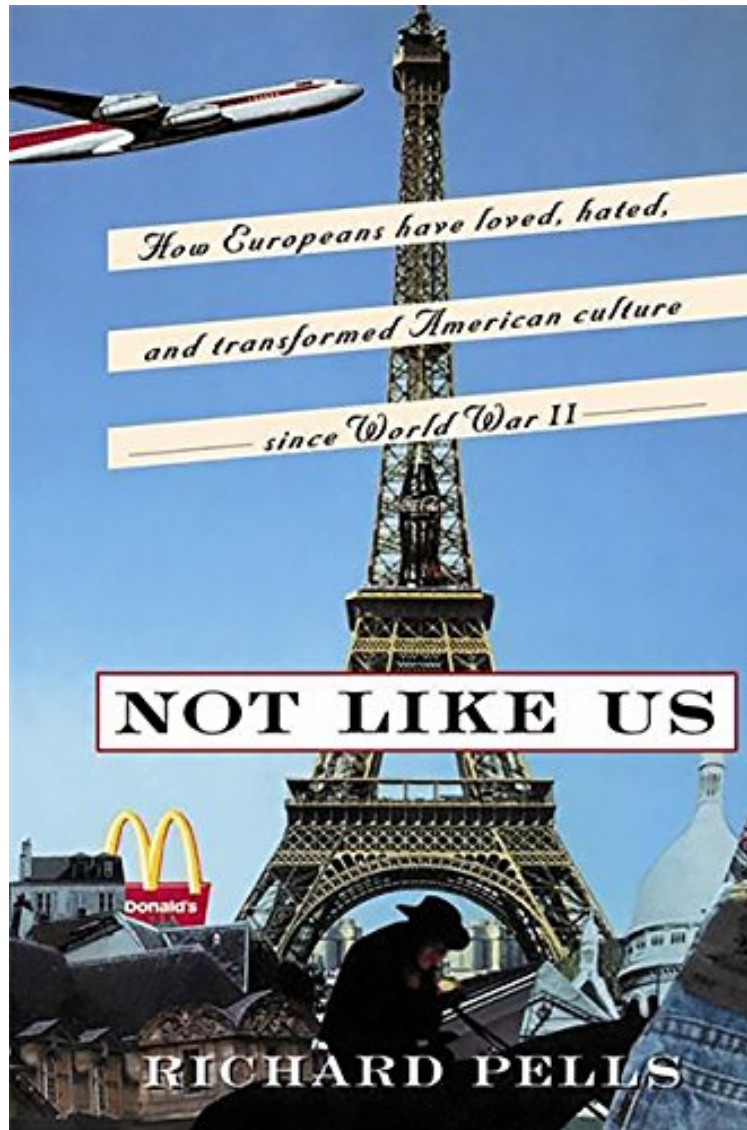


(Free) Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, And Transformed American Culture Since World War II

## Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, And Transformed American Culture Since World War II

Richard Pells

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**Richard Pells : Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, And Transformed American Culture Since World War II** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, And Transformed American Culture Since World War II:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. History that I never knew. By Thikacat This is an education between the covers -- a story that any American should know about how our country is regarded and why. Though the book was published in the 1990's, it is very relevant to today. An ex-pat friend recommended it to me, to help me understand his choice to live overseas. It was a great recommendation.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An interesting look at America's "cultural empire" By Stacie MacAdams It is an undeniable historical reality that the modern culture of the United States has a huge influence on European culture. Upon visiting Europe, an American effortlessly stumbles upon the familiar vistas of McDonalds, Coca-Cola, and icons of American cinema. To the observer, it must seem like America is molding Europe into a reflection of itself. Richard Pells, however, attempts to disillusion the observer of such notions in this book. As the title suggests, Pells argues that European values and traditions, despite being exposed to the "full force" of American cultural influence, have not changed in any significant way and that Europeans have stayed, by their own decision, "not like us." Pells is writing to convince the reader that the "Americanization" of Europe is, in reality, "a powerful and enduring myth." Pells' concept of a "cultural empire" is applicable to modern society as well as old empires. Pells remarks that one of the vessels of American cultural empire is European fondness of American technological advancement. For example, Pells explains how the "French had become addicted to technology and consumerism," and they were "passionately in love with `sinks, refrigerators, and microwave ovens'." In another example, Pells describes how German businessmen "began to admire American technology and industrial efficiency" because of trade between the two nations. This spread of tech-culture from America to Europe is remarkably similar to the old European empires spread of their technology to their conquered lands. Daniel Headrick discusses this phenomena in his book *Tools of Empire*, where he makes the argument that the "true legacy of empire" was the Europeans spread of their "own fascination with machinery and innovation". Lest one forget, the spread of certain Western cultural values, in a way, also has a hand in the destruction of empire. The British Empire, for example, in its quest to uplift people and bring them Enlightenment values, promoted its own destruction. Nations under British control became nationalistic and demanded independence and succession. This fact, coupled with the strain on British society after two world wars, led to its collapse. America, similarly, could collapse from the strain of its wars in the Middle East "to promote democracy" as well as its encouragement of democratic values and independence for nations in the Middle East. Surely, if these nations take these values to heart, an American empire would likely be met with extreme resistance (via modern terrorism, for example). Pells has written an important and interesting book, and his vast knowledge of the subject matter is admirable. The book helps the reader contextualize the concept of "cultural imperialism" by giving much historical background to the events that helped to promote it. Pells also recognizes that it is a two-way street, and that America is just as affected by European culture as the opposite. Whether one agrees or disagrees, the conclusions will prompt much thought into the role of America in world affairs and raise questions concerning whether or not America can, or even should, maintain its vast empire.

