

Comments

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First of all, I would like to thank Professors Susan Smulyan, Fumiko Fujita, and Thomas Zeiler for presenting their illuminating papers. As scholars in the field have different concepts and ideas about what “cultural diplomacy” is all about, and what is academically important to explore, we have today an excellent opportunity and common ground to discuss critical issues involved. There are many in the audience today who have done individual or group projects related to American cultural diplomacy or public diplomacy, so let me start by giving brief comments on the papers and then lay out some basic questions and issues.

My first question is where cultural diplomacy starts and where cultural exports end being part of cultural diplomacy. In discussing the US government’s use of Hollywood films to teach democracy in Japan during the Occupation, the Smulyan paper tells us that it is a straightforward example of popular culture being ideological, a form of cultural diplomacy. The GHQ thought that collaborating with Hollywood would help in the reorientation of the Japanese after World War II, and in the process a government-supported, commercialized media system grew in the mid-20th century.

Professor Smulyan emphasizes the importance of looking at both the content of the films and the form of how they were brought into Japan and distributed. One of the examples is the film *His Butler’s Sister* (1943), which was released as “Haru no Jokyoku” (A Prelude to Spring) in Japan. Although it was one of the first Hollywood films to be released after the war, Deanna Durbin was already a big star in pre-war Japan with her enormous success with *One Hundred Men and a Girl* or “Orchestra no Shojo” (A girl in an orchestra) as its Japanese title in 1937. The two films are similar in being screwball musical comedies with a Horatio Alger twist where an innocent teenage girl achieves success with her good personal character and resourcefulness. But was there anything particularly useful in the 1943 film from the standpoint of the GHQ-SCAP in advancing their efforts in “reorienting” the Japanese? Was it the material abundance pictured in the film *His Butler’s Sister* that the Occupation officials thought would convince the Japanese of the merits of the capitalistic economy and a democratic society that supports it?

My point is whether the Deanna Durbin films from the pre-war era functioned, in their content, as part of cultural diplomacy, even without the direct involvement of the US government and Occupation forces. If a certain purely commercial, not government sponsored, cultural export helps create a favorable image of the country that produces and exports it, could we then say that it is advancing the purpose of cultural diplomacy?

While the Smulyan paper seems to point out that there was a collaborative relationship between the US government and Hollywood during the Occupation, the Fujita paper shows us

that some Americans in the USIS-Japan office already in the early 1950s, felt antagonistic toward Hollywood and the importation of such war films as *Thirty Minutes Over Tokyo*, but that all they could do was ask the American movie industry for self-restraint. Could we then say that Hollywood films undermined the purpose of cultural diplomacy after the MPEA (Motion Picture Exchange Association) of the CIE (Civil Information and Education Section) of the GHQ ceased to function as the gatekeeper of imported Hollywood movies? When Professor Smulyan talks about the murkiness and confusion on the part of the MPEA as to what belonged to reorientation films and what to harmless entertainment films, to what extent did they succeed in using the Hollywood films as a tool to democratize Japan?

Professor Fujita's paper gives us a way to categorize efforts in cultural diplomacy into covert operations and hard-core propaganda. Examples of covert operations she gives are USIS radio programs to be aired through NHK in the mid-1950s, which included news programs, drama, music and other entertainment including the broadcast of World Series baseball games. These programs were aired without mentioning the USIS name and affiliation. Anti-communism films that the USIS produced with Japanese production companies were also shown without being attributed to the USIS. If these films are considered as examples of straight propaganda, can we make any clear distinction between covert operations and hard-core propaganda, or is the distinction between "white" and "black" propaganda useful for understanding the workings of cultural diplomacy?

Another fascinating example of covert operation Professor Fujita gives us is the rush of American musical and dance artists and literary figures who visited Japan from 1955 onward. This rush of cultural exchange perhaps corresponds with the increase in the number of the USIS personnel in Asia, particularly Japan, both suggesting that Japan had increased its strategic importance as a target of US cultural diplomacy after the Korean War.

From an example of my own research, the American Studies seminar conducted between the University of Tokyo and Stanford University every year for the seven years between 1950 and 1956, to borrow Professor Smulyan's content/form argument, cannot be fully understood without considering the Cold War paradigm. The seminar was blessed with the enthusiasm of the US visiting scholars, ranging from the noted scholar of Puritanism, Perry Miller, historians C. Van Woodward and Henry Nash Smith, and the anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn. While those Japanese scholars and students who were actual part of the seminar tend to argue that the seminar was purely an intellectual exchange, or "one of the benign aspects of Pax Americana," the documents show that the visiting US scholars often had meetings with the GHQ and US government officials to share their observations about the communist inclination among the Japanese intellectuals they met at the seminars and public lectures.

