hat.” (Wilke 12.)

¹⁵⁴ Klaus Merten and Joachim Westerbarkey, “Public Opinion und Public Relations,” *Die Wirklichkeit der Medien*, eds. Klaus Merten, Siegfried J. Schmidt and Siegfried Weischenberg (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994) 207.

jedoch nicht, daß Automatismen (Stereotypen und Vorurteile) aus dem kulturellen Langzeit-Gedächtnis ebenfalls aufgegeben werden.¹⁵⁵

Another approach to differentiate between the two concepts is the specificity of stereotypes compared to the complexity of images: “Das Stereotyp ist ein Einzelcharakteristikum, das in bestimmten (einander ähnlichen) Kontexten geradezu zwanghaft assoziiert wird. Images sind dagegen holistisch und beziehen sich auf (meist mehrere) Einzelcharakteristika in ganz unterschiedlichen Kontexten.”¹⁵⁶

Effective advertisements use both images and stereotypes because when the familiar and the new and exciting, the simple and the complicated, the known and the unknown are carefully balanced, the consumer is left in the perfect limbo state. Merten and Westerbarkey stress that it is usually repetition that forms an image and not single occurrences, a characteristic shared with stereotypes: “Unter einem Image versteht man, verkürzt gesagt, ein konsonantes Schema kognitiver und emotiver Strukturen, das der Mensch von einem Objekt (Person, Organisation, Produkt, Idee, Ereignis) entwirft.”¹⁵⁷

Images of Companies, Institutions and Products

Raymond Williams defines an image, particularly in the context of advertising, as “perceived reputation.”¹⁵⁸ Rühl states how images are defined in marketing psychology: “als eine Summe von Ideen, Bildern, Einstellungen und Gefühlen [...], die weitgehend auf Verbrauchsgüter [...] bzw. deren Marken und Verpackungen gerichtet sind.”¹⁵⁹

Marketing uses images as a basis for better advertising.¹⁶⁰ The created images include a variety of factors, including name and brand of the product, prestige, packaging¹⁶¹, quality, price, as well as how and where the product is advertised. The consumer does not only purchase a

¹⁵⁵ Karin Böhme-Dürr, *Perspektivensuche: das Ende des Kalten Krieges und der Wandel des Deutschlandbildes in der amerikanischen Presse (1976 - 1998)* (Konstanz: UVK-Medien, 2000) 55.

¹⁵⁶ Böhme-Dürr 41. Böhme-Dürr also states that images are not only related to persons, groups, and nations, but also to objects, institutions, and organizations.

¹⁵⁷ Merten and Westerbarkey 206.

¹⁵⁸ Williams 158.

¹⁵⁹ Manfred Rühl, “Images – Ein symbolischer Mechanismus der öffentlichen Kommunikation zur Verinfachung unbeständiger Public Reactions,” *Image und PR: Kann Image Gegenstand einer Public Relations-Wissenschaft sein?* eds. Wolfgang Armbricht, Horst Avenarius and Ulf Zabel (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1993) 57.

¹⁶⁰ Rühl 57.

¹⁶¹ On packaging, see also: Hine; Jankowski.

physical product or mere service, but an image, or an image package.¹⁶² “As a result, shopping is not just about acquiring the goods and services we need. It is, more potently, about acquiring elements that make up an image, a lifestyle, and an identity.”¹⁶³ Therefore references to Germany and the Germans always fulfill consumers’ yearning for a lifestyle associated with the country, and thus reveals more about American culture than Germany.

Images also extend to companies and corporations (one also speaks of corporate identity¹⁶⁴) as well as other institutions and can reflect on their national culture and vice versa. “Corporate reputation can be the determining factor in public acceptance of a product,” Hall and Hall explain, “if the product is similar in quality and price to a competitor’s.”¹⁶⁵ Product and corporate images are intertwined and dependent on each other. As I will show later, many companies portray their own identity frequently with only minor emphasis on the actual products. In some business sectors this method is more useful than others, for example financial services often heavily rely in advertising on their integrity, honesty, and past success rather than the actual services, which are difficult to portray or contrast with those of their competitors.

Messaris points out that “the fact that images can reproduce the appearance of reality (or selected aspects of that appearance) also means that they can call forth a variety of ‘preprogrammed’ emotional responses.”¹⁶⁶ Images, thus, facilitate the connection between perceiver and product, between perceiver and nationality. As pointed out above, images can be altered more easily than stereotypes, and therefore are a crucial tool for advertisers. If images elicit certain ‘preprogrammed’ responses, they can be used deliberately and pointedly. Therefore none of the images used in advertisements are random.

Especially if a company’s product is similar or indistinguishable from that of another company, advertisers often resort to creating and promoting an image. Certain feelings, values, and impressions are invoked and a connection between these and the product are established to make the product appear to be unique, different, and special. Advertisers often use this for

¹⁶² Rühl 57-58.

¹⁶³ Laura Pappano, *The Connection Gap: Why Americans Feel So Alone* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001) 44.

¹⁶⁴ See: Mats Alvesson, “Organization: From Substance to Image?” *Image und PR: Kann Image Gegenstand einer Public Relations-Wissenschaft sein?* eds. Wolfgang Armbrrecht, Horst Avenarius and Ulf Zabel (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1993) 113-131.

¹⁶⁵ Edward T. Hall and Mildred Reed Hall, *Understanding Cultural Differences* (Yarmouth: Intercultural Press, 1990) 168.

¹⁶⁶ Messaris xiii.

products whose main distinction is taste or smell. Because these factors cannot be conveyed directly to the perceiver, the advertiser has to create certain images that can make up for this lack. Williamson sees this process, which is also referred to as branding, as linking products to “referent systems.”¹⁶⁷ Goldman asserts that the “fundamental work accomplished within an advertising space is the connection and exchange of meanings between an object (a named product) and an image (another referent system).”¹⁶⁸ These two elements are often also referred to in the de Saussurian terms ‘signifier’ and ‘signified.’ Because they are otherwise not connected, advertisements “must be structured to steer interpretation if they are to fulfill their purpose.”¹⁶⁹ This ‘steering’ is the difficult and often unpredictable work of advertisers.

Referent systems are often decontextualized in order to avoid unwanted and undesirable elements within the referent system of a certain product. This is why many advertisements seem to be so ‘clean’ and artificial, and why the referent system seems to be frequently out of place and context. A product in this category, which makes heavy use of referent systems, is beer. It is not only impossible to show the taste differences to other beers in an advertisement, but often these differences are barely perceivable and difficult to judge, which the resulting intense use of images compensates. Because consumers believe what they see and hear, an important function of images is that of evidence:¹⁷⁰

In the carefully calculated design of many consumer goods, the technological supremacy of the corporation is made seemingly accessible to the consumer. [...] In a world where a genuine sense of mastery is elusive, and feelings of impotency abound, the well-designed product can provide a symbolism of autonomous proficiency and power. Often this symbolism is nothing more than a gesture.¹⁷¹

Goldman and Papson point out that intertextual referents can function “as a hook to anchor the association of the commodity with the consumer’s memories.”¹⁷² The use of referent

¹⁶⁷ Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising* (London: Marion Boyars) 1984.

¹⁶⁸ Goldman 71.

¹⁶⁹ Goldman and Papson 2.

¹⁷⁰ Messaris 129-160.

¹⁷¹ Stuart Ewen, *All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1988) 215.

¹⁷² Goldman and Papson 70.

systems in advertisements has a cultural impact: “In the process of appropriating, reworking, and using them, advertising transforms the borrowed ideas.”¹⁷³ Messaris discusses that images simulate and distort reality.¹⁷⁴ Hall and Hall argue that “Americans are very image-conscious,”¹⁷⁵ a widely accepted view, which in itself can be seen as a stereotype.

National Images

Images of nations and nationalities refer to national groups and are shared by members of another group/nation. In contrast to national stereotypes, national images can be created by organizations and institutions.¹⁷⁶ Tourist boards or chambers of commerce consciously and intentionally work on improving Germany’s image in America and the world. Malinckrodt asserts that both West and East Germany tried to actively influence Germany’s image in the U.S. during the Cold War.¹⁷⁷ In her analysis, Böhme-Dürr discusses that national images are communicated publicly and refer to groups and not individuals:

Wenn wir davon ausgehen, daß Nationenbilder - wie andere Images auch - zumindest unter bestimmten Voraussetzungen und in Teilbereichen veränderbar sind, dann ist es nicht sehr sinnvoll, sie als geschlossene Systeme zu begreifen. Sie sind vom Wahrnehmungsinput, also von direkter wie auch von medialer Information abhängig. Und wir müssen davon ausgehen, daß Nationenimages sich nicht auf Einzelindividuen beschränken, sondern (öffentlich) kommuniziert werden.¹⁷⁸

To a certain extent one could argue that national images are also images of a product. Tourism advertisements by government agencies, city councils, or tourist boards, attempt to attract visitors, who are also consumers. Many advertisements I analyzed try to present a nostalgic

¹⁷³ William M. O'Barr, *Culture and the Ad: Exploring Otherness in the World of Advertising* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994) 5.

¹⁷⁴ Messaris 3-125.

¹⁷⁵ Hall and Hall 168. Schor, for instance, has recently pointed out that brands are increasingly recognized by children, who are more and more oriented towards images and brands.

¹⁷⁶ See Mallinckrodt; Rainer Epbinder, “The Role of Inter Nationes in Propagating an Image of Germany Abroad,” *Images of Germany: Perceptions and Conceptions*, ed. Peter Daly (New York: Peter Lang, 2000) 11-18; Köpke; Gramberger; Düwel and Link.

¹⁷⁷ See: Mallinckrodt.

¹⁷⁸ Böhme-Dürr 47. For an in-depth discussion of national images, see also: 43-64.

Germany, which is a thoroughly created national image and seems to be largely shared by the American public.

1.6 Images and Stereotypes of Foreigners in Advertising

Following the discussion of the nature of stereotypes and images above, this chapter sets out to explore why these phenomena are useful in the world of advertising. According to O'Barr, images and stereotypes of foreigners are found in contemporary advertisements in three categories: travel advertisements, product endorsements, and international business ads. There are several advantages that explain their widespread use in advertising, but also several social side effects that have elicited many critics' responses. Group norms are increasingly spread through commercial media, but can also be seen as merely reflecting already existing social norms.

With the possible exception of family and friends, the media are probably the most powerful transmitters of cultural stereotypes, at least in Western societies. The expression of group norms in art, literature, drama, and film both reflects and transmits the stereotypes deeply ingrained in a culture.¹⁷⁹

Advertisements create a special, artificial environment, which results in the following implications that need to be taken into account. Firstly, communication is only one-way, the recipient can only receive information and not send it back, and thus interaction is not possible. Secondly, the information given is created, crafted, carefully designed, developed, and devoid of all spontaneity. In actual cross-cultural contact, which is obviously more coincidental and consists of interaction, the distorted picture is created by our own culture. We see the Other according to our own reference system, our set of cultural values; our perception is ethnocentric. Whereas both cross-cultural interactors use their value-system, the creator of an advertisement can manipulate this system and usually even shares this system. In other words and in our context, the creator is American and the viewers are Americans. The value-system of the Other,

¹⁷⁹ Mackie et al. 61.

in our case, German, is not part of the act of communication; the problems of cross-cultural communication do not occur. There is no contradiction, no conflict, because the viewer perceives information specifically designed according to his or her cultural setting. The communication is intra-cultural, not inter-cultural. Stephan and Stephan write that “both cultural interpretations of contexts and the conditions of contact have important effects on cross-cultural relations. All cross-cultural encounters take place in specific contexts that are likely to be construed differently by people from different cultures.”¹⁸⁰

Through the mass media, people can see representations of groups that perhaps they would otherwise never come in contact with. Television is especially suitable for this because it uses both visual and audio information, thus seemingly conveying an authentic and realistic representation of reality. Therefore an individual can form stereotypes about certain groups whose members he or she has never actually met. Even when contact with a certain group is frequent, the stereotype may be resistant to the new experiences.

Stereotypes of foreigners are learned from a very early age and are initially usually indirect. It can be assumed that, as children are more and more exposed to television and thus advertising at very early ages, ethnic and national stereotypes are increasingly internalized by children. Advertisers use more of these stereotypes, as most viewers, even the youngest, will recognize them.

In as much as ethnic and national stereotypes are associated with their relevant social groups, then they are somewhat different to most other stereotypes. Both ethnicity and nationality are relatively stable elements of an individual's sense of identity, and come to impact one's life from a very early age. Psychologists have demonstrated that children manifest a preference for the symbols of their own nation before their cognitive apparatus can even fully comprehend what a nation or nationality actually is. [...] since both ethnic and national stereotypes are learnt early in life, and associated with potent social identities, they are likely to be quite resistant to change, and to come to form an important part of an individual's set of beliefs.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Cookie White Stephan and Walter G. Stephan, "Cognition and Affect in Cross Cultural Relations," *Cross-Cultural and Intercultural Communication*, ed. William B. Gudykunst (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003) 113.

¹⁸¹ Cinnirella 48-49.

Us vs. Them

O'Barr sees businesses using and abusing depictions of the Other as a confrontational tool: "Advertisements that depict foreigners, I argue, depict ideologies about relationships between us and them."¹⁸² As I have argued above, people like to be members of a group and often define themselves by contrasting one's group to another. The more distinguishable that group is, the easier it is to see the contrast and the differences. Thus the Other is often shown in an exotic way, which means in a way both foreign and simplified yet interesting.

While the exotic can be used for both attracting and repelling the consumer, it also becomes a mask for ideological ventures such as appropriation, subjugation, and dominance. The untroubling images of foreignness both undermine and underscore the fears associated with the Other and promote stereotypes that prevent significant communication between and across cultural boundaries. The economic component of the foreign 'inclusion' translates into the objectification of the foreign and its reduction into a commodity useful only in its exchange value.¹⁸³

An economic system that conveys cultural information only fosters simplification of the Other and exacerbates outgroup homogeneity. As consumers are more and more bombarded with these images, they become part of a culture's set of common knowledge.

Although stereotypes are internal, they can be visualized. The more powerful the visual cues, the more suitable are these visualizations for advertising. Advertising agencies, which rely on a constant supply of images, especially for print advertisements, often work together with stock photography agencies and companies. This type of business can be defined as "a global industry which manufactures, promotes and distributes photographic images for use in marketing, advertising, sundry editorial purposes, and increasingly for multimedia products and website design."¹⁸⁴ Stock images have been known for centuries, and early advertising and trade

¹⁸² O'Barr 12.

¹⁸³ Elise Salem Manganaro, "When Foreign Sells: Exotica in American TV Ads of the Eighties and Nineties," *Advertising and Culture: Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. Mary Cross (Westport: Praeger, 1996) 25.

¹⁸⁴ Paul Frosh, *The Image Factory: Consumer Culture, Photography and the Visual Content Industry* (Oxford: Berg, 2003) 3.

cards already made heavy use of them. Frosh interprets stock photographs, which are widely used in advertising, “as striking visual materializations of cultural stereotypes.”¹⁸⁵

In order for images and stereotypes to work, the target audience and its culture need to be taken into account. Most advertisements only work in the country they are produced for and would fail in other countries. Ricks states that multinational companies must have different marketing campaigns for different countries. He uses the examples of tire makers stressing durability and mileage in the U.S. in contrast to agile performance in Germany, and of Volvo, which “has emphasized economy, durability, and safety in America; [...] performance in Germany; and safety in Switzerland.”¹⁸⁶ Thus for each advertisement and its content, not only a stereotyped country but also the country in which the ad is aired needs to be taken into account. “According to reception theory,” Berger comments, “we must not privilege the text and must take into account ‘the role of the reader’ [...] and the way different readers (or listeners and viewers, in the case of audio-visual media) interpret texts.”¹⁸⁷

Country-of-Origin Effect

Sometimes products from certain countries are favored over similar or identical products from other countries. This higher prestige can result from a number of factors: invention of a product, practice and experience, favorable growing/production factors, local or regional culture, etc. Very often food is seen as better in some countries than others, for example French wine, cheese from Switzerland, Italian olive oil, or German beer. The list is endless and numerous examples can be found for any country. Manufactured products also fall into this category, ranging from Swiss clocks and watches to Japanese electronics.

The competitive advantage that manufacturers and producers from these countries have is called country-of-origin effect.¹⁸⁸ It is triggered by a variety of cues, including packaging, advertising, and the company image. Stereotypes and images, as has been shown, are powerful triggers that can lead to the advantageous country-of-origin effect and thus are often used by

¹⁸⁵ Frosh 107.

¹⁸⁶ Ricks 56.

¹⁸⁷ Arthur Asa Berger, *Manufacturing Desire: Media, Popular Culture, and Everyday Life* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996) 12.

¹⁸⁸ See: Jaffe and Nebenzahl. For summary of country-of-origin psychological processes: Murray A. Young, Paul L. Sauer and H. Rao Unnava, “Country-of-Origin Issues,” *Global Marketing: Perspectives and Cases*, eds. Salah S. Hassan and Roger D. Blackwell (Fort Worth: Hartcourt Brace, 1994) 196-210.

advertisers. The energy-saving advantages of stereotypes lend their use to delivering quick visual (a kilt, a Lederhose, etc.) and audial (an accent, folk music, etc.) triggers.

It is noteworthy that, in general, products from more developed countries appear to be favored over those from less developed countries.¹⁸⁹ This is not surprising as more developed countries are seen as having accomplished certain goals (inventions of products or certain discoveries), which lends them credibility of excelling also in other areas. As cars were invented in Germany and many cars and innovations come from there, German engineering is still more highly esteemed in comparison to that of other countries.

While the country-of-origin effect can be advantageous to exporting countries, it may also be a “liability.” Babej reports that Germany is perceived less positively when negative perceptions and tensions are on the rise and during times of political, social, and cultural disagreements and hostilities.¹⁹⁰ He states that companies that show their German image might be negatively affected in times of political crises:

When a rift between two countries enters public consciousness, ‘badge’ products such as cars become shiny, chrome-plated targets because they make a very public statement about their owners. Though Mercedes hasn’t been touting its nationality, everyone thinks of it as a German brand. If buying a Mercedes becomes stigmatized as funding anti-Americanism, brands without this baggage, such as Jaguar or Lexus, could look more attractive.¹⁹¹

Referring to the tourism industry, he asserts that “[c]ompanies whose product *is* Germany could be in for a hard time.”¹⁹² Babej concludes that advertising and image campaigns can counter disadvantages that are caused by the country of origin, stressing that each marketing strategy has to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

¹⁸⁹ Mary Ellen Ryder, et al, “Multilingual Advertising: Does It Have the Intended Effect?” *Global Marketing: Perspectives and Cases*, eds. Salah S. Hassan and Roger D. Blackwell (Fort Worth: Hartcourt Brace, 1994) 313-314.

¹⁹⁰ Common reactions are boycott movements, for example the one organized by Jewish Americans against Nazi Germany (Dana Frank, *Buy American: The Untold Story of American Economic Nationalism* (Boston: Beacon, 2000) 101.) or a lighter version during the 2nd war with Iraq in 2003 during which French and, to a lesser extent, German products were shunned. Of course there are other reasons other than times of diplomatic and political differences. During times of higher unemployment and economic hardship, such as the Great Depression, “Buy American”-campaigns resurface. (Frank 56-78.)

¹⁹¹ Marc E. Babej, “When ‘made in Germany’ is a liability,” *Brandweek* 24 February 2003: 20.

¹⁹² Babej 20. See also: Rietig.

Harmless Fun or Humiliating Jokes?

It has been shown that stereotypes can be provocative or even hurtful and demeaning. They are often found in jokes, which can reveal many group attitudes and, according to Dundes, must not be underestimated: "A proverb or a joke told by members of one national group about another may be more responsible for the first group's attitude's about the second than any other single factor."¹⁹³

Many times a certain degree of controversy is planned and wanted by advertisers, as it increases the viewers' and the media's attention. As most ads are never seen in other countries, these images and stereotypes might even be hurtful and yet not have a negative impact on a company's image. But there is a certain line that must not be crossed and advertising agencies go to great lengths to make sure that the advertisement does not cause a decrease in sales and the company's image. Especially ethnic humor can, if not carefully used, lead to opposite results and is thus increasingly avoided by many advertisers.

Whether jokes are merely funny or humiliate and hurt certain groups inside or outside a country is generally decided by audiences on a case-by-case basis. The question if it is ethical to use jokes that depict certain groups or minorities is certainly debatable and cannot be answered generally; evidence does not support one position or the other. La Fave and Mannell conclude: "Although many ethnic 'jokes' exist at the expense of the group, a surprising number of arguments exist for humanitarian functions of ethnic humor."¹⁹⁴ A certain amount of 'teasing' or 'poking fun' can be healthy in relationships between individuals as well as groups and may spur, for example, positive feelings or productive competition.

Mediated images and stereotypes of various groups, not only those of foreigners, but also those concerning gender, age, physical features, sexual orientation, profession, and social status can injure and thus need to be constantly evaluated.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Alan Dundes, *Cracking Jokes: Studies in Sick Humor Cycles and Stereotypes* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1987) 96.

¹⁹⁴ Lawrence La Fave and Roger Mannell, "Does Ethnic Humour Serve Prejudice?" *Journal of Communication* 26/3 (1976): 122.

¹⁹⁵ See: Lester and Ross. On humor see also: Berger, *An Anatomy of Humor*; Dundes.

Why not to use stereotypes

Ricks shows in his book *Blunders in International Business* that advertising mistakes can lead to cultural misunderstandings, wrong conclusions, negative images, and insult. He presents examples ranging from packaging and layout to different cultural receptions of color, gestures, and symbols, from badly chosen names of products to wrong translations, and from pricing to marketing strategies. The often-amusing examples show that even thorough research can produce unexpected, uncommon, and often undesirable outcomes. Thus marketers and advertisers need to be careful in their marketing of products. A local advertising agency may filter out or not even make mistakes in the first place. Therefore many American advertisements for German companies are developed by American advertising agencies. However, many decisions of the marketing of a product lie with the company and its strategy, therefore cultural influence is often not completely eliminated and traces can still be found in many advertisements.

Furthermore the use of stereotypes in contrast to that of images is limited as advertisers strive to maintain an ever new, up-to-date, and fresh image. Therefore it is seen more frequently that existing stereotypes are challenged or played with, which prevents viewer-anticipated patterns and draws attention. Several advertisements, for example, play with the stereotype of the Germans as being overly traditional. They clearly challenge an older view and show that Germany has undergone massive changes, which is elaborated on below in the chapter called “The New Germans.”

1.7 Images and Stereotypes of Germans and Germany in America

The goal of this chapter is twofold: firstly, research on stereotypes and images of Germans and Germany not directly associated with advertising is summarized, followed by previously conducted research on the representation of Germans and Germany in American advertising.

How the Germans are seen in America

It is often argued that the Americans are the ‘significant other’ for the Germans, while the Germans are ‘one out of many’ for the Americans. Germany and Europe, however, constitute a

central focus of American culture, which is often argued to draw its concepts and images mainly from Europe. This Eurocentrism is inextricably connected to the European immigration that has shaped much of the United States' social fabric. It also pervades Germany's image, resulting in a number of depictions of Germans on a European rather than a national level.

As one of the large and influential immigrant groups (one quarter of Americans trace their heritage to Germany, more than to any other ethnic background¹⁹⁶), the way the Germans are seen has been largely influenced by the image of German-Americans. This has altered the perception of the Germans until today and may explain certain characteristics that are salient in the Americans' view of Germany. Koch-Hillebrecht, for instance, argues that the Pennsylvania Dutch convey a refracted depiction of the Germans:

Die Pennsylvania Dutch, die schon auf Grund ihrer soziologischen Struktur kein getreues Abbild der Deutschen vermitteln konnten, wurden trotzdem von den umwohnenden Einwanderern aus Schottland und England als paradigmatische Deutsche angesehen. Das amerikanische Deutschenstereotyp wurde in einigen Grundzügen durch diese Auswanderer geprägt.¹⁹⁷

Another general ascertainment is the duality of German characteristics: "Eindeutig positiven stehen ebenso eindeutig negative Bilder gegenüber. Die rationalen, 'offiziellen' Einstellungen gegenüber Deutschland und den Deutschen sind eher freundschaftlich, die emotionalen sehr ambivalent."¹⁹⁸ Especially Prussian militarism and two world wars have contributed to a negative perception of the Germans, even though this never prevented the more positive traits to be overshadowed for long.

Negative characteristics in advertising are seldom utilized in comparison to other types of representation. During both war efforts the propagandistic nature of advertising resulted in a

¹⁹⁶ "The 1990 U.S. census identified this country's four most numerous ethnic groups. Of the total of 248 million people, there were 58 million German Americans, 38 million Irish Americans, 32 million English Americans, and 23 million African Americans. Those same four groups also headed the 1790 census. [...] The dominant cultural groups - those with the most power and influence in the social structure, including the media - are the ones that control which images get seen. It is always to the advantage of the dominant groups to stereotype other groups in order to secure their dominance." (Lester 80.)

¹⁹⁷ Manfred Koch-Hillebrecht, *Das Deutschenbild: Gegenwart, Geschichte, Psychologie* (München: Beck, 1977) 141.

¹⁹⁸ Frank Krampikowski, *Das Deutschlandbild im Deutschunterricht am amerikanischen College* (Tübingen: Narr, 1991) 57.

surge of negative depictions, but as Germany changed from enemy to ally and eventually friend after World War II, the Soviet Union quickly replaced the Third Reich as a foe.¹⁹⁹

There are a number of publications that analyze particular characteristics of Germans held by Americans and their change during the past decades. While the methods of many of them have been criticized,²⁰⁰ many yielded serviceable results.²⁰¹

A final, noteworthy point is the regional diversity of the perception of the Germans within the United States. In the Midwest, the rating is the most favorable, predominantly due to this being the major settlement area of German immigrants. It is followed by California, the rating in the eastern states being rather average. The image is the least favorable in the South, partly due to the German anti-slavery stance before the Civil War, as Emmerich argues.²⁰²

Previous Research

As already indicated in the preface, previous research on this dissertation's topic is scarce, while studies on the depiction of Germans and Germany in other types of media abound:

"Die Studien zum Deutschlandbild im amerikanischen Fernsehen haben entweder Unterhaltungsfilm analysiert oder Nachrichten."²⁰³ Bredella, however, believes that advertising is an important type of text when it comes to creating or reinforcing Germany's national image.²⁰⁴

Wolfgang Gast has produced some valuable research on the topic in a study co-authored with Lothar Bredella and Siegfried Quast. The study titled *Deutschlandbilder im amerikanischen Fernsehen: Inhalte – Formen – Funktionen* is an analysis of 3500 hours of TV materials,

¹⁹⁹ See: Quandt and Schult.

²⁰⁰ See above for a more detailed discussion of one of the earliest, very influential study by Katz and Braly. (Katz and Braly 280-290.)

²⁰¹ For a review of research on stereotypes of Germans held by Americans, particularly American college students, between 1932 and 1986, see: Stapf, Stroebe and Jonas 38-53; also: Krampikowski.

For a summary of research on national characteristics of Germans, see also: Peabody.

²⁰² Klaus Emmerich, *"Ach, diese Deutschen": Eine Nation auf der Such nach ihrer 4. Identität* (Köln: Böhlau, 2000) 45.

²⁰³ Böhme-Dürr 69. On the media as a source of information on Germany, see: Wilke 11-21. See also: Wolfgang Gast, "Das Bild der Deutschen im amerikanischen Fernsehen: Ein Bericht über Ziele und Methoden einer inhaltsanalytischen Studie," *Völker und Nationen im Spiegel der Medien* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1989) 43-53.

²⁰⁴ "Dieser Textsorte kommt insofern eine erhöhte Bedeutung für die Ausbildung bzw. Verstärkung des Deutschlandbildes zu, weil die Bilder im US-Fernsehen durch ständige Wiederholung im hohen Grade präsent sind." (Wolfgang Gast, "Das Deutschlandbild im amerikanischen Fernsehen: Zahlen, Strukturen, Methoden," *Deutschlandbilder im amerikanischen Fernsehen: Inhalte – Formen – Funktionen*, eds. Lothar Bredella, Wolfgang Gast and Siegfried Quandt (Tübingen: Narr, 1994) 261-62.)

recorded between April 1st 1988 and March 31st 1989 from the network stations ABC, NBC, and CBS, the non-commercial PBS and the commercial channels CNN and TBS. The researchers came to the conclusion that, in relation, the mentioning of anything related to Germans or Germany was insignificant (1478 references excluding commercials and ca. 950 in commercials).²⁰⁵

Most references in this study are made towards cars.²⁰⁶ In the analysis of which characteristics are connected with German products, the following all relate to the large amount of automobile advertising:

Exklusivität: 26,6%

Dynamik/Sportlichkeit: 23,9%

Wirtschaftlichkeit: 14,7%

Zuverlässigkeit: 11,0%

Individualität: 10,1%

Innovation: 6,4%²⁰⁷

Gast also names folkloristic allusions as a second reoccurring theme:

Daneben gibt es aber auch ein weiteres Bildsegment, das in der Werbung dem Deutschlandbild zugeordnet wird: Deutsche Folklore, insbesondere in Form “romantischer” Versatzstücke aus der Architektur mittelalterlicher deutscher Städte (etwa Rothenburg o.d.T., Heidelberg). Abb. 10 zeigt, daß in fast einem Drittel aller Werbespots mit irgendeinem Deutschland-Bezug diese “Eigenschaft” an der Spitze steht.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ Gast, *Das Deutschlandbild im amerikanischen Fernsehen: Zahlen, Strukturen, Methoden* 253.

²⁰⁶ “Abb. 8 macht deutlich, daß unter den deutschen Produkten, für die in den USA im Fernsehen geworben wird, das Auto mit 85,3% aller Fälle die Nr. 1 ist. Eine gewisse Rolle spielen noch Medikamente (8,3%), den Rest (auch Hightech mit nur 1,8%) kann man vernachlässigen.” (Gast, *Das Deutschlandbild im amerikanischen Fernsehen: Zahlen, Strukturen, Methoden* 260.)

²⁰⁷ Gast, *Das Deutschlandbild im amerikanischen Fernsehen: Zahlen, Strukturen, Methoden* 261.

²⁰⁸ Gast, *Das Deutschlandbild im amerikanischen Fernsehen: Zahlen, Strukturen, Methoden* 262-63. [Abb.10: Werbeelemente mit Deutschlandbezug: Eigenschaften. Folkloristik 28,8%; Deutsche Produkte ohne Kontext 22,1%; Genialität 9,8%; Luxus 9,2%; Funktionalität 8,6%; Andere 6,1%; BRD: West 6,1%; Anachronismus 2,5%; Innovation 2,5%; Unkonventionalität 2,5%; Zuverlässigkeit 1,8%.

Another brief analysis of this dissertation's topic by Gerhard Probst is much more superficial and does not distinguish between references (images, stereotypes) to Germany and the national (German) origin of product and country. Probst sees the three largest German "achievements" to be cars, chemicals/pharmaceuticals, and beer. The information is not backed up, and the reference to German images is not clear: the German chemical industry does not display any connection to its country, and the only beer ad he discusses is not by a German company.

There are mainly three areas of commercials in which Germans appear: there are automobile advertising spots of Volkswagen 'German engineering at affordable prices,' Mercedes "engineered like no other car in the world,' and BMW 'the ultimate driving machine' in which German engineering ingenuity and quality of workmanship are presented to be unequalled; the German chemical industry, above all Bayer, which, by the way, most Americans do not consider to be a German company, represents the second area of German achievement; and then there is beer, with Loewenbrau and Beck's leading the way. In the 'fire-brewed' beer commercial by the American Stroh brewery the firm's German ancestry and beer-brewing tradition are exploited. Half-timber houses in medieval, fairy tale towns, which figure prominently on the average American tourist's European itinerary, are shown and invoke the romanticism also associated with Germany and the Germans.²⁰⁹

As this is the whole account, Probst's text does not prove to be of much help. It is not structured and stays on a superficial level.

Gast's following summary of the Germans and Germany in advertising in America, however, has been very influential in my research and shall therefore be quoted here fully.

Schon bei der Werbung als einer aus dem fiction-nonfiction Koordinatensystem herausfallenden Textsorte sieht das anders aus, ist der Rezeptionsmodus komplizierter. Hier ist der Kommunikationsakt nicht auf informierende Rezeption ausgerichtet, sondern

²⁰⁹ Gerhard Probst, "Images of Germany and the Germans in American Media," *Mediating a Foreign Culture: The United States and Germany*, ed. Lothar Bredella (Tübingen: Narr, 1991) 85.

als persuasive Gestaltung auf pragmatische Handlungsschemata hin orientiert. Die im Werbespot über deutsche Autos verwendeten Bilder sind also nicht als informierende Bilder über den Deutschen, die deutsche Wirtschaft, die deutsche Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte intendiert und werden auch nicht so rezipiert. Die Thematisierung 'Deutsches Auto' hat aber immer ganz selbstverständlich weitere ethnische Bilder im Gefolge, die in dieser auf Prägnanz und Kürze ausgerichteten Textsorte eine besondere Affinität zum Stereotyp hinweisen: So läßt sich blitzschnell ein Arsenal an Bilderwelten aufrufen und für persuasive Zwecke instrumentalisieren, wobei individuelle Differenzierung nur hinderlich wäre. Die Werbung greift dabei ganz selbstverständlich auf weitverbreitete ethnische Vorurteile zurück, auf deren Kenntnis und Wirksamkeit jeder Produzent setzen kann. Dabei können im Fernsehen alle drei Zeichensysteme genutzt werden: Visuelle Präsentation von *dem* Deutschen, typisch deutscher bekannter Bauwerke, Symbole, etc.; akustische 'Bilder' vor allem parasprachlicher Art (harter Akzent, schnarrende Stimme u. ä.), und sprachliche Versatzstücke ('Autobahn', 'Ja', deutsche Namen). Die Rezeption von Werbespots über deutsche Produkte wird dabei - vor allem durch die ständige Wiederholung - maßgeblich durch die kaum bewußte Aufnahme gleicher stereotyper Bilder bestimmt, die sich so im Kopf des Rezipienten verstärken.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Wolfgang Gast, "'Typisch Deutsche' im amerikanischen Fernsehen," *Deutschlandbilder im amerikanischen Fernsehen: Inhalte - Formen – Funktionen*, eds. Lothar Bredella, Wolfgang Gast and Siegfried Quandt (Tübingen: Narr, 1994) 11-12.

2. Germans and Germany as Object of Admiration

‘Many’ qualities and characteristics that are connected with the Germans have been and still are admired, cherished, appreciated, or even envied. Many of these positive notions are up to this date seen as inherently German, even though the social fabric or cultural landscape of Germany may have changed. It is not of interest here whether or not, or to what extent these national characteristics or stereotypes are true. Rather the existence of such specific traits and connections that are admired is the object of analysis in this chapter.

It is in no way surprising that advertisers conjure positive, pre-existing images of the Germans and their traits when the advertised products have a certain connection to Germany. It enhances both the company’s and the product’s appeal and thus is hoped to increased sales.

2.1 *The Efficient, Precise, Perfect and Diligent German*

Being accurate, efficient, precise, punctual, organized, and diligent are national characteristics of the Germans not only frequently perceived by Americans, but also by Germans themselves. Even though many of these characteristics could be discussed here as separate entities, I will present them as intertwined, as one image package, as one set of work ethics.

In the 1930s, the Nazi propaganda effort in the U.S. presents these apparently German qualities and their benefits for international travelers. A government agency travel ad claims: “German genius for organization has timed these events so that you can enjoy them during a glorious vacation in Germany.”²¹¹ The Hamburg American Line/North German Lloyd stresses punctuality: “Consider also the regularity of sailings now scheduled through the year, more than 200 crossings, a frequency that fits your travel plans to the day. And a punctuality that keeps the fit perfectly.”²¹² While World War II halted such promotions and depictions, the post-war years once again showed that these apparently German characteristics could also be positively charged, which led to an enormous display of advantageous traits. Only a few years after the war,

²¹¹ Advertisement in: Jim Heimann, *30s: All-American Ads* (Köln, Los Angeles: Taschen, 2003) 744.

²¹² Hamburg American Line/North German Lloyd, advertisement, *Country Life* March 1937: 19.

Germany began exporting goods again, and, as an ad for the 1950 United States International Trade Fair in Chicago reveals, it is promoted that “German products stand for quality.”²¹³

Lufthansa and “typical German fussiness”

These characteristics have been enforced over decades and continued well into the post-war years. Lufthansa’s campaigns have made extensive use of qualities such as seriousness and attention to detail and perfection, characteristics highly esteemed in the airline business. For instance, a 1966 print advertisement deals with a flight being delayed eight minutes because the coffee-machine was broken (“kaputt”): “And with typical German fussiness we refuse to take off until every part works perfectly. Maybe it’s being ridiculously German to carry anything to such an extreme.”²¹⁴ Koch-Hillebrecht comments on the salience of the discussed characteristics in airline advertising:

Einigen Ärger hatte die Werbeagentur Doyle, Dane und Bernbach mit einer Serie von Anzeigen für die Lufthansa, die 1966 erschien. Der deutsche Zug zur großen Genauigkeit, zur Gewissenhaftigkeit, zur Disziplin, den die Amerikaner an den Deutschen im allgemeinen nicht gerade besonders schätzen, kann jedoch einen Flugpassagier beruhigen, wenn er sich überlegt, daß das Flugzeug nicht von einem notorisch leichtlebigen Südländer gewartet wurde.²¹⁵

In another 1971 ad, titled “It is time we changed our image,” the Red Baron, the fictional ‘spokesperson’ of Lufthansa for several years, tells his employees: “Guten Tag cheerful employees of Lufthansa German Airlines,” followed by this text written in verse:

You will continue to be efficient
and prompt
and meticulous
and methodical
But you will also pamper and coddle

²¹³ German Industry, advertisement, *New York Times* 21 July 1950: 32.

²¹⁴ Koch-Hillebrecht 241.

²¹⁵ Koch-Hillebrecht 241.

Passengers

And it doesn't hurt to know some funny jokes.²¹⁶

The strict imperative and the emphasis on obedience produce a negative association of the Germans' leaning towards hierarchies and strong leadership. It shows the German employees not as freethinking individuals but as recipients of an order, as someone who will obey to a superior; even such a human trait as telling jokes seems to be dictated. A sense of humor, as discussed later, is not a trait commonly associated with the Germans. Interestingly, the superior here is the Red Baron, whose background is in the aristocracy and military, two institutions that rely on a system of rank and obedience.

In more recent ads such techniques, if somewhat more subtle, can still be found. The airline promises "Lufthansa *thoughtfulness*" and "expert efficiency"²¹⁷ or "supremely efficient service that's also sophisticated. Careful planning" and "cheerful efficiency."²¹⁸ Similarly, Lufthansa claims that it has "a passion for perfection,"²¹⁹ and emphasizes its "reliable service."²²⁰

Human Hands vs. Machines

Many automobile ads also emphasize safety and frequently show how often a car is inspected with careful attention to the minutest details.²²¹ Many advertisements for German cars also explain every step of the production process: "The 230S body is a taut shell, welded 10,000 times."²²² Volkswagen speaks of "hair-splitting precision."²²³ Extensive descriptions connote the quality of German craftsmanship, a quality that is generally acknowledged in the U.S.

Very often the perfection of German craftsmanship is highlighted, showing that this trait indeed is the opposite of machine-operated, faceless production processes. The German car industry uses the image of German manual workmanship to promote reliable quality products. A

²¹⁶ Lufthansa, advertisement, 1971, personal collection.

²¹⁷ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 27 May 1963: 17.

²¹⁸ Jim Heimann, *60s: All-American Ads* (Köln, Los Angeles: Taschen, 2002) 928.

²¹⁹ E.g.: Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 10 October 1990: C13; Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 2 October 1991: C15; Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 28 April 1991: CNA5.

²²⁰ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 2 October 1991: C15.

²²¹ E.g.: Volkswagen, advertisement, *Esquire* October 1963: 157.

²²² Mercedes, advertisement, *New York Times* 30 January 1967: 17. See also Mercedes "Tests," advertisement, 2001.

²²³ Volkswagen, advertisement, *New York Times* 19 November 1984: C5. Another commercial claims that "Precision" is important and "MAKES IT BETTER." (Volkswagen "Tight," advertisement, 2002.)

Super Bowl Porsche commercial stresses its manual production processes: “The new Porsche Boxster is assembled in Zuffenhausen, Germany, much the same way our original roadsters, the Spiders, were assembled; by human hands. Makes you wonder who builds other sports cars.” The classical music that accompanies the voice-over to this point quickly fades out and a robot is shown, pounding on the cars interior. Because the music is muted, the hammering of the relentless machine constitutes a sharp contrast to the personal, manual work that the presented employees “Kurt Hartmann, Assembly,” “Manfred Schirmer, Saddlery,” and “Dieter Wurster, Motorworks” perform. The names do not only add to the theme of ‘human hands vs. robots,’ but also to the label ‘made in Germany.’ It is most likely that they were carefully chosen, as they can easily be identified as German names by non-Germans and yet are not too exotic for the American public. The workers shown are all middle-aged, white males in grey work coats.²²⁴

Manual, quality craftsmanship is a theme used in many automobile advertisements often to a level of repetitiveness. Quality, the “meticulous attention to detail,”²²⁵ is seen by the advertisers as a key characteristic, more important than a lifestyle image. The following excerpt should suffice as an example of the thoroughness of the coats of paint on German cars: “The body is then dunked in a 52-ton primer tank, baked, spray-painted, hand-sanded, sprayed again, then *hand-sprayed*.”²²⁶ Why the image that German cars are made by real people is so important is explained in the following ad: “hand-stitched upholstery, hand-smoothed coachwork, the fact that every moving part is bench-tested before assembly – these are the hallmarks of honest work, proud work, built to endure.” The “special quality” that apparently only cars of this brand boast is linked to the many German workers shown in their blue overalls and suits above a yellow Mercedes.²²⁷ Once again, worker and product are directly connected.

Efficiency and Purity

The German work ethic, which is very advantageous for the German business world, has been a very persistent stereotype not only since Max Weber’s discourse on the Protestant Ethic. Even though working hours per week and days per year are far less in Germany than those in

²²⁴ Porsche “By Human Hands,” advertisement, 1997.

²²⁵ Mercedes, advertisement, *Esquire* April 1962: 53.

²²⁶ Mercedes, advertisement, *New York Times* 14 October 1968: 27. Very similar and even more repetitive: Volkswagen, advertisement, *Esquire* September 1964: 25; Volkswagen, advertisement, *Esquire* May 1965: 29. The following TV commercial follows the same procedural descriptions: Volkswagen, advertisement, *Automobile Advertising of the 60's*, New York: London International Advertising Awards, Video Recording, 1992.

²²⁷ Heimann, *60s* 167.

competitors' countries such as the United States or Japan, Germans are still regarded as hard-working, diligent, and efficient. Stapf, Stroebe, and Jonas remark that the attribute "fleißig" could always be found among the attributes stated most often in the studies that use character trait lists. They also remark that attributes in the field of work and science were often mentioned, such as "wissenschaftlich orientiert" and "effizient".²²⁸ This work ethic seems to be one of the strongest German traits.²²⁹

Both the German immigrants to the United States as well as the European Germans have long been known for their dedication to work in America, a country in which diligence, frugality, temperance, and hard work are admired traits. In the commercial world, marketing and image campaigns cultivate this pre-existing image. Predominantly cars, but also many other products symbolize the largely positive German traits. Automobiles seem to embody the characteristics deemed German; a Mercedes in a 1982 Super Bowl ad, for instance, puts "function first," has "surgically precise steering, tenacious road-holding" and is "road-efficient as well as fuel-efficient." Summed up, it is "aiming for efficiency in all its forms."²³⁰

Beer is a product that combines German festival culture with experienced craftsmanship. Some beer ads emphasize the strict German purity law, or "Reinheitsgebot," which signals traditional brewing techniques, the product's impeccability²³¹ as well as superior ingredients.²³² Many German beer advertisements stress the careful production process: "born through masterful blending of perfect ingredients."²³³

²²⁸ Stapf, Stroebe, and Jonas 50-51.

²²⁹ Stapf, Stroebe, and Jonas 106-07.

²³⁰ Mercedes "Test Track," advertisement, 1982.

²³¹ E.g.: Löwenbräu, advertisement, 1961. Personal collection.

²³² For example, a spot by the American brewer Sam Adams makes of point of importing Bavarian hops, showing German hops farmers talk about the importance of this carefully chosen ingredient. (Sam Adams, advertisement, *Comedy Central* 10 March 2005.)

²³³ Löwenbräu, advertisement, *Esquire* June 1960: 4.

2.2 German Engineering and the Automobile

It is not surprising that a leaning toward precision is generally found in the advertising of automobiles, the most important of German export goods.²³⁴ It signifies more than any other product the 'German success story': "In der zweiten Hälfte der 1950er und verstärkt in den 1960er Jahren rückten Mercedes-Stern und VW-Käfer in den Rang deutscher Wahrzeichen und schienen die deutsche Gesellschaft wirkungsvoller zu symbolisieren als Sauerkraut und Pickelhaube."²³⁵ The image of Germany is inextricably intertwined with the very salient symbol of the automobile, which constitutes more than a mere product in both Germany and the U.S.:

The growth of the automobile industry has been perhaps the most significant development in twentieth-century American history. Increased mobility affected to a momentous degree not only the physical character of American culture in terms of urban planning and lifestyles but also the psychological orientation of the country. In a society that has increasingly depended on outward appearances and material possessions as personal evaluative criteria, the automobile has occupied a unique position as a major symbol and as an active agent in socio-economic relationships.²³⁶

The automobile is perhaps *the* icon of popular culture, its depictions ranging from pop art, film, collector's item, mode of recreation, and leisure to a complete definition of lifestyle. Barthes sees automobiles as myth and magical objects:

I think that cars today are almost the exact equivalent of the great Gothic cathedrals: I mean the supreme creation of an era, conceived with passion by unknown artists, and consumed in image if not in usage by a whole population which appropriates them as a purely magical object.²³⁷

²³⁴ 17% of the world's production of cars in 1999 came from Germany. (Emmerich 13.)