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. all encompassing By Susla As a Texan who first moved to Europe at age 13 in 1961, Pell's book was like reading the story of my life. And yet it made me understand so many things that were always something of a conundrum (such as why the French looked down on everything American in general but adored the Kennedy's) to the sinister goings-on of the McCarthy era (they actually burned books considered subversive in American embassies abroad, such as "works by notorious radicals like Mark Twain and Theodore Dreiser"). I got this book because I wanted to have a better understanding of why the U.S. is where it is today, and it more than filled the bill, in an all-emcompassing way. Thank you, Mr. Pells.

Debunking the myth of the "Americanization" of Europe, a noted historian presents an authoritative and engrossing cultural history of how America tried to remake Europe in its own image, and how the Europeans successfully retained their identity in the face of American mass culture. Richard Pells provides a new paradigm for understanding the survival of local and national cultures in a global setting.

.com "The Europeans could never understand the American fixation with showers and toilets. Or how these could become a test of whose civilization was superior." Could it possibly be true, Richard Pells continues, "that sitting on the pot might be more exhilarating, and more ennobling, than trudging through Chartres or Notre Dame?" Not the whole of Pell's cogent investigation of America's attempt to "Americanize" Europe is so merry. But it consistently displays his vast knowledge acquired both as a historian and a frequent resident abroad. Pells comes at his theme from a variety of angles: a chronological treatment before 1945 that sweeps through the cold war years; a chilling discussion of Hitler's impact on the shifting balance of cultural power between Europe and the U.S.; a look at Europe's resistance in the '90s to mass culture; and Hollywood's impact on the European film industry. What is happening to "us," as we morph into a global culture, whose landmarks, alas, pock the globe with golden arches, Disney detritus, and Nike Towns? Pells notes, refreshingly, that "for many Americans, the effects of American's mass culture and its global economy are even more unsettling within the United States." Highly engaging and employing a conversational tone, *Not Like Us* weaves history, theory, vibrant examples, and the comments of such expatriate writers as Mary McCarthy and James Baldwin. It will engage any reader seeking some kind of reason for the relentless vulgarization of the

globe. --Hollis GiammatteoFrom Library JournalPells (The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age, Univ. Pr. of New England, 1989) explores here the cultural relationship between the United States and Europe since World War II. We see Europe at first viewing the United States as an isolationist cultural backwater, then as a superpower that liberated and rebuilt the Continent, and, finally, as a dominant economic and cultural influence experienced through a flood of American films, television and print media, consumer goods, and tourists since the end of the war. Pells convincingly argues that even with this onslaught, Europe has successfully retained its collection of distinct cultures. The author even highlights areas where Europe has influenced the United States, most notably regarding performance automobiles and entertainment. Pells's book has particular value as the United States struggles to find a place on the Continent in light of the European unification movement. Recommended for academic libraries.?Robert J. Favini, Bentley Coll. Lib., Waltham, Mass. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Before 1945, Europeans ignored American culture as barbarically provincial. After 1945, they hated it as barbarically commercial. But they couldn't ignore it. Yet Pells claims that for all the McDonald's franchises and Dallas reruns seen in Europe, Europeans have not been "Americanized." Pells assembles his stories topically, addressing the influence of TV, fashion, the USIA, U.S.-sponsored curricula in American studies, and above all, the impact of movies. After the war, Hollywood resumed the dominance it had claimed in the 1920s, and Pells gives an entertaining account of tangles with France, particularly, over trade restrictions on films. Skeptical that anything injurious has occurred, and observing that cultural influence is mutual (witness European takeovers of American publishing and media companies), Pells still opens for us over here a window on why they're so anxious over there. Gilbert Taylor