Similarly the summer seminar on American Civilization began in Salzburg, Austria immediately after World War II, with private initiatives of Harvard University. Margaret Mead, Wassily Leontief, and other celebrated scholars were among the American lecturers who attracted young intellectuals from all over Europe. In fact the Salzburg Seminar was called a "Cultural Marshall Plan" to introduce American scholarship and cultural values to postwar

Europe.

The Fulbright international exchange program, which began in the immediate aftermath of WWII to promote person-to-person exchange between the US and many other countries in the world, should be analyzed in both its content and form as a powerful case of cultural diplomacy and the spreading of US global cultural influence. Furthermore private initiative in various cultural exchanges by US-based foundations and other organizations may be examined from a similar standpoint.

This leads me to the paper by Professor Zeiler, which talks about the “dynamic corporate initiative” in American-led globalization. I notice that Professor Zeiler uses the word “empire” or “imperial” at least 20 times in his paper, and almost all of them refer to the global baseball empire built by MLB (Major League Baseball), quite distinct from the official diplomatic influence of the US government. He even claims that the MLB cultural empires rival the nationally-based US empire in influence. If the state played the role of ushering the corporate actors to the new worldwide market, I would like to ask Prof. Zeiler if this could still be considered as a model case of US cultural diplomacy.

Professor Zeiler indeed suggests that as an example of “transnational service-oriented and cultural export companies,” MLB has become a catalyst in globalization to transform the world as a single marketplace. There is no arguing about the effectiveness of the marketing skills of MLB, but it is important to note that the baseball games which they export are being played domestically in the US by a diverse mix of nationalities, over a quarter coming from outside North America. Although major league baseball and the World Series have long attracted the attention of the Japanese fans, it is precisely the increased participation of Japanese players in MLB that has made Japan a lucrative viewer and consumer market for MLB. This rapidly widening stream of players from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines is the other half of the story of globalization. Sooner or later China may be part of this globalized field of baseball talent; it already produced top basketball players working for major US teams.

It seems that what matters is not so much who plays in these games, i.e., the content of the cultural export, but that the control of this baseball “empire,” or the form of the exportation, remains in the hands of the US-based corporate entity called MLB. This reminds us of the most prestigious tennis match in the form of Wimbledon, where we no longer see British players win the championship, but the event itself is still a powerful cultural tool to mark England as the birthplace of lawn tennis with all its aristocratic symbols and rituals. Similarly, soon or later, Japan may be remembered as the birthplace of Sumo, when most of the top wrestlers may be from outside Japan.

Finally I would like to discuss the issue of human agency involved in the practice of cultural exchange. In all of the cases mentioned in today’s papers, there are (1) export products, such as films, radio and TV programs, and baseball games, (2) the planners, investors, and other cultural brokers who bring these products overseas, and (3) the targeted people at the end of the cultural flow. Within this basic structure of cultural trade, there are human links working at every phase and level, but I would like to see our study of cultural diplomacy focus

more on people's actions and interpretations; in other words, seeing the people at the end of the sending-and-receiving equation not merely as targets of a government-supported propaganda or of the powerful consumer commodifications led by global capital, but as central agents who have their own options about using, interpreting, and perhaps transforming the intended meaning(s) of the cultural exports.

I say this because what we heard in the three papers today are very much part of our modern history and living daily realities. For example, I grew up hearing from my elder family members about their love of Deanna Durbin. While it is said that the Japanese audience were strongly attracted to the film *Madame Curie* for its kiss scenes, my mother remembers the film still today for Madame Curie's enduring her pains caused by radiation experiments. Lou Gehrig's visit to Japan is part of the history of this Komaba campus where he and other Yankee players visited in 1934 to teach the college students some lessons in baseball. I was just a young girl when my parents took me to a performance of the New York City Ballet in 1958 that Professor Fujita talked about, and of course I had no idea that that was part of the US Cold War cultural offensive. Today we and our children are being told by the Disney empire the stories of not only European fairy tales but the stories of Aladdin and Mulan, the ancient Chinese heroine, and told that it's a small world after all. In other words, we are actors participating in the phenomena we are studying, and for these and other reasons of widespread human engagement and agency, issues of cultural subjectivities should be explored further in our research into the dynamics of cultural diplomacy.

This session clearly tells us that this is a promising field for diplomatic historians, scholars of popular culture, sociologists, anthropologists, cultural geographers, and those in many other academic disciplines, and a field for further collaborative efforts such as what we experienced today.