²³⁵ Thomas Reuther, "In Hitlers Schatten: Amerikanische Deutschlandbilder," *Die USA und Deutschland im Zeitalter des Kalten Krieges 1945-1990: Ein Handbuch. Vol 1*, ed. Detlev Junker (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 2001) 917.

²³⁶ Mamiya 19.

²³⁷ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Noonday Press, 1972) 88.

Klink et al. stress that cars are and have been especially dominating in American society:

The importance of the automobile in the everyday life of America in the twenty-first century cannot be overestimated. The automobile industry is the largest industry, according to some, in the United States. More than a mere means of transportation, the automobile has come to be recognized as an object of dreams, fantasy, and identity. The study of the automobile as a social and psychological force in society is a means to understanding national values and aspirations.²³⁸

While the connection that the automobile creates between Germans and Americans is further explored later, this section deals with the engineers and producers on the one hand and the product on the other.

The Men in White Lab Coats

German engineers and scientists had been admired in the United States before the advent of the automobile due to major contributions of Germans and German-Americans during the 19th century, such as pharmaceutical products, bridges, crafts, lenses, as well as optical and glass products.²³⁹ While Germany still continues to be among the leading producers of such goods, the automobile is the most visible in America, not only in advertising.

The self-confident use of the term “German engineering,”²⁴⁰ used predominantly by Volkswagen but also other German car manufacturers, reveals the strong associations and connections of Germans and engineering in America. The aspect of engineering is stressed in most advertisements for German automobiles. Mercedes speaks of “engineering extravagance”²⁴¹ and claims that their cars are solid pieces of machinery: “At Mercedes Benz, engineers – not

²³⁸ William R. Klink, Michael L. Berger and Maurice Duke, “The Automobile,” *Handbook of American Popular Culture*, 2nd ed, vol. 1, eds. Thomas M. Inge and Dennis Hall (New York : Greenwood Press, 2002) 117.

²³⁹ Christine M. Totten, *Deutschland – Soll und Haben: Amerikas Deutschlandbild* (München: Rütten & Loening, 1964) 32-34.

²⁴⁰ E.g.: Volkswagen “Mr. and Mrs. Schmidt – Garage,” advertisement, 1985; Volkswagen “Remarkable,” advertisement, 1988; Volkswagen “Interact,” advertisement, 1988; Volkswagen “Good News Travels Fast,” advertisement, 1989; Volkswagen “Amusement Park,” advertisement, 1989. Also sometimes found is the variation “German-engineered car” (Volkswagen “Reverb,” advertisement, 2002.)

²⁴¹ Mercedes, advertisement, *New York Times* 21 January 1969: 20.

styling geniuses or marketing wizards – have the upper hand.”²⁴² The engineer as a person, as a craftsman with a name (see also the previous section) is highlighted repeatedly: “All the engineering and automotive theory in the world isn’t going to *build* a great car. The actual building is up to the craftsmen in the factory. That’s why we use skilled cabinetmakers to craft and fit the wood trim. Former dressmakers to sew the upholstery.”²⁴³ The do-it-yourself, can-do spirit is likely to be seen favourably by American consumers.

The ubiquitous white lab coats by which the engineers are easily identified, are the embodiment of “German engineering,” a marketing term and image has been intensely cultivated by advertisers because it stresses important stereotypical connections of country of origin and apparent product qualities. The term suggests that engineers from Germany possess these qualities and thus adds a certain scalability to the term “engineering.” The lab coat thus becomes a reoccurring visual trigger for these apparently inherent qualities. Many advertisements underscore the “single-minded devotion”²⁴⁴ with which they perform their tasks. In one commercial they are shown conducting a test on a closed track; but the voice-over assures the viewer: “for us it’s an amusement park.”²⁴⁵ Similar ads show the meticulous work the engineers’ conduct: in one Super Bowl commercial, a VW Jetta is shown driving around and then towards some engineers, only to turn and come to a precise halt, while they stoically stand in line inanimatedly.²⁴⁶ Similarly, in another spot also shown during the 1988 Super Bowl, two engineers sit on chairs in the middle of a test track and do not move. The car speeds towards them but comes to a shrieking halt right next to them.²⁴⁷ Both spots, which conclude “German engineering. The Volkswagen way,” show how well the car is engineered and how the German engineers trust their own work, but again brings up notions of machine-like, robotic behavior.

The characteristics introduced in the previous section also apply to the men in white coats: work ethic, perfection, efficiency, and cleanliness. The voice-over in a 60-second VW spot summarizes their dedication to their work:

²⁴² Mercedes, advertisement, *New York Times* 14 October 1968: 27.

²⁴³ Mercedes, advertisement, *New York Times* 16 February 1970: 23.

²⁴⁴ Volkswagen, advertisement, *New York Times* 19 November 1984: C5.

²⁴⁵ Volkswagen “Amusement Park,” advertisement, 1989.

²⁴⁶ Volkswagen “Interact,” advertisement, 1988.

²⁴⁷ Volkswagen “Remarkable,” advertisement, 1988.

What kind of people finish something but are never quite done with it? I mean, aren't you done when you're finished? See, these people have an idea, but as soon as they're finished with it, they realize they're not finished. So they keep fiddlin', tryin' to make it just a little bit better. Then they have another idea, and it's good, too. But they can't leave that one either. Of course, more ideas pop up, and they can't keep their hands off any of them. You know, they might spend a month tryin' to tweak this little part here or drive themselves crazy smoothing out that shape there, just to make every Volkswagen a little better. So, no matter what they finish, they're never really finished – ever. Maybe these people have some kind of weird DNA, these engineers and designers. Well, they sure are smart – smart, but kooky. I wonder what they're gonna think up next.²⁴⁸

The engineers shown in this animated commercial share the common characteristics with those in other ads: they are all men. Three different types are depicted, one in a white lab coat, another with a white shirt, vest, tie, and round, metal-rimmed glasses, and a third type wears a turtleneck and is completely dressed in black.²⁴⁹ The Volkswagen spot uses common stereotypes – their perfectionism, their involvement, even their nerdy disposition – in order to show the superiority of the product.

A Mercedes commercial modifies this theme, showing engineers dressed again in white shirts, ties, and white lab coats conducting a crash test. The car breaks through the wall, drives through an office and is seen crashing out of the building. A person is heard exclaiming: “Hey, what are you guys doing in there?” and the engineers look at each other in a slightly puzzled manner.²⁵⁰

Even the American competition acknowledges the engineering quality, as one Buick advertisement admits: “Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Bavaria – In the quiet, scenic villages of the German Alps, the townspeople are not easily excited about an automobile. Here, in Germany, automotive excellence is expected, rather than marveled at.”²⁵¹ Engineering, in this ad, is shown as a German way of life: the American consumer may not envy, but he or she respects the Germans for their engineering talent and expertise, even the common “townspeople.” They

²⁴⁸ Volkswagen “Weird DNA,” advertisement, 2002.

²⁴⁹ See also chapter 4.4.

²⁵⁰ Mercedes “Crash Test,” advertisement, 2002.

²⁵¹ Buick, advertisement, *New York Times* 13 May 1984: SM33.

function here as critics and pundits, who approve of the American car, which implies that these are usually not known for the best engineering.

Even though German engineering is not limited to cars, other products are only rarely found. They lack the emotional appeal, the differentiation, the market value, and the symbolism of the automobile. One advertiser praising German vacuum cleaners alludes to the dominance of car advertisements in contrast to other German engineering commodities: “Owning German engineering this remarkable [...] usually requires premium auto insurance.”²⁵² On the right, the ad elaborates on the theme by using more automobile advertising lingo: “The Miele vacuum cleaner is one brilliantly engineered set of wheels. [...] Test drive a Miele vacuum cleaner today.”²⁵³

Linking three of the most frequent German advertising topics, cars, food, and beer, the brewing company Beck’s recently announced its latest low-calorie beer with a very large “Holy Schnitzel,” combining American phraseology with the stereotypically German food. At the bottom of the ad, the claim and typical language so often used by car advertisers is found: “Every calorie is German-engineered for maximum flavor capacity.”²⁵⁴

The Dark Side of Engineering

While the German engineer is associated with these positive characteristics, it is often argued that there are also several negative traits generally linked to the Germans:

Wenn man jedoch genauer hinsieht, so greifen die sprachlichen und visuellen Referenzen aber auch Bilder auf, wie sie in den fiktionalen Porträts deutscher Wissenschaftler zu finden sind: ‘German engineering’ zeigt technologische Genialität, aber ihr haftet der Beigeschmack des Unmoralischen, des Menschenverachtenden an; die Entwicklung der ‘ultimate driving machine’ (so der Slogan von BMW), ‘engineered like no other car in the world’ (so der Mercedes-Slogan) können auf diese Weise auch negative Konnotationen bekommen. Ganz direkt und aktuell wird dieser negative Aspekt der deutschen Ingenieursgenialität im US-Fernsehen immer dann aufgegriffen, wenn Hochtechnologie für „das Böse“ eingesetzt wird, etwa Waffenexporte und

²⁵² A vacuum cleaner is shown in the middle of this message.

²⁵³ English’s Sew and Vac/Miele, advertisement, *The Paducah Sun* 13 August 2004: 8A.

²⁵⁴ Beck’s, advertisement, *New York Times* 25 February 2005: A13.

Giftgasproduktionsanlagen an Feinde der USA wie Libyen und den Irak. In diesem Fall sind in der Regel visuelle Zitate aus der Zeit des Dritten Reichs nicht weit.²⁵⁵

Among the triggers that possibly elicit negative connotations are the previously discussed uniform-like lab coats and the engineers' lifelessness and lack of emotion. A 1960s Volkswagen commercial, which makes a point of the numbers of engineers that check the Beetle before it is released to be sold, is a good example of these associations. It shows rows and rows of male engineers in white lab coats and black pants, looking more like an army than a workforce. The men are faceless as they are filmed from behind by a camera that moves slowly forward. The second camera perspective shows the engineers diagonally from below, the height of the camera being just below their shoulders, which makes them appear larger. All look towards a Volkswagen, which is shown only in the last frames of the spot. The eerily howling wind, the endless concrete area, and the absence of anything natural or any other object, add to the dull, lifeless, cold, and inhumane atmosphere.²⁵⁶ A comparison of this spot with works of Berta Helene Amalie 'Leni' Riefenstahl, particularly "Triumph des Willens," shows strong similarities in the use of imagery and filming technique. Riefenstahl is famous for her documentary propaganda films for the German Nazi party, which are thought to be both seductive and effective as well as highly controversial; two characteristics that are also prominent in the Volkswagen commercial.

The wording in some ads can lead to these negative associations, as in the phrase "Mercedes-Benz was *obsessed* with safety engineering long before it became fashionable"²⁵⁷ (my emphasis) or terms relating to Germany's militaristic or Nazi past, as in "over-engineered."²⁵⁸ Many ads conjure the popular stereotype of the mad (German) scientist in the tradition of Dr. Frankenstein as a personification of the German genius, combining the stereotype of the German engineer and the totalitarian follower.

²⁵⁵ Gast, *Das Deutschlandbild im amerikanischen Fernsehen* 261-62.

²⁵⁶ Volkswagen, advertisement, *Automobile advertising of the 60's*. New York: London International Advertising Awards, Video Recording, 1992.

²⁵⁷ Mercedes "Safety," Advertisement, 1989.

²⁵⁸ Mercedes, Advertisement, *New York Times* 10 June 1968: 31. See chapter 4.5 for a discussion of "über"-compounds, referring to the term "Übermensch." Also see chapter 6 for an analysis of the depiction of Germans and Germany as rival and enemy and chapter 5.3 for a discussion of the use of the German language in American advertising.

It is difficult to assess to which extent these associations are consciously perceived by the audience. I argue that the positive traits of the Germans definitely outweigh these few negative associations, and follow Bredella, who also leaves this point open as evidence is scarce:

Die Werbung für deutsche Produkte kann sich auf das Stereotyp des deutschen Wissenschaftlers und Technikers verlassen, und sie bestärkt dieses Bild. Selbst die Werbung für nicht-deutsche Produkte akzeptiert den Maßstab, den deutsche Technik setzt. So heißt es bei Daihatsu: 'Driving a Daihatsu feels as if it were engineered by Mercedes. It is the Mercedes of small cars.' Für einen Ford Scorpio wird mit den Worten geworben: 'It offers all the performance you would expect from a German touring sedan.' Die Werbung für deutsche Produkte blendet die negativen Assoziationen des deutschen Technikers aus und betont, wie deutsche Produkte die Lebensqualität erhöhen. [...] Dabei muss offen bleiben, ob die negativen Assoziationen, die mit dem Stereotyp des Deutschen als Wissenschaftler verbunden sind, nicht dennoch ins Spiel kommen.²⁵⁹

It can be assumed that such commercials reinforce the existing stereotype of the obedient, conforming, and technical German. They contribute to the view that there is something such as a deep-rooted German national character.

Body and Soul: The Personifications of Cars

The standard that German engineering is supposed to deliver can be seen in the references made in several ads, as in "The most fuel efficient V-8 powered luxury car wasn't engineered in Japan or Germany"²⁶⁰ or "all of which makes the '82 Scirocco one good-looking German sports car."²⁶¹ The car itself seems to embody the very characteristics that Germans are associated with, the VW Beetle probably being the most salient example. "Variously called 'the bug' or 'the beetle,' the prepossessing prewar *Volkswagen*," Jarausch asserts, "became the symbol of postwar

²⁵⁹ Lothar Bredella, "Funktionen der Nazizeit in amerikanischen Diskursen," *Deutschlandbilder im amerikanischen Fernsehen: Inhalte - Formen - Funktionen*, eds. Lothar Bredella, Wolfgang Gast and Siegfried Quandt (Tübingen: Narr, 1994) 230.

²⁶⁰ Lincoln, advertisement, *New York Times* 10 February 1992: A9.

²⁶¹ Volkswagen "Take a Fast Look," advertisement, 1982.

German industry, reliability and efficiency.”²⁶² The beetle was a simple, humble, honest car that seemed to represent the new Western Germany and its positive virtues. It was very efficient and low-key, was easy to maintain and had low gas mileage, advantages presented in almost every ad for the car.

In fact, many German advertisers use personifications and depict their cars as animals or human beings. Audi’s all-wheel drive model is presented as an animal in a spot in which an Eskimo shows his son traces in the snow, pointing at them and explaining in his native language which animal they belong to, first those of a wolf, then those of a bear. Then he points at tire tracks and explains that they were made by an Audi Quattro.²⁶³ Similarly, Mercedes shows one of its offroad vehicles as a wild animal, which is beige/sand-colored and drives through grasslands on a dusty lane. The commercial concludes with the following lines: “Born August 2001” and “The new 2002 M-Class.”²⁶⁴ Audi’s “Anatomy of a Genius” spot shows the physical parts of one of its cars: “the heart,” “the skeleton,” and “the brain,”²⁶⁵ thus equating it with humans.

The following analysis shows why such methods are employed. A Mercedes is put into a junk press in recent TV commercial labeled “Soul”: it is about to be destroyed. The camera position is the middle of the car, in between driver’s and passenger’s seat, allowing the viewer to see through the windshield. Thus a view through the “eyes” of the car is simulated, and the following scenes show the car’s “life” backwards as that of a human being, according to the widespread belief that one sees one’s life condensed and in retrospect before dying. The viewer can see several driving scenes, kids playing on its hood, intimate moments of its driver and a passenger kissing, ice being scraped from the windshield, the car being washed or avoiding a crash, and a parking ticket being stuck under the wiper by a police officer. Then the car is seen driving through a tunnel, with a bright light at the end. The whole screen becomes a white light, and finally engineers on each side in white lab coats, reminiscent of those of doctors, appear: the

²⁶² Konrad H. Jarausch, “Huns, Krauts or Good Germans? The German Image in America, 1800-1980,” *German American Interrelations: Heritage and Challenge. Joint Conference held at the University of Maryland April 2 - April 5, 1984*, ed. James F. Harris (Tübingen: Tübingen University Press, 1985) 155.

²⁶³ Audi Quattro “Lessons,” advertisement, 2002.

²⁶⁴ Mercedes “Born Free,” advertisement, 2001.

²⁶⁵ Audi A8 L “Anatomy of a Genius,” advertisement, 2003.

car is on an assembly line and is reborn into a new generation model. The voice-over concludes that “[t]he outside may change, but the soul remains the same.”²⁶⁶

The personification of the car in this ad has a number of functions: it creates emotion by not only alluding to such dramatic and elemental scenes as death and birth, but also by showing the humans’ relationship with the car. These depictions include the caring for the car, the family activities enjoyed together, the most intimate moments shared: in short, the car is an important part in most Americans’ lives, and the commercial reinforces this image. The automobile is presented as if it were a partner, a pet, a member of the family, as if it had a personality, a life story, and feelings. And even more so, the whole brand can stay man’s or woman’s best friend if the cars are reborn: the advertiser aims at brand loyalty in this spot.

The advantages of emotional appeal have been shown above; car advertisers try to strengthen the perception that cars are more than a means of transportation: that they define who we are and how we live our lives. Some people give their cars names and others spend much of their spare time on cleaning, decorating, tuning, and driving their car. That the automobile is really such a defining factor for so many people is played with in a Mercedes ad displaying several photos of people with their Mercedes Benzes.²⁶⁷ The conclusion, “No one ever poses with their toaster,” is meant to reveal that the automobile really is more than just a piece of machinery. In this train of thought, then, it does matter whether the car is ‘American made’ or a result of ‘German engineering.’ It defines an individual by his or her choices as a consumer. The country of origin of a chosen consumer product can thus constitute an integral part of one’s identity.

²⁶⁶ Mercedes-Benz C-Class “Soul. Unlike Any Other – Reincarnation,” advertisement, 2002. A BMW commercial showing the car’s headlights and explaining “Eyes are the window [...] to the soul” uses the same theme. (BMW “Eyes,” advertisement, 2001.)

²⁶⁷ Mercedes “Toaster,” advertisement, 2004.

2.3 “High Culture”: Music, Art and Crafts

Music, arts, and crafts are common themes in advertising. A closer look at which type of art is used in advertising related to Germany can give insights into a subtler, less obvious German image, the Germany of the ‘Dichter and Denker,’ a romantic, passionate Germany.

Music

It is not surprising that many Americans make connections between Germany and classical music, as many famous composers were German, or at least German-speaking. “Die Musikalität wurde als typisch deutsche Begabung angesehen,”²⁶⁸ Totten asserts, and explains the roots of this perception: “Die deutsche Musik drang auf drei breiten Fronten in das amerikanische Bewußtsein ein: zuerst auf dem Wege der Kirchenmusik, dann der Chormusik und schließlich der Orchestermusik.”²⁶⁹ References to music and Germany fall into two categories here: direct promotions for concerts or operas in Germany, and secondly, the use of music in commercials for German products.

Especially the Nazi propaganda effort to improve Germany’s image abroad drew on music, as the following examples display: One ad praises

a magnificent program of music, opera, theatre and picturesque folk festivals, such as the Wagner festivals at Bayreuth; the Berlin Art Weeks; the Great German Art Exposition and the Wagner-Mozart-Strauss Festivals at Munich; the Exposition ‘Nation at Work’ at Duesseldorf; the Heidelberg Dramatic Festivals.²⁷⁰

The passion play in the “inspiring, old-world village of Oberammergau,” which is found in several ads, is often presented as “the greatest cultural and religious event of all Europe.”²⁷¹

An ad promoting ship travel between Germany and the United States goes into detail; image of musical instruments (cello, violin, trumpet, woodwind) and a musical score titled “Die

²⁶⁸ Totten 39.

²⁶⁹ Totten 40.

²⁷⁰ German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 21 March 1937: 187.

²⁷¹ German Tourist Information Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 25 May 1934: 2.

Meistersinger,”²⁷² are shown, instantly presenting the ad’s theme. The text discloses a rather vague connection between the company and Richard Wagner: “For music, [sic] is our forte, and a mighty tradition with us. In the great creative period of Richard Wagner, 1847-57, our LINES were founded.” This connection is insubstantial, as many companies were founded during those 10 years, and because there is no link between the founding of the lines and Richard Wagner’s success and popularity. It is an early example of creating artificial or superficial associations which mislead and are only unmasked at second glance. The text continues to add other, positively perceived German strong points: “Fine music, yes, and with those other qualities together total the Art of Fine Living: ... surroundings of the highest decorative art, perfection in service, delicious food, pleasant people and security resting on the Science of Navigation.”²⁷³ Musical festivals in Germany, some of which would now be located in Poland and Austria, are then presented to the audience. Direct marketing in travel advertisements of German music still follows much the same pattern of merely listing the offerings,²⁷⁴ but seems to have abated over the past decades.

The use of music, especially identifiably German music, is a widespread and subtle technique to relate to the country of origin and also create a certain mood and emotional appeal. German music styles used in advertising include classical music²⁷⁵ and opera,²⁷⁶ folk music and yodeling,²⁷⁷ Marlene Dietrich²⁷⁸ and the “Neue Deutsche Welle.”²⁷⁹

Music itself is a nonverbal element, which is, however, often mixed with verbal elements. Both pre-existing music as well as music specifically composed for commercials can add to the overall appeal of advertisements: it can add energy, stimulate the listener, function as an attention-getting device, activate one more sense (hearing) to increase effectiveness, may invoke

²⁷² See also: German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *Country Life* May 1938: 114. (“the spirits of the Meistersingers live in Nürnberg”)

²⁷³ Hamburg-American Line/North German Lloyd, advertisement, *Country Life* April 1937: 21.

²⁷⁴ For example a Lufthansa ad for the winter season praising the arts: “Or take opera, the arts, the ballet, the festivals. Same story. Multiply natural inclination by generations of practice and you get excellence. Unforgettable excellence.” (Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 26 October 1965: 28.)

²⁷⁵ For example the Donauwalzer: Mercedes-Benz “Artists,” advertisement, 1998. Also: Volkswagen “Leaf,” advertisement, 2004; and Porsche “Valets,” advertisement, 1997, which combines classical with rock music.

²⁷⁶ BMW “Unavoidable,” advertisement, 2002.

²⁷⁷ E.g.: Glad ForceFlex “Avalanche,” advertisement, 2005.

²⁷⁸ Mercedes “Danke Schoen,” advertisement, 2001; Mercedes “Falling in Love Again,” advertisement, (*Lürzer’s Archive Online Services*. Reference number: [v2.9717]. <<http://www.luerzersarchive.net>> 12 January 2005).

²⁷⁹ Volkswagen “Dadada,” advertisement, <http://media.eurotuned.com/vwcommercials_nolinking/Golf-dadada.mov> 19 January 2005.

recipient's emotions²⁸⁰ and usually requires little active involvement or perception. An important advantage is the possibility to connect to something known and create instant familiarity; music is another reoccurring component that leads to identification with a brand, functioning as a recognition factor.²⁸¹ Too much or the wrong kind of music may, however, take the listener's attention away from the advertiser's message, thus it should enhance an ad rather than overpower it.²⁸²

Different types of music trigger different responses and associations from the perceiver in a similar way that visual images do. The frequent use of classical music in ads concerning Germany can be explained by the associated images of sophistication, prestige, and high culture. The other type often found is folk music, which, can lead to nostalgic connotations of a simpler life or perhaps one's roots: "Music provides the most frequently appropriated signifiers for referencing the past. Music works as a trigger of memory and supplies a mediating bridge between personal memory and collective memory."²⁸³ Music in advertising is one facet of stereotyping, as different styles are often associated with different groups. Thus music associated with Germany through style or language creates instant recognition and conjures national schemata.

Art

The use of fine arts is very similar to that of music; it is generally Eurocentric and connotes sophistication and prestige. While some travel ads directly advertise German art²⁸⁴, art is used in advertising to suggest that consuming the advertised product elevates the consumer's status, allows him or her to be part of a more distinguished, if artificial, group. In order to reach a maximum of potential buyers, the art that is shown needs to be easily identifiable. The frequent use of the Mona Lisa in advertising and other forms of popular culture, for instance, has made

²⁸⁰ G. C. Bruner, "Music, Mood, and Marketing," *Journal of Marketing* (October, 1990): 94-104.

²⁸¹ D. W. Stewart, K. M. Farmer and C. I. Stannard, "Music as a Recognition Cue in Advertising-Tracking Studies," *Journal of Advertising Research* (1990): 30(4), 39-48. See also: Patricia A. Stout and John D. Leckenby, "Let the Music Play: Music as a Noverbal Element in Television Commercials," *Nonverbal Communication in Advertising*, eds. Sid Hecker and David W. Stewart (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1988) 207-223.

²⁸² M. Carole Macklin, "The Relationship between Music in Advertising and Children's Responses: An Experimental Inverstigation," *Nonverbal Communication in Advertising*, eds. Sid Hecker and David W. Stewart (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1988) 226.

²⁸³ Goldman and Papson 127-128. For a discussion of folklore see the following chapters.

²⁸⁴ E.g.: Germany invites "the art and culture lover" to the "documenta," a well-known modern art exhibit. (German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 3 January 1982: SM27.)

this masterpiece a perpetually used cultural icon.²⁸⁵ It signifies high art and culture, a fact culturally communicated, even though most people do not know anything else about this painting. These associations and the created image of high culture, however, are sought by advertisers, especially those of European origin: they complement the overall image.

German car makers have used a variety of art forms, styles, and periods to promote an upper-class image. Particularly interesting, however, is that the product and its production process are frequently referred to as an art form itself: “The art of engineering.”²⁸⁶ Similarly an Audi is shown driving out of Guggenheim parking garage, as the voice-over concludes that “all great works of art belong in a museum.”²⁸⁷ BMW claims that “[t]he world’s automotive press have declared it nothing short of a masterpiece” and directly claims that its car is a piece of art: “BMW elevates engineering to an art form.”²⁸⁸ To emphasize this, the ad uses Michelangelo, the famous painter, sculptor, poet, and architect.²⁸⁹ Volkswagen refers to the Renaissance as well, presenting the “Volkswagen, Italian Style.” The linking to another nationality rather than to Germany reveals that the connection of this particular characteristic, style, with Germany was not seen as salient at the time.

It comes cut with a Roman nose, graceful curves, and a low silhouette. [...] Now you might think we’re crazy to go to all this trouble, just to turn out some fancy Italian sculpturing. [...] So that with the Ghia’s beautiful form and this strictly functional interior, you’ve got yourself a pretty solid piece of architecture. It’s known as renaissance Volkswagen.²⁹⁰

Art in advertising transcends national boundaries, while generally a European image is emphasized when depictions concerning art are used. The Renaissance, which originated in Italy but is regarded largely as a European movement, is an ideal theme representing high culture,

²⁸⁵ Gina Strumwasser and Monroe Friedman, “Mona Lisa Meets Madison Avenue: Advertising Spoof of A Cultural Icon,” *Advertising and Popular Culture: Studies in Variety and Versatility*, ed. Sammy R. Danna (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1992) 83-92.

²⁸⁶ This motto is used in many TV and print ads, e.g.: Audi “No Car In The World,” advertisement, 1986.

²⁸⁷ Audi “Guggenheim,” advertisement, 2002.

²⁸⁸ George E. Belch, *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective*, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001) 245.

²⁸⁹ The text below the picture of a BMW reads: “What Michelangelo would have created if he worked with galvanized steel” Advertisement in: Belch 245.

²⁹⁰ Volkswagen, advertisement, *Esquire* May 1964: 47.

beauty, knowledge, and sophistication. It creates a contrast to America, and is thus often used by advertisers that wish to stress European characteristics.

Germany's contributions toward architecture are acknowledged internationally. The influential and popular Bauhaus, a school of artists and craftsmen focusing on form *and* function, was dissolved by the Nazis by force and many of them emigrated to the U.S. where they continued to teach and work.²⁹¹ The artists and their style build a bridge between Germans and Americans and convey a counterpoint to a more isolated and aggressive image of Germany.²⁹² References to its tradition are found in several ads, for instance in a furniture maker's print advertisement: "Fine European Homes have known Hülsta for decades. Now you can experience Hülsta. An elegant balance of form and function. Precision German design. Streamlined style inspired by Bauhaus tradition."²⁹³ Here, the advantages of the positive image of German perfection, precision, and craftsmanship are combined with more artistic virtues.

Similarly, the producer of plumbing products, Kohler²⁹⁴, shows an architect who combines several stereotypical cues. His German accent as well as his tall, thin physique and his completely black attire and turtleneck point towards his cultural and ethnic background. This grey-haired, energetic designer shows two visitors his accomplishments: "This is a classical design we did in Milan. This is a postmodern residence in ... This design won five prestigious awards..." He then explains his international focus: "To see our architecture, you don't look around the corner, you look around the world." This is followed by his question: "So, what can I do for you?", which one of the two visitors, a woman, answers determinately in a very American accent: "Design a house around this." Presented with a faucet made by Kohler, the architect muses over the task and looks at the faucet, speechless and fascinated.²⁹⁵

Showing art in conjunction with German characteristics adds to the impression of European sophistication and cultural achievements. It is a trait commonly yearned for especially by upscale American consumers. With its relatively short history, the United States is commonly regarded as lacking deep-rooted cultural traditions and is only recognized for more recent

²⁹¹ Well-known examples are Walter Gropius' PanAm Building in New York or Ludwig Mies van der Rohe high-rise buildings on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago.

²⁹² Many German immigrants, especially those leaving during the years of persecution by the Third Reich, had a strong impact at American colleges and universities in the various disciplines, including the arts. (Totten 57.)

²⁹³ Hülsta, advertisement, *New York Times* 2 December 2004: D3.

²⁹⁴ The company was founded by an Austrian immigrant in Wisconsin. Its "European craftsmanship" has frequently been emphasized. (<http://www.kohler.com/corp/timeline/history.html> 17 January 2005.)

²⁹⁵ Kohler "Architect," advertisement, 2003.

cultural achievements. It is also a means of communicating the Eurocentric roots of the United States and creating a connection often pined for. It is important to note that artistic achievements are not portrayed as specifically German but rather European, and it is not not a salient or dominant German characteristics but a subordinated one in advertising. The exception here is German success in the field of design, which is commonly found in technical products.

Kitsch or Craft?

When it comes to some of Germany's unique products, the lines between kitsch and craft may blur. These desired objects, which are often collector's items, may indeed be pieces of art, but many producers try to sell anything as authentic German craftsmanship. The items discussed here, beer steins, cuckoo clocks, and Hummel figurines, are among the most strikingly German collector's items.²⁹⁶ The items themselves and the motives and themes used to advertise them reflect many stereotypes about German lifestyle. Whether these items are craft or kitsch lies in the eye of the beholder. But their existence reveals the strong impression they have left on American culture and their contribution to Germany's image.

One advertisement for a beer mug reveals military influences associated with the German mindset, which was especially strong during the militaristic years that these products were made: "Bavarian Beer Steins, circa 1896-1913, are collector's items. Hand decorated and capped with heavy, hinged pewter lids with individual military statuettes of cavalry, artillery, infantry and engineers. Of cold-retaining earthenware, each holds half a liter."²⁹⁷ Manual craftwork is stressed in this product category as well. On the more kitschy side, the following two ads suggest factory-produced mass-taste: one promotes "The World's Smallest Beer Steins" which are "imported from Western Germany,"²⁹⁸ the other boasts "colorful Bavarian scenes" and "plays a famous old drinking song" when it is lifted.²⁹⁹ Steins are inextricably intertwined with the country-of-origin effect and the salience of German beer quality, adding further to this image as discussed further below.

²⁹⁶ This has not changed much over time, as a 1914 ad shows. The advertiser offers to those "forced to return from Europe in haste on account of war," several German products: "German weatherhouses, Black Forest Cuckoo Clocks, Bavarian Beer Steins." (Swiss Clock Company, advertisement, *New York Times* 23 August 1914: 11.) For other German collectibles and souvenir items, see also: *Esquire* May 1959: 116-118.

²⁹⁷ Hoffritz, advertisement, *Esquire* November 1965: 199.

²⁹⁸ Menick's Gifts, advertisement, *New York Times* 7 December 1952: X44.

²⁹⁹ Hoffritz, advertisement, *New York Times* 5 April 1955: 5.

The cuckoo clock is another very popular German collector's item or souvenir. Often, the artistic and expert German craftsmanship is praised. In an ad of the early twentieth century, A. Frankfield & Co. promises "artistic carving" and explains the importance of the country of origin of the clocks it sells: "Having our own skilled wood carvers at the Black Forest, Germany, we are enabled to display exclusive designs, far superior in workmanship to those shown elsewhere."³⁰⁰ The advantages of "hand-carved" clocks, which are "imported from the Black Forest in Germany – famous for cuckoo clocks for centuries!"³⁰¹, is the common way of praising these clocks that were invented by Franz Kletterer in the Black Forest region in southwestern Germany during the first part of the 18th century. The cuckoo clock is also often used as an important trigger for Germany, as can be seen in an ad by the German Tourist Information Office, which shows a German clock maker assembling a cuckoo clock as the "travel picture of the week."³⁰² The cuckoo clock and its craftsmanship represent a non-threatening, respected, romantic, and rustic Germany, which is often emphasized by the German tourist office.³⁰³ Wanamaker's induces the country-of-origin effect by referring to its clocks' creators as "world-famed clock-making perfectionists."³⁰⁴ But cuckoo clocks are also often used simply for their comical effect,³⁰⁵ emphasizing their affinity to kitsch and nostalgia.

Cuckoo clocks exemplify that "German" is often not presented and understood according to country boundaries, but refers to the "German-speaking" area in Europe, thus including Austria and Switzerland. Advertising an "Alpine Village," Fortunoff presents cuckoo clocks as Austrian: "*Willkommen!* This cozy hamlet is delighted to become a prosperous pair of Austrian shops: Metterniche Wurst Shop; purveyors of top quality meats, and Kukuck Uhren; crafters of the finest quality cuckoo clocks."³⁰⁶ Similarly, H.M. Grams promotes the "Swiss Music Movement"³⁰⁷ of its "Black Forest House," which is "[s]hipped direct [sic] from the German

³⁰⁰ A. Frankfield & Co, advertisement, *New York Times* 31 March 1902: 2.

³⁰¹ Namm's Silverware, advertisement, *New York Times* 4 November 1951: 86. Similar, e.g.: The cuckoo clock "is hand carved with exquisite design in authentic tradition and built by world-famed clock-making perfectionists." (Wanamaker's, advertisement, *New York Times* 26 September 1954: 67.)

³⁰² German Tourist Information Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 28 March, 1954: X30.

³⁰³ Names vary over time. See especially the following chapter for a discussion of travel-related advertising.

³⁰⁴ Wanamaker's, advertisement, *New York Times* 26 September 1954: 67.

³⁰⁵ E.g.: Virgin Mobile/MTV "Cuckoo Clock," advertisement, 2002; Mounds/Almond Joy "Cuckoo Clock," advertisement, 2001.

³⁰⁶ Fortunoff, advertisement, *New York Times* 10 October 1993: 549.

³⁰⁷ This statement refers most likely to the reputation that Swiss clocks and watches have. Thus, the advertisement combines two country-of-origin effects by referring to both Swiss and German craftsmanship.

Black Forest.”³⁰⁸ This phenomenon of seeing others as homogeneous and disregarding differences among those, called out outgroup homogeneity, accounts for such inaccuracies.

Hummel figurines, which were originally known in the form of drawings and watercolors, are well-known collector’s items that exemplify the American’s perception of Germany.³⁰⁹ They are a manifestation of material and consumer culture, offering easy access to German culture: “The fact that an American in Ohio can look at lederhosen- and dirndl-clad Hummels and see, as if in a mirror, her own family, testifies to the power such objects have to shape the way we perceive other cultures.”³¹⁰ Chaimov argues in his article “Hummel Figurines: Molding a Collectible Germany” that they can be seen as a strong symbol of post-war Germany. Their infantile, idealized, non-threatening, nostalgic character resembles a changed nation: “Of the characteristics that made Hummels appropriate American vehicles for a rehabilitated image of Germans, the most important was perhaps their anti-Nazi pedigree.”³¹¹ Even though these figurines are not heavily advertised, their symbolic expressiveness comes from the same commercial culture. They depict Germany the way Americans like to see it; Chaimov argues that “Hummels embody a synthesis of the pastoral and the industrial that speaks to a bifurcated ideal image of post-war Germany.”³¹² These two branches, the Germany of technology and engineering on the one hand, and the Germany of folklore and nostalgia, are the two central dialectic components that shape Germany’s image in American commercial culture. It is the idealistic, romanticized depiction that not only distorts Germany’s image, but also explains why these items are often regarded as kitsch and vastly more popular in America than in Germany. I believe that they serve as a vehicle to transport a nostalgic, perfect, and easily accessible image; accuracy, even if acknowledged, is subordinate.

³⁰⁸ H.M. Grams, advertisement, *Esquire* March 1962: 138.

³⁰⁹ In general, also porcelain made in Germany is well-renowned and advertised accordingly; e.g.: Bloomingdale’s/Villeroy & Boch, advertisement, *New York Times* 28 April 1991: 18.

³¹⁰ John Chaimov, “Hummel Figurines: Molding a Collectible Germany,” *Journal of Material Culture* 6 (2001): 50.

³¹¹ Chaimov 53.

³¹² Chaimov 59.

2.4 Endorsements and Celebrities

Prominent and famous people are not a rarity in advertising. As discussed above, they can lend positive associations to otherwise less attractive or indistinguishable products. While the most common of such endorsements are made in the fashion and beauty business, celebrities are employed to advertise almost any product, no matter how weak the connection may be. Oxoby argues that such product advocacies result from different viewing habits:

In fact, a 1994 poll suggested that up to 74 percent of Americans switched channels during commercials, and that 50 percent occasionally muted the sound during them. One solution was to give viewers something they would actually want to watch, regardless of the fact that it was selling to them. Naturally, then, nothing seemed better for the advertising industry than a celebrity.³¹³

While this may be a reason why celebrity endorsements have been on the increase, they are hardly a new phenomenon. Prominent persons were already a common image on trade cards.³¹⁴ Even famous German persons have given their seal of approval, as two ads from the turn of the century demonstrate. In the first one from 1894, Mellin's Food is promoted by the German royal family (Emperor Wilhelm II., his first wife Auguste-Viktoria, and seven children), referred to as "Our Loving Friends," of whom a picture is presented. The ad explains why German royalty should be concerned about this product: "The empress of Germany certifies that Mellin's Food has been used with the best results in rearing German Princes." To prove this claim, a "Fac-simile of testimonial received from Her Majesty the Empress of Germany" is presented at the bottom.³¹⁵ Another, a 1910 advertisement for Sanatogen, claims that "Physicians to Royalty Endorse the Sovereign Food Tonic." Several photos of European rulers are shown, those of the "King of Italy," "the "Emperor of Austria," the "Czar of Russia," "King Edward

³¹³ Oxoby 51.

³¹⁴ For example the German William I. (W. Duke Sons & Co. "The Rulers, Flags, Coats of Arms - Image 14," advertisement, 1888 (*Emergence of Advertising in America: 1850-1920*. Item number: D0007-14. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/ea/tobacco>> 22 February 2005).)

³¹⁵ Edgar R. Jones, *Those Were the Good Old Days: A Happy Look at American Advertising, 1880-1950* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979) 53.

IV,” the “King of Saxony,” and the “Late Emperor Frederick.” Below the portraits, quotes from each ruler’s physician are printed, which all praise the benefits of the tonic.³¹⁶ This technique differs a bit as it is the physicians commenting on the rulers’ health and not a direct endorsement by the rulers. The basic underlying principle, however, which is still at work in today’s celebrity advertisements, is the suggestion that if more powerful, important, prominent, and richer people use a product, it must also be better for the average consumer. Indeed, it is suggested that the consumer may rise to the same level of the endorser simply by purchasing the same product ostensibly used by the celebrity.

These early examples are intriguing because they show German royalty, thus representing monarchy and the feudal system. This sharp contrast to American ideals of democracy, liberty, and independence, is a paradox only at the first glance. Appeal, as has been previously discussed, can also result from the absent and the Other. It is the lack of something that creates desire, a gap often filled by advertising but also other forms of popular culture. Glamorous, idealized, and romanticized depictions of Germany’s feudal and monarchic past are found in a broad variety of advertisements, a point further analyzed below in analyses of fairy tales and castles.

The use of German celebrities in American advertising, however, is scarce; Albert Einstein and fashion models, which are dealt with here, exemplify the scope and effects of this particular aspect of advertising. Albert Einstein, who was born in southern Germany and emigrated from Germany to the United States after the Nazis came to power, is an icon in popular culture and is widely used in advertising. His appeal stems from several factors: he was an initially unrecognized genius and a promoter of pacifism and world peace, he transcends national boundaries, and has a very distinctive physical appearance. In fact, his story is a classic example of the American dream. Albert Einstein is recognized as a German-born immigrant to the United States and thus makes him an interesting ‘spokesperson’ for Germany. Totten sees him as a counterpart to the German evil: “Gleichzeitig wurde Albert Einstein für Amerika zum Prototyp der Flucht des Geistes vor Hitlers Ungeist.”³¹⁷ He functions as a connector between the two countries as a symbol of hope and peace. Therefore he is an appealing figure for advertisers of German products or German-American hybrid companies.

³¹⁶ Jones 188.

³¹⁷ Totten, 58.

The following two advertisements attest how versatile he is for advertisers. The brewer Löwenbräu uses Einstein's fame and brilliancy for its goals: "In his attempt to improve upon Löwenbräu's formula for the best way in the world to brew beer, Albert stumbled upon another formula."³¹⁸ The drawing shows Einstein in front of an enormous blackboard, which is full of notes and calculations, such as "Beer is relative; Time is nothing; Beer is universal; Beer is Boss." His deliberations on the board of course lead to the formula he is mostly known for: " $E=mc^2$." The ad is humorous because it presents beer as something grand and important, more so in fact than the theory of relativity. Einstein is shown as the slightly nutty professor (he "stumbles"), who is apparently looking for a beer formula and discovers something groundbreaking through that. Löwenbräu uses Einstein as a trigger for the country-of-origin effect and a scenario that viewers can relate to because it shows a human, less serious side of science. In a print advertisement for Nikon cameras, Einstein is contrasted to Moe, one of the Three Stooges, each with a camera. Showing Einstein as the opposite of the Stooges, who are notoriously brainless and short-witted, reveals how the public generally sees him: as a genius, as an expert. Together they represent two extremes in pop culture, allowing the average person to place oneself somewhere inbetween the two. Thus, Nikon's message is that its product is fit for anyone, for beginners to amateurs to professionals, and any viewer feels addressed inbetween the two poles: "Nikon introduces the camera for both."³¹⁹ As positive as Einstein's image is, it is also limiting. Emphasizing genius and technological savvy automatically cancels out other traits. The focus on technology, even though represented through this human, positive figure, is yet again reinforced.

Two German models frequently seen in commercials and advertisements are Heidi Klum and Claudia Schiffer. While known to be from Germany, they are international figures in the borderless fashion world. In their ads they are generally not distinguishable from models of other nationalities,³²⁰ but it has to be assumed that many viewers do know the origin of at least the more famous models. Triggers concerning the nationality are rare and subtle, as Heidi Klum's short "Auf Wiedersehen."³²¹ German female celebrities such as these two, but also prominent

³¹⁸ Löwenbräu, advertisement, (*Lürzer's Archive Online Services*. Reference number: [4.8711]. <<http://www.luerzersarchive.net>> 12 January 2005).

³¹⁹ Advertisement in: Esther Thorson, *Advertising Age: The Principles of Advertising at Work* (Lincolnwood, IL: NTC Business Books, 1989) 191.

³²⁰ E.g.: Gap "The Pants of Fall – Gapstretch 1," advertisement, 2003.

³²¹ Victoria's Secret "Most Important," advertisement, 2004.

figures like Marlene Dietrich³²², who connect Germany and the United States, can have a positive impact on the generally passive or absent image of German women, which is further analyzed below: they can truly break through stereotypes and show that Germans, too, can be smart, strong, sexy, witty, creative, disobedient, and peaceful.

2.5 Conclusion

It is no surprise that admirable, stereotypically German qualities are used in advertising. Traits such as precision, perfection, punctuality, cleanliness, and engineering expertise are esteemed characteristics in American culture, and thus the national image enhances a company's or product's image. It has been shown that especially German companies, compared to domestic, American ones, employ such depictions, however stereotypical they may be.

The stereotypes are used to display only one or two aspects of the Germans. These are generally positive, but can also include traits that are ridiculed when they are not deemed important for the promotion of a product. For instance, while attention to detail is important in the production of a vehicle, it is not given to humor or compassion. Thus by employing admirable qualities, there is always a distortion of the image presented as it minimizes and reduces the nationality to individual aspects, completely omitting the larger picture.

A passion for cars is a powerful interest valued in both American and German society, an aspect further analyzed in this dissertation. It has been shown that the automobile is frequently personified in various advertisements, revealing its cultural importance as a symbol of mobility and individualism. The depiction of the care that German cars ostensibly receive is represented by the manual labor and meticulous production process.

German perfectionism and inclination to engineering and the sciences, however, can often invoke more negative connotations than positive ones, conjuring memories of the country's National Socialist past:

³²² Marlene Dietrich became an American citizen in 1939 after turning down offers to return to Germany.

An zweiter Stelle hat das Wirtschaftswunder das Bild des deutschen Technikers, des Präzisionsmenschen, des Roboters, des Wunderarbeiters verstärkt. Dieser Arbeiter streikt nie. Auch dieses Bild kann sich in einigen Ländern auf alte Radikale stützen: auf das Image des zwangsneurotischen Deutschen, der das staatliche und private Leben genau reguliert, der den ‘Affen erfunden hat’, der pünktlich ist wie ein Zeiger, der die Dienststunden einhält wie ein Schalterbeamter, der streng auf Standesunterschiede sieht, der einen Titel trägt (und noch lieber eine Uniform mit Rangabzeichen) und dem vor allem eines fehlt, der Humor.³²³

In contrast to the image of the German engineers and scientists, achievements in fields such as the arts, music, literature, architecture, and crafts, reveal a more human side of the German people. It is enhanced by several celebrities and famous persons, which add to a slightly more balanced image. Qualities for which the Germans are admired also extend to their country, which offers a nostalgic and romantic counterpart to the machine-like side of the Germans.

The frequent use of admirable yet generally distorted or exaggerated characteristics can be explained by the positive effect these have on product sales, the sole motive behind the advertisements.

³²³ Koch-Hillebrecht 144.

3. Escaping Daily Life: Germany and Nostalgia

Advertisers often elicit feelings of escapism in consumers by alluding to negative aspects of modern life. Among them are uprootedness, lack of personal history in their homes, a fast-paced life, artificial, superficial, monotonous, and digital environments, as well as a rapidly changing world. The void is often filled by nostalgia, which provides ostensible authenticity and suggests calmness and steadiness. Pappano argues in her book, *The Connection Gap: Why Americans Feel So Alone*, that a loss of community and personal ties is responsible for the extensive use of nostalgic appeals by advertisers.³²⁴ Nostalgic imagery often signifies family and communal values, such as trust, friendship, kinship, honesty, faith, authenticity, certainty, but also autonomy and individualism, traits longed for but not necessarily found in actual life. Advertisers utilize this yearning by presenting images of better times and places and by offering a means of escape from one's real environment.

Nostalgia is an ambiguous term, stemming from the Latin *nostus* (homeland) and *algia* (pain). Wernick sees it as a combination of "both home loss and time worries. It is this, perhaps, which accounts for nostalgia's power as a promotional attractor."³²⁵ I agree that nostalgia has both a temporal as well as a spatial dimension. This makes foreign countries with long histories, for instance Germany, suitable for nostalgia in advertising because the loss of home and worries of time can be "compensated imaginarily."³²⁶

Nostalgia functions as an outlet, a valve, which is tapped into by advertisers by offering ways to escape one's present situation. This section deals with the different images presented to the targeted audience and why they are so powerful and appealing to American consumers. Many of these ads depict Germany as a product offer ostensible solutions to connect to a foreign yet fascinating world, a place that is often portrayed as out of time. What is offered is frequently not a real image but an illusion, a fantasy version of what Germany should or could be.

The term "fantasy" applies here because much of the imagery not only caters to the consumers' imagination but also their desires, including especially those generated and fostered

³²⁴ Pappano 2001.

³²⁵ Andrew Wernick, "Resort to Nostalgia: Mountains, Memories and Myths of Time," *Buy This Book: Studies in Advertising and Consumption*, eds. Mica Nava, et al. (London: Routledge, 1997) 220.

³²⁶ Wernick, 220. Certainly, this compensation can be found not only in advertising, but also in art, literature, music, film, and so on.

by advertisers. One main characteristic of a fantasy is that it is impossible or highly unlikely to achieve. It is this void that advertisers utilize by suggesting the fantasy's realization and possibility through a product. Many places shown in the analyzed examples are not concrete and real but rather function as a catalyst for pre-existing images in the American audience's heads. "Fantasy," according to Mendelsohn, is "for the most part [...] an extension of reality in disguise."³²⁷ Analyzing this disguise, which advertisers use to promote their products, is the goal of this section. Below, different nostalgic and escapist appeals are discussed. All of the following categories that emerged from my research overlap to a lesser or greater extent.

3.1 Vacation- and Fantasyland Germany: Spatial Escapism

The Rhine, surrounded by mystique and history, constitutes an ideal image package for advertisers. Southern Germany, scenes of nature, small villages and towns, are presented as a world of fairy tales, which reflect fantasies that young and old, that many generations and cultures share. As a more modern fantasy I chose the German highways, or autobahns³²⁸, as they show a different, more modern, longing. Fantasizing about unlimited speeds and possibilities has functions in the same way that the other fantasies work: escaping the normal, average, boring world and dip into another, fascinating, fulfilling, rewarding world that is made to seem real: fantasyland Germany.

Germany has long been a popular travel destination for Americans, not only during the twentieth century. Initially reserved for the upper classes, international travel has become a reality for the middle class due to lower prices, more options, and convenience. Because the amount of money spent on travel and the increasing number of offerings, competition among airlines, travel agencies, tourist boards, and other travel-related businesses is strong. Thus it is not surprising that companies advertise heavily in this segment. The field of public relations is of particular interest in this dissertation. Several institutions, such as the German National Tourist Office or the German American Chamber of Commerce rely on images of the country they promote: Germany. Their advertising goals are a heightened awareness of Germany, more

³²⁷ Harold A. Mendelsohn, *Mass Entertainment* (New Haven, CT: College & University Press, 1966) 98.

³²⁸ Although capitalized in German, the American spelling of the term "autobahn" and its plural will be used henceforth. Some quotations, however, may contain the capitalized spelling.

positive feelings towards the Germans, and certainly the persuasion of non-Germans to come to Germany as tourists. Thus public relations campaigns for countries differ from commercial advertising, as the images shown do not promote a product, they *are* the product. From travel ads of the “German Railroads Information Office” during the National Socialist 1930s to today’s print and internet ads, the message is the same: show the country’s best side and leave out anything that might be perceived to be negative.

In contrast to the direct marketing of a country, there are companies that have an interest in customers visiting a certain country, such as airlines, transportation companies, insurance companies, producers of travel accessories, credit card companies, etc. Their depiction of Germany, then, is different, because these businesses, both German and American, do not necessarily try to improve Germany’s image – it is their company’s or product’s image that is the main focus of attention. O’Barr criticizes the often exotic and unrealistic images used in such ads: “The circuslike curiosity of others (rather than the discovery that superficial difference masks more fundamental commonality) is a recurrent theme in twentieth-century travel advertisements.”³²⁹ This exotism, however, is seen less frequently in advertisements concerning Germany, which can be attributed to the fact that Germany and the United States have and have had strong ties. O’Barr also notes the economic aspect of these depictions of foreigners in ads: “When foreigners cease to be merely a part of foreign tourism and become business partners and consumers, this expansion occasions increased sensitivity to the qualities in such representations.”³³⁰

Most of the references were found in a commodified context, such as travel advertisements. Those used in appropriated contexts are not dealt with separately but are included in the thematic discussion. It is important to keep this distinction in mind: in travel advertisements foreigners are the commodity, but not in an appropriated context, as they are, for example, in product advertisements.

³²⁹ O’Barr 13.

³³⁰ O’Barr 13.

The Rhine

One of the oldest and most frequent images of Germany is the river Rhine, which can already be found in trade card advertising. In a national flag series, the Prussian flag is displayed with the hymn “The Watch on the Rhine” underneath it:

A roar like thunder strikes the ear,
 Like clang of arms or breakers near
 Rush forward for the German Rhine!
 Who shields thee, dear beloved Rhine?
 Dear Fatherland, thou need'st not fear,
 Thy Rhineland watch stands firmly here!
 Dear land, dear Fatherland, though need'st not fear,
 Thy watch, thy Rhineland watch stands firmly here!³³¹

The Rhine appears as a personified national symbol, which needs to be defended. It appears to be inherently Prussian/German. The Rhine in this sense signifies possession, national pride, a boundary, and an area of dispute. However, it is important that neither Germany nor Prussia are advertised here; the product promoted are American cigarettes, the countries depicted in these series are for collectible purposes.

The image of the Rhine has been more professionally marketed by tourist boards since the 1920s and especially the 1930s. These efforts were certainly not only aimed at bringing in tourist money but also at raising the awareness of Germany's positive attributes and its overall image. The 1936 Olympics in Berlin, a heavily politicized event, were also frequently promoted. A 1936 print ad by the German Railroads Information Office shows the “quadriga” of the Brandenburg Gate with a large, muscular, male, laurelled athlete in the background. This man can be both interpreted as a victor of any nation, or the Aryan ideal of the Nazi ideology, revealing the mixture of commercial advertising and political propaganda. In small print underneath tourist attractions are suggested, among them:

³³¹ Zira and Nebo Cigarettes “National Flag Series,” advertisement, date unknown (*Emergence of Advertising in America: 1850-1920*. Item number: D0281a. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/eaatobacco>> 22 February 2005).

Scenic grandeur and natural beauty ... famous health resorts ... romantic castles ... picturesque folk festivals ... medieval towns ... cosmopolitan cities ... the Rhine. Modern travel comfort and the traditional hospitality of the land of Wanderlust and Gemütlichkeit.³³²

This advertisement, which promises ticket rebates and urges consumers to request further information from the information office's New York location, already contains many appeals that can be found in subsequent ads: Germany's natural beauty, its folk character, its combined modernity and history, and its hospitality. Indeed, several other ads use this river to identify their products with Germany. Most ads of the time depict the same images over and over again: "follow the lure of the Rhine."³³³

Asbach Uralt was promoted in 1959 as "the great brandy from the Rhine," showing a gentle slope in the outline of a brandy glass. The sailing ships on the river add a historical component, as do the walled village with a massive tower on the right and a distant city with what appears to be a cathedral on the left. The undulating hills flanking the Rhine add to the enchanting mood of the scene.³³⁴

The German Tourist Information Office placed a detailed ad about Cologne, which resembles a newspaper article and would now be referred to as an advertorial, in 1961, featuring images of the cathedral, carnival, and of course the Rhine: "To the accompaniment of good food, Rhine wines, and beautiful old songs of the Father Rhine, you can see some of the grandest river scenery of the world." The ad gives detailed information not only on the attractions of the Cologne area, but also details about plane flights and informational sources.³³⁵

Many of the same images are used over and over again, the customer apparently already knows to expect that a typical, a 'real' Rhine tour includes what these exemplary advertisements promise: "Glide past windmills, fairy tale castles, medieval villages and world-famous vineyards." Images of all sights promised are morphed into an illustration on the right. These

³³² Advertisement in: Jim Heimann, *30s: All-American Ads* (Köln, Los Angeles: Taschen, 2003) 744. Ads with the same wording but different style appeared throughout 1936, e.g.: German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 12 May 1936: 13.

³³³ E.g.: German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *Country Life* February 1937: 83; German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *Country Life*, April 1937: 82.

³³⁴ Asbach Uralt, advertisement, *Esquire* May 1959: 42F.

³³⁵ German Tourist Information Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 9 April, 1961: XX45.

tours are usually labeled to be “romantic.”³³⁶ “Regal castles. Grand palaces. Breathtaking vistas. And a cruise down the legendary Rhine [...] is the ideal way to see it all.”³³⁷ Sometimes the Rhine needs only to be alluded to without actual mentioning: “a vineyard-lined valley of ancient myths.”³³⁸ A TWA ad for European destinations uses the Rhine as its representation of Germany: “Medieval Majesty: a castle on the Rhine.”³³⁹ The Rhine, however, is not only a German domain. Even in ads concerning other countries the river is, although less frequently, utilized: In Switzerland, for example, “[t]he Rhine supports fat salmon, pike and perch.”³⁴⁰

The Rhine sells. But not only as a tourist site do marketers use it: the river can be used as a powerful country-of-origin effect trigger, as can be seen in an ad about international food specialties: the Bahlsen cookies are praised as “Castles on the Rhine” cookies³⁴¹, Bavarian beer steins are offered with the slogan “Each Rhine stein thine for \$24.95.”³⁴² The rhyming quality is deemed more important as accuracy in this latter advertisement, again revealing that the sale of the product is more important than the cultural message conveyed.

Why is the Rhine such a potent image that is used time and again? Historically, it has been an important natural boundary,³⁴³ which is reflected in a 1938 ad: “A castle by the Rhine thrusts its ancient turrets defiantly toward the sky.”³⁴⁴ But also its peaceful functions of trade and travel make it more than just a German symbol: the Rhine is European.³⁴⁵ From an American perspective, the Rhine is a potent, condensed symbol of Western Europe and the Old World. Furthermore, German immigrants have spread the word of this river in America.³⁴⁶

³³⁶ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 6 June 1971: XX34.

³³⁷ German National Tourist Office / KD German Rhine Line, advertisement, *New York Times* 1 May 1988: XX4.

³³⁸ German National Tourist Office/Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 26 November 1972: XX29.

³³⁹ TWA, advertisement, *Esquire* May 1964: 28-29. (“You can almost see the sentinels on the crusty ramparts of an ageless Rhine castle.”)

³⁴⁰ Swissair, advertisement, *New York Times* 1 May 1970: 19.

³⁴¹ Bloomingdale’s, advertisement, *New York Times* 18 November 1958: 10.

³⁴² Hoffritz, advertisement, *New York Times* 5 December 1965: 141.

³⁴³ The Romans could not permanently occupy the land beyond – Germania. The cities along the Rhine, which are often mentioned, invoke this Roman heritage. The Rhine has since been a symbol of border disputes, predominantly between France and Germany.

³⁴⁴ German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *Country Life* May 1938: 114.

³⁴⁵ It flows through Switzerland, Austria, Liechtenstein, France, Germany, and the Netherlands and offers a wide scenic variety. In 2002 the section between Bingen and Koblenz (Oberes Mittelrheintal) was included in UNESCO’s World Heritage List. As the most important water trade route it has not only divided Europe but also brought it closer together.

³⁴⁶ For instance, “[d]uring the American pre-Revolutionary War period,” Rippley states, “immigrants came primarily from the Rhine valley, an artery that gives access to the sea.” (La Vern J. Rippley, “German Americans,” *Gale Encyclopedia of Multicultural America*, vol. 2, ed. Jeffrey Lehman (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Group, 2000) 710.)

As a cultural icon, it has been often depicted in the arts.³⁴⁷ Totten writes in the 1960s about the Rhine as the premier tourist attraction:

Das Bild des Rheins und seiner Burgen nimmt unter den freundlichen Illustrationen des Begriffes Deutschland, die sich automatisch dem amerikanischen Denken aufdrängen, den ersten Platz ein. Unverrückbar wie seine Felsen gehört der Rhein in die klassische Vorstellung Amerikas von der Alten Welt und in das Repertoire amerikanischer Europareisen.³⁴⁸

The mythic, historic, scenic, and romantic elements that are associated with this important river make it an ideal combination for advertising. Even today the Rhine is used intensely for promotional purposes. The official web site of the German National Tourist Office in New York starts with the following lines: “Germany: it’s more than you’ve imagined! Here, there’s something for everyone – from charming Rhine river cruises and the traditional Oktoberfest and Christmas markets, to the cultural hotbed of Berlin and the thrill of skiing or snowboarding in the Alps.”³⁴⁹ In marketing terms it can be seen as an established trademark that only needs to be reinforced. Its dominance, however, also results in a lack of representation of other German regions, especially those in the north and east.

Mountains and Forests: The Case of the South

Germany’s image has long been associated with that of its southern regions: Bavaria, the Alps, Baden-Württemberg, and the Black Forest appear more often in depictions of Germany than other parts further north. There are several reasons that can explain this phenomenon. American travel writers have especially covered regions that have frequently been invoked in American advertising: the Rhine, Heidelberg, the Black Forst, the South. Travel literature, such

References are still found in the U.S. The German settlement in Cincinnati across the Ohio River, for example, is still referred to as “over the Rhine.”

³⁴⁷ Clemens Brentano’s novel *Godwi* (1800-1802) and Heinrich Heine’s poem *Loreley* (1823) are examples of the Rhine’s importance especially in romantic German literature. Richard Wagner’s tetralogy “Der Ring des Nibelungen,” including “Das Rheingold,” “Die Walküre,” “Siegfried,” and “Götterdämmerung,” also draw much of its imagery from the Rhine. Wagner’s popularity worldwide and in America can be seen in the success of the Bayreuth Wagner Festival Plays, which are often mentioned in the same ads as the Rhine. (E.g. Advertisement in: Heimann, 30s 744.)

³⁴⁸ Totten 212-213.

³⁴⁹ German National Tourist Office, advertisement, <<http://www.visits-to-germany.com>> 27 September 2004.

as Mark Twain's *A Tramp Abroad* and Bayard Taylor's *View a-foot: or, Europe seen with knapsack and staff*, has influenced which parts of Germany are more salient than others. Furthermore, the American sector in post-World War II Germany was located in the southern part of the country, and this led to a disproportionate regional focus. The southern parts also have been more successful in preserving and marketing their traditions, especially the visible and salient ones, until today. I will show further below that many images and stereotypes of Germans as a whole are, in fact, associated with these southern traditions. In this chapter, however, the focus is on the landscape and surroundings. The grandeur and mythical aspects are also an explanation concerning the emphasis on the south. The predominantly reoccurring natural attributes of this geographical region are mountains, or more precisely the Alps and forests.

The airline LTU informs the reader that "Germany shouldn't cost a Bavarian mint" and it flies you "where everything from the Black Forest to the Alps is within reach."³⁵⁰ This advertisement sums up the many reoccurring images that especially travel advertisers frequently use. The Alps and the Black Forest are well known and the audience can easily connect with them: even without visual information the perceiver can connect these terms to already stored information and images. Thus the advertisers do not necessarily have to create these themselves. A 1965 ad promoting a trade exhibition by the German American Chamber of Commerce stresses the pleasure of visiting Bavaria – Germany is not mentioned, whereas Bavaria is printed in oversize letters. The image shows a woman, who is dressed in traditional attire, playing the harp. In the background we see a collage of churches, palaces, towers, the "Bamberger Reiter," horses and a carriage, as well as a bridge: Germany's peaceful, quaint, mythical side.³⁵¹

The South is more of an image package than a realistic portrayal. Lufthansa titles an advertisement of the same year "Germany's Storybook South." Its photos clearly show this image package character by a collage: the baroque St. Bartholomä at the "Lake Chapel in the Alps," an image of a wayside shrine with a young woman in traditional attire, a Maypole raising scene, alpine horn blowers, Bavarian shepherds, a woodcutter, and swans on the "Hopfensee." The pastoral associations of the South are of an appealing nature, they emanate perfect nostalgic appeal: time is standing still here; everything is as it used to be in the good old days. The ad also reveals how unimportant the accuracy is in these portrayals. It shows "The Pied Piper of

³⁵⁰ LTU, advertisement, *New York Times* 27 March 1987: AS55.

³⁵¹ German American Chamber of Commerce, advertisement, *New York Times* 15 January 1965: 54.

Hamelin,” a legend rooted in medieval black plague years, which is well known in the United States. Hamelin, or Hameln, however, is located in northern Germany in the state of Lower Saxony.³⁵² But it seems to fit into the overall mythic image of southern Germany: “Bavaria – fairyland castles are really there.”³⁵³

Images like the ones used by Mercedes, which in one ad promotes its 220SE Coupe with a massive mountain and an alpine village in the background, and Lufthansa, are frequently used.³⁵⁴ Lufthansa asks in another advertisement: “How do you like your Alps? In Germany they come in all sizes.”³⁵⁵ The Alps are so grand, impressive, unique, and breathtaking, that they are even used as a contrast and a prototype of mountain vacation spots. An advertisement for India poses the question: “What could be closer to heaven than the Alps?” The answer is promptly suggested: “Try the Himalayas.”³⁵⁶ Mountains, hills, meadows and cows are found in TV commercials as well, for example in Federal Express’s promotion for its European delivery service. Among other ‘typically’ European sights, such as the statues, windmills, an old corner shop, and a town square with line dancers, one sequence shows a mooing cow next to a parcel. The ad is enhanced by accordion folk-style music, which could be German or French. Due to out-group homogeneity nuances are depicted and thus they give the setting as generally European rather than pertaining to a particular country.³⁵⁷ The Alps are also frequently used in car commercials, such as BMW’s depiction of the alpine and “brutal” testing grounds: “It’s been called the devil’s roller coaster.” Even though the Stelvio Pass is located in northern, German-speaking Italy, the signs of the ad suggest its German affiliation: a “Durchfahrt Verboten” traffic sign and the German (Munich) license plate on the test car.³⁵⁸ As already stated, formal borders are not seen as binding.

Many advertisements are similar to the ones described above, giving only sparse and often superficial information. Only few ads are truly informative and try to address some of the common clichés: “Bavaria. Actually three distinct regions, each with its cultural heritage and

³⁵² Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 17 May 1965: 32.

³⁵³ TWA, advertisement, *Esquire* September 1966: 72-73; see below for a discussion of the theme of fairytales and chapter 4.2 for a discussion of the use of history in advertising.

³⁵⁴ Heimann, 30s 320. The same image reappears in a Lufthansa ad with the description: “The Alps! The Alps!” (Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 16 March 1965: 32.)

³⁵⁵ Lufthansa, advertisement, 1969, origin unknown.

³⁵⁶ India, advertisement, *Esquire* March 1965: 36.

³⁵⁷ Federal Express “Europe,” advertisement, 1986.

³⁵⁸ BMW “The Devil’s Rollercoaster,” advertisement, 1992.

special landscape, ‘Bavaria’ is a convenient label for the vacation area that stretches across southern Germany.” The following description, as do the detailed depictions of the several Bavarian regions, however, then resorts to the flowery and fairy tale-like advertising language: “Bordered by vast forests and jagged peaks, it embraces a great inland sea and vegetation ranging from apples to edelweiss. Cowbells are concerts, cosmopolitan cities and medieval towns are merely the contrasts in this compact all-season holiday region.”³⁵⁹

Bavaria is the number one destination for tourists in Germany, and represents the country in the same way that the Germans’ image of the United States is largely comprised of Florida, New York, and California. A travel ad for New York State shows an image of nature and asks “Bavaria?”, only to be answered below, “No... New York State!” The ad then explains why New York State has similar attractions to offer, even though it is not the original and lacks the reputation, mystique, and history Bavaria and the Alps have: ‘Put on your Lederhosen, take your Fräulein with you and pretend you’re an alpinist. You’re a hundred miles up the Hudson in the Catskill Mountains...’³⁶⁰ The advertisement reveals the hollowness of stereotypical stock imagery and unmasks the artificial desires created by many producers of travel advertisements.

Quaint Villages, Medieval Towns, and Big City Lights

Many portrayals of Germany include settlements, usually smaller rather than larger ones, and often in combination with scenes of nature. The images seem wildly romantic as they often emphasize quietness and solitude and share the focus on southern Germany: “A picturesque village lies dreamily beside a trout-stream in the pine-scented Black forest.”³⁶¹ Lufthansa’s ad of “old-world villages in the Bavarian Alps and the Black Forest” shows a picture of a traditional horse-drawn carriage with a large flower wreath on top, led by a traditionally clad Bavarian, and a church in the background.³⁶² Picturesque towns are a reoccurring theme: “Historic grandeur of medieval picture towns – Nürnberg, Rothenburg, Hildesheim.”³⁶³ Other depictions frequently used are cobblestone streets, elaborate restaurant and inn signs, as well as traditional houses with

³⁵⁹ Bavarian Tourist Association/German Tourist Information Council, advertisement, *New York Times* 23 February 1969: IR3.

³⁶⁰ New York State, advertisement, *New York Times* 19 March 1967: SM75.

³⁶¹ German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *Country Life* May 1938: 114.

³⁶² Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 12 April 1964: XX26.

³⁶³ German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 21 March 1937: 187.

large flower beds underneath the windows.³⁶⁴ Streets are often shown as narrow and lined with half-timbered houses and sometimes feature stone arches, which add to the historical image.³⁶⁵ Furthermore, churches, town squares, towers, and turrets can be spotted numerous times. Rothenburg in one advertisement is described as follows: “Historical associations cloak cozy towns like Rothenburg, a living museum of towers and turrets.”³⁶⁶ Sometimes images of typically German villages are so short in TV commercials that viewers can only catch a glimpse of them. Porsche has its car pass pleasant fields with forests on the edge and a small village of trees and steep red roofs.³⁶⁷ In a 1969 Super Bowl commercial, TWA shows, among other ‘typically European’ scenes, narrow alleys and old stone or half-timbered houses, complete with an old man holding a cane and another man leading a donkey.³⁶⁸

Nostalgia is a predominant force in these depictions, as they invoke not only ‘better’ times and upheld traditions, but also associations that the term “marvelous miniature”³⁶⁹ describes best: these places are simple, understandable, non-threatening, peaceful, enchanting, picturesque, and clearly laid out and arranged. They suggest order, but not boredom, in an unordered world. They also imply heritage and tradition, a powerful technique used to sell high quality products, as the alpine village in a candy commercial exemplifies: “Here in the European village of Werther is the home of the world’s favorite caramel, Werther’s Original. There for over a century, a family tradition of making smooth, creamy caramel has been handed down from generation to generation...”³⁷⁰

One attraction that Germany and its towns have been famous for already since the nineteenth century are spas. The stay in German spas has long been reserved for the upper classes. A number of several health resort ads from 1926, which are introduced by a general Germany travel ad by the German Railroads Information Office, point out the advantages of the German spas in Bad Eilsen, Wiesbaden, Bad Kissingen/Bavaria, Neuenahr, Oeyenhausen, Wildungen, and Wildbad in the Black Forest. Cures for sufferers of gout, rheumatism, skin

³⁶⁴ E.g.: Mercedes, advertisement, *New York Times* 19 March 1989: XX12.

³⁶⁵ E.g.: Mercedes, advertisement, *New York Times* 17 April 1988: XX25; European Travel Commission/Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 10 June 1973: 552.

³⁶⁶ Bavarian Tourist Association/German Tourist Information Council, advertisement, *New York Times* 23 February 1969: IR3.

³⁶⁷ Belch 355.

³⁶⁸ TWA “Tour Our Tours,” advertisement, 1969.

³⁶⁹ Bavarian Tourist Association/German Tourist Information Council, advertisement, *New York Times* 23 February 1969: IR3.

³⁷⁰ Werther’s Original “Small European Village,” advertisement, 2004.

diseases, stomach and intestinal troubles, heart problems, diabetes, constipation, gallstones, liver and kidney troubles, and ailments of advanced age are offered. Wonderful surrounding nature, modern equipment, thermal springs, a diverting social life, and first-class entertainment are praised.³⁷¹

A 1938 ad, which appeared in the upscale magazine “Country Life,” uses the novelist Frederic Prokosch and a passage from his novel, *The Seven Who Fled*, to appeal to upper-class Americans. The city of Baden-Baden offers “cure while you play,” and the location, the Black Forest, is highlighted.³⁷² In other ads of the time period, spas, such as Homburg, Nauheim, and Wiesbaden, are frequently mentioned, but seldom discussed in detail.³⁷³ Since then the importance of German spas has declined and they are less frequently found in more recent ads.

Of course there are also big cities that are often used in commercial messages. The German Tourist Information Office sums up the “Big 8,” which are the cities of “Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Berlin, Cologne, Hanover, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Munich.”³⁷⁴ In more recent ads also cities located in the eastern parts of Germany, especially Dresden and the unified Berlin, are used in travel ads. The city mostly mentioned besides Berlin is, and has been, Munich, which only ties in with Bavaria’s dominant image role.

However, the power of German images lies in the quaint, idyllic and even kitschy representations of ‘small town Germany.’ While big cities may be fascinating, they are hardly unique, and they seem to be only partially different from American urban centers. But the charm of less populated towns and villages reflects the lost communal ties, the calmness, and the complete difference to life in America. It is the fascination with a world that has never existed in such a way in the much younger America that lets advertisers make heavy use of such imagery.

Land of Fairy Tales

Tied to this small town charm are allusions to fairy tales often found in the analyzed advertisements. Rather than depicting an often unspectacular reality, fairy tales portray the realm of imagination. Such a setting allows Germany to be presented as both modern and exotic, as both real and imaginary.

³⁷¹ German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 28 February 1926: X18.

³⁷² German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *Country Life* May 1938: 115.

³⁷³ E.g.: German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *Country Life* May 1938: 114.

³⁷⁴ German Tourist Information Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 23 February 1964: XX16; German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 25 February 1968: T6.

Many ads explicitly state that a vacation in Germany is a fairy tale itself: “I can plan a fairy tale for you in the Alps and Central Europe. With American Express and Lufthansa it will come true.” The speaker is indicated as Doris D. Durfey, a travel counselor who directly addresses the customer. The situation and her personal account create a certain intimacy and trust: “Whenever I think of the Alps, all sorts of things spring to mind. From breath-taking, snow-capped mountains to the blue Danube, gingerbread lodges and quaint coffee shops. From the swinging beer halls and oompah bands to castles full of history, picturesque 15th-century houses and cobbled streets.” Above the text, a drawing features two mountain goats glancing at the Neuschwanstein castle surrounded by undulating hills, snow-capped mountains and a lake. Using a personal account here allows the advertiser to promote an imaginative image and fantasy rather than an accurate description. The unrealistic depiction of the scene has close resemblance to similar illustrations in fairy tale books. In harsh contrast to this rather kitschy scene are the other, more commercial parts of the ad: “It’s no secret that the strength of the American Dollar makes a trip to Europe a real bargain right now.” This message is followed by hints at using the AmEx credit card and descriptions of pre-arranged trips, such as “The Blue Danube,” “Romantic Germany,” and “Fairytale Festival,” which includes a visit to the home of the Brothers Grimm during their 200th anniversary celebrations.³⁷⁵

Many ads connect fairy tales specifically with southern Germany, as the following excerpts show: “alpine fairytale tour,”³⁷⁶ “Germany’s *Storybook* South,” (my emphasis) which offers “the rustic, romantic Germany of your childhood dreams,”³⁷⁷ and “Fairytale castles and enchanted gardens are the stuff dreams are made of, and wishing really makes it true in this mythical part of Bavaria. Grape arbors, sub-tropical parks and frosted peaks lie within miles of each other in this Lilliputian kingdom.” Other typical fairy tale expressions are “candlelit halls,” “embarrassment of riches,” and “gingerbread castles and frosted palaces,”³⁷⁸ “Germany’s fairytale hamlets” and the “magical Black Forest.”³⁷⁹ “Even if you’re not royalty, a vacation in

³⁷⁵ American Express Vacation Store, advertisement, *New York Times* 24 February 1985: 472.

³⁷⁶ Europabus (Overseas) Inc, advertisement, *New York Times* 28 March 1971: XX29; Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 6 June 1971: XX34.

³⁷⁷ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 17 May 1965: 32.

³⁷⁸ Bavarian Tourist Association/German Tourist Information Council, advertisement, *New York Times* 23 February 1969: IR3.

³⁷⁹ The image in this ad also shows a fairytale enactment and half-timbered houses, subtitled “The Pied Piper of Hamelin.”: Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 17 May 1965: 32. The Pied Piper is one of the most frequently alluded to fairytales, e.g. German National Tourist Office/Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 26 November 1972: XX29.

Germany would be a treasure.”³⁸⁰ Visitors are promised to receive “royal treatment” in Germany (“one of the world’s most enchanting countries.”)³⁸¹ Sometimes fairy tale references are not constricted to Germany, as all of Europe can be “a fairytale world of castles.”³⁸²

Many advertisements directly try to associate Germany with previous knowledge and experiences that Americans might have. In a more recent example, a vacation to central Europe is portrayed as a “treasure”: “One such moment would be a visit to Neuschwanstein, the castle that Walt Disney modeled his Magic Kingdom after. See the Sababurg, where according to legend, Sleeping Beauty actually did meet Prince Charming. And Alsfeld, the home of the real Little Red Riding Hood.” The advertising technique of connecting fact and myth is especially salient here. Then the potential customer is offered to “Celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Brothers Grimm. Travel in their footsteps through the forest and countryside to rediscover their enchanting tales.” The image shown above features, yet again, the castle Neuschwanstein with the title: “Between our glorious Rhine, majestic Alps and noble architecture, we can make anyone feel like a king.”³⁸³ Another ad, this time by Lufthansa, included the female version as well: “Even if you are not a king or queen, at least you can live like one.”³⁸⁴

While the associations are not always linked to southern Germany, the created images mostly connect to known tourist destinations, such as the Alps, Bavaria, or sometimes the Rhine.³⁸⁵ The Harz mountains are another, less often mentioned location: “The grandeur of Germany’s scenery is thrilling: the Harz mountains, the setting of Grimms’ fairytales...”³⁸⁶ In all these ads it is implied that the perceiver has previous knowledge of these stories: “You know the legends: Forests where you meet Hänsel and Gretel; castles of a romantic king, reminding you of Sleeping Beauty’s palace; cliffs where the Loreley could sit, combing her golden hair; fishing villages just like in the picture books...”³⁸⁷ It is a more obvious example of the advertising technique of connecting to and using existing schematas to achieve recognition and save cognitive energy. While the referent system is completely broken, the consumer only receives

³⁸⁰ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 12 April 1987: SM51.

³⁸¹ German National Tourist Office / KD German Rhine Line, advertisement, *New York Times* 1 May 1988: XX4.

³⁸² EuropAmerica Cruises, advertisement, *New York Times* 15 September 1996: SMA12.

³⁸³ Germany ’86 (German National Tourist Office, German Rail, KD German Rhine Line, Lufthansa), advertisement, *New York Times* 13 April 1986: XX11.

³⁸⁴ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 16 March 1986: 661.

³⁸⁵ Rhine Cruise Agency, advertisement, *New York Times* 16 March 1986: 655.

³⁸⁶ German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 21 March 1937: 187.

³⁸⁷ German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 25 February 1968: T6.

seemingly connected hints. It is an image package that is presented, not concrete and relevant information.

On television German fairy tales are not absent either, but often seem to be more in touch with pop culture. Whether Rapunzel in Red Bull commercials or Red Riding Hood in Quaker Chewy commercials: they are part of commercial nostalgia, even though Germany is not specifically mentioned.

Fairy tales are so potent because they invoke deeply internalized childhood stories: the child in all of us, the core of nostalgia. Fairy tales have a long tradition in and connection with Germany. They are a bond between generations and cultures. Many German fairy tales, especially those of the Brothers Grimm, are present in American thought still today, as Totten pointed out 40 years ago:

Sie sind auch für Amerikaner aller Alterstufen einer der Punkte, an denen der Funke zur Gedankenverbindung mit dem verträumten und versponnenen Deutschland der Kindermärchen willig überspringt. Die Gebrüder Grimm fügen sich als Berühmtheiten besonders leicht in den Rahmen dessen, was Deutschland in den Augen der Welt als liebenswert auszeichnet: als Wissenschaftler, als Gestalter von Wort und Gedanken.³⁸⁸

Fairy tales give children – and adults – a world of both order and wonder, of the good struggling with evil and eventually overcoming problems and hardship. They are stories boasting universal experiences and truths, which allow advertisers to tap into their existing rich imagery and narratives and connect them with their products or services: “Fairy tales can come true.”³⁸⁹

The advertisements suggest that consumers can easily relive both their childhood and their fantasies in a never-changing, “storybook” world: “Discover the Danube, the land of elves and forests, of mountain glens and sudden lakes, of cuckoo clocks and time stood still – the rustic, romantic Germany of your childhood dreams.”³⁹⁰ Another advertisement by the German National Tourist Office also presents Germany as a fairy tale of the real world: “Once upon a time, there was a land of fantasy and legend. It still exists today and you can experience it. It is Germany.” The picture showing a princess in a dirndl-inspired dress, complete with rose and

³⁸⁸ Totten 219.

³⁸⁹ German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 16 March 1986: 409.

³⁹⁰ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 17 May 1965: 32.

crown, in front of a romantic castle could well be taken from a fairy tale book. The ad ends in a line that clearly combines the romantic content with the sales message: “Come visit us and live happily ever after.”³⁹¹

Myth and Fantasy: The Autobahn

Another topic that stands out in the analyzed advertisements is the Autobahn. A recent Mercedes print advertisement shows a sports utility vehicle (SUV) driving along a winding, pristine, and empty road leading through a dark pine forest.³⁹² The trees frame the image to the left, to the right, and in the background with the center being filled by the road and the car. On the road “Autobahn meets Audubon” is written. Several connections are established by the advertisement’s creators: German cars and the autobahn; nature, especially the dark woods and the autobahn; speed and the autobahn; America (and thus the consumer) and the autobahn. The mention of the autobahn suggests that this scene takes place in Germany. If seen out of context, the location could, however, also be in the United States: the setting is ambiguous enough to allow the consumer to imagine the car in America, but creates the belief that it depicts Germany through the headline. The scene of nature fits in with depictions of the Black Forest and German woods discussed above, but also with American nature, alluded to by the mention of (John James) Audubon, America’s well-known wildlife artist. An almost identical scene, including fog and a red sky, is used in a 1990 TV commercial.³⁹³

The image presented in the Mercedes ad is an idealization of how Americans ought to picture the German highways. It adds a historic dimension by referring to Audubon, creating the theme of harmony between nature on the one hand and technology, science, and culture on the other. The link between the viewer and this desirable scene, literally and metaphorically the vehicle of escape, is presented in the middle: the product, the automobile. The connection to the German highways, however, is completely fictional and, looking beyond the facade, merely superficial. The presentation perpetuates the myth of the autobahn: commonly believed in but largely erroneous, fictional, and very far from reality. The rhyming Audubon again reflects an upscale connection to art and a more pastoral connection to nature. Another link that is created

³⁹¹ German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 16 March 1986: 409.

³⁹² Mercedes “Audubon,” advertisement, <<http://www.merkleyandpartners.com/advertising/print.html>> 2 May 2004. See also below for a further discussion of this ad.

³⁹³ Mercedes: The New 300e, advertisement, 1990.

here is that of two countries, the United States and Germany, using the advertising technique of creating a link to a foreign product and culture, which is further explored in chapter 5.

As the autobahn is a salient identifier of Germany, it is depicted as a tourist's most exciting and stylish mode of transportation: "Adventure beckons – The open road calls [...] Now you breeze along Germany's swift, smooth autobahns on your way to the great, glittering cities of Europe."³⁹⁴ The American consumers' fantasy of escaping the norms and restrictions is alluded to in many ads again and again: "On stretches of Germany's *autobahn*, drivers regularly push their cars as fast as they'll go – rushing along full throttle for hours on end."³⁹⁵ American Express varies this theme in its ad promising prestige and "Super Cars and Castles Self Drive": "A full throttle along one of the world's most famous roadways. Cruise the Autobahn in luxury and style behind the wheel of a Mercedes, BMW or Porsche."³⁹⁶ Stylish is also the "new Autobahn coat from Bavaria," which is promoted in an ad showing a man in this weatherproof coat beside a mechanic who works on his car, which has apparently broken down on the highway.³⁹⁷ As an advertising symbol, the autobahn is not limited to one product or only related products. It can be used to sell anything that is associated with the traits of the autobahn, for example speed, style, freedom, perfection.

Emmerich sees a double function ("Doppelfunktion") in the autobahn: "als Freiheitsbeweis" and "als millionenfacher Test auf die Produktqualität."³⁹⁸ In this sense the Autobahn is not only used and seen as a fantasy but also an extension of the ideal of the German engineer and German engineering and cars: "With no speed limit on Germany's Autobahns, unflappable high-speed performance is a *must*."³⁹⁹ Mercedes asserts that a "fragile engine wouldn't last long in Germany. The Autobahns have no speed limits."⁴⁰⁰ In two recent TV commercials the Autobahn is also used as a guarantee for excellence and dependability: In one ad the car dealer talks to a customer on a test drive: "You know, Volkswagens are built for the Autobahn. – Ah yeah!? – The Jetta is built to perform at higher speeds, so it's solid. [...] Really

³⁹⁴ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 16 March 1965: 32.

³⁹⁵ Mercedes, advertisement, *New York Times* 10 June 1968: 31.

³⁹⁶ American Express Travel Related Services, advertisement, *New York Times* 1 March 1992: TST53.

³⁹⁷ Wallachs, advertisement, *New York Times* 24 February 1957: 75.

³⁹⁸ Emmerich 14.

³⁹⁹ Mercedes, advertisement, *New York Times* 30 January 1967: 17.

⁴⁰⁰ Mercedes, advertisement, *New York Times* 12 September 1966: 33. See also: Volkswagen, advertisement, *New York Times* 19 November 1984: C5. ("...brutal endurance test. On Pike's Peak and the Autobahn. On U.S. Interstates and chewed-up city streets.")

holds the road, cool, huh?”⁴⁰¹ In a second spot the voiceover praises the car’s features: “The 2004 Volkswagen Passat will always come with award-winning engineering, will always have over 50 standard features, it will always boast autobahn-tested performance, ...”⁴⁰² The reference system of the actual Autobahn and its significance as a German phenomenon becomes increasingly detached from its original context. The term ‘Autobahn’ loses its meaning and turns into a hollowed-out attribute.

Even non-German carmakers use the Autobahn as a reference and testing ground.⁴⁰³ Cadillac uses a quote, which emphasizes prestige, from the magazine *Road & Track*: “The Catera is a fully vested member of Germany’s Autobahn Society.”⁴⁰⁴ Infinity titles an ad about one of its vehicles, which was apparently tested and tweaked in Europe “from Germany’s high-speed autobahns to Austria’s twisty Alpine roads,” with a personification of its new car: “Born in Japan. Educated in Europe. Now available in America.”⁴⁰⁵ The mentioning of European education is reminiscent of the Grand Tour of Europe, which was undertaken by young aristocrats of the upper classes to achieve a well-rounded education and a high level of sophistication. Thus the image invoked adds to the prestige of the advertised product.

A Buick advertisement even uses both the Autobahn as well as German cars as the standard of comparison: “THE GERMAN AUTOBAHN (no speed limit) – Imagine yourself on a seemingly limitless stretch of Teutonic Interstate, tucked confidently inside a precision German touring sedan.” Then the ad describes that one is passed by a car – of course a Buick. Furthermore Buick describes that the world-respected engineers of Bosch, in Stuttgart, Germany, inspect their fuel injection system.⁴⁰⁶ The interesting choice of the term ‘teutonic’ here connotes uncivilized manner and a degree of aggression. A BMW ad later reacted to this trend, reclaiming the country-of-origin advantage. “An unusual kind of tourism is on the rise in Germany. Carmakers from faraway places have been arriving, vehicles in tow, to photograph their new models on the world-famous autobahn.” The ad then states that only its cars are really autobahn-

⁴⁰¹ Volkswagen, advertisement, <<http://www.vw.com/commercials/index.html>> 26 September 2004.

⁴⁰² Volkswagen Passat “Always,” advertisement, 2004. Speed seems to be a European domain, even on other roads than highways. A Volkswagen ad uses the same manufacturing arguments as those using the autobahns: “Why is a Volkswagen Jetta so easy to drive? Well, Europe and brains. See, in Europe they have narrow roads, high speeds, and lots of sheep. So the brains of VW thought about all those buttons, controls, ergonomics, make them easy to read, easy to get to. So you can keep an eye on those sheep.” (Volkswagen Jetta “Sheep,” advertisement, 2002.)

⁴⁰³ E.g.: Buick, advertisement, *New York Times* 12 April 1984: A22.

⁴⁰⁴ Cadillac, advertisement, *New York Times* 15 October 1998: B4.

⁴⁰⁵ Infinity, advertisement, *New York Times* 2 August 1998: 16.

⁴⁰⁶ Buick, advertisement, *New York Times* 29 April 1984: SM8.

tested, “the roads that have been part of the BMW engineers’ daily commute for more than 70 years.”⁴⁰⁷

Lufthansa tries to soften the intimidating aspect of the high-speed roads by telling customers that they are not that much different: autobahns “are just like American highways, even with the big blue-and-white signs.”⁴⁰⁸ They are usually, though, a pre-fabricated image of speed that advertisers can readily use. Lufthansa, for instance, advertises its own new flight connections as follows: “The Autobahn of the Atlantic has just added three more lanes.”⁴⁰⁹ This interesting expression seems absurd, as planes neither need roads nor do they have speed limits. But it nonetheless implies a fast connection of high quality between the two continents and the beginning of Germany before one arrives there.

The autobahn is such an ideal image in advertising for several reasons. Its status between known and unknown signifies excitement, danger and adventure. Driving at speeds generally unimaginable is impelling, and mixed with old-world charm and the stereotypical engineering it is a potent sales message. It fits in with the American ideals of non-intrusive authorities and the freedom to express oneself.

Another factor is the taboo nature of this aspect of danger: it does not fit in with more modern safety and fuel-saving concerns. It is something we know we should not do but yet yearn to do, it appeals to emotions and instincts rather than reason, which makes for better sales. It also suggests freedom because these roads seem to be less civilized and untouched by political correctness. Lipman reports that in 1989 consumer groups demanded the removal of a Mercedes ad, in which the car was shown “speeding along the Autobahn,” revealing the controversial nature of a lack of speed limits: something forbidden in one’s own country nurtures the fascination of it.⁴¹⁰ Furthermore, the autobahns, which had been planned in the 20s, were one of Hitler’s projects to reduce the high unemployment in Germany, often referred to as “Straßen des Führers.” The associations with Nazi Germany are not made explicitly in advertisements, but could add to the taboo nature and certainly to the mythical status of these legendary highways. A Dodge advertisement, displays black-and-white and faded-color footage of deserted and pristine

⁴⁰⁷ BMW, advertisement, *New York Times* 25 May 1990: B2.

⁴⁰⁸ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 31 January 1972: 16.

⁴⁰⁹ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 13 March 1990: B9.

⁴¹⁰ Joanne Lipman, “Critics Attempt to Put Breaks on Subaru Ads,” *Wall Street Journal*. (Eastern edition) 15 Aug 1991: B1.

autobahns: “Germany built the first super-highways.” This commercial was the only one found that somewhat alluded to the German highways’ origins.⁴¹¹

The associations also include the previously discussed aspects of perfection, prestige, and luxury. These are genuine, they are an “original”, and they seem to be a logical consequence of Germany’s engineering image.

The reality of German highways is ignored. While the ads always show unused or half-empty roads, they never depict traffic jams, stop-and-go traffic, or the majority of the stretches with speed limits or construction sites. The idea of the autobahn appeals more to consumers than the reality, which the advertised product is suggested to help them escape from.

3.2 Historic Germany: Temporal Escapism

The discussion of the nostalgic appeal of Germany as a place reveals that the historic dimension is inextricably intertwined with the spatial dimension. The terms related to fairy tales discussed above are also often historic terms: a king can be a fairy tale character but also a person and function in a feudal system or monarchy. Both viewpoints share a certain alien, exotic nature that today’s spectator is faced with: “Ads for foreign scenes are often constructed on a paradoxical blend of the familiar and the Other, weaving nostalgic imagery of a lost past recuperable in the present.”⁴¹² Advertisements can recover times that have long past, or at least give the viewer the *feeling* of connection. Lears talks of certain universal experiences that make folklore – and this is also true for nostalgia – so prevalent in advertising:

All people, even academics and advertisers, once were children; many may have experienced a sense of pain and loss en route to adulthood – the ‘separation anxiety’ that Rodney Olsen has argued was particularly resonant in market society, where the

⁴¹¹ Dodge “Autobahn,” advertisement, 2002.

⁴¹² Martin Green, “Some Versions of the Pastoral: Myth in Advertising; Advertising as Myth,” *Advertising and Culture: Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. Mary Cross (Westport: Praeger, 1996) 29.

establishment of adult identity required the severing of family ties and (often) the uprooting of the individual from familiar surroundings.⁴¹³

Longing for previous generations' lifestyles is a common phenomenon. Topics include the extended family compared to the nuclear and increasingly the patchwork family as well as country life in contrast to today's increasingly urban environments. Often a connection to one's surroundings and nature compared to modern artificial worlds is an issue, as is a sense of genuineness, novelty, and adventure in comparison to our post-modern views. Green argues that "[a]s civilization becomes complex and increasingly crisis-ridden, the yearning for a simpler past becomes stronger."⁴¹⁴

Germany is an important part of America's past; one quarter of Americans trace their heritage to Germany, and many customs that are derived from Germany are still can still be found, especially in the midwestern states. Examples include festivals, local dishes, music and occasionally clothing. Immigration has shaped America's and its people's identity. Many Americans try to trace back their roots and, even those who do not see themselves as German-Americans, are often aware and proud of their German heritage. Images of one's ancestors' home country are part of one's own heritage, and advertisers do exploit these nostalgic feelings.

Often the use of history in ads is just that: a mere tool or trick to sell products: "'History' is uprooted, decontextualized, washed in a bath of aesthetics, stylized, and spectacularized as it becomes the sign value for a commodity. [...] The value of any historical signifier is quickly used up and turned into a by-product of commodity culture, further contributing to a culture composed of shifting surfaces."⁴¹⁵ Many of the often random and highly selective images that are presented have mainly been chosen for their manipulative power. How easily certain historical aspects can be altered can be seen in the switching between Germany's status as friend or enemy, as is further discussed in the last chapter.

The following analysis focuses on certain reoccurring, powerful examples: castles and palaces as historical remnants, history as a signifier for tradition and value, and the German Reunification as an example of how the present is portrayed as history in advertising.

⁴¹³ Jackson Lears, "Packaging the Folk: Tradition and Amnesia in American Advertising, 1880-1940," *Folk Roots, New Roots: Folklore in American Life*, eds. Jane S. Becker and Barabara Franco (Lexington, MA: Museum of Our National Heritage, 1988) 105-106.

⁴¹⁴ Green 37.

⁴¹⁵ Goldman and Papson 139-140.

Castles and Palaces

Castles and palaces are testimonials of a simpler, distant European past. They are artifacts that are physical remnants of those times, proof in stone of the seemingly exciting times which many have been familiar with since early childhood through stories, legends, fairy tales, books, and movies. Thus they allow a historical connection to non-historians; they are easily accessible and understandable. Advertisements, among other sources, show us that there is a large number of castles and palaces in Germany, and make frequent use of these historical, emotionally charged remnants. A 1937 advertisement shows high-speed trains and tourists in a train car with huge glass windows, which is referred to as a “glass train.” The tourists look down at a sight not revealed in the ad, not even looking at the impressive, towering castle ruins in the background.⁴¹⁶ The image suggests such an abundance of attractions that tourists do not even marvel at the historic site.⁴¹⁷ It is also an example of connecting the past to the present and old marvels to modern ones.

A 1938 ad, featuring a photo of swastika flags flying on a German beach, asks the reader to “turn romantic pages of history”:

The time-mellowed ruins of ancient castles, the tomb of Charlemagne, the elaborate Guild Halls of medieval cities, the Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals of Cologne, Freiburg, Worms and Speyer, and Frederick the Great’s palace of Sanssouci ... these and many others ... What glories of the past they echo!⁴¹⁸

The propagandistic intent seems to be obvious. Invoking the ruling of the German emperors over large parts of Europe during the Middle Ages was one of the themes of Nazi ideology. The train of thought leading from Charlemagne, who was made emperor in 800 AD, over the rise of central Europe to Frederick the Great, shows a selective timeline of German history. And again, the common romantic scenery is praised: “the Bavarian Alps, the Black Forest, the Harz and Thuringia ... the castles and vineyards of the Rhine and its gentle-flowing tributaries, the fruit

⁴¹⁶ The castle ruins are a good example of the overlapping of categories. While they are part of a present Germany, they also add a historical dimension.

⁴¹⁷ German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *Country Life* May 1937: 77.

⁴¹⁸ Advertisement in: Heimann, 30s 765.

trees and gardens of the Bergstrasse, the lovely sweep of sea and sky along the Baltic and North Sea.” On the right of the text, a winding train among high mountains is shown.⁴¹⁹ It is important to keep in mind that this ad was released just one year before World War II broke out, the year of the “Anschluss” of Austria and the occupation of the “Sudetenland” by Germany. The ad clearly is not only an attempt to lure visitors to come for a tourist visit, but also a political attempt to show Germany’s gentler side and hide the realities of political and military struggle. In an economical sense this means that the creation of image is more important than the actual selling of a product.

In terms such as “ancient castles,”⁴²⁰ the historical dimension is routinely emphasized. As a contrast to this, the German people are portrayed to be a part of this historical world and take these remnants as granted. The image of “Students sing[ing] in the shadow of Heidelberg castle”⁴²¹ juxtaposes the old and the new, the peaceful and the aggressive. The potential visitor can be part of this almost surreal world if he or she believes the attempts of persuasion: “whether you’re dreaming back through the centuries in a Rhine castle or a medieval town.”⁴²²

Lufthansa, which uses the topos of the castle extensively, invites potential visitors with the headline “Castle Hopping,” which, again, indicates an abundance of historical sites while alluding to a more modern lifestyle. The following list of attributes, part of the headline, includes an alliteration that strengthens the advertising message and emphasizes the historical dimension: “Come and delve, dine, dwell in Europe’s most legendary, chivalrous, lordly, golden, haunting, romantic past.” The following passages invite the customers to imagine themselves while experiencing a kind of time travel:

Enter a German castle, and you step across the threshold of the ages. Its massive doors close. And the slumbering centuries, long silent and dim, awaken with a stirring of echoes and a glimmer of light.

Listen! Do you hear the clash of armor ringing over a thousand years, as the Knights of Hehenscheid gird themselves for glory?

⁴¹⁹ Advertisement in: Heimann, 30s 765. Another ad of the same year, using the same wording, shows a beer garden or outdoor cafe near a pedestrian bridge leading over a lake or river instead of the beach. (German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *Country Life and the Sportsman* March 1938: 99.)

⁴²⁰ German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 21 March 1937: 187.

⁴²¹ German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *Country Life* May 1938: 114.

⁴²² Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 15 June 1964: 26.

Do you see the great hald of the island castle, Herrenchiemsee, gleaming with the soft brilliance of a million candles whose dancing blaze reflects off a thousand mirrors from tiered chandeliers of chrystal? You are there for a concert today – and it could be a hundred years ago.

Hush! Do you feel the presence of Napoleon in this room at Castle Auel? He stayed here in 1812. Is 1965 your year?

There are hundreds of castles in Germany, and many extend their hospitality to you.⁴²³

Images of several castles, which are also referred to as “history’s toys in the attic,” and their names are presented in the ad: Neuschwanstein, Schlosshotel Kronberg, Burg Eltz, Schloss Linderhof, Burg Hohenscheid, and Burghotel Lauenstein.⁴²⁴

The castle is used as a symbol and a trademark of Germany: “The world is one big castle – and Germany is the front door.” The ad continues that Germany is “the land where castles were practically invented.” The word “practically” reveals that this is not a historical fact but a persuasive opinion; there have been fortifications well before a ‘Germany’ or ‘Germania’ existed. Even the claim that the *medieval* castle has emerged in Germany is historically problematic. It is interesting to compare the images used in the advertisement, which features, besides Burg Eltz in Germany, castles and palaces in Japan, Egypt, Italy, India, Bangkok, and Iraq.⁴²⁵ The ad suggests that Germany’s castles are the original, a technique used in promotions ranging from ketchup to cars: “This summer, instead of building sand castles, go to Europe for the real thing.” Lufthansa takes you “right to the *drawbridges* of Europe’s most fanciful attractions.” (my emphasis) The label of the original can also be seen in the following travel suggestions: “Cruise through Germany’s castle-studded Rhine Valley, dine at the Castle Sababurg, the inspiration for ‘Sleeping Beauty,’ and be enchanted by the beautiful castles of Bavaria’s King Ludwig II.”⁴²⁶

Another advertisement showing the same image of the Heidelberg bridge and castle as this ad also stresses Germany’s still visible history and heritage: “What better way to experience all the revelry than on a Lufthansa Romantic Road Tour. Setting you on a journey through cities,

⁴²³ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 19 April 1965: 26.

⁴²⁴ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 19 April 1965: 26.

⁴²⁵ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 24 January 1966: 22. The photo of the German castle is larger than those of the others.

⁴²⁶ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 10 April 1988: 1145.

castles and countryside. From historic Heidelberg to medieval Rothenburg, to the classic spirit of Munich, you'll partake in all the heritage and history Germany has to offer."⁴²⁷ In close relation to this, another advertisement aims at a slightly different audience: "Lufthansa has a 21 day tour for Flower People." The "Great Garden Tour of Central Europe" offers visits to various "[p]alace gardens" and "[h]istorical gardens," in and around Germany.⁴²⁸ The pun of the flower people refers to an American context by alluding to hippies, and thus creates a connection as well as ironically connoting freedom by referring to places of feudal origin.

As can be seen from the ads described above, Lufthansa uses historical sights in general and castles in particular extensively. For several years the airline signed its messages with "The Red Baron," referring to the famous World War I fighter pilot Manfred Freiherr von Richthofen. This 'spokesperson' has a historical connotation which is several-fold: the type of warfare and manners that were deemed chivalrous and fair; the fame that certain pilots gained during the war as individuals; and his aristocratic roots. In one ad he claims: "From the windows of my castle, you can see the wonder of the Alps."⁴²⁹ Several other airline ads, such as the Pan Am campaigns of the 1950s, made heavy use of German castles, predominantly Neuschwanstein.

Castles can also make products look more distinguished: an ad titled "Coup d'Etat" and featuring Helbrun Castle in Austria, stresses the distinguished characteristics of Mercedes, including the three pointed star: "That, of course, is entirely in keeping with the seventy-five-year-old tradition of Mercedes-Benz."⁴³⁰ A similar ad has several cars of this brand parked in front of the Austrian castle "Schloss Mittersill."⁴³¹

Photographs of castles and palaces are frequently used in many of the ads, as they are a highly visible manifestation of history. They are also somewhat exotic to the American perceiver's eye, as there are no medieval castles and only few buildings that can be referred to as palaces in the United States. But even those were not built under feudal or monarchic circumstances. The castle is a very un-American symbol in the sense that it does not represent democracy, pluralism, freedom, or equality. And yet castles and palaces have a strong attraction for people in two ways: they have a certain old-world charm and they are decadent yet

⁴²⁷ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 19 October 1986: 612.

⁴²⁸ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 24 March 1968: D35.

⁴²⁹ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 2 December 1973: 656.

⁴³⁰ Heimann, 60s 181.

⁴³¹ Mercedes, advertisement, *Esquire* February 1962: 117.

wonderful.⁴³² They attract us in the same way that a prison like Alcatraz does: it frightens us, it awes us, it elicits feelings of rejection, but we are nonetheless fascinated by the horror, by the extravagance, by the fact that this used to be reality – and yet we do not have to feel any of its negative impacts. Castles are usually presented through a soft-focus lens, highlighting only certain aspects and leaving others out; they are “Story-book Castles.”⁴³³ The most frequently used exemplar in advertisements is “The castle of King Ludwig of Bavaria,” the Disney prototype Neuschwanstein.⁴³⁴

Certainly castles and palaces are not the only manifestations of historical traditions in Germany, but I use them here to exemplify the issue. Historical superlatives are used in promoting many tourist attractions to depict uniqueness and originality: “Hardly a recent play for tourists, the Munich Christmas fair claims it is the oldest dating back 600 years.”⁴³⁵

History as a Sign of Expertise and Tradition in Automobile and Beer Advertising

A very different approach to implementing historical components in a sales message is the history of a product or a company itself.

When invoked as a formal category in ads, history is usually represented as a source of value, which when placed in formal equivalence with the corporate name, lends value to the sponsor. Ironically, insofar as we become a culture without historical memory, history seems to have little value in daily life where the ‘creative destruction’ of the market is relentless.⁴³⁶

Certain companies stress their company legacy more than others, depending on their corporate philosophy. The advertisements analyzed in this dissertation revealed that German companies make particularly heavy use of this strategy, offering a disproportionate historical

⁴³² It is noteworthy that other countries’ castles are also frequently used by advertisers referring to the particular country, for instance England, France, or Spain. Also several castles, as well as other historical sights, are shown as being generally European; e.g.: an ad showing a very general and vague unidentified castle, titled “European vacations so great, we wrote a book about them.” (Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 29 March 1987: AS33.)

⁴³³ This refers to a special tour package that Lufthansa is offering. Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 6 June 1971: XX34.

⁴³⁴ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 1 November 1987: AS17.

⁴³⁵ German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 10 October 1989: B13.

⁴³⁶ Goldman and Papson 117.

connotation to Germany's depiction. The sample advertisements discussed below stem from the German automobile and brewing industries, which use this technique heavily in their U.S. advertising campaigns.

To emphasize the expertise that Mercedes has gained over the twentieth century in building its cars in general and the E-class in particular, the company ran a TV spot showing the various stages of the company's history. It starts out with a car, presumably from the 20s, but definitely from pre-war Germany, being rolled into an assembly hall and checked by engineers in white coats. Then more workers can be seen assembling additional cars manually. The camera moves backwards through the large manufacturing hall throughout the commercial, but each scene fades and changes into another time period. The first footage, which is shot in black and white, becomes a colored scene of post-war Germany, and the cars are the models of that time period. The factory hall changes again, showing Mercedes models of the 80s and 90s and a much lighter, more mechanized assembly line. In chronological order, every model of the E-class 'family' is shown in the ad. Finally the camera arrives in a car showroom, showing the latest model. "The story remains the same, yet the story is always changing. Introducing the all-new E-class." The words "The New E-Class" are written on the screen, which change to the word "Experience. Unlike any other." The message of the commercial is enhanced by the song "Time is on my side," which also changes at each different scene: it starts slow, becomes faster and changes instrumentation to reflect each model's and each time period's character and feeling. In 60 seconds the history of Mercedes Benz is shown, yet so fast that the viewer only stays focused on the commercial's message: It offers both time-honored expertise and tradition, but it is also cutting-edge. Goldman and Papson state that "ads depict corporate histories around the organizing principles of vision and innovation."⁴³⁷ Another print ad is more straightforward and repetitive, as it describes Mercedes as the "[w]orld's oldest car maker," "the world's oldest automobile maker," and as "the inventors of the automobile."⁴³⁸ Time connotes wisdom, experience, and value in these instances.

A similar, previously discussed Mercedes commercial featuring Marlene Dietrich's "Dankeschön" song also uses history as a value-enhancing tool. A gray timeline on a black background continuously scrolls in from the right side of the screen. The only specified dates are

⁴³⁷ Goldman and Papson 137.

⁴³⁸ Mercedes, advertisement, *New York Times* 30 January 1967: 17.

1901 at the beginning and 2001 at the end of the timeline, other information is displayed in graphic form: a very early example of a motorized vehicle, photos of Mercedes Benz' founders and Mercedes herself, a trophy, a short clip of a race, early versions of the Mercedes logo. Along the timeline the images become more modern and eventually in color, showing newer versions of cars and the company logo. One can spot a television set and a short film of an automobile assembly scene. The information passes by so quickly – the spot lasts only 30 seconds – that it is nearly impossible to decipher and make sense of all the bits of 'historical' information without pausing or using slow motion. However, a concise portrayal of historic facts is not the aim of the commercial, but rather to suggest to the customer that the company has a long tradition, that it has evolved, and that it is now a hundred years old, a message that is repeated in written form at the end: "A hundred years. A million thanks."⁴³⁹ It is worth noting that images of the 1930s and 40s have been left out, which can be explained by the company's desire to leave out any negative or unwanted associations with the Third Reich. What is more important than a concise picture of history is its historicalness, offering only selected and vague references, not giving a whole, clear account of it. German history is significant so far only as a hollow reference, modified and minimized to the advertiser's needs.

History and tradition of Mercedes, the "World's oldest car maker," have been stressed in its promotional efforts for decades: the model in one particular ad is "from the *inventors* of the automobile" in 1886, when "Henry Ford's amazing Model T was still 22 years off."⁴⁴⁰ Showing that one's product was the first and is the original is a mode of persuasion, which suggests that therefore it must also be the best. Mercedes also stresses its history in the field of racing to display its overall tradition:

[A]s early as 1894, the ancestors of today's Mercedes-Benz were winning races. [...] All of the vast experience and knowledge accrued through the decades of success are evident in the engineering and construction of every Mercedes-Benz. The silver three-pointed star

⁴³⁹ Mercedes "Danke Schoen," advertisement, 2001; similarly: Mercedes "Falling in Love Again," advertisement, (*Lürzer's Archive Online Services*. Reference number: [v2.9717]. <<http://www.luerzersarchive.net>> 12 January 2005).

⁴⁴⁰ Mercedes, advertisement, *New York Times* 30 January 1967: 17.

is the silent symbol of this glorious past and the hallmark of automotive excellence for today and tomorrow.⁴⁴¹

A recent Mercedes commercial includes the consumer and his/her personal history. Quickly showing photos containing individuals posing with their cars, it creates a spectrum of impressions. New cars in color and old cars in black and white photos show, once again, the whole range of Mercedes past and present models.⁴⁴² It is powerful because of the personal touch, because it urges the viewers to think about their own car, and it creates emotion⁴⁴³ and a feeling of authenticity because the photos depict “real” people as opposed to staged photo shoots with professional models. Further viewer involvement is created by the opportunity to go to the Mercedes website and send in or upload one’s own photos.

Audi also uses commercials depicting its historicalness without delivering clear historical reference but rather suggesting vague glimpses.⁴⁴⁴ Revealing its age and expertise, it is emphasized that “[b]efore there was a Model T there was an Audi.”⁴⁴⁵ Showing that Audi introduced 4-wheel drive and a female driver to the racing world, another commercial mixes old footage with its latest model. The final statement is: “Great then. Great now.”⁴⁴⁶

In contrast to this, an advertisement by Porsche gives the potential customer a more personal and direct account of the company’s origins:

The year was 1948. In a rented building outside of Stuttgart, Germany, an old man, his son and a dozen workers began building an automobile. After a lifetime of designing cars for other people, this one would be the first to bear his name. Three years later Professor Ferdinand Porsche was dead. But he’d left behind, in his son, the determination to build great cars. Today, Porsches are still made in Stuttgart. And Porsches are still made by Porsches. Ferry, the son who worked on the 1948 car with his father, works on the 1970 cars with his sons. Butzi, who designs them. Peter, who is in charge of production. And Wolfgang, who’ll learn the business from the bottom up. The generations have changed.

⁴⁴¹ Mercedes, advertisement, *Esquire* December 1961: 53.

⁴⁴² Mercedes, advertisement, *Comedy Central* 12 April 2004.

⁴⁴³ “No one ever poses with their toaster.” is the final line. (Mercedes “Toaster,” advertisement, 2004.)

⁴⁴⁴ Audi A8 L “Even in the Beginning,” advertisement, 2003.

⁴⁴⁵ Audi, advertisement, 1972. Personal collection.

⁴⁴⁶ Audi “Great then,” advertisement, 2001.

And so have the cars. But one thing has stayed the same. The love that went into the first Porsche over 21 years ago goes into every Porsche that's made today.⁴⁴⁷

The ad is meant to especially appeal to an American audience, as it tells the story of a self-made man, who rose from rags to riches through his own work and ingenuity, who came from humble origins and enabled a brighter future for his sons, his company, and his country. A more recent commercial also invokes the company's past: Porsche has a "man awake after decades of coma" drive an older model in a 2002 Super Bowl commercial. A younger man in the latest model of the same company passes him, and both are amazed at each other's model. The message fits in with all other previously discussed corporate messages: "Boxster. What a Porsche has always been."⁴⁴⁸ Volkswagen's commercials and ads especially stress the legendary VW Bug, not only in those promoting the new Beetle, the Bug's successor model.⁴⁴⁹

Such advertisements shape and reinforce Germany's image only indirectly. They stress certain company values that have become generally accepted. Combined with the common knowledge of the country of origin of a carmaker, such connections do emphasize impressions of Germany as having traditions and being technologically advanced. This again leads to a disproportionate emphasis on these characteristics and averts the view from others.

In a similar fashion, the past is employed by beer advertisers. Holsten claims that the company's hometown Hamburg is "Germany's oldest brewing center, dating back to the 13th century." The advertisement gives a detailed account to prove this statement: "The Knight of Holsten-Schauenburger then gave to the town of Hammaborg (now Hamburg) the most important privilege of brewing beer and Hamburg's beer was shipped to all northern areas, including England, Holland and Scandinavia. Over the centuries, Hamburg's brewing fame spread throughout the world." The reference to today's world then follows, linking the past and

⁴⁴⁷ Heimann, 60s 264.

⁴⁴⁸ Porsche "Coma," advertisement, 2002.

⁴⁴⁹ Goldman and Papson conclude similarly and add further examples: "Archival black and white film has become a primary chip played in the sign wars between upscale automakers such as Audi, Mercedes, and BMW. When affluent baby boomers demanded safety in their cars, Audi, Mercedes and BMW raided their respective film libraries to signify their 'early days' in which their forward-looking engineers scientifically tested collision safety equipment. Such scenes are presented on the assumption that they provide historical evidence leading to the conclusion that Audi, or Mercedes, or BMW is still a safety feature innovator today. For example, in one Mercedes ad an older engineer reminisces seeing dated images of crash testing that 'we had no idea we were inventing safety science.'" (Goldman and Papson 137.)

the present of the company and its beer: “Today, this tradition is in every glass of Holsten beer. True German flavor. Hearty taste. Satisfying to those who appreciate a truly fine beer.”

Many assumptions and vague statements are made with the purpose of enhancing Holsten’s rich tradition and giving it the notion of being an original and one of the first beer producers. The term “oldest brewing center” does not actually mean it is the oldest brewery in Germany. But it gives the perceiver the impression of being the first and oldest. Also the term “true German flavor” is rather ambiguous and raises the question whether something like this actually exists. The extensive Hanseatic trade described is not necessarily due to superior quality of the beer but rather the trading privileges the city offered. Furthermore one has to take the absence of brand products during the Middle Ages and the fact that the modern company was not founded until 1879 into account.

The photograph above the text shows a knight looking at his large, richly decorated beer glass with satisfaction. He is sitting on a replica of a medieval throne, with his helmet placed on a small table, which is covered by a white tablecloth. The image appears to be very artificial due to the cleanliness of the scene, the shiny metallic armor, the well-groomed (the hairstyle and beard appear to be artificial) model. The scene is surrounded by an old-looking picture frame with a plaque at the bottom stating “The Holsten Knight and his Noble Brew.”⁴⁵⁰ The only connection between the beer and the knight is merely the fact that he gave the city of Hamburg the brewing privilege.

A very similar British ad⁴⁵¹ uses much of the same imagery and hollow symbolism.⁴⁵² The Holsten knight, here called the Black Knight, is as vaguely referred to as in the American counterpart: “Nobody knows for certain who he is but he’s long been a symbol of the Holsten brewery in Hamburg. Tradition says that the Black Knight is Duke Adolph III and it’s a happy explanation.” Williamson sees the knight as “the product’s own mythology,”⁴⁵³ devoid of any real historical value.

⁴⁵⁰ Holsten, advertisement, *Esquire* July 1960: 34.

⁴⁵¹ Williamson does not specify where this product was advertised, but I conclude that it must be a British ad: “The historic beer is being shipped to Great Britain and is available in bottles and cans...” (Williamson, 168.)

⁴⁵² Here it is called the “historic beer of Germany”: “In 1188 Duke Adolph III granted the city of Hamburg its own brewing rights. The rest is history.”

⁴⁵³ Williamson 169.

So history becomes identified with a total mystification: there is a ‘symbol’ about which we know nothing, except that it signifies this beer, and our only access to the beer is by ‘looking for the Black Knight on the label’. Action is located around the symbol, while history is somehow suggested as being both knowable, and yet ‘obvious’: ‘the rest is history’ implies that it need not be told, it stands so objectively and solidly on its own.⁴⁵⁴

Both the American and the British ad rely on certain historical facts to create an image and historical associations to stress the beer’s value and heritage. They do not explain any real connection, only giving a “happy explanation.”

A similarly selective and quasi-historical foundation is used in an ad for Würzburger Beer, using the headline “1643 WAS A YEAR TO REMEMBER.” This attention-grabbing line leads, as is common in these types of advertisements, to a more detailed explanation:

The Thirty Years War was coming to an end. A dry, dusty end; for the armies that had warred upon the Bavarian lands had ravaged the wine cellars of Wurzburg... Meanwhile, back at the castle, Prince Johann Philipp von Schonborn, troubled by conscience that the good people of Wurzburg were so deprived of drink, had an idea! Why not build a Royal Brewery? It was done, and late in 1643 there began to flow from the Wurzbürger Hofbrau a stream of golden deliciousness that has washed the thirst of the world for over 300 years! Today, enjoy a glass of the finest **imported** [sic] beer you’ve had in centuries...⁴⁵⁵

It is the same story of a nobleman giving a city the brewing privilege, which is not unique at all in German history. But the tradition and age of the brewery as well as its story are meant to impress American customers. The advertiser stressed its historical connection further in subsequent years by altering the label and adding a castle on a hilltop as the prominent feature on the bottle depicted in the ad: history sells.

“Max Schumann’s famous Hof-Brau-Haus” [sic] claims that it was “a place where lovers of good German Food and Bier have been frequenting since before Prohibition,” thus invoking elements of the American past. The beer sold at their establishment is, once again, described in

⁴⁵⁴ Williamson 168.

⁴⁵⁵ Würzburger Hofbräu, advertisement, *Esquire* May 1959: 42H.

the usual style: “Founded in 1328 by the Monks of Holy Augustinus it is now privately operated and owned for the past 100 years by the Wagner family.”⁴⁵⁶

History in the Making: Reunification

Current or recent events are often portrayed by advertisers as being historical to enhance product appeal and can often function as a national identifier. The reunification in Germany in 1990 and the events that led to it in central Europe are a good example of how companies quickly make use of the emotional and sensational power inherent in these moments. I argue that the depictions presented below appeal to consumers similarly as nostalgia does because they suggest to the viewer that soon this particular moment will be history. They tell the audience that it can be witness to an event that it will always fondly remember. This technique turns the present into nostalgia before it is even history. The perception of ongoing events can be greatly altered by choosing highly selective imagery and creating calculated moods, which advertisers do not hesitate to implement.

In an ad that was printed just one week after the official unification of the two Germanys, Lufthansa invites passengers to come to the newly reunified Germany. Featuring the Brandenburg Gate, the headline tellingly states: “Now open for business.”⁴⁵⁷ Marketers in the tourism industry quickly detected the potential of this opportunity and created a number of ads to convert viewers into tourists. Lufthansa’s print ad titled “Let us show you the new Germany, now that there’s so much more for you to see” puts the message out very directly: “There’s never been a better time to see Germany. Because now with the added attraction of the eastern states, there’s twice as much to see.”⁴⁵⁸ The message does not really promise anything new, and the large photo underneath the headline depicts the stereotypic German idyll, a church, some historic houses, and a lake. A second ad with almost the same wording, titled “The New Germany,” shows a young, smiling couple with binoculars below Neuschwanstein, which is located in former Western Germany.⁴⁵⁹ Both ads reveal the slowness of change in the successful German image; they tell the consumer that they can get their beloved product now with a bonus. Images

⁴⁵⁶ Hof Bräu-Haus, advertisement, *New York Times* 18 April 1933: 13.

⁴⁵⁷ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 10 October 1990: C13.

⁴⁵⁸ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 28 April 1991: CNA5.

⁴⁵⁹ Lufthansa/German Rail/KD/DZT, advertisement, *New York Times* 7 April 1991: XX25.

from the eastern part are not used as they lack the recognition factor to connect to existing schemata.

As American businesses, such as Coca Cola, Pepsi, McDonald's, and Burger King, poured into the Eastern Germany, they also employed images of deprived people finally receiving the blessings of western consumer culture. "As dozens of children chisel away at the cement," Leslie Savan describes one Pepsi commercial, "a big graffiti peace sign hovers above and, culminating the ad, a girl gives a guard a rose." The voice-over explains why Pepsi should be the customer's preferred product, while Händel's 'Halleluja Chorus' plays in the background: "In this, the season of giving, the gift of freedom is the greatest gift of all."⁴⁶⁰ While the Deutsche Telekom usually does not reveal its country of origin in American advertising, one rare example from its early campaigns shows Karl Marx with a wireless phone in a U.S. ad: "Who ever managed to catapult an entire country's telecommunications from the Stone Age into the future?"⁴⁶¹ It reveals not only the origin of Deutsche Telekom, but also shows the victory of capitalism ("the future") over communism ("the Stone Age"), giving this advertisement a remarkably strong political and ideological tone.

Savan describes an AT&T "people spot," in which "West Germans talk excitedly not just about the wall coming down or their joy of seeing East German relatives, but their joy in reaching their relatives *over the phone*."⁴⁶² The fragrance-producing company Quintessence had a spot produced, in which a grandfather from Eastern Germany "crosses near the Brandenburg Gate, and his four-year-old, West German grandson immediately recognizes him. As they embrace, a teddy bear falls from *Opa's* bag, and an East German guard picks it up for him."⁴⁶³ Savan sees certain similarities in the analyzed commercials despite differences in technique:

Not only because all feature the Berlin Wall, children, graffiti, and/or skull-breaking guards turned simpatico, but because most of these corporations view this 'celebration of freedom' as their 'holiday greeting.' In each case, the company and its ad people talk about how 'excited' they are to be 'a part of history.'⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶⁰ Savan 137.

⁴⁶¹ Deutsche Telekom, advertisement, *New York Times* 5 September 1995: D3.

⁴⁶² The conversation goes as follows: "'And then I called my sister,' one strapping lad says. 'She couldn't believe it. She hadn't heard the radio, not the TV, nothing.'" (Savan 138.)

⁴⁶³ Savan 138.

⁴⁶⁴ Savan 136.

While the divided Germany and its reunification is the most prominent symbol of the Cold War and its end, other countries in which revolutions and change of government, system or regime took place are frequently used in advertising, stirring up emotion, satisfaction, and joy. The U.S. phone company Sprint showed the power of “the human voice” in one of their commercials, which related to voice activated dialing as well as protesters waving a Czech flag, and a public speaker.⁴⁶⁵ The theme is that communication is powerful and can be, literally, revolutionary. Keyishian discusses similar ads depicting General Electric’s contracts and relationships with Hungary in 1990 and Japan in 1992.⁴⁶⁶

The advertisements show a certain disconnect that is common in advertising. The American viewer most likely is in a completely different, revolution-free environment, sitting in front of a television set, and perhaps does not even know much about the revolution in this particular country, which may not even be specified. The only reason the advertiser uses it is to create positive feelings and connect them somehow to its products, whether that is a soft drink, a fragrance, or a telephone service. It is suggested that good deeds are done or supported by simply consuming a company’s products. By the time the Super Bowl hits, the interest in revolutions may have significantly declined, as the comedian Jay Leno reveals in a Doritos commercial: “This guy writes: Because of this Berlin Wall thing, will there be enough Doritos tortilla chips to go around for my Super Bowl party?” Leno answers: “Didn’t you understand the whole ‘crunch all you want’ campaign? Hey, the day comes when we can’t make more than you can eat. That’s when we hang it up, pal. Do you understand that?” The voice-over suggests to the viewer to “Eat Doritos and enjoy the game!”⁴⁶⁷ This commercial reveals how quickly events are superseded by new ones.

But some historical moments, images, and figures have become classic advertising tools: the first step on the moon, the Wright brothers and their flight near Kitty Hawk, NC, certain athletes and their glorious moments, famous people like Edison and Einstein. They are used again and again, for any product from financial services to food or cars. A recent Bass beer commercial claims that the company is not responsible for all the great historical moments, that

⁴⁶⁵ U.S. Sprint “New World,” advertisement, 1990.

⁴⁶⁶ Harry Keyishian, “‘We Bring Good Things to Life’ / ‘We’re Always There’: The AdWorld of GE,” *Advertising and Culture: Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. Mary Cross (Westport: Praeger, 1996) 57-58.

⁴⁶⁷ Doritos “Jay Leno – Berlin Wall,” advertisement, 1990.

they “didn’t tear down the Berlin Wall,” that they did not put a man on the moon, that they did not help win any important horse races (“and we didn’t race into the history books”), but that they do make a good beer (“Our passion is beer. Whatever yours is, reach for greatness”). In the spot, people are seen crowding the top of the wall with the Brandenburg Gate in the background, climbing it, or hammering pieces from it. To add a funny element, the Bass employee fails all the tasks and is too weak to properly hit a piece out of the Berlin Wall.⁴⁶⁸ A Nintendo print ad shows its main video game character, Mario, sitting on the Wall, alluding to the fact that its video games allow players to take on a wide range of imaginative roles.⁴⁶⁹

It is likely that the fall of the Wall will remain to be a potent historical moment used in advertising. It has several advantages and is remarkably similar to other defining events. It reveals a certain power structure: The fall of the East is one of the biggest advertisements for all businesses: capitalism triumphed and proved to be the apparently good winner over an evil system. These events give companies an opportunity to celebrate themselves and be able to show their ostensible connection to values such as freedom, joy, success, and power. As many of the other frequently used historical moments, these events signify a fresh start, something new and exciting, and hope. The Wall is such a potent symbol that is very versatile, can be highly personal, is emotionally charged, its fall has been regarded as generally positive, and it boasts strong visual power. It is instantly recognizable and part of our personal memories and for the younger generation already history.

3.3 Conclusion

Escapism is a common phenomenon in advertising. Both images from the past or distant places create the sensation the viewer gets when viewing such advertisements. The use of nostalgia creates what Harris calls an “emotional cushion,” which results in a certain double standard used by advertisers:

⁴⁶⁸ Bass, advertisement, *Spike TV* 10 September 2004.

⁴⁶⁹ Nintendo, advertisement, (*Lürzer’s Archive Online Services*. Reference number: [3.0407]. <<http://www.luerzersarchive.net>> 12 January 2005).

The public's nostalgia provides one of the most fertile grounds for advertising. In the ornamental details that lurk in our peripheral vision, it is possible to perceive the anxieties and daydreams of a society still undergoing momentous changes from an agricultural to an industrial economy. One of the primary functions of the aesthetics of consumerism is to provide us with an emotional cushion, a form of camouflage, a credible disguise for a culture that refuses to admit the truth about itself, that self-righteously insists on its own anti-consumerism even while enjoying the luxuries and conveniences of mass production.⁴⁷⁰

Nostalgia adds aspects of importance, grandeur, universal values, and transcendence to advertisements and commodities: a product and its consumption is made larger and more important than it in fact is.

A product or an advertisement can also take on its own meanings, which can enter unintentionally into a culture: "Once commodities enter everyday life and are immersed within the context of real social relations they take on new meanings and emotional valences – their sign value is no longer simply inscribed on them by their advertisers. Commodities become part of our life histories."⁴⁷¹ Advertisers often tap into apparently personal memories, such childhood, relationships, special moments or places, and animals. Vacation and holiday memories both at home and overseas are frequently invoked, also referred to as "destination marketing": "Because a product sampled on a holiday can arouse emotional memories when recalled, companies promote heavily in destination marketing in prime holiday areas." For instance the U.S. division of the German brewer Beck's uses this technique because it believes that "if heavy promotion induces people to sample Beck's while on holiday, they will continue to buy it when back home because they will associate it with pleasant times."⁴⁷²

Oxoby points out that during the nineties nostalgia was one of the trends in advertising.⁴⁷³ From a rising interest in 'retro' fashion⁴⁷⁴ to music from previous decades, 'old' became popular again. During the 1990s this nostalgia encompassed even the 1980s, a time which even the

⁴⁷⁰ Daniel Harris, *Cute, Quaint, Hungry, and Romantic: The Aesthetics of Consumerism* (New York: Basic Books, 2000) xix.

⁴⁷¹ Goldman and Papson 119-120.

⁴⁷² O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 97.

⁴⁷³ Oxoby 49.

⁴⁷⁴ The German companies Puma and Adidas, which sell mainly sports clothes and equipment, have been exceptionally successful with their collection from the 1980s in the new millenium.

younger generation had lived in and consciously experienced. The television station VH1, which has a younger audience in their teens and twenties, released a series called “I love the 90s”⁴⁷⁵ in 2004, depicting ‘memories’ of popular culture, which most of even its younger viewers have experienced themselves. In a world in which everything is always new, clean, and perfect, many marketers offer the opposite: rustic looks, items made to intentionally look old (sometimes referred to as shabby-chic), and items that had been sold years and decades earlier; in retro-style. The Volkswagen Beetle is a prime example of old and yet brand-new, of life in the 60s and the 90s, all at once. In today’s popular culture, nostalgia can be lived because history can be consumed and is constantly in the making. Ads showing the Berlin Wall, for instance, brought nostalgic moments to viewers ‘in real-time.’ But such incisive events also break the routine of solid stereotypes. The fall of the Wall “stands out as one of those rare occasions,” Trommler asserts, “when the power of stereotyping between nations was momentarily revealed and challenged.”⁴⁷⁶

While the goals and techniques of the advertiser are clearly crafted, the cultural byproduct – disseminated stereotypes and contorted national images – is unimportant from a commercial standpoint. It is however these depictions that shape, emphasize, define, and influence the view of Germany and the Germans. They are one-sided, distorted, and simplified representations that are often out of context. Advertising only offers glimpses at complex phenomena such as history or social and regional makeup. It gives in to the tendency of fast consumption of culture and shies away, due to the very nature of its medium and purpose, from depicting anything below the surface.

⁴⁷⁵ It was preceded by similar shows depicting the 70s and 80s.

⁴⁷⁶ Frank Trommler, “Unification Policies and the German Image: Comments on the American Reaction,” *Transatlantic Images and Perceptions: Germany and America Since 1766*, eds. David Barclay and Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 353.

4. The Typical German in American Advertising

Whereas the previous chapter deals with Germany as a country, in this chapter I explore the depiction of the typical, or rather stereotypical German. As the discussion of stereotypes has shown, characteristics of a nationality are condensed into a few, highly salient attributes, which include aspects of physique, language, culture, and customs.

The following sections on the depiction of German food, beer, and festival culture, the Germans' clothing style, gender, and physical characteristics as well as the German language show which triggers are used to signal "Germanness." Furthermore, while the previous chapter is solely concerned with Germany and the Germans, it is the German-Americans' influence that has shaped the following images and stereotypes. The last section, titled "The New Germans," deals with new developments and changes of these rigid manifestations of the typical German.

4.1 German Lifestyle: Food, Beer and *Gemütlichkeit*

German groups in America have contributed to its culture, and many traditions can be traced back to this ethnic group. Nostalgia regarding German-Americans, thus, works very differently from that regarding Germans and Germany; it is seen not as exotic but as an integral part of America's historical makeup.

The culture that German immigrants brought over to the United States flourished especially in the Midwest. Festivals, beer gardens, music, and *Gemütlichkeit* became an image closely tied to that of Germany.⁴⁷⁷ Totten agrees that these also constituted one of the most striking differences between the German and the Puritan English immigrants. The 'Heimat' traditions are especially prevalent in the German settlement areas such as the northern Midwest states.

Das kleinstädtische, gemütlich-familiäre Element, das aus dem Bild der deutschen Einwanderer auf die Gesamtsicht ihres Vaterlandes in amerikanischen Augen übertragen

⁴⁷⁷ Leach 139-141.

wurde, prägte sich im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert besonders durch die gemütvollen Formen seiner Geselligkeit dem amerikanischen Bewußtsein ein. Gegenüber den Angloamerikanern, von denen es hieß, daß sie kein anderes Vergnügen kannten als das Geschäft, gehörten für die Deutschen zu den sauren Wochen auch frohe Feste.⁴⁷⁸

The roots of many other contributions and influences of German immigrants are mostly forgotten, of which Christmas traditions and Easter celebrations are only the most prominent examples. They are now part of mainstream culture, whereas the exotic and the different do have more appeal when it comes to advertising.⁴⁷⁹ One ad combines several of these most typically German experiences, which the visitor will encounter when visiting the promoted “Big 8 Cities” in Germany: “gaily-dancing pink-cheeked, blond pigtailed lasses and sturdy yodeling lads; long beards, longer pipes, and mammoth jugs of hearty beer; cobwebbed wine cellars; sauerkraut and dumplings.”⁴⁸⁰

Food

Food is a very accessible part of a culture, making it easy to experience other cultures in a convenient way. One does not even have to leave one’s country to experience quasi-authentic German or foreign food. This characteristic leads to a simplification of cultural perceptions and representations, and explains the abundance of food stereotypes used in advertising and foodways.⁴⁸¹

Food has always played an important role in the perception of foreigners; we are what we eat. The Germans have long been referred to as “krauts,” sometimes as “noodles.” This is not uncommon, as Americans have labeled people of foreign origin according to their native food, in

⁴⁷⁸ Totten 35.

⁴⁷⁹ Christmas traditions, however, are in a few cases explained or alluded to in ads by German companies. Beck’s claimed some years ago that Germany’s contributions to Christmas were the Christmas tree and their brand of beer. Lufthansa frequently described in their winter travel ads which other Christmas traditions have their origins in Germany, thus making Germany an original when it comes to winter or Christmas travel.

⁴⁸⁰ German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 25 February 1968: T6.

⁴⁸¹ “Because food has become one of the foci of popular culture research and cultural studies research generally, the term ‘foodways’ has expanded to cover not just regional or ethnic cooking and cuisine or regional food festivals but the treatment of food and eating in popular media, film, and fiction and the increased importance of ‘fast food’ as an element of American culture.” (Sara Lewis Dunne, “Foodways,” *Handbook of American Popular Culture*, 2nd ed. vol. 2, eds. Thomas M. Inge and Dennis Hall. (New York: Greenwood Press, 2002) 689.)

a simplified way, such as “frogs“ for the French.⁴⁸² Food is also often used to label or identify certain ethnic groups especially in advertising. Sausages and cabbage are often seen as stereotypically German fare. But these foods are not inherently German; they are also consumed in many other countries.

The origins of ‘typical’ German food suggest many differences in tradition and food preparation that may have led to those stereotypes still prevalent today. Gabaccia, for instance, describes some of the differences between the German and the English settlers in food ‘production’ and preparation.

Unlike the English settlers, Germans cooked on stoves rather than over the open fire, and they were more likely to stew rather than roast native meats. They also devoted more attention to their kitchen gardens – cultivating a wider range of cabbages and other vegetables – and they ate less corn than their English neighbors.⁴⁸³

Totten contrasts German and French food: “Die deftige Hausmannskost, die von tüchtigen Handwerkern und resoluten Hausfrauen zubereitet wird, erscheint besonders typisch deutsch im Vergleich zu ihrem Gegenpol, der eleganten französischen Küche, die von einem Chef zubereitet wird.”⁴⁸⁴ German food sometimes is, however, marketed as having metropolitan and international flair.⁴⁸⁵

Another phenomenon in conjunction with food is the abundance and overindulgence associated with the Germans. It can partly be attributed to the fact that German settlers generally thrived as farmers in the United States. Pillsbury gives an explanation for the overindulgence: “the Germanic tradition of the ‘groaning board,’ that is, serving family and guests more food than they could possibly consume, also contributed to the heaviness of these meals and those who consumed them.”⁴⁸⁶ Germans tended to stick to their native foods more than other ethnic

⁴⁸² See below for a discussion of “kraut” as an ethnophaulism.

⁴⁸³ Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) 29.

⁴⁸⁴ Totten 28.

⁴⁸⁵ For example in a restaurant called “Zum Zum”: “If you’ve never eaten at **zum zum** [sic] maybe you’re from Little Rock.” New Yorkers “know they’re getting the best of the wursts: bauernwurst, knackwurst, weisswurst, frankfurters. Any wurst they want, with red cabbage or sauerkraut and potato salad.” (Zum Zum, advertisement, *New York Times* 8 April 1975: 4.)

⁴⁸⁶ Pillsbury 41.

groups, which led to their higher saliency.⁴⁸⁷ The attributes that have long been connected to ethnic groups within the United States have not disappeared and were prevalent in many of the analyzed advertisements.

Food can be employed for several reasons in advertising. It can be used as a way to label an ethnic group in the same way a piece of clothing or an accent can instantly reveal a person's or a product's origins, whether that would be a baguette or beret or a bratwurst or Lederhosen. It can furthermore be a way of creating humor or ridicule.⁴⁸⁸ And then, it is certainly a product itself that can be marketed as a delicacy, as ethnic, foreign food. Negra suggests that TV ads and other texts "overvalue and exaggerate ethnic food as a sensual, reproducible sign of a mode of ethnic kinship that is simultaneously mourned, romanticized, and nostalgically reenacted in popular culture. Food stands in for a way of life our contemporary culture has largely left behind and that we now identify with an American immigrant past and with cultures other than our own."⁴⁸⁹ Negra mentions food chains, such as Olive Garden, which serves Italian-inspired food and so-called "comfort foods." These ethnic foods, which are often depicted as natural, hand-made, and slow, are often contrasted to the mass-produced, fast-consumed, and artificially flavored 'American' food. This trend has also benefited the German cuisine, with "more than 40 percent of buyers having some relationship with German foods."⁴⁹⁰ Perhaps due to this popularity, McDonald's marketed a "McBrat" in the late 1990s, a bratwurst with sauerkraut and onion, in Wisconsin and Minnesota, two states with a large German ethnic background. However, this is an exception, and traditional German food is not a mainstream and mass product.⁴⁹¹ Another advertisement revealing food stereotypes is titled "German Pizza." It shows a whole green cabbage, "Knackwurst," Sauerkraut, caraway seeds, and a pizza topped with these

⁴⁸⁷ This sometimes led to alienation and ridicule: "In the early twentieth century, for instance, ethnic foods were regarded as suspicious signifiers of an inappropriate attachment to non-U.S. homelands." (Diane Negra, "Ethnic Food Fetishism, Whiteness, and Nostalgia in Recent Film and Television," *Velvet Light Trap* 50 (2002): 64.)

⁴⁸⁸ See below for a further discussion.

⁴⁸⁹ Negra 69.

⁴⁹⁰ Joanne Friedrich, "German Import Market Tries to Overcome Old Perceptions and Build a New Reality," *Gourmet News* October 2003: 17.

⁴⁹¹ An interesting, related example is the fast-food chain with the curious name "Wienerschnitzel," which does not sell fried pork chops as the name would suggest. The name refers to the main ingredient – Wieners – of the company's products, which are actually hot dogs.

ingredients: “You can make German Pizza by adding sliced knockwurst and sauerkraut (rinsed and drained). Then sprinkle generously with caraway seeds.”⁴⁹²

More and more German food products are marketed in the U.S., which tend to be in the following categories: sausages, beer, sauerkraut, candy, confections, pickled vegetables, mustards, bread, wine, cheese, cold cuts, and cooking and baking mixes.⁴⁹³ When October comes, many things are promoted as Oktoberfest items, predominantly beer and food: “The Tastes Are *Wunderbar!* *Ump-pah-pah* on over to The Food Emporium’s Oktoberfest celebration, where you’ll discover a fabulous feast of traditional German taste sensations ... from wonderful *wursts* to hearty hams and scrumptious cheeses and so much more.”⁴⁹⁴ Different types of meat and sausages as well as beer are the most common types of German food displayed; Löwenbräu, for instance, presents its beer in one advertisement next to a rather large, red, glazed, and very fatty chunk of meat on one plate and a slice of it on another. In the background three large beer steins can be spotted. The text underneath this still life claims: “This is Löwenbräu. It is brewed in Munich as it has been since the year 1383...”⁴⁹⁵

Such representations have been common since the beginnings of modern advertising, as an early newspaper advertisement from 1912 for the Hofbräu-Haus, the “quaintest place in America,” shows. It depicts a man in traditional attire on a scale, apparently wondering about his weight. The foods praised in the advertisement add to the suggested abundance that a German restaurant would offer: “The Loin of a Rice Fed Pig, roasted to a golden brown, with German Knob Celery. Immensely fine! Or perhaps, in a cocotte, a rice fed Squab with New Sauerkraut.”⁴⁹⁶ In 1912, of course, customers were not as concerned about weight issues as today. And this marketing technique, however crude it may seem today, is still being used: “all-you-can-eat” and “super-size” are widespread phrases in the American food industry’s marketing campaigns.

⁴⁹² 1973 ad for “Chef Boy-ar-dee Pizza Mix,” which also offers recipes but no pictures for “Polynesian Pizza” and “Indian Pizza”: Jim Heimann, *70s: All-American Ads* (Köln, Los Angeles: Taschen, 2004) 601.

⁴⁹³ Friedrick 17-19.

⁴⁹⁴ Food Emporium, advertisement, *New York Times* 21 October 1992: C24. See also: “Best of the Wursts! Celebrate this Oktoberfest with the most traditional of Germany’s most treasured treats ... with wurst! Featuring calves and goose liverwurst, bloodwurst, bockwurst, knackwurst, bauernwurst, bratwurst, Black Forest Ham, Imported Bavarian Swiss, German Potato Salad, and Wisconsin Cheddar.” (Food Emporium, advertisement, *New York Times* 20 October 1993: C24.)

⁴⁹⁵ Löwenbräu, advertisement, *Esquire* August 1961: 106.

⁴⁹⁶ Hofbräu-Haus, advertisement, *New York Times* 27 April 1912: 1.

German food sold in the United States or used in advertising does not resemble the normal German diet of today, which is much leaner and healthier, more nutritional, and often organic and meatless.⁴⁹⁷ An international food manager's explanation: "There's not a lot of innovation, but then we're not necessarily selling new items, but rather memories and traditions."⁴⁹⁸ Again, it is more a nostalgic image than the reality that is marketed to the consumer.

Beer and Germany – Fame and Notoriety

The connection between beer and Germany's image in the United States is a particularly striking one. Certain historical developments have manifested this image in America. It was the Germans who introduced a beer that was lighter than the English and Scottish ale.⁴⁹⁹ And brewing was and is a rather complicated process, which benefited from the centuries-long brewing experiences and traditions that the German immigrants brought along.⁵⁰⁰

In travel writings and similar accounts from the 19th century, Americans found that drinking beer was very widespread and socially acceptable in Germany, especially during the first four decades of the century before the temperance movement grew in the 1940s.⁵⁰¹ Until this time, however, the image of the German who consumes large quantities of beer had been noticed and spread.⁵⁰² The fact that German settlers in the New World often also continued their eating and drinking habits and traditions seemed to prove observations like this one to be valid.

Many German immigrants opened not only breweries, but also saloons and beer gardens, which catered to both German-Americans as well as a multi-ethnic clientele.⁵⁰³ The consumption of beer and the other amenities sold, entertainment and recreation, became a popular pastime for

⁴⁹⁷ See: Friedrick 17; Emmerich 15-16.

⁴⁹⁸ Friedrick 18.

⁴⁹⁹ The Germans were the first to produce beer that did not have the problems of those produced before using an English method, brews which were "ill-tasting, cloudy, and without sparkle." (W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) 109.)

⁵⁰⁰ "Breweries," Rorabaugh asserts, "required skilled labor, a major difficulty in a country where labor was expensive and maintaining a stable force impossible; it took years of apprenticeship to become a skilled brewmaster, and, as foreigners observed, Americans lacked a sense of craft..." (Rorabaugh 108.) During the 1840s, the first German lagers were produced in America, and the names of the breweries founded in the mid-19th century still reveal their founders' German heritage: Schlitz, Pabst, Miller (Müller), Anheuser-Busch, Schaefer. Today, the German lager is still the standard of mass-produced beers. (Pillsbury 146.)

⁵⁰¹ Dirk Karl Voss, "National Stereotypes About Germans in American Travel Writings, 1815-1914," Diss. U of Oklahoma, 2000: 32.

⁵⁰² Henry Adams wrote in 1859 that German food was "a diet of sauerkraut, sausage, and beer." (quoted in: Voss 58, 63)

⁵⁰³ Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat* 97-99.

Americans of all ethnic backgrounds.⁵⁰⁴ Perhaps the effect of bringing different people together and slowly uniting them is one of the reasons that beer gardens have retained their largely positive image in American society and in advertising.

But beer also helped maintain different ethnic groups apart from others and helped them retain their background. Burnham remarks that “there were cultural groups – particularly, numerically important Irish and German ethnics – in which patterns of alcohol consumption cut across class lines and provided important elements of group cohesion.”⁵⁰⁵ This of course led to a more pronounced association of Germans and beer than had they been more integrated.

Festive settings and the popularity of beer, however, were one of the major causes for temperance movements and eventually prohibition.⁵⁰⁶ The Germans fought vehemently against prohibition, which had social and economical reasons, which certainly intensified the image of Germans as consumers of large amounts of beer. Nowadays these differences in alcohol consumption have long been gone: “Whereas the largest centers of per capita consumption throughout most of the nation’s history were in Germanic settlement areas, consumption today has little to do with ethnicity.”⁵⁰⁷ Another source that connects beer with the Germans is Germany itself: no other country has more breweries (about one third of the world’s breweries are located in Germany).

The question that is of importance for this topic is why the connection between beer and Germany and the stereotypes resulting from this are invoked so frequently in advertising. First of all, beer is one of the products to which the country of origin of the product is of importance to most consumers.⁵⁰⁸ As discussed, beer making is very dependent on expertise, resulting in the strong emphasis on tradition found in most beer advertisements. Furthermore, using the jolly images of Germans and Germany in beer advertising takes the consumer’s view away from drinking as a vice and diverts it to a traditional, time-honored view.⁵⁰⁹ The label “made in Germany,” or “German beer,” seem to almost guarantee a superior product. Beck’s, which is

⁵⁰⁴ Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat* 99.

⁵⁰⁵ John C. Burnham, *Bad Habits: Drinking, Smoking, Taking Drugs, Gambling, Sexual Misbehavior, and Swearing in American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1993) 55.

⁵⁰⁶ Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat* 134.

⁵⁰⁷ Pillsbury 146.

⁵⁰⁸ See: Ira Wagman, “Wheat, Barley, Hops, Citizenship: Molson’s ‘I am [Canadian]’ Campaign and the Defense of Canadian National Identity Through Advertising,” *Velvet Light Trap* 50 (2002): 77-89.

⁵⁰⁹ On drinking alcohol as a vice, see also: Burnham 23-85. Also see the discussion of festival culture, especially the Oktoberfest.

now the company with the largest market share of all German breweries, referred to its product as “the Other German Beer”⁵¹⁰ when it was still competing with other distributors, especially Löwenbräu. This company asserted that German beer was in fact a superior and not a common, lowbrow product: “If you run out of Löwenbräu ... order champagne.”⁵¹¹

Many advertisements for German beer do not only stress that they are German, but also that they are better than the other *German* beers, as if they were not competing with other domestic or imported products: “Beers keep pouring in from all over the world; but the best beer still comes from Germany, and the best German beer in America is Beck’s, the number one imported German beer.”⁵¹² Even the most recent ads continue this theme. In an ad of the “Life Beckons” campaign using questions and multiple choice answers, the term *German* is used three times: “The number one German beer in America is: a) actually German, b) more popular than the other German beers, c) Beck’s, d) all of the above.”⁵¹³ A similar use of country-of-origin references is found in the following similar spot, which personifies its product: “The thing to remember about water is: A. It falls from heaven; B. It’s the source of life; C. Every little drop dreams of being German beer when it grows up.”⁵¹⁴

Beer is also an image frequently used in travel ads. Lufthansa promotes its connections by simply showing a close-up of a glass full of beer. Into the dew that formed outside of the glass, the following has apparently been ‘written’ by a finger: two dots connected by a straight line. Over the first dot we can read “N.Y.,” over the second “Mun.” To make this clear, on the bottom of the picture above the Lufthansa logo the ad states: “New York nonstop to Munich Daily.”⁵¹⁵ Similarly, LTU offers “Germany on a beer budget.”⁵¹⁶ Beer is part of the German image package, part of the perceived German lifestyle. It is also a vehicle of escape from the rut and mores of everyday modern life.⁵¹⁷ The fact that wine is not perceived to be a very German product, even though it is more customary than beer in various parts of Germany, attributes to

⁵¹⁰ Beck’s, advertisement, *Esquire* September 1965: 75; and Beck’s. Advertisement. *Esquire* October 1965: 143.

⁵¹¹ Löwenbräu, advertisement, *Esquire* June 1962: 61.

⁵¹² Beck’s “Pouring in,” advertisement, 1989.

⁵¹³ Beck’s “German,” advertisement, 2004.

⁵¹⁴ Beck’s “Water,” advertisement, 2005.

⁵¹⁵ Lufthansa, advertisement, (*Lürzer’s Archive Online Services*. Reference number: [3.8608]. <<http://www.luerzersarchive.net>> 12 January 2005).

⁵¹⁶ LTU, advertisement, *New York Times* 1 June 1986: XX26.

⁵¹⁷ As can be seen in a spot in which all that three young American men are doing in Europe is partying and drinking. In the beginning one says “So, this is Europe;” after their week of spending their time only on nightlife, one man takes a picture of an older looking building and says: “Okay, good trip.” The commercial simplifies and dumbs Europe down to one point: drinking. (Budweiser “True – Eurotrip,” advertisement, 2004.)

the stereotype of the German beer lover. This is reflected in the scarcity of German wine in advertising.⁵¹⁸

Festivals and Fairs

German festival culture is a related aspect frequently used by advertisers to boost sales for tourism, food, beverages, crafts, and even even unrelated products. A mixture of social gathering and marketplace, of leisure and business, festivals are communal events that serve as bond-makers between otherwise unconnected people and allow them to escape from their daily lives.

For the German settlers and immigrants to the United States this was of particular importance. The tradition of fairs in America, according to Totten, can be traced back to 1701, when the inhabitants of Germantown had the first “Jahrmarkt.”⁵¹⁹ Bungert sees carnival, a type of festival particularly cherished in Germany, as a “vehicle that offered a heightened sense of *Communitas* as well as a moratorium from everyday life...” for the German-Americans.⁵²⁰ While these festivals created strong communal bonds among the Germans, they also differed significantly from the traditions and values of other ethnic groups. Certainly festivals and fairs were highly visible manifestations and images of the lifestyle that many German-Americans shared:

Mit ihren in der neuen Heimat gegründeten Gesangvereinen und der Tradition von Bierfesten stellten die deutschsprachigen Einwohner einen Gegenpol zu den starken puritanistischen Tendenzen in den damaligen Vereinigten Staaten dar und vermittelten den Eindruck eines friedlichen und gemütlichen Kleinbürgertums, das sich gleichzeitig durch positiv bewertete Eigenschaften wie Fleiß, Sparsamkeit, und Gründlichkeit auszeichnete.⁵²¹

⁵¹⁸ One rare example: “The legendary Rhine wine of old Germany is one of the world’s greatest taste experiences. [...] With an exquisitely fresh flavor that rivals fine German wines, RHINE GARTEN has a special California richness all its own.” (Gallo Wine: Heimann, 60s 53.)

⁵¹⁹ Totten 27.

⁵²⁰ Heike Bungert, “‘Feast of Fools’: German-American Carnival as a Medium of Identity Formation, 1854-1914,” *Amerikastudien* 48/3 (2003): 344.

⁵²¹ Juliane List and Hans-Willi Nolden, *Zerrbild Deutschland: Wie uns Engländer, Franzosen und Amerikaner seit der Wiedervereinigung sehen* (Köln: Deutscher Institutsverlag, 1992) 71.

The goods offered at these fairs and festivals suggest the previously discussed abundance of food and drink in a favorable light. Furthermore, highly visible aspects of German traditions were displayed in music, dancing, attire, and communication.

Festivals and fairs create a mixture of a peaceful, jolly atmosphere and an exotic element while also suggesting inclusiveness.⁵²² Companies use the time of late September and early October for heavy marketing of both German and American beer and German food products.⁵²³ While many of these efforts are promotions and sponsoring rather than print or TV advertising, I found frequent mentioning of the German festivals and festival culture in my research.

Tourism is another industry that especially benefits from this festival. “Come to the laughingest, eatingest, drinkingest, dancingest, singingest folk festival in the world!” states an advertisement headline for Lufthansa’s flight service to Germany. The event, “where time and life are dedicated to well-being and bliss,” is displayed as a cockaigne, where everything “becomes a carnival: parades and pageantry, fun and festivity, feasting on veritable *tons* of native sausages and broiled chicken, millions and millions of flowing bumpers of the world’s best beer.” The ad particularly addresses an American audience, showing that the Oktoberfest easily fulfills one of the three unalienable rights: “There is dancing in the streets and no need for the pursuit of happiness – because happiness is here and all around you.” The images shown include an Oktoberfest parade, people in traditional clothes, a butcher selling sausages, a baker selling pretzels, a beer maid with several beer steins, and a traditional trumpet player, who toasts with a beer in front of a Maypole.⁵²⁴ The most frequent occurrences I encountered are the many Oktoberfests everywhere in the U.S., which are often advertised in daily newspapers.⁵²⁵

The Food Emporium announces the Oktoberfest celebrations with a picture featuring the classic stereotypes and imagery: a young, blond, smiling beermaid carrying beers and a Gugelhupf, a traditional band with accordion, tuba, and trumpet, in the background snow-capped mountains and church steeples. The image is made complete by the traditional clothes worn by

⁵²² The prime example that is used most often is Munich’s Oktoberfest, which dates back to 1810. After World War II, German-American societies started organizing Oktoberfests in America, which helped rebuild a positive image of Germans and Germany.

⁵²³ Friedrich 18.

⁵²⁴ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 2 August 1965: 15.

⁵²⁵ E.g.: Astrojet Room/Oktoberfest, advertisement, *New York Times* 9 October 1964: 27 (“happy, stirring folk music” “Rollicking drinking songs ... everyone joins in!”); The Glen Rock Inn, advertisement, *New York Times* 5 October 1980: NJ25. The Oktoberfest is also celebrated in Canada: “pack your lederhosen and check out Oktoberfest, a German Beer Festival that raises the roof in Kitchener-Waterloo” (Canada, advertisement, *New York Times* 24 September 1972: 62.)

all, Bavarian flags, a banner in traditional font stating “Oktoberfest,” which is adorned with an edelweiss flower. In the text to the right, German specialties are described, not necessarily traditional Oktoberfest food, but more readily available food from all over Germany, from canned herring filets to Bahlsen cookies, from potato salad to Erasco soups.⁵²⁶ Festival and beer garden imagery is even used with rather unlikely products, for instance bottled water,⁵²⁷ or in rather untypical locations such as an “Oktoberfest at sea.”⁵²⁸

A hotel with the telling name “McAlpin” invites visitors into their “Alpine Cellar” for “Steins, Schnitzel and Sing-Alongs.” Following this alliteration, the potential customer is invited into a stereotypical world, a Disneyland version of Germany: “Franzl Montan, singing host. Vlado Wurmser and his Oom-pah-pah Band and the SINGING MAEDCHEN IN UNIFORM. [sic] Slap Dances. Lederhosen. Schnitzelbank. Waltzes and polkas for dancing. Imported Beer on tap.” Drawings of an attractive beermaid and a dancing Bavarian couple illustrate this attraction right in the middle of New York.⁵²⁹ The girls in uniform are eerily reminiscent of Germany’s military past and the stereotype of order and subordination.

One advertisement tries to explain, rather vaguely, what German Karneval is. It refers “to the ‘foolish’ late winter days, a time when merry-making and fun are necessary to help spring overcome the cold, cruel winter.” These celebrations include, according to the ad, parades, the Karnival Society of Cologne, music by the “Oompah Band,” dancing and “Schunkeln,” and a Karneval “Masked Ball.”⁵³⁰ The same restaurant offers these festivals year-around as promotional attractions with very similar offerings. During “Lüchow’s traditional, once-a-year Bock Beer Festival,” the restaurant will be “transformed into a giant, old-fashioned Bavarian Beer Hall as thousands of revelers join us to honor the 700 year-old tradition of brewing the strong, dark and potent Bock Beer.” The offerings resemble those of the Karneval and the Oktoberfest, among others:

There’ll be Viennese waltzing and dancing to our own Victor Herbert string ... exciting polkas and other dances done to the unforgettable music of the legendary Lüchow’s

⁵²⁶ Food Emporium, advertisement, *New York Times* 18 October 1989: C26.

⁵²⁷ Aquafina, advertisement, *VHI* 15 July 2004. The commercial also shows other European nations’ drinking places.

⁵²⁸ Bahama Cruise Line, advertisement, *New York Times* 1 June 1986: XX26.

⁵²⁹ Hotel McAlpin, advertisement, *New York Times* 13 January 1970: 34.

⁵³⁰ Lüchow’s, advertisement, *New York Times* 8 February 1980: C18.

Oompah Band ... special menu items including a special Veal Sausage called, appropriately enough, Bockwurst, which is served with hot mustard, big salty pretzels and white radishes ... plus, of course, barrels and barrels of hearty Bock Beer.”⁵³¹

These advertisements display this aspect of German culture disproportionately and in a simplified way, resulting in simply the goal of selling more beer, food, and flights. And any festival will do to achieve this goal: from the May Wine Festival,⁵³² the “Sommerfest”⁵³³ and the “Schuetzenfest”⁵³⁴ to the more public “German American Steuben Parade,”⁵³⁵ all display Germany’s more festive and traditional side.

Gemütlichkeit

The German word “Gemütlichkeit” is a notoriously difficult one to translate. It encompasses a variety of attributes that are cherished in Germany. But due to its two suffixes and the umlaut it is often used as a stereotypically German word and as a trigger for its country of origin. Hence it is a suitable word for advertising, and can be found in a variety of ads for different products.

Displaying its beer amidst an assortment of food, the Löwenbräu company offers a possible explanation: “Wherever good food, good living and good companions meet, they produce what Germans call ‘gemütlichkeit.’ Define it? You cannot. But you can experience it, and in many ways.”⁵³⁶ The German National Tourist Office sees “good old Germanic ‘gemutlichkeit’ (loose translation: coziness)” also as a particularly positive German way of living.⁵³⁷ The term “Germanic” connotes a certain historicalness and suggests that this characteristic has a long tradition in Germany.

The term is also often used in conjunction with Bavaria, which fits in with the overall image described above: “‘gemütlich’ means the kind of atmosphere in which you can relax. Or a place is ‘gemütlich’ if it’s somewhere like Bavaria – with its mountains, lakes, art galleries and

⁵³¹ Lüchow’s, advertisement, *New York Times* 29 February 1980: C20.

⁵³² Which, curiously, is advertised in June: Lüchow’s. Advertisement. *New York Times* 3 June 1972: 2.

⁵³³ Lüchow’s, advertisement, *New York Times* 18 August 1972: 2.

⁵³⁴ First National Schuetzenfest, advertisement, *New York Times* 16 June 1895: 13.

⁵³⁵ German American Parade Committee of New York, advertisement, *New York Times* 20 September 2001: A22.

⁵³⁶ Löwenbräu, advertisement, *Esquire* June 1960: 4.

⁵³⁷ German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 10 October 1989: B13.

happy people.”⁵³⁸ Lüchow’s promotes its “Sommerfest” as “AN UNFORGETTABLE GEMÜTLICH EXPERIENCE!”⁵³⁹

As can be seen, there is generally the claim that one’s product offers a way to experience the state that “Gemütlichkeit” stands for. One advertisement uses it without explanation, but rather as a reference to Switzerland: The “‘Gemutlichkeit’ Ranch,” which promises “relief from the stereotyped ranch,” offers the “‘*gemutlichkeit*’ of an authentic Swiss Chalet.”⁵⁴⁰ The fact that the term is also attributed to Switzerland shows that often no differentiation between German-speaking countries is made, which can be explained by the phenomenon of out-group homogeneity.

Lufthansa even offers it in one advertisement apparently exclusively: “enjoy the special sense of well-being in travel we call “Gemütlichkeit,” which you’ll find only on Lufthansa.”⁵⁴¹ By trying to explain what this complicated and multi-faceted term means, the companies can describe their products’ attributes and advantages.⁵⁴² Whether one knows the term or not, it certainly looks German and thus connects the perceiver with that image.

⁵³⁸ German Tourist Information Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 2 March 1958: XX8.

⁵³⁹ Lüchow’s, advertisement, *New York Times* 24 June 1972: 63.

⁵⁴⁰ Hamilton Park, advertisement, *New York Times* 28 September 1958: R6.

⁵⁴¹ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 27 May 1963: 17.

⁵⁴² See also below for a further discussion of foreign words in advertising.

4.2 Beyond Clothes: The Germans' Physical Appearance and Gender

Physical appearance is one of the most effective visual triggers for nationality and country of origin in advertising. Many depictions reflect a folk culture that has long died out, thus creating a connection to this golden past through the means of nostalgia. The physical appearance of Germans in advertising is very stereotypical. The external attributes allow for instant recognition of a person's home country and have "long been a favorite technique of advertisers."⁵⁴³ Stereotypes, as has been discussed, force the perceiver to instantly categorize people into certain groups: "Most stereotyped groups can be differentiated by their appearance."⁵⁴⁴ The outgroup homogeneity in the case of the Germans is largely determined by the image of the traditional Bavarians.

Clothes and physical appearance are, on a visual level, the quickest triggers for such a grouping process and are thus frequently used in advertising: in a 30-second or even 15-second spot there is not much time to convey nationality in detail, and print ads rely on quick recognition and a certain connection between visual images and text.

But besides instant recognition, depictions using native costumes, however accurate they may be, satisfy what Rashap calls "an American need for foreign experience and armchair travel without really challenging any assumptions about significant cultural variation."⁵⁴⁵ Native dresses let people appear to be genuine, friendly, to have values and morals, and make them non-threatening because there is often a notion of inferiority of those not dressed in modern clothes. People in native dresses may appear to be a bit naive, rustic, and backwards yet gentle, or merely exotic and interesting; to some perceivers perhaps there is a comic element if they see Bavarians clad in Lederhosen. Whatever the perception may be, native clothes often incite positive feelings in the perceiver for a number of reasons and are thus often used in advertising.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴³ Amy Rashap, "The American Dream for Sale: Ethnic Images in Magazines," *Exhibition Catalogue: Ethnic Images in Advertising* (Philadelphia: Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, 1984) 10.

⁵⁴⁴ Leslie A. Zebrowitz, "Physical Appearance as a Basis of Stereotyping," *Stereotypes and Stereotyping*, eds. C.N. Macrae, C. Stangor and M. Hewstone (New York: Guilford Press, 1996) 79.

⁵⁴⁵ Rashap 11.

⁵⁴⁶ Trade cards already made frequent use of native clothing styles. (W. Duke Sons & Co. Cigarettes, advertisement, 1888. (*Emergence of Advertising in America: 1850-1920*. Item number: D0005-13. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/ea/tobacco>> 22 February 2005).)

There have been and still are two general physical types of Germans: the bigger, jolly, dumb, beer drinking, feasting type and the slender, tall, well groomed, and more intelligent type. While this is true for both genders, German men are generally depicted more frequently than women, a trend which has not changed much during the past decades: “Das Bild der deutschen Geschichte und Kultur in fremden Augen ist rein männlich bestimmt. Es fehlt an vertrauten Gestalten und Symbolen, die daneben das weibliche Element vertreten.”⁵⁴⁷ In general, German men and women were often believed to be plump and rather unattractive. In the 19th century this was a common impression of Germans, and it was often noted that they lacked refinement and elegance.⁵⁴⁸ While these stereotypes are very persistent, a new type of German is slowly replacing these older physical depictions.

German Men and Lederhosen

It has been discussed previously that many Germans are shown as rather corpulent and over-indulgent. This depiction sends out a mixed message of Germans ranging from disgusting and extreme to funny, harmless, and jovial. While the big German is hated, he is also admired for his ability to enjoy himself. This mixed attitude, which has long been established in America, cannot be found in advertising. The big Germans are depicted as non-threatening, funny, perhaps in a somewhat condescending way, but they are overall amiable and enviable. After all, a product needs to be sold. It is also interesting to note that most Germans presented in advertising are older, while younger Germans are less frequently shown.

Clothes can be, concerning the bigger German type, equated with native costumes, usually of southern German origin. The stereotypical triggers are almost always Lederhosen and a Tyrolean hat, which instantly distinguish the Germans not only from Americans, but also from other nationalities.⁵⁴⁹ Many early trade cards already used Lederhosen as a typical visual marker for Germans. Since then this piece of clothing has been used in promotions for a variety of

⁵⁴⁷ Totten 187.

⁵⁴⁸ Voss 59-62.

⁵⁴⁹ “Eine andere Tendenz als die Zuordnung eines allgemein verbreiteten Zuges zu einem besonderen Volk steckt in der Ausbildung des deutschen Lederhosentyps. Einmal ist die Überbewertung des Auffälligen zu verzeichnen. In der grauen Gleichmäßigkeit der europäischen Kleider fallen nicht nur Lederhosen, sondern auch Schottenröcke oder Baskenmützen besonders auf. Solche Kleidungsstücke werden deswegen als typisch angesehen, obwohl sie zahlenmäßig nur relativ selten angetroffen werden. [...] Zum anderen läßt sich beim Bier- und Lederhosenstereotyp das Phänomen feststellen, daß atypische Sondergruppen das Bild der Gesamtheit prägen.” (Koch-Hillebrecht 138-140.)

products. Traditional clothes can invoke the country-of-origin effect, a common occurrence in beer advertising. The simple message comes down to the formula: Lederhosen signify Germans, this signifies German beer or at least German heritage, which signifies superior beer and thus more sales. In a 1957 Schlitz beer advertising series, featuring a “Schlitzecue,” “Schlitznic,” and “Schlitzquerade party” in different ads, in each picture a man in Lederhosen and a woman in a dirndl among other attendees are shown. Implicitly the advertisers hint at the company’s origins, a technique frequently used by breweries of German or German-American provenance.⁵⁵⁰ Ads for many different products use German traditional clothes, from the offering “summit sound” stereo HI-FI systems⁵⁵¹ to the frequent restaurant and Oktoberfest ads.⁵⁵²

Ethnic clothes have been advertised by several companies in the U.S. They can function as a statement of distinction, tradition, and heritage, as can be seen in a 1956 advertisement for school clothes, titled “hand me down my alpenstock ... I’m yodeling back-to-school.” Advertising a fashion style for apparently upper-class boys, Gimbel’s promotes this line of clothes as the latest fashion: “we’re flipping our Bavarian beanies over the new back-to-school clothes for the class of ’56. The view this year is definitely alpine with loden cloth.” One of the feature items are the “loden duffle coats for boys.” The offered outfit is “practically the uniform” in “Tyrol,” but the claim that the clothes have been imported from Bavaria reveals again that the whole Alpine region is seen as one and that details are not important in these matters: Tyrol is located in Austria, southern Tyrol in Italy, whereas Bavaria is part of Germany. The rather simple drawing left of the text features a boy in such a coat, wearing a Tyrolean hat. In the background there are snow-capped mountain peaks and a hill with what appears to be a school: a sign stating “schule” is located on the right of the boy.⁵⁵³

Another advertisement by Continental Imports praises the practicality and superior quality of its “Genuine Bavarian Lederhosen”: “These world-famous knee-length leather pants can now be shipped direct to you from Bavaria. Lederhosen are ideal for camping and all outdoor sports, suitable for any age, both sexes.” As an optional item the “[m]atching braces with

⁵⁵⁰ A good example is the drawing of a male in lederhosen and Tyrolean hat holding a beer in a 1937 Pabst ad: (Pabst, advertisement, <<http://www.gono.com/beermagazineads/pabst/pabst.htm>> 26 October 2004.)

⁵⁵¹ Phonola. Advertisement. *Esquire* December 1961: 102.

⁵⁵² Representative is the Valley Stream Park Inn advertisement, in which it is claimed that “waiters and waitresses clad in authentic Alpine costumes”: Valley Stream Park Inn/Octoberfest. Advertisement. *New York Times* 22 September 1974: 117.

⁵⁵³ Gimbel’s, advertisement, *New York Times* 19 August 1956: 96.

stag-horn medallion” make the outfit even more authentic.⁵⁵⁴ Lederhosen are, however, rather more ridiculed than praised. Wallachs, for instance, describes this clothing item as “leather-shorts-cum-harness” and “Yodel Britches.”⁵⁵⁵ In an ad by Meyrowitz discussing different styles of glasses, the fourth is described as “[a]nother arresting metallic frame from Germany. A giant leap forward from *lederhosen* and those funny little hats.”⁵⁵⁶

Other German traditional clothes are rare. Occasionally historical clothes are used in some ads,⁵⁵⁷ while regional styles outside of Bavaria are seldom shown. Lufthansa presents an old man with a felt hat and long, bushy white beard as a “Citizen of the Black Forest.”⁵⁵⁸ Another ad shows a similar “Black Forest” person with a long pipe.⁵⁵⁹ This information suggests that the outer appearance shown is the norm in this part of Germany. Other clothing styles typically depicting Germans, such as the Nazi and the Prussian military uniform,⁵⁶⁰ are less commonly found.

German Women

The female version of the male type described above complements many of its characteristics. In the analysis of the ads I encountered two general types: the German “hausfrau” and the young German woman as a sex symbol.⁵⁶¹ Both types share that they wear the “traditional” German/Bavarian garments, the dirndl.

The type of the German “hausfrau” has been and is a common stereotype of German women. In a 1966 survey the question following question was posed: “Wie würden Sie eine typisch deutsche Frau beschreiben?” The answers support this kind of image of German women: 33 percent claimed “schwer gebaut, breit, dick, untersetzt, plump, pausbäckig,” 24 percent “hellfarbig, blond, hell, blaue Augen, nordisch,” 24 percent “schwer arbeitend, fleißig, ehrgeizig, sparsam, genügsam,” and 20 percent “gute Hausfrau, gute Ehefrau/Köchin, Mutter, häuslicher Typ.”⁵⁶² Totten describes the image similarly.⁵⁶³ In advertising, the “hefty hausfrau,” as this type

⁵⁵⁴ Continental Imports, advertisement, *New York Times* 1 May 1966: 306.

⁵⁵⁵ Wallachs, advertisement, *New York Times* 29 June 1964: 18.

⁵⁵⁶ Meyrowitz, advertisement, *New York Times* 5 October 1972: 43.

⁵⁵⁷ E.g.: Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 24 September 1972: XX26; Stroh’s “Europe,” advertisement, 1981.

⁵⁵⁸ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 17 May 1965: 32.

⁵⁵⁹ German National Tourist Office/Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 26 November 1972: XX29.

⁵⁶⁰ E.g.: Stroh’s “Europe,” advertisement, 1981. see also chapter 6 for a further discussion of this issue.

⁵⁶¹ Totten mentions two similar types of German women, the Gretchen type and the Valkery type: Totten 187-188.

⁵⁶² Koch-Hillebrecht 75.

is sometimes referred to, is usually the older beermaid, carrying several large steins of beer.⁵⁶⁴ In advertising this type is, however, not depicted nearly as often as the younger woman type.

German women in advertising are no exception to the general trend of women in advertising being depicted as young, slim, good-looking, sensual, and sexual. Their prime function in advertisements is to enhance or present the product, which gives the impression in advertising that most German women work as beer maids.⁵⁶⁵ Following the general trend of sexist and stereotypical depictions of women, the function of these types is to fulfill male sexual fantasies. In a Beck's print advertisement, a forward-leaning woman in a green, pink, and white Dirndl offers the consumer the company's beer.⁵⁶⁶ The New York Sheraton Hotel advertises the grand opening of "Sally's Schnitzelhaus und Spätzlefactory Featuring Sally's Big Bavarian Buffet und Bierfest." The drawing of the beer maid shows the stereotypical attributes of German women: pigtails, blond hair, carrying beer, an ample bosom, deep cleavage, slim, and young.⁵⁶⁷ The stereotype persists until today, which can be seen especially in the St. Pauli Girl image, which has changed over the decades to meet modern tastes but has retained its sexual innuendo. Also referred to as "Germany's fun-loving beer," it is targeted at younger men.⁵⁶⁸ Even though the beer maid, the company's logo, is a drawing depicting the above mentioned characteristics, every year a real woman that resembles this character is chosen in a pageant. The company also conducts promotions through its website, where visitors can vote for the best commercial⁵⁶⁹ or view outdoor and bus stop ads.⁵⁷⁰ All images used revolve around the central theme, the company's "spokesperson" and name-giver, the bar maid "St. Pauli Girl."

If the sexual and provocative aspect is absent, servitude and passiveness is often displayed. For example, a Macy's Oktoberfest ad, which mainly praises German cheeses, such as "Bruder Basil" and "ButterKase [sic]," shows a young woman behind a large cheese platter with apples and beer. The woman seems to complement the scene as do the mountain range and the

⁵⁶³ "Als Nebenprodukt der gängigen Ansicht, daß die deutschen Männer ungewöhnlich leistungsfähige Esser sind, ist man sich über die Jahrhunderte einig geblieben, den Ruf der deutschen Frau auf ihre Leistungen als Köchin und Haushälterin zu beschränken." (Totten 26).

⁵⁶⁴ E.g.: German National Tourist Office/Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 26 November: 1972: XX29.

⁵⁶⁵ E.g.: Food Emporium, advertisement, *New York Times* 18 October 1989: C26.

⁵⁶⁶ Beck's, advertisement, *Esquire* November 1965: 156.

⁵⁶⁷ The New York Sheraton Hotel, advertisement, *New York Times* 22 May 1978: C16.

⁵⁶⁸ E.g.: "The hottest girls always travel in packs. Some just happen to be in six packs."

(St. Pauli Girl, advertisement, *Maxim* August 2004: 167-168.)

⁵⁶⁹ St. Pauli Girl, advertisement, <<http://www.stpauligirl.com/TheNews/eAds.php>> 14 November 2004.

⁵⁷⁰ St. Pauli Girl, advertisement, <<http://www.stpauligirl.com/TheNews/Ads.php>> 14 November 2004.

castle in the background.⁵⁷¹ A 1953 ad, which is disguised as the “Travel Picture of the Week,” shows two young women in traditional attire and hats in a similar manner: “These two German girls,” the text explains, “admire some Spring blossoms which appear in Germany much earlier than in our part of the world.”⁵⁷²

In older advertisements, German women have very often been shown with food, based on the discussed image of the German housewife. This depiction of female Germans invokes aspects of nourishment and caring, and reveals a more regressive, passive, and more traditional and outdated image of women. Koch-Hillebrecht argues that the image of young German women is more favorable than that of men. He discusses a 1968 Lufthansa campaign that included women in their ads. “Die Lufthansa-Stewardessen zeigen sich in den Anzeigen von ihrer weiblichsten Seite...”⁵⁷³ The Lufthansa ad clearly shows the role of women as server, housewife, and mother: “Because when we know that a number of babies will be aboard, we’re going to add a baby stewardess to our regular cabin crew. That way, baby has a baby sitter, mother has a mother’s helper and you have a stewardess who isn’t warming milk when you want a cold beer.” Such depictions are found less and certainly less overtly in more recent advertisements.

The clientele for many of the products mentioned above – beer, flights for businessmen – is male, and the way German women are shown caters to male fantasies, wishes, or even subconscious longings. It is interesting to note that I have not encountered one advertisement in which German men are shown as serving: they either produce a product or they enjoy life and indulge in drink and food. Other types of women do not stand out as clearly, but do exist in advertising. German models, as discussed above, certainly represent one’s country but even more so a more international consumer world in which beauty transcends national boundaries. German women wearing common, everyday attire are rarely found in advertising.⁵⁷⁴

The image of Germany is clearly male-dominated, for several reasons. A more traditional understanding of gender roles was a concept German immigrants brought with them to America. “The traditional German American family,” Rippley asserts, “was essentially patriarchal with women assuming subservient roles.”⁵⁷⁵ The view of “German-American *hausfrau*” is ambiguous as she “was considered a role model because of her many virtues, but she was also considered to

⁵⁷¹ Macy’s, advertisement, *New York Times* 17 October 1984: A6.

⁵⁷² German Tourist Information Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 1 March 1953: X27.

⁵⁷³ Koch-Hillebrecht 150.

⁵⁷⁴ E.g.: German National Tourist Office/Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 26 November 1972: XX29.

⁵⁷⁵ Rippley 715.

be willingly subject to her husband.”⁵⁷⁶ In this dialectic depiction, she resembles both the positively charged characteristics as well as the negative associations generally brought in connection with German men. Besides this cultural explanation, the world of advertising tends to present products to appeal to potential consumers: “Die Exporterfolge der Deutschen sind typisch männliche Produkte: Röhren, Autos, Stahlwerke, Bier.”⁵⁷⁷

4.3 The German Language

The German language is far from new in American advertising. Many early advertisements were in fact in German, sometimes completely, sometimes in conjunction with an English version of the text. As English began to dominate American speech, German faded out and only few remnants have remained in advertising. Many German words are known by Americans, and some have even become part of English, such as “hinterland,” “gesundheit”⁵⁷⁸ or “kaputt.”⁵⁷⁹ But the use of German words in advertising goes beyond these commonly known terms. This section is both an attempt to group certain German expressions and phrases used in American advertising and to discuss why they are used in the respective advertisements.

Presenting and ridiculing the German language and the Germans’ distinct accent has a fairly long tradition. The Katzenjammer Kids, the “widely-circulated cartoon series” which “lampooned German authoritarianism and had the German characters murder the English language,”⁵⁸⁰ debuted in 1897. Leab praises the cartoon’s language as an “effective use of an Anglo-German pidgin.”⁵⁸¹

Language is important for the transmission of culturally shared stereotypes, whether that is on an interpersonal or a mass communication level. Maass and Arcuri confirm that “it seems unlikely that the specific content of a stereotype (Germans are efficient and authoritarian, women

⁵⁷⁶ Daniel J. Leab, “Deutschland, USA: German Images in American Film,” *The Kaleidoscopic Lens: How Hollywood Views Ethnic Groups*, ed. Randall Miller (Englewood, N.J.: Jerome S. Ozer, 1980) 158.

⁵⁷⁷ Koch-Hillebrecht 151.

⁵⁷⁸ Nyquil, advertisement, *History Channel* 3 January 2005; Volkswagen, advertisement, (*Lürzer’s Archive Online Services*. Reference number: [5.0343]. <<http://www.luerzersarchive.net>> 12 January 2005).

⁵⁷⁹ For example in a Lufthansa ad: “the coffee-machine was kaputt.” (Koch-Hillebrecht 241.)

⁵⁸⁰ Allen L. Woll and Randall M. Miller, *Ethnic and Racial Images in American Film and Television* (New York: Garland, 1987) 222.

⁵⁸¹ Leab 159.

are dependent and other-directed, Italians are hospitable and lazy) can be transmitted without linguistic labels.”⁵⁸²

Food

It is not uncommon that non-speakers of a particular language know words depicting food. The importance of foreign and ethnic food in general and German and German-American food in particular have been described above. This is reflected in a number of German terms that are commonly used in American advertising. Not surprisingly a German cookbook advertisement makes extensive use of these, grouping some in alliterations and others randomly:

Ach! Das ist wunderbar! Himmlisch! Here is a succulent parade of German dishes that will drive even a first-year cook into the kitchen – and a trencherman out of his mind. Hundreds of *fantastische* soups and sauces, *kuchens* and *krauts*, *schnitzels* and *strudels*, pastries and puddings, fish and *vorspeisen*. Und such meats und *geflügel* and *wursts*! And things to dunk in and with! All culled from *Hausfrauen* and hamlets, *Bierstuben*, *Konditoreien* and grand hotels. [...] Included: enticing notes on eating customs, and a dumpling-noodle-potato section that makes calorie counters forget how. *Nicht wahr?*⁵⁸³

It is interesting to examine the italics, which are used for some German words, while others blend in with the rest of the text. The terms in italics are also capitalized according to German noun rules, while the others are not.⁵⁸⁴ The mixed use of both languages is also apparent in an ad suggesting in German: “Beginnen wir mit einer Vorspeise.” Because this would not be understood by a majority of potential customers it is translated below in parantheses: “(Let’s start with an Appetizer).” All the following “Spezialitäten” are in German with an English translation underneath. The capitalization in the phrase “200 Köstliche entrees” shows that this grammatical feature of the German language, even though it is used here incorrectly is very recognizable and thus occasionally used even when it is not correct.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸² Anne Maass and Luciano Arcuri, “Language and Stereotyping,” *Stereotypes and Stereotyping*, eds. C.N. Macrae, C. Stangor and M. Hewstone (New York: Guilford Press, 1996) 196.

⁵⁸³ The German Cookbook, advertisement, *New York Times* 21 November 1965: BR27.

⁵⁸⁴ Other grammatical phenomena, or “mistakes,” such as the s plural and the endings are described below.

⁵⁸⁵ Lüchow’s, advertisement, *New York Times* 21 January 1972: 2.

Food related words seem to be acceptable in a foreign language, even if the meaning is not clear or obvious to some consumers. Lufthansa, for instance, offers “Torte.”⁵⁸⁶ A restaurant ad proclaims that “[i]t’s Berliner Gemütlichkeit und Gastfreundschaft Time” because the “Old Berlin Festival” is celebrated.⁵⁸⁷ While “Gemütlichkeit” is known by many (see chapter above), Gastfreundschaft could be inferred or regarded as similar to “Gemütlichkeit.” Because it is a long compound it gives the impression that it is a typically German word. A “Prosit” is pronounced in the ad, a common phrase that is known in several languages by most consumers. It has been used very often in advertisements, sometimes explained⁵⁸⁸ and sometimes not.⁵⁸⁹ A follow-up translation is a common practice to avoid confusion: “Our Oktoberfest... It Always Means Köstlich, ‘Delicious,’ in Every Aisle!”⁵⁹⁰ Several food words of course have become part of everyday language, such as beer steins,⁵⁹¹ bratwurst (“brats”) or sauerkraut.

Mistakes and Grammar

The examples mentioned above already revealed that the German language is rarely used correctly. But as the majority of the consumers does not notice it, this aspect is not important to advertisers. Hagedorn, who deals with different types of comedy and their depiction of Germans, assesses that “accuracy is of little importance, both in terms of the German language and German-speaking culture.”⁵⁹² I think that the same is true for advertising.

An Oktoberfest ad’s headline “Ja Das Ist Ein Oktoberfest!” sounds awkward and uses English capitalization rules for headlines. The following attractions pointed out all use the same article (i.e. neuter, singular): “DAS FOOD!” “DAS MUSIC!” “DAS SONGS!” “DAS BEER!” “DAS WINE!,”⁵⁹³ while Becks’ proclaims: “New! Das Longneck.”⁵⁹⁴ This dominant use of the neuter article is commonly found, even though sometimes the masculine or feminine forms are

⁵⁸⁶ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 26 October 1965: 28.

⁵⁸⁷ Peacock Alley Restaurant, advertisement, *New York Times* 2 November 1972: 2.

⁵⁸⁸ “Prosit! Bottoms Up!” explains an ad for Christmas gifts and beer steins. (Gimbels, advertisement, *New York Times* 8 December 1957: 139.)

⁵⁸⁹ German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *Country Life* May 1938: 114. (“ein prosit”).

⁵⁹⁰ Food Emporium, advertisement, *New York Times* 20 October 1999: F16.

⁵⁹¹ One brewery removed it even further from its original German meaning: “Schlitz in ‘Steinies’,” referring to their new brown bottles; Heimann, 30s 76.

⁵⁹² Julie Hagedorn, “A New German Stereotype: Images of Germans in American Pop Culture,” *Images of Germany: Perceptions and Conceptions*, ed. Peter Daly (New York: Peter Lang, 2000) 174.

⁵⁹³ Astrojet Room/Oktoberfest, advertisement, *New York Times* 9 October 1964: 1.

⁵⁹⁴ See Babej’s article.

used.⁵⁹⁵ Endings are commonly simplified, as in “Der Neu Lexus RX 330.”⁵⁹⁶ Also noteworthy is the anglicized version of “Knackwurst,” which becomes “Knockwurst” and is the common form in English now.⁵⁹⁷

The construction of the plural according to English grammar rules is also common, as in “Meistersingers”⁵⁹⁸ or “wursts.”⁵⁹⁹ Even though not correct, it can easily be identified as a plural, which the more complicated German plural construction would not permit. In this case, plural and singular would even be the same, only distinguishable by a German article. Sometimes whole phrases are grammatically incorrect: “Willkommen nach Deutschland.”⁶⁰⁰ Calling the addressee “Fraulein,”⁶⁰¹ a term well-known in the United States, is antiquated, but it clearly shows that the target group of the ad is mainly female. And finally, as in comedy, random, and meaningless phrases are compiled for mere effect: “Well, Ach du lieber and slap our lederhosen” begins an advertisement for German clothes.⁶⁰²

Other advertisements depict Germans whose command of English is not perfect. One commercial playing with English idiomatic expressions shows an apparently sick American in a dark hotel room in Germany. A knock on the door is heard, followed by a voice with a slight accent saying “room service.” The hotel employee is told to come in, who replies to a sneeze: “Gesundheit! Nyquil; you sleep great; sleep like ... lumber; like the ... infant.” The sick man does not understand him, until the German says: “sleep like ... home?” This results in the guest imagining being at home in his lit bedroom with his wife, resting and being happy. The spot concludes with the swallowing of the advertised medicine.⁶⁰³ The correct idiomatic expressions, of course, would have been “sleep like a log” and “sleep like a baby.” This use of language and the contrasting settings of the dark hotel room and the lit bedroom at home create a sense of the Other, which is then juxtaposed with the self. The advertised product is presented as the solution

⁵⁹⁵ *The Katzenjammer Kids* already used German articles for the characters’ names: “die Mama,” “der Captain,” and “der Inspector” (Leab 159.)

⁵⁹⁶ Lexus, advertisement, <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/handouts/adverts/ueber/ueberauto.html>> 9 November 2004.

⁵⁹⁷ Astrojet Room/Oktoberfest, advertisement, *New York Times* 9 October 1964: 27.

⁵⁹⁸ German Railroads Information Office, advertisement, *Country Life* May 1938: 114.

⁵⁹⁹ Food Emporium, advertisement, *New York Times* 21 October 1992: C24.

⁶⁰⁰ The correct term would be “Willkommen in Deutschland,” as the preposition “nach” indicates direction. (Busch Gardens, advertisement, *New York Times* 22 May 1977: 222.)

⁶⁰¹ “Fraulein, The Marketplace is having an Oktoberfest you’ll never forget.” Macy’s, advertisement, *New York Times* 17 October 1984: A6.

⁶⁰² Gimbel’s, advertisement, *New York Times* 19 August 1956: 96. Please note the use of capitalization again.

⁶⁰³ Nyquil, advertisement, *History Channel* 3 January 2005.

to escape the foreign, unknown, and unwanted state; the discomfort is linked to the Other. In this advertisement the sense of alterity is created mainly through language.

New Word Creations

Advertising is well known for inventing new words, altering existing words, or generally playing with language. Therefore it is not surprising that also new German or German-English words are created. One of the most common and easiest practices is compounding, a common, highly salient phenomenon in the German language. In his well-known take on the German language, Mark Twain referred to German compounds as “alphabetical processions,”⁶⁰⁴ alluding to their length but also to their versatility.

The most frequent compounds are derived from the German word “wunderbar,” which is itself a common sight in American advertising: whether “The Tastes Are Wunderbar,”⁶⁰⁵ or “Germany is Wunderbar.”⁶⁰⁶ The German “wunder” and the English “wonder” are a minimal pair, they only differ in the second letter and look quite similar: “Germans have a word for wonderful – it’s wunderbar!”⁶⁰⁷ “Wunder” and “wunderbar” are easily recognizable; they are foreign and yet not too alien, which can explain their popularity in advertising.

The creations generally have the same pattern: “wunder” precedes the English word that is being intensified and enhanced. This leads to labels such as “Wunder rivers” (the image shows what appears to be the Rhine), “Wunderhotels,” as well as “Wunderbiking.” There seems to be no end to “wunder”-compounds: “And Germany is filled with wundervalues, especially our Wunderpackages and WunderAdventures.”⁶⁰⁸ A similar advertisement adds to the above that there is “WunderArt” and an offered “Wunderbuggy Tour” in Germany.⁶⁰⁹ Audi sells

⁶⁰⁴ Twain 611.

⁶⁰⁵ Food Emporium, advertisement, *New York Times* 21 October 1992: C24.

⁶⁰⁶ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 15 March 1987: 411. Also the long-time slogan of the German National Tourist Office. (e.g.: German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 16 March 1986: 409.)

⁶⁰⁷ German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 29 March 1981: AS9.

⁶⁰⁸ German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 29 March 1981: AS9.

⁶⁰⁹ German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 3 January 1982: SM27.

“wundercars”⁶¹⁰ and German trains are better boarded with a “Wunder Card.”⁶¹¹ It seems that the wildest creations are possible, and even the spelling differs from case to case.⁶¹²

Another interesting compound involves *über*, as in Nietzsche’s “Übermensch,” which was later used by the Nazis and since then is connected to Germany’s Third Reich. The prefix *über*, or *uber*, has entered the English vocabulary and generally signifies superiority, as can be seen in a Lexus ad which features a fictitious car magazine called “ÜBER AUTO.”⁶¹³ In it the new Lexus is displayed as superior, and the ostensibly German magazine suggests that if the car- and perfection-loving Germans are impressed, it must be a good product. In a way the Japanese carmaker uses the German country-of-origin effect for its product. The most direct way is to introduce the company’s name as a German word itself, even if it is not one. The brewing company Beck’s claimed in several commercials: “the word around town is German: Beck’s.”

Using foreign words in advertising has several advantages. It elicits international prestige and invokes the country-of-origin effect by choosing words that appear to be German, that are “typically” German. Ryder et al. list four patterns and characteristics that can be expected to be found when foreign words are used in an advertisement: firstly, “the use of any language will be limited to products that are clearly connected to that stereotype.” The German language, for example, is “used to emphasize a product’s technological quality.” Other products, such as food, equally pertain to high quality and expertise. “Second, since the meaning of the actual words used is not important, there will be no effort to use commonly understood expressions, nor will the expressions be translated. Third, since the meanings of the foreign words are probably unknown, the words will not appear as part of the informative text in ads.” Their function, then, is to get the consumer’s attention or display peripheral information. “Fourth, since the consumers aren’t fluent in the language from which the foreign terms are taken, and often the advertisers or producers of the product aren’t either, ungrammaticality will be acceptable and, in fact, usually unnoticed.”⁶¹⁴ It is important, however, that the word is clearly recognized as being “German.”

⁶¹⁰ Audi, advertisement, *New York Times* 5 December 1997: A23.

⁶¹¹ German Rail, advertisement, *New York Times* 11 March 1984: AS63.

⁶¹² “WunderHotels” (German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 16 March 1986: 409.) compared to “Wunderhotels” (German National Tourist Office, advertisement, *New York Times* 29 March 1981: AS9.)

⁶¹³ The fake nature of the magazine is only shown by the small disclaimer “fictional” at the bottom of the page. (Lexus, advertisement, <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/handouts/adverts/ueber/ueberauto.html>> 9 November 2004.)

⁶¹⁴ Ryder 319-320.

The examples I have given above all confirm these patterns. The first aspect, the display of certain characteristics, can be seen in the use of the terms “Fahrvergnügen” and “meisterstück”:

Because of their modern connotations, both German and Japanese can also be used to convey an impression of scientific or engineering excellence, as in the Mazda campaign promising *Kansei* engineering or the Volkswagen campaigns using *Fahrvergnügen*. The Mont Blanc ad for its *Meisterstück* pens is another example; few people know that *meisterstück* means ‘masterpiece,’ but its identification as a German word, based in part on the unlauded *ü*, ensures an evocation of fine engineering.⁶¹⁵

The term *Meisterstück* is also reminiscent of the medieval guild system, which placed a high value on precision, perfection, and craftsmanship. These traits, deemed very German as previously discussed, culminate in the German term for masterpiece, which the journeyman had to produce in order to receive the title of master of his trade. Thus the product shown embodies the highest quality, artfulness, and perfection.

Ryder et al. also note that a second Mont Blanc ad using the French *solitaire* instead of *Meisterstück* with a slightly different pen changes the focus of the advertiser’s message to an emphasis of style rather than fine engineering.⁶¹⁶ It is interesting to note that in Great Britain Audi used the same technique with the phrase “Vorsprung durch Technik” in its 1984 ads depicting German stereotypes.⁶¹⁷ The slogan was not, however, used in the United States.

Even though the compound *Fahrvergnügen*,⁶¹⁸ and for that matter also *Meisterstück*, could be easily translated into English, the German usage creates curiosity among consumers: “Interest can be attracted by something unusual, something very attractive, or by the activation of the perceptual vigilance mechanism.”⁶¹⁹ The umlauts, long compounds, or other particularly German features, such as “ß” can activate the viewer’s interest and perception. Uncommon

⁶¹⁵ Ryder 320. Advertisement displayed on page 321.

⁶¹⁶ Ryder 323-324.

⁶¹⁷ See: Mark Robinson, *100 Greatest TV Ads* (HarperCollins: London, 2000) 49.

⁶¹⁸ Its pronunciation is transcribed as “Far-fair-gnu-ghen.” E.g.: Volkswagen, advertisement, *New York Times* 2 February 1990: A7; Volkswagen, advertisement, *New York Times* 9 February 1990: A15; Volkswagen Passat, advertisement, *New York Times* 13 March 1990: A12; Volkswagen, advertisement, *New York Times* 6 March 1990: A15. The term can also be found on several stickers, posters, decals, and other collectibles.

⁶¹⁹ Ryder 312.

consonant clusters, such as "hrv" and "rgn" in *Fahrvergnügen*, are hard to decipher because of the difficulty of where one should make the syllable breaks. But advertisers have to be careful when using foreign words, as they may also cause confusion and frustration and take away the attention from the actual message. "Thus, while a foreign word may break the attention barrier and attract interest," Ryder et al. state, "its unusual nature and unexpected appearance in the text may cause a discrepancy between the meaning intended by the sender and the meaning attributed by the receiver."⁶²⁰

The use of a foreign language is a way to invoke the country-of-origin effect without specifically stating "made in Germany." Some products may not have been produced in Germany. For example, some German car companies produce their vehicles in the United States, thus a direct claim cannot be made but can be implied by using foreign words.⁶²¹ But even when produced in Germany, *showing* can be more advantageous than *telling*.

The frequent use of umlauts has already been mentioned, and some ads use several to emphasize the country of origin, as can be seen in an advertisement for the "Hof Bräu-Haus," which uses the terms "Augustiner-Bräu München," "gegründet," and "gemütlichkeit."⁶²² Oftentimes it is part of the company name itself, especially in German brewery names including "bräu."⁶²³ A second technique is the use of words that are very similar, as the discussion about *wunder*-compounds above showed. Similar German words are, for instance, "schule"⁶²⁴ or "Familie."⁶²⁵ An advertisement about language tapes called "Schau ins Land" claims to offer "Aktuelles, Kultur, und Schlager!"⁶²⁶ The use of similar words also gives the perceiver a feeling of being sophisticated and knowledgeable, while difficult terms like "Fahrvergnügen" arouse curiosity.

Sometimes many languages are used to show a company's internationality and competence. The car rental company Avis, for instance, translates its slogan "We try harder" into several other languages, including German ("Wir geben uns mehr Mühe").⁶²⁷ It implicitly tells

⁶²⁰ Ryder 313.

⁶²¹ Ryder 313.

⁶²² Hof Bräu-Haus, advertisement, *New York Times* 18 April 1933: 13.

⁶²³ E.g.: Meisterbräu, advertisement, *Beer Advertising of the 80s*, New York: London International Advertising Awards, video recording, 1990-99.

⁶²⁴ Gimbel's. Advertisement. *New York Times* 19 August 1956: 96.

⁶²⁵ Food "Served Familie Style": Lüchow's, advertisement, *New York Times* 18 August 1972: 2; "Served Every Nite in Familie Style": Lüchow's, advertisement, *New York Times* 24 June 1972: 63.

⁶²⁶ Schau ins Land, advertisement, *New York Times* 11 February 1990: BR23.

⁶²⁷ Avis, advertisement, *Esquire* June 1966: 6-7.

the consumer that the company also rents cars in other countries and has local knowledge. Another example is a consortium of international hotels, which states: “Ein Anruf, 255 leading hotels.” It translates in smaller print in parentheses: “One call, 255 leading hotels.”⁶²⁸

Most often, however, it is not of importance for the advertiser whether the consumer understands the language or not; all he or she has to comprehend is the message. Two recent, quite similar Beck’s commercials exemplify this view of language explicitly. The spots start completely in German, which is eventually blurred and faded out as the English voice-over explains that knowing German is not important. What is important, according to the advertiser, is that the consumer needs to understand the superiority of the product, based on its country of origin:

Seit 1873 wird Beck’s strikt nach den Richtlinien des deutschen Reinheitsgebotes von 1516 gebraut. Es sind die Qualität der Zutaten ... You don’t have to understand German. All you need to know is A. You are not in Germany; B. Germans understand beer. The number one German beer in the world.⁶²⁹

Typeface and Pronunciation

Typeface can function as a trigger for nationality in visual texts in a similar way as accents can in spoken language. The attribute “German” is often connected to fonts such as “Cloister Black,” “Luthersche Fraktur” or “Neue Luthersche Fraktur.” The predominant color is black and letters are often richly ornamented. Frequently the initial letter of a word, phrase, or text is an elaborate representation of one of these fonts.⁶³⁰ Their use in advertisements not only connects the product with Germany but also adds a dimension of age and history.⁶³¹

Parts of the German language, of course, are pronunciation, intonation, and accents. The deliberate use of accents in advertisements works both ways, that is to say both the English

⁶²⁸ The Leading Hotels of the World, advertisement, *New York Times* 22 November 1989: C3.

⁶²⁹ Beck’s “Understand 2,” advertisement, 2005. The other spot differs slightly in both visuals and text: “Seit 1873 wird Beck’s strikt nach den Richtlinien des deutschen Reinheitsgebotes ... You don’t have to understand German to ... Es sind die Qualität ... All you need to know is Germans are willing to compromise on ... A. Nothing; B. Nothing; C. All of the above. The number one German beer in the world.” (Beck’s “Understand 1,” advertisement, 2005.)

⁶³⁰ E.g.: New York State, advertisement, *New York Times* 19 March 1967: SM75.

⁶³¹ E.g.: Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 6 June 1971: XX34; Peacock Alley Restaurant. Advertisement. *New York Times* 2 November 1972: 2.; Asbach Uralt, advertisement, *Esquire* May 1959: 42F.

language spoken by Germans as well as German spoken by Americans. The latter is used less frequently, as an American accent in spoken German is often not perceived by non-speakers of German, which the majority of American consumers are. A Honda ad, for instance, depicts a German language lesson⁶³² to promote its advantages over German competitors. A male voice-over with an obviously non-German, American accent introduces the German word, which is then translated by a female voice-over: “stilvoll – stylish; kraftvoll – powerful; was für ein Auto ist das? – what kind of car is this? [...] wie haben sie das geschafft? – how did they do it?”⁶³³ But several sounds are used that can be perceived as highly salient features of the German language, such as the “scht-sound,” which is a combination of the postalveolar voiceless frikative [ʃ] and the alveolar voiceless plosive [t], the uvular German “r,”⁶³⁴ the vowels unnaturally stretched vowels and the semi-vowel/glide [w] which is always pronounced as the labio-dental fricative [v].

Diamant transcribes a 1955 commercial for S.O.S. Magic Scouring Pads, in which three characters “dressed in Wagnerian costumes” discuss this dishwashing device. The theme created by the costumes is further enhanced by the accents and expressions used by the actors. The open [w]-sound as in “why” is always pronounced as the labio-dental [v] and the [ð] is pronounced as [d].⁶³⁵ The grammar is not always quite correct. German expressions and names (“Achtung,” “und,” “wunderbar,” “Hilda”) and once again stereotypically German food enhance the overall German/Germanic theme: “Look, ve got here... ve got the burned-on sauerkraut dere. Und ve got the scorched vienerschnitzel. All of it’s a mess!” After about 40 second the actors start singing.⁶³⁶

In a recent commercial for Sam Adams beer, a blonde barmaid uses an accent that is more difficult to assess, and could be that of a speaker of either German or a Slavic language. Many consonants are pronounced voiceless, and the features identified above are also applied in this commercial.⁶³⁷ The ambiguity of the bartender’s origin allows the viewer to decide where

⁶³² At first a CD labeled “Language 1.2.3... GERMAN” is inserted into a car’s CD player, followed by a voice-over stating: “Lesson one.”

⁶³³ Honda Accord, advertisement, 2002.

⁶³⁴ I did not find any commercials that used the /r/ in southern German, which is pronounced dental-alveolar.

⁶³⁵ The difficulties that Germans often have with the English voiced [ð] and voiceless [θ] dental fricatives (“th” sound) are often hinted at by the use of the the voiced alveolar plosive [d] or the alveolar fricatives [s] and [z].

⁶³⁶ Lincoln Diamant, *Television's Classic Commercials: The Golden Years, 1948-1958* (New York: Hastings House, 1971) 133-135.

⁶³⁷ Samuel Adams/House of Beer, advertisement, 2004.

she is from, but in either way she is from a country that is known for having a strong beer tradition.

German-American accents are also sometimes used. The German heritage is obvious to the American audience when they hear phrases such as “Ya hey der!”⁶³⁸ Another common occurrence is the use of a British accent in commercials by Germans. Not only does it emphasize a European background, but it also adds an element of sophistication.⁶³⁹ Accents, although rarely, sometimes are also used in print advertising. Then the orthography is altered to show the difference in pronunciation: “Fasstensietbeltz!”⁶⁴⁰

4.4 The New Germans

Even though many depictions of the Germans have not changed over decades, new images appear and slowly change existing stereotypes. Campaigns by the car manufacturer Volkswagen and the brewing company Beck’s, which exemplify these updated representations of Germans, are analyzed in this section.

Volkswagen’s advertising campaigns in the U.S. are well renowned for their innovation, particularly their dismantling of stereotypes. One of the problems after the war was to sell a car connected to Hitler in America.⁶⁴¹ Some of the Doyle Dane Bernbach (DDB) Volkswagen ads were “remarkably free of content,”⁶⁴² especially the 1961 ad that consisted simply of a blank page with only one sentence on the bottom of the page reading “We don’t have anything to show you in our new models.”⁶⁴³ Many DDB ads, such as the famed “Lemon” and “Think Small” ads, are regarded as classics that revolutionized advertising. Their technique is simple and from today’s standpoint nothing special: “Instead of superlatives and subtle promises of virility and

⁶³⁸ Budweiser, advertisement, <<http://www.vikingbrewing.com/breweriana.htm>> 16 November 2004.

⁶³⁹ E.g.: Volkswagen “Take a Fast Look,” advertisement, 1982; Porsche “Valets,” advertisement, 1997.

⁶⁴⁰ Lexus, advertisement, <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/handouts/adverts/ueber/ueberauto.html>> 9 November 2004.

⁶⁴¹ Hence Bill Bernbach’s famous quote: “How to sell a Nazi car in a Jewish town.” (Rietig)

⁶⁴² Vernon Padgett and Timothy C. Brockm, “Do Advertising Messages Require Intelligible Content? A Cognitive Response Analysis of Unintelligible Persuasive Messages,” *Nonverbal Communication in Advertising*, eds. Sid Hecker and David W. Stewart (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1988) 185.

⁶⁴³ Padgett and Brockm 185.

romance, the VW ads disarmingly admitted failings and gave facts in straightforward prose, sometimes with a 'klitchik' at the end to sum up the case and leave the reader smiling."⁶⁴⁴

The displayed honesty about the Beetle's design⁶⁴⁵ and its technical limitations⁶⁴⁶ and straightforwardness⁶⁴⁷ appealed to a generation that was tired of exaggerations and empty promises, both addressing established conservatives as well as radical hippies. The generation of the anti-war, emancipation, and civil liberties movements adopted the German cars, the Beetle and the Minibus, as its symbols.

Appealing to young people has remained a strong focus of Volkswagen until today, often challenging the established world and thus existing stereotypes. In one commercial, two young men drive around doing nothing in particular. They see an old armchair and pick it up. The voice-over sums up the young 90s generation's mood: "The German-engineered Volkswagen Golf; it fits your life – or your complete lack thereof."⁶⁴⁸ The song "Dadada" by the German band Trio, which is played in the background, was a hit in Germany during the 1980s. Previously unknown, the song sold widely in the U.S. after the commercial aired, showing the connection of advertising and other forms of popular culture. It was a car advertisement that brought a piece of German popular culture, a prime example of German the "Neue Deutsche Welle," to an American audience.

The ad is in tune with the new generation's lifestyle and a contrast to the common marketing techniques to young people: "Perhaps the most striking aspect of many television commercials is the amount of energetic activity that goes on, often to the accompaniment of frenzied rock music. People walk with brisk strides, they engage heavily in outdoor sports, they are passionate exercisers."⁶⁴⁹ The commercial shows that many young people like to be lazy or just be idle, and that they do not like to be stereotyped. Messaris distinguishes different styles for different age groups: "Ads for high-status, luxury products occasionally feature a spare, tightly

⁶⁴⁴ Fox, *The Mirror Makers* 257.

⁶⁴⁵ The design never really changed, which was admitted rather than revealed (E.g.: Volkswagen, advertisement, *Esquire* November 1963: 81.); "Ugly is only skin-deep" (Volkswagen, advertisement, *Esquire* June 1966: 11.); "Ugly as ever. Beautiful. Just beautiful." (Volkswagen, advertisement, *Esquire* October 1968: 8.)

⁶⁴⁶ "Heard any Volkswagen jokes lately?" (Volkswagen, advertisement, *Esquire* January 1963: 25.)

⁶⁴⁷ "A Volkswagen can go forward and backward It can go fast or slow It can go uphill, downhill and turn around – Isn't that wonderful?" (Volkswagen, advertisement, *Esquire* August 1963: 2.)

⁶⁴⁸ Volkswagen "Dadada," advertisement, <http://media.eurotuned.com/vwcommercials_nolinking/Golf-dadada.mov> 19 January 2005.

⁶⁴⁹ Bogart 84.

ordered style, whereas the style of youth-oriented ads is often deliberately loose and anarchic.”⁶⁵⁰ Volkswagen has managed to renew its image to appeal to successive younger generations, pointing out in many ads that German engineering is hip.

This modern image is reflected in a variety of commercials, some of which have been controversial. It has been speculated that the two car salesmen, who appear in a number of 2002 TV commercials,⁶⁵¹ are homosexual. In one spot, for instance, one of the two salesmen is dressed in a bridal gown and throws flowers over his shoulder.⁶⁵² Other ads play with traditional gender roles.⁶⁵³ Another interesting trend is the emergence of an international youth culture, in which national boundaries and differences seem to disappear.⁶⁵⁴

In a similar fashion, Beck's markets its beer to the younger generation. While many seem rather universal and unspecific with respect to nationality, some show the Germans in a new light. In one Beck's Light commercial, a blonde, young, traditionally clad beer maid brings elaborately ornamented beer steins with pewter lids to four male customers, who according to their clothes are also native Germans or rather Bavarians. The German folk music, which is played in the background, stops when the waitress takes away two steins and her belly with a tattoo featuring a peace sign and flowers is revealed. One of the four men looks at the tattoo in disbelief, but then quickly smiles at the waitress. The voice-over clarifies the situation with a pun: "It seems Germany's got a taste for America." This, of course, refers to both sides; Germany sells a special beer, a special taste in America, and in return the Germans absorb some cultural phenomena from the U.S., which are only vaguely alluded to. Whether it is the tattoo itself or its message, love, peace, and flower power, has to be judged by the viewer. The visual consists of a Beck's bottle, under which the text "Germany's lighter side" is displayed.⁶⁵⁵

Another exemplary commercial presents a young blonde woman with pigtails and wearing a dirndl, who jumps on an alpine meadow. The beginning is almost exactly copied from the opening scene "The Sound of Music," a movie that has shaped the image and stereotype of German-speaking people for decades. The effect is similar as that of the previous ad: the music stops, she jumps up and catches a frisbee, the music becomes more modern, and she throws the

⁶⁵⁰ Messaris 82.

⁶⁵¹ E.g.: Volkswagen "Yard Sale," advertisement, 2002; Volkswagen "Reverb," advertisement, 2002.

⁶⁵² Volkswagen "Bride and Groom," advertisement, 2002.

⁶⁵³ E.g.: Volkswagen Jetta "Babysitter," advertisement, 2003.

⁶⁵⁴ E.g.: Volkswagen Cabrio "Pink Moon," advertisement, 2001. The spot, in which young people drive through the night in a convertible, also aired in Germany.

⁶⁵⁵ Beck's "Steins," advertisement, 2001.

frisbee under her leg. The visual and voice-over are identical, reminding the viewer that while the Germans bring their beer expertise to America, they in return take on throwing a frisbee and being less traditional.⁶⁵⁶

A more modern, updated image of Germany is certainly on the rise. New textbooks in the U.S. show a more balanced and authentic picture of Germany,⁶⁵⁷ and within the younger generation, the Germans have gained a reputation concerning important issues, such as design, music, and environmental issues. Hagedorn, who analyzes this new German image in the United States, lists three major characteristics of the new German stereotype:

The first characteristic may be described as a hyperawareness of the absurdity and inaccuracy of the old stereotype. The second characteristic is a tendency to mock, mimic and deride those people who still believe in the old stereotype. The final characteristic is exemplified by the success of individual writers and performers in inventing brand-new comedic German caricatures based on more contemporary considerations and images.⁶⁵⁸

These arguments are reflected in some of the modern advertising campaigns. While stereotypes are still found, they are increasingly addressed, challenged, ridiculed, and exposed.⁶⁵⁹ Some of the more recent depictions may in the future take their place: the *lederhose* is replaced by the black turtleneck, while the rotund body type makes way for the slender German. So far, old stereotypes and newer, trendier images of the Germans coexist in American advertising.

⁶⁵⁶ Becks "The Hills Are Alive," advertisement, 2001.

⁶⁵⁷ Mark Webber, "Plus ça change ...? Images of Germany and the Germans in North American Textbooks of German," *Images of Germany: Perceptions and Conceptions*, ed. Peter Daly (New York: Peter Lang, 2000) 185-208.

⁶⁵⁸ Hagedorn 173-174.

⁶⁵⁹ See also below for further ads in this category.

4.5 Conclusion

I have broken down the nostalgic triggers and imagery used in advertising into different categories. The lines between these, however, are by no means as clear-cut as the analysis above might suggest. Most advertisements I encountered use in fact several of these techniques for the greatest possible effect. A few examples are therefore described in this concluding section.

A multitude of ‘typical’ images, a collage of Germany, is often used rather than merely single photos. A German Rail ad shows several of Germany’s wonders, including a tower, a Fachwerkhaus with two traditionally-clad women in front of it, a young, blond, stout waitress with several beers, who is also in traditional attire, a river (probably the Rhine because it is specifically mentioned in the text) with a castle sitting on top of a nearby hill, the Cologne cathedral, and a German Rail train in the very center of all these images. The ad also uses language, in this case the “Wunder”-compound: all of the above mentioned wonder can be experienced through the “Wunder Card.”⁶⁶⁰

But to discover Germany one does not have to leave the U.S., according to one ad. It offers the standard version of Germany, “the one-day Europe,” right in America in a Disneyland-style fashion:

“Willkommen nach Deutschland.

Step aboard a cruise ship named *Lorelei* for a trip up the Rhine. Pick a steady mount for a turn on our antique carousel. Then cross a fantastic bridge into a world you’ll have to believe.

It’s called Oktoberfest. And it’s one festival that never stops.

Here you can take your pick of two speeding roller coasters, a monster of a ride [...], and a German wave swinger [...].

Cap off the day with a visit to Das Festhaus – the biggest festival hall this side of Munich. You can sing along with 2,000 other revelers as tubas blare, dancers twirl and everyone has the time of their life.

It’s gemütlichkeit!

⁶⁶⁰ German Rail, advertisement, *New York Times* 11 March 1984: AS63.

It's wunderbar! And it's all on this side of the Atlantic.”⁶⁶¹

The image displayed in the middle of the ad shows men and women in dirndls and Lederhosen and other traditional attire, a brass band, and a large, half-timbered house.

These artificial, Germany-themed places of escape are not so rare, which the many restaurant and Oktoberfest ads discussed above show. Similarly, the Bavarian Inn in Frankenmuth in Michigan caters to all German/Bavarian needs,⁶⁶² also referred to as “Michigan’s Little Bavaria” offering a “Cheese Haus” and restaurants called “Oma’s” and the “Ratskeller.” The resort is loosely based on a Bavarian village.⁶⁶³

Radio advertisements are predetermined to rely on language instead of visual imagery. The depiction of a brewer’s German heritage in the following radio ad is created by a German-American accent⁶⁶⁴, several German words and cultural allusions (e.g. gender, alcohol consumption):

Augsburger Oktoberfesten
 dat’s mein beer and
 once a year and
 stehen up and late and burpen
 mein Oktoberfesten Ja!

Augsburger Oktoberfesten
 Not getting any rest and
 Comin’ home and singin’ loud and
 Wakin’ up die frau der haus and
 She say Schnitzel where you been and
 Hit my noggin’ with a rollin’ pin

⁶⁶¹ Busch Gardens, advertisement, *New York Times* 22 May 1977: 222.

⁶⁶² See: Mary Ann Tasoulas, “A Breed Apart: Independently Operated Restaurants that Gross \$10 Million-Plus in Annual Sales Are in a Whole Different Realm,” *Restaurant Business* 15 October 2000: 88-90.

⁶⁶³ Bavarian Inn Lodge, advertisement, <<http://www.bavarianinn.com/Images/brochure.pdf>> 13 September 2004.

⁶⁶⁴ E.g.: “Schweetie;” “ze way;” “vere;” German “r”: see above for a linguistic analysis of features of the German accent.

I got such a head-a-poundin'
 House is goin' round and round and
 Little Sweetie got a temper
 My bell ringin' 'til December
 Ach, it's just the way things are
 At least the beer is wunderbar
 Can't be beat in east or westen
 Augsburger Oktoberfesten.⁶⁶⁵

The spot reveals the mixing of two cultures through the intertwining of both languages. Its regional appeal notwithstanding, it includes a variety of stereotypes of Germans. Besides the obvious Oktoberfest, food, and beer references, the domesticity and stoutness of the woman match existing German stereotypical schemata.

TV commercials also used a multitude of references. A good example is a well-known spot by the Stroh's brewery which aired during the Super Bowl of 1981.⁶⁶⁶ The scene takes place on a square in a German town of massive stone buildings with steep red roofs and half-timbered houses. People are dancing in large numbers, music is heard, flags are flying and a festival is celebrated in honor of the arrival of a new American beer. An American couple that apparently happens to visit this town as tourists asks a corpulent older man with a mustache in clothes and hat reminiscent of Bavaria: 'Pardon me, what's going on?' The German answers in thick accent: 'Oh, it's a wonderful day for ze town. A great beer is coming all ze way from America. And here it comes.' Two men in older black German police uniforms⁶⁶⁷ open the gates for a beer truck, which is clearly not German, to enter the town square. Music for brass instruments, often referred to as oompah music, follows the resounding fanfares that announce the beer's arrival.

The American woman wonders why everybody makes "all that fuss over Stroh's." Her spouse takes a picture and carelessly responds "Don't surprise me none!" The commercial ends showing several townspeople and the truck driver raising toasts and drinking together. A young blonde woman gives the driver a kiss on the cheek. The clothes of several characters are

⁶⁶⁵ Augsburger Oktoberfest Beer, advertisement, 1994, <<http://www.vikingbrewing.com/breweriana.htm>> 16 November 2004.

⁶⁶⁶ Stroh's "Europe," advertisement, 1981.

⁶⁶⁷ They wear so-called "Tschakos" on their heads, which are uniform caps worn by German police that were mainly worn by German police officers before the end of World War II.

interesting as they depict a more historical than contemporary Germany. The young woman and the fanfare players wear clothing reminiscent of the Middle Ages, the two gate-openers wear uniforms that are decades old and remind the viewer of pre-World War II times, and a bearded man wears a Prussian or German uniform identifiable by the 'Pickelhaube,' or spiked/piked helmet, which has become to symbolize German militarism especially during World War I. The Germans shown are clearly not those of 1981 but of previous decades and centuries. If the commercial did not state it otherwise, one would assume that the people were celebrating Karneval. But the advertiser just employs almost any technique and stereotype to depict the Germany and the Germans that are best for selling its beer in America: a contemporary and historical fantasyland that conjures nostalgic and reminiscent feelings, a culture that solely consists of festivals and beer consumption, people that wear traditional and historical clothes even in 1981, and condescending images of silly and corpulent Germans with thick accents. In the U.S., "Bavarian culture is regarded as synonymous with all German culture, even though Bavarian customs and language are confined to the regional state of Bavaria and its capital, Munich."⁶⁶⁸ This can be explained by the previously discussed phenomenon of out-group homogeneity

Slowly, this older stereotype is changing, making way for a more sophisticated, slender, male German, often clad completely in black with a turtleneck. The German food industry, for instance, is battling outdated food stereotypes and tries to convey more "youthful images" of German cuisine, for instance by using "[m]ore appropriate images in-line with the modern German society."⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁸ Rippley 713

⁶⁶⁹ Anna Wolfe, "New Chief Focuses On CMA Image," *Gourmet News* January 2003: 1+.

5. Germans and Germany as Friend and Foe

The relationship between Germany and the United States has been a friendly one for a long time, surviving two world wars and several crises. This can certainly be attributed largely to the closeness of the two cultures; German immigrants to the United States have had a strong influence on American life, which can still be seen in the many originally German traditions that survive in the country. The arrival of eight German settlers at Jamestown in Virginia in 1608 is often seen as the start of the history of German-Americans. Mennonites from southwestern Germany sailed on the Concord to Philadelphia in 1683 and settled mainly in the Middle Atlantic colonies. The first permanent German settlement was Germantown in Pennsylvania, established in the same year.

Most German-Americans steered clear of politics⁶⁷⁰ and focused primarily on farming and manufacturing, in which they excelled. Generally the image of the German immigrants was positive, revolving around their peacefulness, success, and industry. Even though many poor Germans arrived during the second half of the nineteenth century, most belonged or soon moved up to the middle class. The positive image of the Germans resurfaced after both world wars, and the negative image was replaced after 1945 almost completely and very quickly by that of the Soviet Union and its satellite states. Western Germany was quickly embraced as a partner, ally, and friend. It represented Western democratic, capitalistic values, and through the fast-paced reconstruction and the “Wirtschaftswunder,” the economic miracle, it exemplified the advantages of the West and was seen as a direct contrast to the GDR. Thus the BRD represented values such as increase in prosperity by one’s own deeds, willingness to perform, democracy, free will, importance of the individual, and federalism – values that are also highly esteemed in the United States. The success of Western Germany was also the success of America, thus forging a strong bond between the two countries and a heightened interest on both sides.⁶⁷¹ East and West German symbols were largely tied to the economy:

So haben sich die beiden Teilstaaten in der postfaschistischen Ära gleichermaßen, wenn auch auf unterschiedliche Weise, mit vorgeblich unpolitischen Ersatzsymbolen für ihren

⁶⁷⁰ See: Rippley 716.

⁶⁷¹ Despite this interest in the country, however, Germany is only one out of many partners for the Americans, while the United States is the significant other for Germany: culturally, politically, and economically.

Weltmachtanspruch begnügen müssen. Mit den Identifikationszeichen einer freizügig florierenden Wohlstandsgesellschaft und führenden Exportnation und einer polizeistaatlich reglementierten Sportgroßmacht: mit VW-Golfs und mit Goldmedaillen.⁶⁷²

Besides a generally very friendly and positive relationship between America and Germany, both countries were fierce enemies in the two largest military encounters, World War I and II, which led to unprecedented animosity between the two countries. Totten notes that this contrast, the friendship, and the instant hostilities resulted in previously unknown efforts of propaganda and denigration:

Die Amerikaner haben stets die Deutschen als einen selbstverständlichen Teil ihrer eigenen Umwelt empfunden. Im Grunde war es gerade dieses Bewußtsein der Verbundenheit, das in den Jahren der beiden großen feindlichen Auseinandersetzungen nach 1917 und 1941 so heftige propagandistische Anstrengungen gegen Deutschland in den Staaten notwendig machte.⁶⁷³

The media played a crucial role in the mobilization of the home front, and led not only to hatred and condemnation of the Germans but also to discrimination against German-Americans.⁶⁷⁴ Oehling, contrasting Germans and German-Americans, remarks: "Condemnation was based on guilt-by-association, the association being the tenuous ties of ancestry and national origin – not the characteristics believed to have been always and previously inherent in the German-American."⁶⁷⁵ The political, military, and social events led to a further assimilation of large parts of the German populace in America and a sharp decline of the German-American subculture.

During World War II, the image of the evil German, of the ugly German, reemerged. Its characteristics have largely been formed, defined and spread through movies, but could be found

⁶⁷² Peter Reichel, "Die Häßlichen Deutschen - Extrem Schönheitsbedürftig," *Die Hässlichen Deutschen? Deutschland im Spiegel der Westlichen und Östlichen Nachbarn*, ed. Günter Trautmann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991) 331.

⁶⁷³ Totten 23.

⁶⁷⁴ See Timothy J. Holian's *The German-Americans and World War II: An Ethnic Experience* for a further discussion.

⁶⁷⁵ Richard A. Oehling, "The German-Americans, Germany, and the American Media," *Ethnic Images in American Film and Media*, ed. Randall M. Miller (Philadelphia: The Balch Institute, 1978) 52.

in advertising as well. Even more than during World War I, these propagandistic messages were also part of commercial, not only political advertising. “Political messages,” Bogarts notes, “are a small part of all advertising, but they have a disproportionate share of advertising’s impact on society.”⁶⁷⁶

Less overt animosity towards Germans is also displayed by competitors⁶⁷⁷ and business rivals, but is not as widespread. More often found is the technique of ridicule, which has been frequently used since the first days of modern advertising in the nineteenth century.

5.1 The Business Partner

The positive economic connection between Germany and the United States is often stressed in advertising, reflecting the close relations of Germans and Americans. Not without pride, United Technologies emphasizes the importance of sound economic relations when it claims: “The Marshall Plan built an economy so strong and so attractive that people knocked down the Berlin Wall to get to it.”⁶⁷⁸ The statement stresses that it was the active financial engagement of the American side that made war-torn Germany, at least the western part, into a prosperous industrial nation again; it leaves out the contributions on the partner’s side. This is also true for the claim that it was the lack of prosperity that brought the people of eastern Germany and Europe to start a revolution; left out are the ideas of political and social oppression. The ad shows that the partnership with Germany is a powerful public relations tool as it was mainly America that helped Germany prosper. The point of view shown is clearly the American perspective.

One aspect of the fruitfulness of the successful partnership of the two countries is the closeness of the two cultures. Emmerich discusses the similarities of WASPs, White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (the most influential group within U.S. society), and of Germans as perceived by Americans have in common: “solid, verlässlich, etwas langweilig, technisch begabt, kulturell erstrebenswert, nicht unbedingt ein Freund, jedoch auch kein Feind, sondern ein Partner, auf den

⁶⁷⁶ Bogart 86.

⁶⁷⁷ For instance as sport rivals; e.g.: PowerBar “Live like Lance – Big German,” advertisement, 2004.

⁶⁷⁸ United Technologies gives this example to show its expertise in crisis regions: “From China to Russia to Latin America, we don’t just do business – we live there.” (United Technologies, advertisement, *New York Times* 25 June 1997: D7.)

man sich im Allgemeinen verlassen kann.”⁶⁷⁹ The image of the militaristic German and Nazi has largely been replaced by a more positive image: diligent, intelligent, practical, decent, brave. Those traits, generally valued in American society, are of course ideal for Germany as a partner and an ally.

An interesting phenomenon is the existence of so-called bi-national products, which emerge more and more often. Hybrid companies, such as DaimlerChrysler, have the strategic advantage of drawing their images from both national backgrounds. It is especially powerful when depicting the positive aspects of bi-national collaboration. Two TV commercials, emphasizing the parental corporate merging of the German-American DaimlerChrysler, stress similarities and unique national strengths. One such shared strength is scientific ingenuity, represented by the brightest scientists Einstein and Edison. The voice-over explains that the cooperation naturally must lead to even higher results:

A German named Einstein showed us the universe in a whole new light. An American named Edison turned it on. And putting American and German minds together is bringing a new level of quality to Chrysler, one of the proud American brands of DaimlerChrysler...⁶⁸⁰

A second ad emphasizes the unique strengths which are depicted as complementing each other. After the text “DREAMED IN AMERICA” is shown on screen, still shots of the exterior design elements of the advertised vehicle, the Crossfire, are presented, accompanied by a mysterious silence with sparse sound effects. The sequence introduced by the text “CRAFTED IN GERMANY” constitutes a contrast, followed by images of workers, an engineer, and high-tech production processes in abruptly moving short sequences. The different mood is underscored by very powerful music. The spot, which is filmed completely in black and white, concludes with the text “TURNING HEADS EVERYWHERE,” showing smooth, fast driving scenes.⁶⁸¹

The ostensible strengths of the two countries of origin are emphasized: the Americans are in charge of lifestyle, image, design, and emotion, while the engineering is the Germans’ sphere. The hybrid production process is presented as strength, and the partnership is highlighted.

⁶⁷⁹ Emmerich 44.

⁶⁸⁰ Chrysler “Einstein & Edison,” advertisement, 2002. See also chapter 3.4.

⁶⁸¹ Chrysler “Dreamed in America,” advertisement, 2003.

But the Germans, or other economic partners for that matter, are not always represented as equals. A United Parcel Service (UPS) advertisement shows 12 different people representing their country. Each can be easily identified by the stereotypical nature of the images. The one subtitled “West Germany” features a mustached man, who is a bit rounder and older than the others, wearing a hat and a traditional suit (“Trachtenanzug”).⁶⁸² O’Barr analyzes the advertisement in detail, and comes to the same conclusion as that of the United Technologies ad:

The UPS international delivery network interlinks the twelve separate individuals, but only to an American sender or business. There is no hint whatsoever that the man in Italy can exchange letters with the woman in Japan or that the Australian rancher can send his parcel to the English businessman, although this may be possible by routing them through the United States. The UPS network is depicted as an American network that articulates each of these countries with the United States. The relationship is international from an American perspective, but it is not global. America stands at the center of an international shipping system, but links of the various countries are always back to or through the center.⁶⁸³

The type of clothing indicates that the German partner is presented as inferior and not in control. This depiction along with the abundance of other nationalities reveals that the American side is dominant.

⁶⁸² O’Barr 75.

⁶⁸³ O’Barr 75.

5.2 German Products and American Culture

German companies often use inherently American themes in their advertising efforts in the United States. These ads create a connection between the German product and the target audience's culture for several reasons. It may lessen negative aspects of the country-of-origin effect, which can, as has been shown above, limit interest in the product. It may also show the friendship between Germany and the U.S. Partly due to the fact that Germans shaped the United States considerably and vice versa, values and preferences that the two countries share abound: from the love of cars and nature to customs and traditions.

Love of Cars

The Volkswagen Beetle is an American pop icon,⁶⁸⁴ representing the strong economical post-war relationship between the United States and Germany. The humble car, initially seen as 'Hitler's car,' came to the U.S. in 1949 and was not popular at first. It became a huge success, however, after one of the most important and successful advertising campaigns transformed the small car's image. It has been shown above that it has become the car of a generation⁶⁸⁵ and constitutes common cultural knowledge in America and beyond. One memorable print advertisement shows the car next to an empty Coca Cola bottle, emphasizing the car's international ubiquity and reputation as the text below the images states: "2 shapes known the world over."⁶⁸⁶ It also creates a common ground by stressing both nations' similarities.

A newer TV commercial stresses the positive features of the "German-engineered Volkswagen," such as the voluminous trunk and the spacious back seat. The ad makes a double connection: "Weimaraners⁶⁸⁷ come from Germany" leads to the conclusion: "Maybe that's why they like driving so much."⁶⁸⁸ Thus, Germans like driving so much that it even extends to their dogs. The assumption is that the American viewer shares this love for an automotive lifestyle as

⁶⁸⁴ See: Mamiya 19-44.

⁶⁸⁵ Some ads allude to the first Beetle's link to the 60s civil rights and 'flower power' movements. The newer Beetle has changed with time, offering "Less flower" and instead "More power." (Volkswagen, advertisement, <http://media.eurotuned.com/vwcommercials_nolinking/Beetle-less-flower-more-power.mov> 19 January 2005.)

⁶⁸⁶ Heimann, 60s 195.

⁶⁸⁷ Named after the Grand Duke of Weimar, Charles August.

⁶⁸⁸ Volkswagen, advertisement, <http://media.eurotuned.com/vwcommercials_nolinking/Jetta-dogs.mov> 19 January 2005.

well as pets. Mercedes alludes to the Americans' traditional connection to mobility, speed, openness to new experiences, and innovation in an advertisement in which the promoted vehicle is seen driving next to a typically American, very long, steam-powered highspeed train, which enabled the opening of the West and introduced an age of mobility.⁶⁸⁹

The similarly successful strategy of flattery is employed in a BMW commercial, which shows a car driving through the rugged landscape of the West, shot in black and white. In intervals the following messages are presented:

“Drive-thru restaurants.”

“Drive-thru dry cleaners.”

“Drive-thru weddings.”

“God bless America.”⁶⁹⁰

The ideal and the reality of an automotive lifestyle are contrasted, the former visually and the latter textually. The visual imagery exclusively consists of scenes of driving through vast nature and stands in contrast to the textual message. The unseen side of America – civilization and culture – are presented through the text. This side, though visually rather unappealing and therefore dealt with in a more abstract manner, is needed to convey the necessity of a car and the cultural contrast between Germany and America. Augmented by the last phrase, “God bless America,” the ad not only invokes patriotic feelings, but also reveals that the foreign company understands the consumer's culture.

Being American

Through advertising, foreign companies can reassert their allegiance to America, sometimes resulting in competition among such businesses.⁶⁹¹ Negative stereotypes of the competitors' country of origin are a frequently used technique in these comparative advertisements, with the goal of discrediting the competition. Savan describes one such TV commercial between the traditional rivals in the automobile market, Germany and Japan:

⁶⁸⁹ Mercedes “Steam Train,” advertisement, <<http://www.merkleyandpartners.com/advertising/print.html>> 2 May 2004.

⁶⁹⁰ BMW “God Bless America,” advertisement, 2001.

⁶⁹¹ See also chapter 7.2.

In a new spot for Volkswagen (of all carmakers!), a big, friendly white guy carries on about how Nipponese car prices are rising higher, illustrated with a small Japanese man, baffled and rendered silent, rising slowly off the ground. The white guy waves off the floating Yellow Peril with a cheerful ‘Sayonara!’⁶⁹²

By using racial, physical stereotypes, the two competitors are instantly recognized: the larger Caucasian man is the German; the small Asian man is Japanese. The former represents not only steady prices but also solidity and commitment, whereas the latter is portrayed as unreliable and wavering. The ad reveals arrogance and notions of racism and dominance, which are better avoided by a company with connections to Germany’s Nazi past. Furthermore, the spot exemplifies how important the factor nationality is, especially in the car industry; automobiles are symbols of national pride, and companies are rarely regarded as disconnected from their origin. The target audience of the spot is most likely Caucasian Americans with little regard for political correctness. The imagery suggests ties between Volkswagen and America through the “big, friendly white guy;” Savan comments that this is “how the German Volkswagen proves it’s American.”⁶⁹³

A Beck’s campaign already introduced above in the chapter on the new Germans also has several elements which prove the Germans’ Americanness. The company’s executive, John Lennon, thinks that the campaign “is a slice of Americana from a German perspective. It’s merging of Old World taste with new world style.” The approach in this field is customarily emotional appeal: “the new Beck’s Light campaign touches the heartstrings, which is what beer advertising in the U.S. needs to do.”⁶⁹⁴ Two spots of the campaign highlight two prominent, salient aspects of American culture, bowling and music.

Filmed from below, two men behind an instrument for land survey discuss measurements. While the clearly German accent used in the question “vat is ze calculation?” quickly exposes the two men’s origin, their physical attributes underscore the common stereotype. Both wear a shirt and tie with pens in the shirt pocket, appear clean and proper, have short, blond hair combed

⁶⁹² Savan 233.

⁶⁹³ Savan 234.

⁶⁹⁴ Mike Beirne, interview with John Lennon, “Beck’s Exec John Lennon Bringing New Consumers, Awareness to Brand,” *Brandweek* 2 July 2001: 11.

over to the side, and wear black-rimmed glasses. In the following sequence, shot from the side, the other man looks through the instrument and answers with a similar accent “eighty-nine point zree degrees.” The first comments on this observation with the stereotypical “excellent,” lifts a bowling ball and hits a strike, knocking down all pins. The subsequent reaction of the two is in sharp contrast to the unemotional and scientific previous proceedings. They shout “yeah” several times, make victory gestures with their arms and closed fists, and give each other ‘high fives’ with both hands above their heads. After the voice-over concludes “It seems Germany’s got a taste for America” and the text beneath the beer bottle hints at “Germany’s lighter side,” the two German bowlers are seen again, still being overly excited with their success. One of the two throws the bowling ball with force directly onto the floor, resulting in a large crack in the wooden floor of the bowling alley.⁶⁹⁵

The commercial plays with existing stereotypes by means of contrast and twist. The stereotype that Germans are unemotional and overly rational is resolved by showing that there is another side to the Germans. It is stressed that for the most part both cultures are similar, and that the differences are minor as well as interesting and perhaps quirky. The gestures, the emotional outburst of joy and success as well as the setting, the game of bowling, are deemed American, while the German traits are precision, perfection, and careful calculations. Whether intended or not, the violence that the bowlers’ success results in, however, conjures up the aggressiveness so often associated with the Germans.

In the second commercial, a band of three men clad in traditionally Bavarian clothes are seen on a wooden stage, which could be either in Germany or the U.S. The origin of the band, however, is instantly recognizable, also due to the fact that they announce their music in German: “eins, zwei, drei.” They play the song “Wild Thing” using an accordion, a tambourine, and an idiophone. The scene could not be more stereotypical. One player throws away his idiophone/spoons to start a knee-slapping dance, and a fourth musician is seen off-stage when he starts playing his tuba. The lyrics allow for the use of the standard accent repertoire. The phrase “Wild thing, I think I love you” contains the “w,” two “th” sounds, and “love” is pronounced very open and longer than usual.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹⁵ Beck’s “Bowling,” advertisement, 2001.

⁶⁹⁶ Beck’s “Polka Band,” advertisement, 2001.

Again, the goal is to show connections between the Germans and America, which is achieved by mixing to music styles. And yet, while the often covered song “Wild Thing” might seem inherently American, it was made popular by The Troggs, a British band from the town of Andover in southern England, in 1966. The song, however, was and remains to be very popular in the U.S.

Sometimes ways of showing one’s connection to America are more straightforward, as a Volkswagen advertisement titled “Made in U.S.A.” exemplifies. It suggests that the car is produced in the United States, which is a selling advantage because it is perceived to create jobs at home. But the advertisement actually refers to a VW that is made of spare parts to instruct mechanics in order to convey that proper servicing in the United States can also be expected for an imported car. This information, however, can only be gathered from the small, longer printed text, which probably the majority of magazine readers do not perceive. The ad misleads consumers to think that all VW Bugs are made in the United States.⁶⁹⁷

Customs and Traditions

The customs and traditions that German immigrants introduced to America have been described above. They constitute a shared identity of Germans and Americans, of which advertising makes occasional use. A Lufthansa print advertisement, for instance, reminds the audience of the many German Christmas traditions now generally practiced in America. The headline states: “What makes us think you’ll have more winter fun in Germany? Just remember who introduced the Christmas tree.” The text below picks up on this theme and adds the contribution of carols.⁶⁹⁸ The photos illustrating the ad show a horse-drawn sled and a very large Christmas tree, among other images.⁶⁹⁹

Thanksgiving, a very important American holiday, is also a suitable topic in advertising. Alluding to the ample portions of food and beverages consumed during this holiday as well as the social aspect of gathering around a long table, a 1969 Lufthansa advertisement shows several people enjoying large steins of beer in a spacious beer tent. The headline states: “Oktoberfest is a

⁶⁹⁷ Volkswagen, advertisement, *Esquire* December 1963: 45.

⁶⁹⁸ “Even Christmas will seem more festive in the land that introduced both the Christmas tree and some of your favorite carols.”

⁶⁹⁹ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 26 October 1965: 28.

little like Thanksgiving Day. But it takes 16 days to celebrate.”⁷⁰⁰ The ad picks up on the popularity of Thanksgiving, a festival of indulgence, tradition, and connection, and appeals to the audience because Germany promises another, similar festivity, but promises even more of it: more than two weeks of it. Another thought behind the ad is that the audience can easily connect with the created imagery; after all, there is no American without a clear picture of what Thanksgiving is all about. Thus the Oktoberfest seems less remote, less frightening to the perceivers, but something that they understand and cherish, only a little different. This bridge, which the Beck’s Light commercials also create, emphasizes the friendship, the shared identities, and the multitude of similarities of Germans and Americans.

References to other American traditions and rituals are frequently found in advertising by German companies. From football rivalries⁷⁰¹ to the nursery rhyme of the “ol’ Lady that lives in a shoe”⁷⁰² and “Superman”⁷⁰³, many themes are employed to lend a more American touch to the foreign products.

The Pastoral and Love of Nature

The pastoral ideas and a love of nature are also common grounds of American and German thought. The Audubon Mercedes ad, introduced above, invokes the pastoral theme and alludes to the quest for the simple life, nature, and tranquility.⁷⁰⁴ The advertising technique of using such imagery is also used frequently in ads for German cars. In one spot, mundane, narrated driving directions are depicted as a poetic, scenic description with corresponding visuals that show wonderful scenes of landscape.⁷⁰⁵ Ordinary routes through the United States are presented as idealized depictions of traveling America in other advertisements.⁷⁰⁶ Driving is

⁷⁰⁰ Lufthansa, advertisement, 1969. Personal collection.

⁷⁰¹ Mercedes-Benz ML-350 “Football Game,” advertisement, 2004.

⁷⁰² 1967 Volkswagen print ad: “The ol’ lady finally figured out what to do. Volkswagen not only holds about twice as much as other station wagons, but it’s economical to keep up, too. (And the people in the hat next door thought she was crazy.)” (Heimann, 60s 253.)

⁷⁰³ A 1968 Volkswagen ad, titled “Superwagon,” shows the front, the ‘face’ of a minibus in the colors (blue with yellow and red) of the Superman costume. (Heimann, 60s 261.)

⁷⁰⁴ Mercedes “Audubon,” Advertisement, <<http://www.merkleyandpartners.com/advertising/print.html>> 2 May 2004.

⁷⁰⁵ BMW 7 “Directions,” advertisement, 2002.

⁷⁰⁶ Volkswagen Jetta Wagon TDI “Buffalo to Nashville,” advertisement, 2002; Volkswagen Jetta Wagon TDI “New Orleans to Sarasota,” advertisement, 2002.

often portrayed as a means of achieving independence⁷⁰⁷ and establishing a connection with nature.⁷⁰⁸

“As Judith Williamson argues in her *tour de force* structuralist analysis of modern advertising,” Green concisely summarizes,

the power of modern, technologically based civilization rests in its ability to define the terms of life so that the constructed world of modern life becomes the norm, becomes ‘natural.’ Thus, the terms of opposition between nature and culture in the pastoral archetype, in which nature is the privileged term, are reversed. Culture becomes nature, and nature becomes subsumed in culture; with this reversal, the pastoral ideal becomes accessible only through the ministrations of culture.⁷⁰⁹

He continues that this contrast is very often found in automobile advertisements, especially in the ever more popular offroad vehicles,⁷¹⁰ which are predominantly purchased by city dwellers. Advertising creates an image of individuality, freedom, adventure, exploration, and of breaking out of the ordinary.

5.3 The Evil German

This section mainly deals with American war advertising. Not surprisingly the Germans are prominent in many ads of the time and generally the Germans are shown in a negative way. While many advertisers are companies which profit from the consumers’ feelings, also government ads, or public service announcements are included in the examination here because they complement the general picture of the time. Finally, the few references found in more recent advertising show that the image of the evil German has subsided significantly over time.

⁷⁰⁷ Audi’s slogan, for example, has been “Never follow” for several years, underscoring the main message of independence and freedom (e.g.: Audi “Forget All the Rules,” advertisement, 2002.).

⁷⁰⁸ E.g.: Audi “Jar,” advertisement, 2002. A man drives his convertible and collects the passing air in a glass jar, which he brings home to his father.

⁷⁰⁹ Green 31.

⁷¹⁰ Green 33-35. Also: Harris, *Cute, Quaint, Hungry, and Romantic* 201-205.

The image of the evil German in America did not emerge during the Third Reich. Already during the war of Independence, mercenaries from the German territories, also referred to as Hessians, constitute more than just a concrete negative image of Germans:

The collective memory of Hessians is alive in the United States. The role of the ‘German mercenaries’ in the grand narrative of U.S. historiography is that of an emblem for the oppression by the old regime as well as a counterpoint to the openness and boundless opportunities of the new one.⁷¹¹

This view, however, has been counterbalanced by the support of General Baron von Steuben of Prussia and his popularity; the annual Steuben Parade in New York still commemorates his aid to the Americans during the Revolutionary War and German-American friendship in general. Totten asserts that the Germans were not regarded as militaristic during the eighteenth and nineteenth century.⁷¹² A positive perception of the Germans has often constituted an antipode to the evil Germans.

Other events during the nineteenth century also led to anti-German sentiments. In the Southern States, Germans were unpopular because of their strong involvement in abolitionist movements. The depressions of 1870s and 1890s in the U.S., which occurred during a time of prosperity and growth in Germany, led to animosity and resentment but extended also to other ethnic groups as is common during times of economical crises. Negative feelings towards German-Americans and Germans stemmed also from the jovial lifestyle, which was looked down upon by Puritans and other strict groups. These occasional outbursts of negative attitudes, however, are far from the image of the evil German, which surged during World War I and reappeared in an intensified form during the second World War, which is reflected in the abundance of propaganda efforts.

Propaganda shares many but not all characteristics of advertising. It did not have a negative connotation initially: “The word has long been associated,” Lester reports, “with the thought-control techniques used by totalitarian regimes, but critics have expanded the definition

⁷¹¹ Christof Mauch, “Images of America – Political Myths – Historiography: ‘Hessians’ in the War of Independence,” *Amerikastudien* 48/3 (2003): 422.

⁷¹² “Im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert galten jedoch die Deutschen keineswegs als Prototyp des Soldaten. Sie erschienen vielmehr als friedliche Bürger, die ihre Ruhe haben wollten.” (Totten 36.)

to include many of the persuasion techniques utilized by all governments and large corporations to persuade an unsuspecting public.”⁷¹³ In this sense propaganda is a form of political advertising. A more modern definition refers to propaganda as “the systematic attempt to influence emotions, attitudes, opinions, and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political, or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages via mass and direct media channels.”⁷¹⁴

The lines between propaganda and strictly commercial advertising are by no means clear-cut. It will be shown below that especially during the world wars governments and the war effort had significant impact on advertising messages that often appear to be more propaganda than product marketing. In general, the role of propaganda in America has traditionally been somewhat smaller than in other countries. “Despite the continuing role played by commercial advertising and political propaganda in defining our national institutions, Americans by and large bear a traditional antipathy toward the idea (if not the practice) of propaganda.”⁷¹⁵

Of Huns and Krauts

The image of the Germans as huns emerged during World War I and is closely connected to Emperor Wilhelm. In his famous speech of 1900, the ‘Hunnenrede,’ he told German troops, before their deployment to suppress the Boxer rebellion in China, not to take any prisoners or show any mercy.⁷¹⁶ This ethno-phaulism is thus tied to the ostensible brutal acts of German soldiers, which helped mobilize the home front and public support in America during World War I. “The Germans (or Huns) were represented by grotesque, animal-like features and hulking frames. These distorted caricatures attempted to villify and degrade the enemy. Enemy leaders were portrayed as monsters and enemy soldiers as villainous or pathetic.”⁷¹⁷ Posters designed to boost support for the war among the American populace tied this term to very graphic depictions of German soldiers, and the word *hun* itself was also a common sight in newspaper and magazine advertisements.⁷¹⁸ The term ‘ugly German,’ also frequently used, stems from such

⁷¹³ Lester 64.

⁷¹⁴ Nelson 1329.

⁷¹⁵ Nelson 1328.

⁷¹⁶ “Pardon wird nicht gegeben. Gefangene werden nicht gemacht.”

⁷¹⁷ Shawn Aubitz and Gail F. Stern, “Ethnic Images in World War I Posters,” *Journal of American Culture* 9/4 (Winter 1986): 85.

⁷¹⁸ E.g.: Truly Warner/The Fourth Liberty Loan, advertisement, *New York Times* 12 October 1918: 2; Everybody’s Magazine, advertisement, *New York Times* 28 June 1918: 6. (“Cardinal Mercier, brave Prince of the Church,

representations of barbarism.⁷¹⁹

The term ‘kraut,’ resulting from the hearty diet rich in different types of cabbage, was frequently used during and after World War II. The term ‘kraut’ quickly turned into a term of endearment for the Germans and assumed more and more positive connotations.⁷²⁰ Popular culture picked up on the catchword⁷²¹, which can be found in advertisements with reference to German food⁷²² or more generally, anything German.⁷²³

The Ugly German

Representations of the ugly German are numerous during both world wars. A winning poster of a competition depicts a vicious-looking German soldier with a spiked helmet walking amidst ruins. He holds a rifle in one hand and a bloodstained knife in the other, with the blade down. He is presented as a predator without any form of humanity, lacking the ability to reflect or contemplate. It appears that he cannot be talked to and that brute counterforce is the only solution. The message is sent that the ugly German is not to be pitied, understood, or reasoned with, making it much easier to hate the Germans. The solution offered by this particular propaganda message seems simplistic compared to the presented threat and reinforces the contrast of beast and civilized person: “Help stop this” and “Buy W.S.S. [war savings stamps] & keep him out of America.”⁷²⁴ Referring to this individual soldier (“him”) creates a concrete focus point and identification for the audience, which gives a stronger sense of influence and urgency to said savings stamps.

World War II advertising brought even more sophisticated imagery of the ugly German. The evil German soldiers are shown in dark, vicious, inhuman poses. Looking grim, they scare the reader who is asked to buy “extra Bonds this month” in an exemplary ad. Two soldiers,

standing up to Germany like a dauntless old lion, defies the worst the Hun dare do in Belgium.”); Funk & Wagnalls Company, advertisement, *The Literary Digest* 12 October 1918: 42.

⁷¹⁹ See also: Paul P. Somers, Jr., “Krauts Hinaus: Graphic Stereotypes of German-Americans Before and During World War I,” *International Journal of Comic Art* 2/2 (Fall 2000): 191-205. For depictions of the huns in war posters, see also: Aubitz and Stern 83-98.

⁷²⁰ See: Jarausch 154.

⁷²¹ For instance as in “Krautrock.”

⁷²² For example “The Little Kraut restaurant.” (The Little Kraut, advertisement, *New York Times* 15 May 1983: 597.)

⁷²³ In one ad for “international” Cabbage Patch Kids collectibles, “Baby Bavarian ‘Sauerkraut Kid’ Dolls” described: “They [...] come from a small orphanage in Bavaria, Germany” and are “made of the finest PVC.” It reassures the consumer that the “[c]lothing is hand crafted in Germany and varies with each doll.” (First Impressions, advertisement, *New York Times* 3 March 1985: LI4.)

⁷²⁴ W.S.S., advertisement, *Literary Digest* 1 June 1918: 38.

whose eyes are hidden by the shadow created by their helmet rims, look cruelly at something outside the picture. This simpler setup, compared to the World War I ad, stimulates the viewer's imagination and is thus much more effective. The threatening message, "[i]f they win, only our dead are free," enhances the imagery and lends an extra touch of evil and ugliness to the scene.⁷²⁵ Little details such as the small swastikas on the typical "Stahlhelm," which symbolized German military aggression⁷²⁶, the closed lips and shape of the mouth, and the lines and wrinkles on the faces enhance the overall image of the ugly, mean Germans.

Many times showing only the deeds of the ugly Germans sufficed to achieve the expected results. Often the inhumanity was not connected to the Nazis but their victims. In a long plea, an ad by the "Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe" to the American people asks to "HELP Prevent 4,000,000 People from Becoming Ghosts." It claims that "Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill pretend nothing is happening" and places the burden also on those that look the other way; which includes Germans as well as Americans.⁷²⁷ As more and more of the horrible crimes of the Holocaust became public, paid messages that asked for help for the survivors were not uncommon.⁷²⁸ Such pleas to help the survivors kept the memory of the horrible crimes of the Holocaust alive, but move the focus away from the German perpetrators to the victims.

Scare Tactics

One major technique of World War I and II advertising in the U.S. are scare tactics. If the ads intimidate the perceiver, he or she tends to find a solution against the threat – which is generally supplied by the advertiser, ranging from buying war bonds to saving resources or

⁷²⁵ Northwest Airlines, Inc. "If they win, only our dead are free," advertisement, *Portland, Oregon Journal* 1943. (*Ad Access*. Item number: W0208. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess>> 22 February 2005).

⁷²⁶ It replaced the traditional leather spiked helmet in 1916 as it protected much better against the threats of modern warfare. The symbolism was also carried over, representing German aggression. Thus the design was discontinued after World War II and not used for soldiers in the Bundeswehr to avoid such connections.

⁷²⁷ Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe, advertisement, *New York Times* 5 November 1943: 14.

⁷²⁸ For example, a 1947 ad by "United Jewish Appeal" reminds the public of the horrors of Hitler's plans. The picture shows a baby held upside down by someone wearing what appears to be a white lab coat, and black leather gloves; barbed wire is seen through the window. On the baby's back, the letters "DP" are clearly visible. The ad, which is titled "Born Branded," explains that it stands for "Displaced Person": "In this case, it stands for a new-born child whose parents have survived the hideous scourge of Hitlerism. The years in Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Oswiecim. The gas chambers and the mass graves. The cold. The hunger. The sickness. They have come out of the long night of terror, in which six million of their people were murdered. With your help, they have survived. They still live." (Advertisement in: Jim Heimann, *40s: All-American Ads* (Köln, Los Angeles: Taschen, 2001) 757.)

supporting a particular brand or industry. However successful this mode of advertising may be, it surely creates extremely negative images of the adversary, resulting in unfounded fears. These ads also fostered an atmosphere of threat and suspicion.

A print ad called “SPIES & LIES,” which was paid by the Willys-Overland automobile company, features two women chatting and a suspicious-looking man listening in on their conversation. The text explains why everyone has to be concerned:

German agents are everywhere, eager to gather scraps of news about our men, our ships, our munitions. It is still possible to get such information through to Germany, where thousands of these fragments – often individually harmless – are patiently pieced together into a whole which spells death to American soldiers and danger to American homes.

Then different tips on how to avoid this are given:

Do not become a tool of the Hun by passing on the malicious, disheartening rumors which he so eagerly sows. Remember he asks no better service than to have you spread his lies of disasters to our soldiers and sailors, gross scandals in the Red Cross, cruelties, neglect and wholesale executions in our camps, drunkenness and vice in the Expeditionary Force, and other tales certain to disturb American patriots and to bring anxiety and grief to American parents.

And do not wait until you catch someone putting a bomb under a factory. Report the man who spreads pessimistic stories, divulges – or seeks – confidential military information, cries for peace, or belittles our efforts to win the war. Send the names of such persons, even if they are in uniform, to the Department of Justice, Washington.⁷²⁹

The culture of fear that is being created draws from deep human anxieties and undermines civil society. Even though the ad tries to tell the reader that it is the Germans, in fact it is the advertiser who creates the threat, resulting in corrosion of the social fabric. As a self-fulfilling prophecy, an atmosphere of suspicion and intimidation is created by messages such as this one,

⁷²⁹ United States Government Committee on Public Information / The Willys-Overland Company, advertisement, *Literary Digest* 8 June 1918: 48-49.

not the spies. It certainly heightens the effect by showing the spy with two average, civilian women, a scene which seems to be rather unrealistic.

Another ad that encourages the purchase of war bonds juxtaposes preconceived notions of German (high) culture with the ostensible reality. Titled “This is Kultur,” the picture at the top of the ad shows German soldiers, easily identifiable by the spiked helmets, committing war crimes such as pillage, murder, and rape.⁷³⁰ The text explains that Germans are the opposite of the civilized, allied nations: “There is no sharper contrast between German Kultur and the civilization that our forefathers died for, than the difference in attitude of the two civilizations towards women and children.” It warns of the “savage, bestial revenge upon its [Belgium’s] defenseless women and children.”⁷³¹

Commonly used is the fear of the Germans taking over America. An American Locomotive ad of 1942 presents a towering Nazi judge with a monocle, flanked by two soldiers, under swastika flag. He looks down from behind a massive lectern at the position of the viewer. The low angle view stresses the position of the judge’s power, which is a common technique used in propaganda. A shadow of a person is seen on the lectern, giving the viewer the impression as if he or she were the accused. The ominous text underlines the bleak picture: “This is a Nazi court. Maybe none of us will ever have to face one ... we hope.”⁷³² A similar image shows a lineup of Americans.⁷³³

Similiarly, another ad by the same company shows a bald Nazi officer examining three women in an interrogation room. The viewer is frightened because the scene is hypothetical as this is what would happen if the Germans were not stopped. The headline, “A High Honor for your Daughter,” intrudes the personal space and causes fear.⁷³⁴

The Germans under Hitler: Victim or Enemy?

While Germany was undoubtedly considered America’s enemy in World War II, its people were not always seen as enemies but as victims themselves or at least passive citizens who were not necessarily considered enemies. The ambivalent picture deducted from various advertisements of the time reflects these two different views.

⁷³⁰ Picture: “from a lithograph, drawn on the stone by George Bellows”

⁷³¹ The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, advertisement, *The Literary Digest* 5 October 1918: 73.

⁷³² Advertisement in: Heimann, 40s 665.

⁷³³ F. Fox 57-58.

⁷³⁴ F. Fox 50-51. (image pages not numbered)

Two exemplary advertisements are analyzed here to illustrate this approach. The Texas Company portrays the average German civilian as a concrete and direct enemy:

Thousands of miles away in a suburb of Berlin is your adversary. He is the man behind the German military machine. He sharpened the brutal bayonets. He built the murderous Messerschmitts. He celebrated the cruel destruction of Warsaw and Rotterdam. He is the man on the home front in Germany, the buyer of Deutsche War Bonds, the worker, the man-in-the-German-street.

The ad continues giving general tips on how to fight the war on the home front, such as conserving goods and energy. The conclusion shows the gist of the ad: even civilians fight in this war, and there are no innocent, passive Germans. “By doing all these things you give our boys the beef and rubber and the gasoline they need to drive their battle-wagons right up to the front door of that opponent of yours ... the man-in-the-German-street.”⁷³⁵

A print advertisement of the previous year shows a “goose-stepping” soldier, asking the reader: “...wonder what a ‘goose-stepper’ thinks about?” The response shows his interior monologue, which reveals the ingrained ideology and lack of genuine thought processes of an individual. “Left ... right ... don’t think ... left ... right ... don’t think. The Fuehrer thinks for us. Victory soon. Americans soft. Their tanks no good, planes no good. The Fuehrer says so. Left ... right ... don’t think.” The ad reveals that constructive contemplation would show the senselessness of the regime’s and ideology’s wrongfulness: “No, Hans, don’t think, or you’ll falter.”⁷³⁶ In this case, the blame is put on the individual, the soldier, the citizen, who stubbornly submits to the rule of the government and thus is guilty of its effects.

As an indication of the view of the German people as the enemies, the terms “German” and “Nazi” have been often used interchangeably.⁷³⁷ Many accounts make no clear distinctions between brutal SS officers and soldiers and passionate party members on the one side and the parts of the population that endured rather than supported the regime. The passivity and inactivity of the German people, in one view, makes them just as guilty. This image has survived

⁷³⁵ The Texas Company, advertisement, *New York Times* 30 March 1943: 13.

⁷³⁶ Advertisement in: Heimann, 40s 738.

⁷³⁷ Paul Monaco, “Stereotypes of Germans in American Culture: Observations from an Interdisciplinary Perspective,” *Amerikastudien* 31 (1986): 406-07.

in parts until today: “der Deutsche als klassischer Untertan nach ‘oben,’ herzloser Machtgenießer nach ‘unten’ [...] und unberechenbarer Aggressor nach außen; brutal, kalt, arrogant, unfreundlich, gehorsam.”⁷³⁸

Many other ads, however, point out the Germans as victims of oppression or at least as having a human side. One advertisement by Cutler-Hammer shows a poor peasant family, easily identifiable as German as the boy wears a swastika armband. The scene’s bleak tristesse is created by the winter weather seen through the window and the barren room, which features only few items including a portrait of Adolf Hitler. The text explains that this family of farmers takes parts home from a factory to assemble, making “*slave wages*.” It continues to warn the American readers that this might be their fate, too, creating an identification with the Germans: “The wonders of the ‘American Way’ of making things by machine to get low costs *without* low wages must be victorious *now* or Hitler’s substitute is the pattern for *your* future and your *children’s* future for generations to come.”⁷³⁹ A 1944 North American Aviation advertisement praises the advantages of the North American P-51 Mustang Fighter by showing a note in German which describes and warns of this attack plane.⁷⁴⁰ While it seems to only show the American’s superiority, it also shows insights into the fears on the other side. Views such as these humanize the enemy and allow them to appear less evil.

Most war advertisements specifically address Adolf Hitler himself, depicting him and not the Germans as the real enemy. Leland Electric proclaims in 1944 that “Hitler’s U-boats are doomed.”⁷⁴¹ An ad for cooking fats suggests to “[d]rop explosives on Hitler,”⁷⁴² the Philco Corporation warns the Hitler by stating “Time is Short, Adolf!”⁷⁴³ and Veedoll advertises with the headline: “Target for Tonight [...] Hitler’s glass jaw.”⁷⁴⁴ Another advertisement shows a Hitler who has not learned from previous mistakes. A towering Hindenburg tells him: “Don’t say I didn’t tell you!” The text below states “Now history is repeating itself for Hindenburg’s successor!” and is the central message of victory for the Allies.⁷⁴⁵ Sometimes the Axis rulers are

⁷³⁸ Krampikowski 54.

⁷³⁹ Advertisement in: Heimann, 40s 683.

⁷⁴⁰ Advertisement in: Heimann, 40s 716.

⁷⁴¹ Advertisement in: Heimann, 40s 700.

⁷⁴² War Production Board “Free! Bomber Trip to Berlin,” advertisement, *Times* 1943. (Ad Access. Item number: W0067. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess>> 22 February 2005).

⁷⁴³ Advertisement in: Heimann 40s, 650.

⁷⁴⁴ Advertisement in: Heimann 40s 683.

⁷⁴⁵ Advertisement in: Heimann 40s 662.

also included, showing that they need to be punished⁷⁴⁶ or that that Germany does not have the resources that America has: “Oil is dandy for drowning.” The latter shows an oversized Hitler in the sea being shot by fighter planes and pushing down on the heads of Mussolini and the Japanese emperor.⁷⁴⁷ Even post-war references often address Hitler directly as the enemy and not the Germans as a people.⁷⁴⁸

The Enemy and the Home Front

On the American side, advertising played an important role in mobilizing and energizing the home front. Many ads contained tips on conservation or encouraged production and investments in war bonds or stamps. During World War I such messages were already used, as an ad for the “Soldier’s Service Dictionary” shows: “Ready for the Huns - and for His French Comrades, Too.” It encourages relatives and acquaintances to buy one to help with the war effort: “Get a copy for YOUR Soldier or Sailor friend – he needs it.”⁷⁴⁹ The ad shows the hybrid nature of such messages that were both patriotic and war-supporting as well as promoting a certain product or boosting a company’s image.

World War II brought about a large number of such patriotic sales marketing techniques. While some suggest a more direct influence of civilians – one ad shows an American civilian in shirt and tie with a bayoneted rifle about to kill a German soldier lying on the ground⁷⁵⁰ – most are less martial in nature. Common were messages of conservation of goods such as kitchen fats.⁷⁵¹ Two exemplary ads by Texaco from the year 1943 show the possibilities that civilians have to help defeat the enemy: “Here in America, millions of peace-loving citizens are willingly skimping on food [...] going without gasoline ... working and investing their savings to defeat you [Hitler].” The population is addressed as having a large effect on the outcome of the war: “Our armies have just begun to show their real strength. Our civilians are setting new records of production.”⁷⁵²

⁷⁴⁶ “Belt ‘em One!” (Advertisement by Hickory Belts in: Heimann, 40s 367.)

⁷⁴⁷ The ad describes Kopper’s Oil’s contributions in furnishing the oil industry and producing aviation fuel for the Americans. Advertisement in: Heimann, 40s 724.

⁷⁴⁸ “Hitler’s plan to attack America”: CNN, advertisement, *New York Times* 5 October 1999: A25.

⁷⁴⁹ Funk & Wagnalls Company, advertisement, *The Literary Digest* 12 October 1918: 42.

⁷⁵⁰ Beech-Nut Packing Co. “You Can Put A Nazi Out Of The War!” advertisement, *New York Times* 1943. (*Ad Access*. Item number: W0329. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess>> 22 February 2005).

⁷⁵¹ American Weekly “Nazi-Jap Eraser,” advertisement, *American Weekly* 1943. (*Ad Access*. Item number: W0064. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess>> 22 February 2005).

⁷⁵² Advertisement in: Heimann, 40s, 738.

The second advertisement's text poses several questions: "When ... will the thundering battlefields suddenly become silent? When ... will the dazed captives be led from the prison camps? When ... will mothers see their sons again, wives greet their husbands, happy crowds throng the streets, cheering and singing? When?" Similarly, the importance of the war effort at home by civilian individuals is stressed. "It depends on *you*. Fighting will win the war ... but no army can win a total war without total support from the folks back home. You can help by buying war stamps and bonds ... by conserving food ... and gasoline ... and rubber."⁷⁵³ The former ad illustrates its point by a color image of a crucifix-form wooden grave marker that resembles a dead German soldier raising his arm to greet Hitler, the latter shows the German and Japanese flags and a sword and mace in a trashcan.

Another category highlights the products built in America with the intention of improving a company's image or indirectly advertising for related, civilian products. This widespread type of advertising is used to promote such diverse products as Scotch Tape⁷⁵⁴, oil⁷⁵⁵, electronics⁷⁵⁶, radar systems⁷⁵⁷, music machines⁷⁵⁸, and sprinkler systems⁷⁵⁹. Government programs such as war bonds, war loans, and stamps helped raise money for the war effort. The populace was encouraged to support these as much as possible through ads both by government-related institutions⁷⁶⁰ and companies that sponsored those messages or included them in their own promotions.⁷⁶¹

⁷⁵³ Advertisement in: Heimann, *40s* 738.

⁷⁵⁴ Advertised in 1943, in: Heimann, *40s* 759.

⁷⁵⁵ 1943 advertisement by the "Tide Water Associated Oil Company" in: Heimann, *40s* 683.

⁷⁵⁶ Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Co. "Where a speck of dust could hide a Nazi airdome," advertisement, *Time* 1942. (Ad Access. Item number: R0436. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess>> 22 February 2005).

⁷⁵⁷ Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Co. "What Goes On Under a Nazi Pilot's Cap?" advertisement, *Science* 1943. (Ad Access. Item number: R0453. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess>> 22 February 2005).

⁷⁵⁸ Wurlitzer "Yankee Doodle In Berlin!" Advertisement. *Sunday News* 1944. (Ad Access. Item number: W0204. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess>> 22 February 2005).

⁷⁵⁹ Already advertised in World War I. (Grinnell Automatic Sprinkler System, advertisement, *The Literary Digest* 12 October 1918: 63.)

⁷⁶⁰ E.g.: U.S. Treasury Dept. "Now For The Big Push!" advertisement, *Salt Lake Telegraph* 1944. (Ad Access. Item number: W0216. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess>> 22 February 2005).; U.S. Government Security Dealers Group. "Now Help Them Hit The Nazis From the Beaches to Berlin," advertisement, *New York Herald Tribune* 1944. (Ad Access. Item number: W0378. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess>> 22 February 2005).

⁷⁶¹ E.g.: James Hanley Co. "This Is No Time To Let Go!" advertisement, *Boston Evening Globe* 1945. (Ad Access. Item number: W0234. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess>> 22 February 2005).

Modern References

Today's image of the Germans rarely contains aspects of evilness and hostility. References to German atrocities during World War II, are, however still numerous. Predominantly movies, such as *The Marathon Man*, *Julia*, *Sophie's Choice*, *The Boys from Brazil*, *The Odessa Files*, and *Indiana Jones*, but also TV series, for example Hogan's Heroes, and other types of media and popular culture are still frequently based on this time period.⁷⁶² In several films the Nazis are used to criticize existing problems within America.⁷⁶³

In advertising as well, references to the evil Germans are occasionally used. Today's Germans, however, seem to be detached from the Germans of the past. After the war the image changed rapidly and was superseded by the Soviets: "So wurden aus den 'verabscheuten Deutschen' des Weltkriegs und der Konzentrationslager über die Zwischenstufe der 'bemitleideten Deutschen' der Care-Pakete die 'rehabilitierten Deutschen' der Luftbrücke."⁷⁶⁴ An ad for the Holocaust Museum accuses not Germany per se, but general inhumanity that is detached from nationality. Even though the images of concentration camp inmates might conjure old hostilities, the enemy is clearly stated: "Neo-nazis distinguish themselves with shaved heads and tattoos. Ironical, isn't it?" To avoid anti-German sentiments, "Richard von Weizacker, a renowned German writer" is quoted: "Whoever closes his eyes to the past becomes blind to the present. Whoever does not wish to remember inhumanity is susceptible to the dangers of new infection."⁷⁶⁵

A greater sensitivity can also be seen in an ad for an NBC show. It claims that "[t]wo barriers separate Germany today," that between the eastern and the western part of Germany, but also between father and son. A change of generations, between whom there is a "barrier of silence," is portrayed also as a changing Germany. The advertisement promises that the viewer "will listen to sons who are beginning to ask questions and to fathers who are at pains to answer them."⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶² As a matter of fact, these movies and shows themselves of course were advertised, thus perpetuating the images even to those that did or do not watch them. (See for example an ad for the movie "Battle of the Bulge" in: Heimann, 60s 568.)

⁷⁶³ Thomas Reuther, "Demokratie auf dem Prüfstand: Amerikanische Deutschlandbilder," *Die USA und Deutschland im Zeitalter des Kalten Krieges 1945-1990: Ein Handbuch. Vol 2*, ed. Detlev Junker (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 2001) 793.

⁷⁶⁴ List and Nolden 73. An exemplary advertisement of the truck company "White" can be found in: Heimann, 60s 276.

⁷⁶⁵ Advertisement in: Warren Berger, *Advertising Today* (New York: Phaidon Press, 2001) 319.

⁷⁶⁶ NBC, advertisement, *New York Times* 15 June 1962: 54.

The Nazis certainly are a formidable symbol of evil itself, and as an antipode they are often used to show the strength, support, and unity of the American people. The world wars were a time of uncertainty and tumult of which some ads remind the viewer. Goldman and Papson analyze such an advertising strategy:

Merrill Lynch created scenic reenactments of going off to World War I and coming back from World War II to inject itself at the core of American Patriotism. The WWI ad provides a narrative backdrop to signify not only how Americans can count on this firm during times of conflict and difficulty, but also to signify how America and Merrill Lynch have grown up together through the 20th century.⁷⁶⁷

In recent years, advertising for computer and video games has increased vastly, and as some content deals with World War II, these images are conveyed even to non-gamers. Sometimes the imagery is particularly disturbing, for instance in a commercial for the first-person shooting computer game “Medal of Honor” in which German machine gunners are seen from behind firing at the Americans storming the beaches of Normandy.⁷⁶⁸ Those war images, which minimize the human suffering, have entered popular culture.

Politics

Michael Janofsky writes in the *New York Times* that political controversies and advertising increasingly use Nazi imagery:

Since World War II, the murderous acts of Germany’s Third Reich have been generally held as a benchmark of atrocity and, as such, a wholly inappropriate comparison for almost anything else. But as hyperbole grows at alarming rates, obscuring political issues more and more, the civility of public dialogue has begun breaking down in the race for attention.⁷⁶⁹

⁷⁶⁷ Goldman and Papson 137-138.

⁷⁶⁸ EA Games “Medal of Honor Frontline - D-Day,” advertisement, 2002.

⁷⁶⁹ Michael Janofsky, “Increasingly, Political War of Words Is Fought With Nazi Imagery,” *New York Times* (Late Edition, East Coast) Oct 23, 1995: A12.

It is important to stress that no clear references to Germany but rather to totalitarianism in general are made. Germany, however, cannot be completely disconnected and is therefore discussed here. One example Janofsky notes is that of in a campaign for a sheriff's position, "Ken Barnett for a time criticized Mr. Cassell [the opponent] in a television commercial that showed Mr. Cassell's picture beside Hitler's and called Mr. Cassell's deputies 'goose-stepping Gestapo'." The two-minute commercial, which ran for nearly a week, also showed a scene from the film "Schindler's List" in which the commander of a concentration camp shoots an inmate in the back of the head for no reason."⁷⁷⁰ This phenomenon is not limited to regional advertising; also on a national and international level such references are not uncommon. The organization "MoveOn.org" hosted a competition for commercials that were meant to attack George Bush prior to the 2004 presidential elections. The winning spot was to be shown on national television. One spot posted on the website compared President Bush to Hitler, and was only removed after an outburst of resentment and anger from the press, the public, and various organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League. Although the commercial is no longer available for study, the Republican Party website describes it as follows:

Script 1:

GRAPHIC: Nazi Flags In A Parade

GRAPHIC: Hitler **HITLER:** (Speaking In German)

CHYRON: A NATION WARPED BY LIES

GRAPHIC: German Troops Marching

GRAPHIC: Hitler In Car In Parade

GRAPHIC: German Troops Marching

CHYRON: LIES FUEL FEAR

GRAPHIC: German Tanks

CHYRON: FEAR FUELS AGGRESSION

GRAPHIC: German Artillery Firing

GRAPHIC: German Planes Dropping Bombs

GRAPHIC: German Tanks Firing

CHYRON: INVASION

⁷⁷⁰ Janofsky A12.

GRAPHIC: German Tanks Rolling Down Street

CHYRON: OCCUPATION

GRAPHIC: Hitler With Hand Raised

BACKGROUND: Sig Heil! Sig Heil!

CHYRON: WHAT WERE WAR CRIMES IN 1945

GRAPHIC: President Bush With Hand Raised At Inauguration

BACKGROUND: Sig Heil! Sig Heil!

CHYRON: IS FOREIGN POLICY IN 2003

CHYRON: SPONSORED BY MOVEON.ORG

Script 2:

GRAPHIC: Pictures Of Hitler

HITLER: (Speaking In German)

CHYRON: We have taken new measures to protect our homeland,

GRAPHIC: Pictures Of Hitler

HITLER: (Speaking In German)

CHYRON: I believe I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator,

GRAPHIC: Pictures Of Hitler

HITLER: (Speaking In German)

CHYRON: God told me to strike at al-Qaida and I struck them,

GRAPHIC: Pictures of President Bush

HITLER: (Speaking In German)

CHYRON: and then He instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did.

CHYRON: SOUND FAMILIAR?

BACKGROUND: Cheering German Crowd⁷⁷¹

The topic also reemerges when political action by Germany is inappropriate or too reminiscent of World War II. Titled “German Guns, Jewish Targets,” an advertisement against German weapons sales to Saudi Arabia in the 1980s exemplifies such usage.

⁷⁷¹ “MoveOn.org Should Apologize for Ads Comparing Bush to Hitler Second Ad Posted on MoveOn.org Web site Also Compares Bush to Hitler,” 20 April 2004. <<http://www.rnc.org/News/Read.aspx?ID=3764>>.

A generation after Hitler, German arms again imperil Jewish lives. The government in Bonn is planning a massive sale of warplanes, tanks, missiles and other weapons to Saudi Arabia, sworn enemy of Israel. [...] To the Jewish people, Germany carries a special responsibility, a legacy of the Nazi era. Selling military hardware to Saudi Arabia, which participated actively in all of the Arab wars against Israel, would make a mockery of Germany's obligations.

It advises Chancellor Kohl of Germany and President Reagan and Secretary Shultz that "Jews must never again be the targets of German weapons."⁷⁷²

Scientology also used references to the Holocaust and persecution based on religion in Germany during World War II in the *New York Times*. The ads compare the situation of the 30s and first half of the 40s with Germany's debates about denying Scientology religious status during the 90s. Titled "Practicing Religious Persecution," the first one shows the word "Germany" and a picture of German Federal Minister Claudia Nolte. Two similar stories are presented to the left of the photo, linking past and present persecution.

Germany, 1933: A little Jewish girl who had been called a pig for several days in succession refused to go to school anymore. Boys and girls who used to play with her, turned their backs on her. The teachers showed her frozen faces – they would lose their posts if they did not.

Germany, 1994: The two children of a Scientologist were banished by the rest of the school and a sign placed in front of the children's playground stating that Scientologists are not wanted.

More similarities are presented by contrasting Nazi quotes with quotes of German politicians during the 1990s, hinting at ostensible parallels. The answer to the question why German officials discriminate against Scientologists is that "[t]here is no legitimate reason, just as there

⁷⁷² Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, advertisement, *New York Times* 5 March 1984: B10.

was none for the persecution of the Jews. And, let us not forget, Germany has no tradition of religious freedom.”⁷⁷³

Other advertisements of the “International Association of Scientologists” are designed in the same fashion. One titled “Denigrate...Then Exterminate,” describes “German Hate Propaganda – 1994.” Discussing informational materials by the “Junge Union” which contain anti-sect and anti-Scientology messages and a letter sent to Scientology Hamburg by a Neo-Nazi group called “Propaganda Ministry Berlin – SS State Protection Department,” the ad accuses an atmosphere of hate and discrimination and compares it to the Third Reich.⁷⁷⁴

Another Scientology advertisement accuses Germany of human rights violations in Germany, giving other specific examples: “For the first time since the end of the Hitler era it has become the focus of attention of international human rights groups decrying the surge of incidents of discrimination and violence against minorities and foreigners in Germany.” Even though it attests that “[t]he majority of the Germans detest these atrocities,” it also points out that “the facts show that the attitude of German officialdom tolerates and even encourages it.” This and the other ads are aimed to raise awareness of these issues and warns of a fall-back to intolerance of minority and religious groups: “We have exposed the rise of intolerance in Germany through advertisements in this newspaper because of the staggering evidence of discrimination and violence against minorities, including German Scientologists – law-abiding, industrious and peaceful citizens.”⁷⁷⁵

Germany is clearly presented as one that has not learned from history and that still nurtures discrimination, prejudice, and injustice. These ads reveal that connections to the past have not been forgotten and are still an important component of Germany’s image even decades after the end of World War II and the fall of the Third Reich. Referring to the Nazi past is a powerful tool in the hands of advertisers, as it triggers very emotional responses.

Another niche in advertising in which references to the Nazi past are displayed is the book industry. Even before the outbreak of the war⁷⁷⁶ and during it⁷⁷⁷, images and messages

⁷⁷³ International Association of Scientologists, advertisement, *New York Times* 22 November 1996: A15.

⁷⁷⁴ International Association of Scientologists, advertisement, *New York Times* 19 December 1994: A15.

⁷⁷⁵ International Association of Scientologists, advertisement, *New York Times* 24 October 1994: A13.

⁷⁷⁶ E.g.: “The story of the awakening of a Nazi”: “Blood and Tears.” The ad indicates the discrimination and horrors of the regime: “If you are interested in behind-the-scenes Germany read this novel of a Hitler enthusiast who, in finding his idol with feet of clay, discovers what an ‘enemy’ of Hitler faces.” (D. Appleton-Century Company, advertisement, *New York Times* 22 July 1934: BR15.)

were conveyed through book publishers and their advertisements. Also subsequent marketing uses this powerful topic to sell books. A 1965 ad for religious books shows Stalin, Hitler, and Mao Tse-tung and explains “[w]hy the Godless hate these books”: “Great Books contain the great truths that are fatal to dictators, vital to religious men and women everywhere.”⁷⁷⁸ These and other books are presented as an important part in a pluralistic, democratic society, as they contain content and opinions that are suppressed by oppressive regimes. This statement also indirectly refers to book burnings that are a common technique of authoritarian rulers, and is thus appealing to the consumer because he or she values and appreciates the right to purchase and buy these books.

A popular fiction and non-fiction genre often advertised is that of untold secrets and behind-the-scenes revelations.⁷⁷⁹ The fascination of the topic stems from a desire to learn about the unknown, an interest in history, and a certain attraction to frightening topics much the same way that people are interested in horror stories; the alleged reality of the depicted material only increases the consumer’s interest. Marketers frequently show swastikas and use ominous language to increase the appeal and thus sales.

While many of these books are removed from post-war Germany, occasionally they refer to the possibility of present-day Germany’s return to an authoritarian regime. For instance the book “Return of the Swastika?” fires up such fears: “Recent opinion polls ... show that a whole new generation of Germans sees the Nazis as figures of romance.”⁷⁸⁰

The problematic side of these advertisements is that they influence public opinion by reaching even those who do not read those books because they get pieces of information by looking at these attention-getting messages. The ominous titles and the deliberately frightening and independently uncommented assumptions and suggestions not only keep the memory of the

⁷⁷⁷ For example one ad for “Twilight in Germany” shows a death squad and reports of the fight between the Nazis and Germany’s citizens. “Inside Germany today Nazism is fighting an unbeatable foe – the creeping terror that daily tightens its grip on the minds of the German people, the terror that foreshadows internal collapse.” The ad, which also promotes conserving resources (“paper packs a war punch! Conserve it! Salvage it!”), depicts the German people not only as the enemy but also as a victim of the regime’s oppressive rule. (Collier’s, advertisement, *New York Times* 1 September 1944: 26.)

⁷⁷⁸ Heimann, 60s 478.

⁷⁷⁹ For example: “The Night of Long Knives” (Harper & Row, advertisement, *New York Times* 9 July 1972: BR10.), “Hitler’s Secret Book” (Doubleday Book Shops, advertisement, *New York Times* 9 February 1962: 13.) and “The Man with the Miraculous Hands” about Heinrich Himmler (Farrar, Strauss & Cudahy, advertisement, *New York Times* 26 February 1961: BR21.)

⁷⁸⁰ David McKay Company, advertisement, *New York Times* 2 February 1969: BR19.

horrors alive but also increase the negative picture of a Germany that has not learned from its past.

Apple's "1984" and Authoritarianism

One of the most famous commercials is Apple's *1984* advertisement shown at the 23rd Super Bowl in 1984, partly due to the fact that it was only aired that one time. Using an intertextual approach, the title *1984* instantly invokes the fear of totalitarian regimes because of George Orwell's well-known novel with the same title. In the beginning of the commercial the number is shown, followed by images of storm-trooper figures guarding monotonous inmates. Only one person, a blonde woman clad in red and white, is different. Ultimately, we see the inmates in front of a big TV screen, which the blonde woman destroys with a sledgehammer. The inmates are baffled, and a textual message informs the viewers that 1984 will be the year that a new computer will be introduced (The Macintosh).⁷⁸¹ The images presented are startling, shocking, and provocative. The commercial was in fact only shown once during the Super Bowl, but re-appeared often later in discussions and reports about advertising, and, more specifically, Apple. The message itself is not too difficult to understand, the more interesting question for this topic is why these pictures work, why they are chosen, and what part Nazi Germany may have to do with it.

Berger argues that the blonde represents the Macintosh and Apple and the guards represent IBM, Apple's larger competitor at the time (nowadays this opponent would be Microsoft, which has often been caricatured as the Big Brother that is watching/controlling us). It is evident that most people sympathize with the blonde woman⁷⁸², and therefore be more inclined toward Apple. "One acts not so much to gain pleasure (though that beautiful blonde attracts us) but to avert pain - Big Brother and the dystopian world (IBM) that he represents."⁷⁸³

This fear of oppression and totalitarianism is an important component of American society. "[N]umerous studies of political psychology show Americans to be still outstanding in their anti-authoritarianism, with no deep psychic need to submit themselves to higher political authority, and a continuing propensity to assert their rights to personal autonomy over public

⁷⁸¹ Apple Macintosh, advertisement, <<http://www.apple.com/hardware/ads/1984>> 1 January 2005. For a more detailed description of the advertisement see: Berger, *Manufacturing Desire* 43-56; Twitchell 184-193.

⁷⁸² Twitchell argues that because she is strong, athletic, independent and liberated "she is, in terms of the 1980s, empowerment and freedom." (Twitchell 190.)

⁷⁸³ Berger, *Manufacturing Desire* 55.

control.”⁷⁸⁴ The concepts self-reliance and independence constitute an antipode to authoritarianism, which makes images of Nazis or other authoritarian regimes a powerful tool to convey these concepts.

While the storm troopers invoke this fear, it is not the overt, physical oppression of the guards but rather the omnipotent media that threatens, represented by the large TV screen that casts a spell on the inmates. The screen is filled by a male face, telling the viewers: “We are one people, with one will, one resolve, one cause...” The propaganda lingo is very well known, not only, but in large parts through Nazi party rallies. When the screen bursts, the inmates do not jubilate or even show any emotion but stare in disbelief. They do not know what to do or think without this screen. So there are two forces of oppression, a more physical one on the one hand, and propaganda on the other. Whatever an individual may see in the ad, fear is invoked on various levels: loss of control, individuality, freedom, power, free will, and pursuit of happiness. In short, loss of essential American values and achievements.

The role of the blonde is that of the underdog, also an important phenomenon found throughout the American popular culture. The blonde woman represents willpower, initiative, righteousness, courage, and bravery. She may be weaker (this can be argued for or against as a gender stereotype) but she prevails and ultimately succeeds.

Of course there is irony in this commercial: a victory over the power of the media is itself depicted at the Super Bowl, a media spectacle that draws the majority of Americans in front of their TV screens, and during which the airtime of advertisements is the most expensive. The irony is heightened that we escape some kind of control by purchasing a computer from another corporation, even though it is smaller than the other one. Furthermore, buying a computer seems to be a doubtful way to escape control of technology. Thirdly, one of the messages is to escape persuasion and manipulation. A commercial, though, is a form of persuasion and in some cases manipulation itself.

Using only certain images without being specific is one of the powerful devices used in this advertisement. The not clearly defined pictures invoke fears that already exist in us, and individuals will fill these vague images with more defined ones of their own. Depicting actualities such as German SS-squadrons would undermine this technique because it would not

⁷⁸⁴ Alex Inkeles, “National Character: A Key to Understanding the USA,” *Understanding the USA: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Peter Funke (Tübingen: Narr, 1989) 163.

leave room for our own personal imagery.⁷⁸⁵ That is, in my opinion, one reason why there are comparatively few specific references to the Nazis in post-World War II advertising.

5.4 The German Business Rival

Nationality plays an important role when companies are perceived to be chief competitors in a certain field of business. Especially to counter the country-of-origin effect, rivalries between companies often depict nationality rather than individual businesses. With this type of advertising, a competitor justifies or asserts its products despite the country-of-origin advantage of the competitors, which is implicitly acknowledged. While this was often part of wartime advertising,⁷⁸⁶ it has increased during the post-war years as more and more imports were shipped to the United States.

Two spots by the Japanese luxury car brand Lexus address the effects its cars' advantages have on German carmakers. The setting indicated in the first spot, "Bavaria GERMANY," suggests the carmaker BMW. In a large, filled convention hall hinted at as the "[Kon]ferenzzentrum Bayern," the speaker praises and acknowledges the Japanese achievements in a clearly German accent: "Ladies and Gentlemen, the offensive of technology has begun. Observe: laser-guided, adaptive cruise control, a rearview camera, suspension that lowers at speed, headlights that turn to illuminate your path and curves..." At this point, a man older than the speaker who seems to be the head of the company or division harshly interrupts the presenter in German: "genug!" Then he adds the translation in a gentler tone ("enough"), and asks after a pause of silence: "so, what do we do now?"⁷⁸⁷ The atmosphere, which is underlined by the use of black in the commercial, conveys the dismal outlook of the company in recognition of the ostensibly superior products of the rival.

A second commercial, which suggests Mercedes with the line "Stuttgart GERMANY," presents a man who is probably also in his 60s answering the phone in his office. The nationality

⁷⁸⁵ "[T]he relative obliqueness of the Macintosh ad's visual syntax can be considered doubly advantageous. On one hand, it enabled the ad to suggest a message that could not be expressed more openly; on the other hand, by stimulating viewers and media commentators to spend more time thinking and talking about the ad, the ad's obliqueness may have increased the likelihood that the audience would arrive at the implied message on its own - and that this message would make more of an impression." (Messaris 167.)

⁷⁸⁶ "Kodak optical systems for fire control destroy the legend of 'German supremacy in lens making' (Kodak 1944) in: Heimann, 40s 706.

⁷⁸⁷ Lexus RX 330 "Bavaria, Germany," advertisement, 2003.

is once again emphasized by the accent and a few German words: “Heinrich! Ja...” Slightly alarmed, he responds to the caller that he will “be right there.” In the following sequence he walks along long, dark, black and white, sterile hallway, looking into various rooms in which the engineers assert the dismal outlook he and the company are apparently facing. In the first room he sees engineers examining the new Lexus, who state, also in a German accent: “they have left little room for compromise.” The second two, who due to their sunglasses conjure images of mad or evil scientists, admire technical specifications.⁷⁸⁸ Aggravating the atmosphere, the engineer in the third room only looks at his superior and then down in shame.

In the last scene, a young female secretary tells the man ominously that “they’re waiting for you” as he walks toward two doors. During the spot, sad music underlines the tristesse and hopelessness of the man, who stands for the company at large. The dismal outlook culminates in his apparently frightening walk ahead towards and through the doors, where he probably faces the board of directors or his superiors.⁷⁸⁹

Both ads depict German companies, and through this also give insight into negative, dull German cultural patterns. The world these German employees work in is dark, colorless, and devoid of cheerfulness. Emphasizing gender stereotypes, all employees are middle-aged or older men, with the notable exception of the secretary and the woman next to the superior in the first spot. The negative stereotypes and images convey a more traditional Germany, favoring strict hierarchies and the absence of gentleness and cheerfulness reminiscent of the dark side of German culture. Similarly, the previously discussed “Überauto” print advertisement depicts a Germany in defeat by hinting at stereotypically negative aspects of the Germans’ tendency to perfection.⁷⁹⁰ A recent Subaru ad resembles a matching exercise, with drawn lines linking the following pairs:

“faster than” with “Porsche Boxster[;] BMW 330XI[;] Audi A4 Quattro”

“corners better than” with “BMW 530I[;] Audi TT Quattro”

“0-60 MPH” with “5.8 seconds”

⁷⁸⁸ The first states: “Headlights that turn on curves” and the second answers “impressive.”

⁷⁸⁹ Lexus RX “Stuttgart, Germany,” advertisement, 2004.

⁷⁹⁰ Lexus, advertisement, <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/handouts/adverts/ueber/ueberauto.html>> 9 November 2004.

“Germany” with “in mourning”⁷⁹¹

The depiction shows the high level of national identification that cars constitute. It has been shown that automobiles are an important part of people’s identity in Western cultures, which explains why such attack ads also incorporate such national imagery.

Manganaro discusses a commercial in which Chrysler’s luxury car LeBaron (the name itself suggests that it is marketed towards buyers of foreign cars) is compared to those of Japanese and German origin. At first the yen burns, with soft music in the background. The average price of a Japanese luxury car is displayed, followed by the Deutsche Mark, which also burns. Once again, the average price for a German luxury car is displayed. Then the voice-over remarks that the LeBaron is much cheaper: “Introducing luxury for people who don’t have money to burn.” Manganaro stresses the xenophobic nature in ads like this Chrysler spot,⁷⁹² which I believe is inherent in all the advertisements discussed in this section.

Volkswagen’s Critique of Mainstream America

German companies rarely deride or ridicule companies of other nationalities⁷⁹³ or even their American competitors. To stress its straightforward sales techniques, Volkswagen for instance attacks widespread American marketing approaches: big signs and large promises. An exemplary ad of the year 1964 shows a blue VW Beetle with many differently colored flags and signs on it, stating “Save-um!”, “Come in for pow-wow!” and “Heap big trading bee!” Underneath this overlaid car Volkswagen’s opinion is displayed: “Ugh.”:

This is an awful picture of a Volkswagen. It’s just not us. We don’t go in much for trading bees or sales jamborees or assorted powwows. Maybe it’s because we don’t quite understand the system. We’ve never figured out why they run clearance sales on brand new cars. If there are cars left over every year, why make so many in the first place? And how come the price goes down, even though the cars are still brand new? How does the

⁷⁹¹ Subaru, advertisement, *Newsweek* 5 July 2004: 32-33. A television advertisement by the same company delivers the same message: “somewhere in Germany an engineer weeps.” (Subaru, advertisement, *CNN* 31 August 2004.)

⁷⁹² Manganaro 22. See also: Chevrolet Celebrity Eurosport “High Priced German Roadcar,” advertisement, 1987. (The car “has many of the same features of the high-priced German roadcars. Except one: their high price.”), and: GMC Yukon “Not German, Not Japanese,” advertisement, 2004.

⁷⁹³ See above: Savan 233-234.

poor guy who bought one last week feel about this week's prices? Imagine what a problem it must be to keep enough parts on hand when they're always changing. And for the mechanic to keep track of what he's doing. It's all very confusing. Either we're way behind the times. Or way ahead.⁷⁹⁴

Picking up on sentiments prevalent in the 60s, a 1969 ad derides another aspect of American life: suburbia. In a typical street in with neat, clean, rows of houses, the ad shows red and white VW Station Wagons parked in front of each:

If the world looked like this, and you wanted to buy a car that sticks out a little, you probably wouldn't buy a Volkswagen Station Wagon. But in case you haven't noticed, the world doesn't look like. [sic]

So if you've wanted to buy a car that sticks out a little, you just know what to do.⁷⁹⁵

In the same fashion, a TV spot critiques and caricatures the extraordinary changes in American car design by showing them in simple black and white drawings:

They get longer – and shorter; and longer again; one year fronts look like backs, then backs look like fronts; you remember fins, don't you? And chrome everywhere; here, and here, and here; one-toned cars were out; three tones – they were the thing; we still don't know about headlights: are two enough? Four? Six? Eight? And then, there is the Volkswagen, homely as ever. But everything in it keeps changing. The brakes, the clutch, the transmission; the engine has been improved hundreds of times. Some cars keep changing and stay the same. But Volkswagen stays the same and keeps changing.⁷⁹⁶

Warlaumont sees a personification of social values in such Volkswagen advertising.

⁷⁹⁴ Advertisement in: Heimann, *60s* 215.

⁷⁹⁵ Advertisement in: Heimann, *60s* 261.

⁷⁹⁶ Volkswagen, advertisement, *Automobile Advertising of the 60's*. New York: London International Advertising Awards. Video Recording, 1992.

At a time when Americans were in love with the streamlined, tail-finned, ultra-long American automobile powered by rocket engines, dynaflo, and the ultimate in horsepower, the Volkswagen – slow, small, and ugly – came on the scene to personify social values. The ads captured this change, positioning the Volkswagen as an alternative to large American cars and as a way to simplify life.⁷⁹⁷

The addressee of these two advertisements is clearly not the mainstream customer, but someone who tries to take a stand against the established mainstream culture. It appeals to a niche market, which drew its customers mainly from the younger, rebelling generation and which tended to be disillusioned and politically more liberal.

5.5 Germans as Objects of Ridicule

Ridiculing whole ethnic or national groups, including the Germans⁷⁹⁸, has been a part of American culture since the first groups of immigrants arrived. It is widespread throughout the world, and besides the negative implications of the phenomenon, it can also function as an outlet for intergroup tensions and help people that have completely different backgrounds, cultures, and languages accept each other.

Derision of ethnic groups in America was already common in early advertising. English and American trade cards often depicted Germans as rotund and generally male, often with beer steins and a memorable accent.⁷⁹⁹

World War I brought about a number of ethnophaulisms, as “[r]enaming became a popular pastime: sauerkraut became ‘liberty cabbage,’ hamburgers became ‘liberty sandwiches,’ German measles became ‘liberty measles,’ and of course dachshunds became ‘liberty pups.’”⁸⁰⁰

⁷⁹⁷ Warlaumont 184.

⁷⁹⁸ For jokes involving Germans and their characteristics see also chapter 8 “Slurs International: Folk Comparisons of Ethnicity and National Character” in: Dundes 96-114.

⁷⁹⁹ E.g.: Trade Card. <<http://www.tradecards.com/scrapbook/ethnic/014.17.html>> 26 October 2004. See also the discussion of trade cards in chapter 1.1 for further details on parodies of Germans.

⁸⁰⁰ Leab 163. Such renaming is still sometimes used during times of animosity, for instance replacing “French fries” by “freedom fries” before and during the Iraq War of 2003. Picking up on public sentiment against the anti-war stance of France (and Germany, too, by the way), this clever marketing trick was televised nationally on the news and entered as a term into popular culture much the same way the term “Krauts” did.

Minimizing the enemy was another technique of depicting the enemy as weak and harmless.⁸⁰¹ This extended even into post-war years⁸⁰², as the German enemy turned into a friend and ally and the Nazis entered popular entertainment culture. The TV series *Hogan's Heroes*, which is often cited by researchers of German stereotypes, was even the background for a few commercials. In a Federal Express spot two employees discuss the show: “‘Schultz never knew there were tunnels?’ ‘He didn’t wanna know.’ ‘He knew nothing.’”⁸⁰³ The last phrase is pronounced with the thick accent of the German character of the series. Kiley reports another intertextual reference:

In one memorable TV spot, Deutsch’s [advertising company] creative team produced an ad that seemed like the voice-over was talking about a BMW when it was really a Pontiac Bonneville. The voice-over was German actor Werner Klemperer who had played Nazi Colonel Klink in the TV series *Hogan's Heroes*.⁸⁰⁴

As I have already alluded to above, poking fun at the Germans is often found in conjunction with advertisements for beer. To illustrate which sides of Germanness are ridiculed, a number of commercials by Beck’s, Löwenbräu and Miller are discussed here. The Beck’s spots of 1999 each expose a stereotypical German weakness in order to heighten their brewing skills and history in contrast. All spots end in an exaggerated voice-over exclaiming that “Germans don’t do [comedy/laid back/romance]. They do beer. Beck’s: The best of what Germans do best.” Even though the producer of the product is German, the ridiculing is thought to increase the general image of the largest beer importer from Germany.

Two similar commercials deal with the stereotypical lack of humor, both featuring a German stand-up comedian dressed in a suit and tie. He walks on stage at a club and delivers his one-liners: “Good evening, ladies and germs. I just flew in from Berlin, and boy, are my arms tired”⁸⁰⁵ and “Good evening, ladies and germs. How many engineers does it take to change a

⁸⁰¹ E.g.: War Bonds “Christmas Sock of 1943,” advertisement, *Silver Screen* 1943 (*Ad Access*. Item number: W0171. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess>> 22 February 2005).

⁸⁰² E.g.: Asbestos advertisement of 1948 in: Heimann, *40s*: 508.

⁸⁰³ Federal Express “Hogan’s Heroes,” advertisement, 2001.

⁸⁰⁴ David Kiley, *Getting The Bugs Out: The Rise, Fall, and Comeback of Volkswagen in America* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002) 185.

⁸⁰⁵ Beck’s “Comedy/Berlin,” advertisement, 1999.

lightbulb? None, if manufactured correctly.”⁸⁰⁶ After an embarrassing silence, one audience member manages applause. In both ads the comedian adds: “Thank you, I’ll be here all the week.”⁸⁰⁷ While displaying lack of humor is the obvious goal, the second joke is also of further interest. It reduces Germany into its main advertising components, as is common in the tradition of the “lightbulb jokes”⁸⁰⁸: engineering perfection and beer.

A third spot features a theater scene. The actress, standing on a large white cube, exclaims in German: “Romeo, oh Romeo, warum denn, Romeo? Verleumde deinen Vater, deinen Namen, willst du das nicht? Schwör dich zu meinem Liebsten.”⁸⁰⁹ Her gestures and mimic are very clumsy, monotonous, and unpassionate, and her voice and intonation reveal a lack of emotion and romance. The addressee, Romeo, does not talk at all. He is a mime, who hides behind a black ball on stage and who awkwardly puts his hands on his chest, simulating his feelings and his broken heart. The stage is in black and white, devoid of color, which emphasizes the lack of the performance’s emotion in this scene. This avant-garde, “artsy” theater setting ridicules Germany’s changing and progressive art scene. Lack of romance is a stereotype that the Germans share with other north European nations, such as England or the Scandinavian countries. What makes this setting so German is the addition of language, clumsiness, and a cultural setting that is controversial and difficult to understand.

The fourth and last Beck’s commercial discussed here draws its imagery from similar sources. A man is seen in a sterile room decorated in modern high-tech style. He inserts a CD that states “Das <Kalm>” [sic] into a CD player and follows the audio instructions: “Assume the comfortable position. Relaxation is achieved through extreme focus. Commence relaxation: Now!”⁸¹⁰ While this soft-spoken speech is enhanced by soothing music, the last imperative (“Now!”) is pronounced harshly and authoritatively, interrupting the background music.

The tools used here are again a sterile, colorless, unemotional, black and white setting and playing with language and accents.⁸¹¹ More important than the apparently non-existing

⁸⁰⁶ Beck’s “Comedy,” advertisement, 1999.

⁸⁰⁷ The definite article resembles a direct translation from German, whereas in the correct phrase the article would be omitted (“all week”). The small mistake adds to the character’s awkwardness.

⁸⁰⁸ For these “lightbulb jokes” and similar ethnic and national jokes, see: Dundes. (Chapter 8 “Slurs International: Folk Comparisons of Ethnicity and National Character”: 96-114.)

⁸⁰⁹ Beck’s “Romance,” advertisement, 1999.

⁸¹⁰ Beck’s “Laid Back,” advertisement, 1999.

⁸¹¹ For example the use of German articles (“das”), the changing of “c” to “k” and using English words as foreign words (“Kalm”), the inappropriate use of the direct article in English (“assume the comfortable position”), awkward, non-colloquial words (“commence”) and almost any pronunciation difficult for German speakers.

ability of Germans to relax is, in my opinion, the authoritarian message linked to the Germans: they have to be told what to do, even when they have to relax. The means here are not a totalitarian ruler but technology and the media, which can impose similar restrictions and dictate as the “1984” spot has shown.

The campaign was dropped after initial reactions were not favorable. Apparently not hitting the right tone and exaggerating stereotypes too much led to its failure. Van Munching explains the unpopularity by the spots’ silliness: “Meant to be a winking agreement that maybe Germans aren’t known for their sense of humor or their ability to relax, the campaign was undone by an over-the-top voiceover [...] and became an impenetrable Hans-and-Frans [sic] skit.”⁸¹² In an interview, the Beck’s executive John Lennon explains that it did not aim at target consumer groups of the product:

There was a lot of negative [sic] in the former campaign, which was a little offensive. We have a lot of German Americans in this country, especially avid Beck’s drinkers in the Midwest, who found [the] campaign did not ring true with them. That humor was very sophisticated and highbrow...⁸¹³

Khermouch, however claims, that the “striking, expressionistic ‘best of what Germans do best’ campaign” was “admired even by rival marketers.”⁸¹⁴ Even though the campaign was not economically successful, it reveals a cultural impression about stereotypes of Germans, but also a certain resentment of such oversimplifications. The light beer campaign that followed softened the approach and integrated more favorable sides of Germans into its commercials.⁸¹⁵

In a similar fashion, the German brewer Löwenbräu took a spin on the stereotype of older, folkloristic southern Germans in a print campaign of the late 90s. Three ads depict the above-mentioned lack of romantic tact and instinct combined with an even greater appreciation of beer. While all the pictures are black and white, the text and the company’s logo are not. The

⁸¹² Philip Van Munching, “The Devil’s Adman,” *Brandweek* 25 September 2000: 90. A similar reference to those skits is made in a spot depicting a live cooking show (“Turn up the heat with Hanz [sic]”) reminiscent of the Hans and Franz characters. The presenter’s German accent, use of the word “Ja” and grammatical mistakes, his feminine gestures and behavior, his silly jokes, and his mistakes poke fun at this character. (Dupont Teflon “Hans,” advertisement, 2003.) Hans and Franz are characters from the comedy show *Saturday Night Live*.

⁸¹³ Beirne 11.

⁸¹⁴ Gerry Khermouch, “Beck’s Looks To Energize Marketing,” *Brandweek* 17 July 2000: 5.

⁸¹⁵ See previous chapters.

message next to an image of two older men holding large steins of beer and an older woman in the middle states: “We share everything at Oktoberfest, except our Lowenbrau.”⁸¹⁶ The other ad shows a married couple with the statement “My wife won’t talk to me. That’s OK my Lowenbrau will.”⁸¹⁷, and the third depicts a rotund man with the phrase “I like my Lowenbrau like my women. Big and easy to pick up.”⁸¹⁸ One advertisement of the same campaign depicts the Germans’ connoisseurship of beer and awkward sense of humor, as an even larger Bavarian male is presented next to the line “It only comes in bottles, cause cans are for tuna.”⁸¹⁹ This series of advertisements again emphasizes a dominant role of males in German society and an objectification of women.

The GDR has played almost no role in advertising. One exceptional 1980s TV commercial for “Miller Lite” beer, however, depicts both East German and Soviet stereotypes, as not only the initial text blended in indicates: “‘Helga’ Piscopo Ex-East German Swimmer.” Three women, who are played by men wearing wigs and unappealing dresses, stand at a bar counter and talk into the camera. It is obvious that the East German female swimmers are ridiculed here. The man in the middle, who is said “Helga Piscopo,” talks with a heavy German accent:

Well I used to compete for girls’ swim team of East Germany; my comrades and I always loved to come to America; we love the stylish clothes and late-night TV; but most of all we love the Miller Lite; and it’s truly superior beer, not only tasting great but also less filling, which is very important to comrades and I so to keep the girlish figure.⁸²⁰

⁸¹⁶ Löwenbräu, advertisement, (*Lürzer’s Archive Online Services*. Reference number: [5.9733]. <<http://www.luerzersarchive.net>> 12 January 2005).

⁸¹⁷ Löwenbräu, advertisement, (*Lürzer’s Archive Online Services*. Reference number: [5.9734]. <<http://www.luerzersarchive.net>> 12 January 2005).

⁸¹⁸ Löwenbräu, advertisement, (*Lürzer’s Archive Online Services*. Reference number: [5.9734]. <<http://www.luerzersarchive.net>> 12 January 2005). This advertisement differs from the one quoted in the previous footnote, even though it shares the same reference number, which are not unique in Lürzer’s Archive.

⁸¹⁹ Löwenbräu, advertisement, (*Lürzer’s Archive Online Services*. Reference number: [5.9733]. <<http://www.luerzersarchive.net>> 12 January 2005). This advertisement differs from the one quoted in the previous footnote, even though it shares the same reference number, which are not unique in Lürzer’s Archive.

⁸²⁰ Miller, advertisement, *Beer Advertising of the 80s*, New York: London International Advertising Awards, Video Recording, 1990-99.

Each statement is confirmed by the others shouting “Ja.” As the bartender comes by with more beers, Piscopo yells: “yeah, cute, huh? Ja! Ja!” The scene culminates in Piscopo lighting a cigar and everyone laughing obnoxiously.

The three “East German swimmers” are clearly men, as they are muscular, have hair on their chest, and deep, loud voices. Female athletes from Soviet countries, especially the GDR, who allegedly took performance-enhancing drugs frequently and thus brought about an imbalance of hormonal levels, are ridiculed here. These practices often resulted in an inability to bear children, physiological and psychological problems, and most notoriously in deeper voices and a more muscular physique.

Many other common stereotypes are object of derision, from the Germans’ language and accent and their love of beer to their obnoxious, yet self-confident behavior. While the image of the ugly German is presented quite literally, so is their alleged love for America.

5.6 Conclusion

The extraordinary relationship of Western Germany and the United States that quickly followed World War II is also reflected in American – and in fact German – advertising. From the first big boost of German popularity during the Berlin airlift, a popular advertising motif⁸²¹, German-American friendship has prospered and been used, if rather rarely, in American advertising as well. The advertisements discussed in this chapter reveal that they generally seek to portray shared characteristics and values, from a love of cars and nature to a common interest in prosperity and production.

In the previous chapter another type of friendship, that of American tourists and their German hosts, has been discussed. The overall message is that Americans are particularly

⁸²¹ Praising GCA radar landing systems, one advertisement for example refers to the “2295 blind landings on GCA at Tempelhof.” It shows three German children at the Tempelhof Airdome, watching the Americans deliver much needed supplies. (Gilfillan “Operation Christmas,” advertisement, *Time* 3 January 1949. (*Ad Access*. Item number: R0488. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess>> 22 February 2005). Another ad uses the success in Berlin to promote its air freight services in America. (American Airlines, Inc. “‘Berlin Airlift’ in Your Own Home Town!” advertisement, *Saturday Evening Post* 1949. (*Ad Access*. Item number: T1781. <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess>> 22 February 2005).)

welcome in Germany.⁸²² Travel ads also play with the little differences and similarities that make German-American relations interesting, as this print advertisement exemplifies:

We are hefty barmaids who can carry up to 16 steins of beer at a time and we are salesgirls who ought to be in Hollywood. Some of us speak dialects few of us can understand, and many of us speak English that is as American as apple strudel. We're patient, polite people with some of the wildest night life in Europe and some very majestic opera. We live in cities that haven't changed since the Middle Ages and in cities that weren't there 20 years ago. And we have mountains and forests and villages that have been there forever.⁸²³

Certainly the combination of sameness and otherness is the aim of these ads. While something different and desired is presented, showing close ties to the United States always ensures that the presented image is not too exotic or alienating.

The image of the Germans has always been an ambiguous one. Interactions between America and Germany have spawned such negative representations as the infamous Hessian mercenaries, Prussian militarists, and the Nazis. All of these have had a powerful impact on the perception of the Germans as evil or ugly in America.

In advertising, there have been surges of such depictions during both world wars, but they quickly abated soon thereafter. During these wars, advertising campaigns were politically motivated and often contained imagery and texts that helped build up public resentment of the Germans and helped spark patriotic feelings and support for the war effort. The propagandistic content often displayed the Germans as monsters devoid of feeling who committed brutal war crimes, often resulting in increasing fears of a personal threat to Americans. On the other hand, the Germans in World War II advertising were also frequently depicted as victims of a totalitarian regime. Most ads, however, simply used the antagonism to show the advertisers' expertise in a certain field and their patriotic commitment.

As images of the Soviet Union replaced those of the Nazis as the enemy, favorable

⁸²² Titled "If you're a discerning traveler... Germany's the place to be!", one print ad states: "As an American in Germany you will feel wanted, and especially welcome. The people's warmth and friendliness make it that way [...]. Ask any American who's been there." (Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 15 June 1964: 26.)

⁸²³ German National Tourist Office/Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 26 November 1972: XX29.

images once again resurfaced and only rarely can such negative advertisements be found in subsequent decades. As the analyzed advertisements of movie, book, and computer game producers as well as the Church of Scientology exemplify, images of Germany's infamous past do reappear from time to time. The Germans are also ridiculed at times as robot-like engineers or emotionless bores who are known only for their beer. As did early depictions in trade cards, more recent advertisements play with long-ingrained stereotypes, thus revealing a certain level of otherness and resentment that has not completely vanished from perception of the Germans in America.

Conclusion

In this dissertation I have created a collage of the depictions of Germans and Germany in American advertising. The study led to a number of conclusions, some of which were surprising while others supported my initial assumptions.

While the number of ads connected to Germany is rather small in comparison to the total number of ads, it was surprising that I encountered such an abundance of material. The initial guess of dozens turned into hundreds of advertisements during the compilation and research period. There are most likely many more relevant advertisements, providing rich materials for future research on this topic. The topos of Germans and Germany has been used since the beginnings of advertising in the United States and I have encountered it still frequently in recent ads that were aired and printed during the writing process of this dissertation.

The types of products that Germans and Germany are commonly employed for in advertising met the expectations. The automobile, tourism, as well as the food and beverage (predominantly beer) industries, are the ones that most frequently employ German images. It is interesting that it is German companies themselves and their American subsidiaries that often use stereotypes that might be very simplifying if not offensive. Advertisers such as Beck's, Lufthansa, or Volkswagen were among those that most often used explicit references to Germany. The majority of German companies exporting goods to America, however, avoid any references to their country of origin. For big corporations such as Bayer, Krupp, or Siemens, a national label would counteract their international image. Brands such as Puma, Adidas, or T-Mobile do so because Germany does not represent modern lifestyle or cutting-edge technology.⁸²⁴ In the marketing world, Germany and the Germans are depicted by a limited number of established images and stereotypes, which add to the overall prestige of a product or a company. It is interesting to note that, with a few exceptions, many American companies with German roots such as Budweiser⁸²⁵ or Heinz⁸²⁶ do not show their heritage. This allowed and

⁸²⁴ Cf.: Rietig.

⁸²⁵ Adolphus-Busch, founder of Anheuser-Busch, "could have touted German culture and expertise in advertising his Budweiser beer. Instead, German references in Anheuser-Busch trade materials disappeared after 1890 (although they briefly reappeared again during Prohibition)." (Donna R. Gabaccia, "As American as Budweiser and Pickles? Nation-Building in American Food Industries," *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies*, eds. Philip Scranton and Warren Belasco (New York: Routledge, 2001) 181.)

allows these companies to not only be seen as genuinely American, one of their trademarks still today, but also to reach broad markets and grow considerably by inclusive rather than exclusive marketing techniques.

An important finding of this dissertation is the temporal distribution and changing depiction of Germans and Germany in American advertising. The two world wars mark important breaks also in advertising history. They brought about a barrage of politically charged propaganda that could not be found in previous or following time periods. I found that the post-war years were missing Germans and Germany almost completely, partly due to the lack of German imports as well as a political and social reorientation period. Starting in the sixties, German motifs began to be slowly re-introduced into American advertising culture and have since then grown to a fairly stable element since the 1980s. With the exception of the propaganda period, depictions have remained largely positive.

In this dissertation I showed that even though all these depictions are used to increase the market value of a product and increase its sales, they also perpetuate stereotypes and create new images of the Germans and their country in very powerful ways, perhaps more so than the news media or literature currently does. Advertising, Bogart writes, “is a pervasive, intrusive element of media content, fragmenting communication and purveying messages that go beyond direct persuasion on behalf of whatever it sells.”⁸²⁷

Rather than presenting empirical data, I am more concerned with the possible impact of such presented depictions of Germany and the Germans in this dissertation. Gast summarizes the image of the Germans and Germany as presented by advertising as follows:

So wird auch in der Werbung ein ambivalentes Bild der Deutschen und Deutschlands unterschwellig vermittelt: Gefährliche, intelligente Technologie, die unglaubliche Ingenieurleistungen erbringt, aber diese häufig unmoralisch einsetzt - und der gemütliche, behäbige Romantiker, der in mittelalterlichen Kleinstädten wohnt, gern Bier trinkt, usw.⁸²⁸

⁸²⁶ Gabaccia, *As American as Budweiser* 181.

⁸²⁷ Bogart 65.

⁸²⁸ Gast, *Das Deutschlandbild im amerikanischen Fernsehen* 262.

In my opinion this summary is somewhat exaggerated. It is true that the German image is a two-sided one, including the aggressive, cunning, often evil German and his romanticized, nostalgic opposite. But dangerous technology, which may be used for immoral purposes, is, in my view, not even sublimally conveyed. Such depictions were certainly common during wartime advertising, but quickly abated after the world wars ended. I do agree with Gast's analysis that technology is predominantly shown and that certain authoritarian themes can, if infrequently, be found. Totten argues a bit differently in that there is a clear negative image of the Germans, yet a completely positive notion of this does not exist:

Die Karikatur des bösen Deutschen kann mit wenigen Strichen das deutsche Problem von hervorstechenden menschlichen Eigenschaften ableiten. Den deutschen Idealtyp in fremden Augen gibt es dagegen in dieser Klarheit nicht. An seiner Stelle müssen wir mit einer deutschen Ideallandschaft vorliebnehmen.⁸²⁹

In my opinion this "Ideallandschaft" does, especially in advertising, include not only Germany but also the romanticized German. This is due to an intensive use of nostalgia in advertising in general and to the ethnic make-up of the American population. Americans claiming German heritage constitute the largest ethnic group in the United States:

Das von vielen Mitgliedern geprägte Brauchtum beschränkte sich aber meist auf *Steuben Day*-Paraden, Oktoberfeste, und das Schwärmen für 'typisch deutsche' Utensilien wie Lederhosen und Sauerkraut. Selten nahm sie die Form aktiver Auseinandersetzung mit den politischen und sozialen Verhältnissen in der Bundesrepublik an.⁸³⁰

I found that this trend is certainly reflected in advertising as well. This presentation of Germany allows for easy access to a simplified, romanticized German culture that, if it has ever existed at all, does not take into account a contemporary Germany.

⁸²⁹ Totten 204. Similarly, Koch-Hillebrecht notes that a well-defined, positive image is largely absent in the perception of the Germans: "Vom Image der 'Dichter und Denker' hingegen, das unserem Selbstbild so ungemein schmeichelt, ist in aller Welt nur wenig spürbar." (Koch-Hillebrecht 145.)

⁸³⁰ Reuther 788.

The bifurcated ideal image of the good Germans and the evil Nazis, that of the efficient, machine-like engineer and the jovial, rotund, non-threatening German that is so prevalent in the depiction of Germans in general,⁸³¹ can also be found throughout advertising. The negative aspect, however, is not used as often, as advertising generally functions better if more positive images are invoked.

I found that several stereotypes and traits commonly associated with the Germans were not depicted in American advertising. The German stereotype of worrying too much, contrary to the American sense of initiative, efficacy, and optimism, was absent from any of the ads that I analyzed. An explanation that I found most plausible is that this abstract concept is rather difficult to display and far too nuanced for marketing techniques. Interestingly, one of Germany's greatest passions, soccer, is also only rarely alluded to.⁸³² This may be due to the fact that soccer is perceived to not be a particularly German phenomenon, but rather an international, non-American sport, which can also be seen in the term 'American Football.' Only rarely are German sports stars such as Steffi Graf used to promote products. The 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany, however, brought about a large number of advertisements featuring Germans and Germany, which disappeared very quickly thereafter.

The addressees of advertising containing references to Germans and Germany come from all classes and groups of the American population. I do not support Koch-Hillebrecht's view of the German image as something appealing to only the lower and middle classes and not the upper classes.⁸³³ Most German cars are in the upper or luxury segment, and the pricier, imported German beers and international travel appeal rather to the affluent social strata.

While many stereotypes and images continue to be used in advertising, certain changes in representation can be seen. Condescending or negative imagery is declining as there is a greater cultural awareness and political correctness in American society. As such depictions tend to offend segments of the population, sales fall and thus such advertising is counterproductive. Advertisers do not want to create uneasy feelings about certain terms or controversial issues. "Within the bounds of its audience," O'Barr stresses, "advertising is deeply concerned with the appropriateness and even the morality of its representations. It takes care not to offend the

⁸³¹ This ambivalent view of the Germans reappears at times, for instance during the re-unification discussions. See: List and Nolden; Schmiese.

⁸³² An exception may be a print advertisement titled "Soccer made in Germany." (German Educational Television Network Ltd, advertisement, *New York Times* 5 September 1981: 15.)

⁸³³ "Im ganzen hat der deutsche Geist versäumt, die Oberschichten der Welt anzusprechen." (Koch-Hillebrecht 149.)

members of its audience, lest offense result in lost sales. For those defined as outside the market - and thus outside the audience - these considerations do not apply.”⁸³⁴ Thus the depiction of Germany and the Germans in advertising differs from their representation in other media, which do make references to the negative aspects of German life. More often than not, both the advertising and the non-advertising media image of Germany is distorted or even completely out of touch with reality:

The true picture of German culture differs substantially from that presented in the popular media where Germans are presented as either brutal or as jolly, overweight, and beer-guzzling. Equally enigmatic is post-World War II German Americans’ perception of their heritage as inseparable from certain icons and costumes, notably beer mugs, fast high-quality cars, sausage and sauerkraut – enlivened by the spirit of Bavarian folk music.⁸³⁵

I found that some stereotypes are actually challenged, ridiculed, or played with. In general though, the German image in advertising reveals a mixed and ambivalent, distorted view of Germany and its inhabitants. In my opinion, it is this ambivalence of the rustic versus the modern, the new versus the old, the seriousness versus the silliness of the Germans that constitutes the greatest appeal for American consumers. This contrast must not be seen as a conflict, but rather a romanticized, exotic, and nostalgic view that many consumers long for and which is perpetuated by advertising and the media in general. A Lufthansa travel ad exemplifies this appeal: “Germany is a world of treasures to explore; exuberant beergardens to intimate dining, cafes to castles, cosmopolitan cities to the glorious Alps.”⁸³⁶ “Without ever saying so explicitly,” Stewart writes, “the media of style offer to lift the viewer out of his or her life and place him or her in a utopian netherworld where there are no conflicts, no needs unmet; where the ordinary is – by its very nature – extraordinary.”⁸³⁷ Schneider remarks that “stereotypes have become less well defined and more positive over the past couple of decades,”⁸³⁸ and I found that advertising reflects that trend.

⁸³⁴ O’Barr 12.

⁸³⁵ Rippley 713-14.

⁸³⁶ Lufthansa, advertisement, *New York Times* 15 March 1987: 411.

⁸³⁷ Ewen, *All Consuming Images* 14.

⁸³⁸ Schneider 436.

In this dissertation I aimed at presenting the many different ways in which Germans and Germany were and still are presented in American advertising. It has been shown that even though some representations have changed over the years, many stereotypes have remained. It can be expected that with increasing globalization and internationalization, improving information technology, and bigger advertising budgets, depictions of the Germans and their country will continue to be employed but are likely to change over time. Advertising can be expected to be seen by heterogeneous groups of people with different cultural backgrounds, not restricted by national boundaries. But as the very core of the advertisements, the targeted consumer, changes, the advertising content itself will have to change.

Since we are in an era of global advertisers, global ad agencies, and global media, we might assume that we face a strong future of global advertising campaigns. To some extent, that is true. But with different cultures, languages, mores, demographics, and standards of living, the concept of global advertising is just that, a concept. Very few commercials can run worldwide and be equally effective and accepted without substantial changes.⁸³⁹

It remains to be seen how these changes might play out. In my opinion, advertising will continue to have a strong influence on the perception of other nationalities and its impact is likely to grow rather than decrease. The very nature of advertising, its brevity, conciseness, and intention, dictates the use of stereotypes and distorted images.

⁸³⁹ Cappo 93.

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