

Fabricating the Absolute Fake: 'America' in Contemporary Pop Culture (American Studies)

Jaap Kooijman



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From the pageantry of Oprah Winfrey's daytime talk show to the Atlanta-based Coca-Cola empire, American "pop" culture—and the contemporary films, television programs, and cultural objects that determine it—dominates the rest of the world through its hegemonic presence. Does that make everyone a hybridized American or do these elements find mediation within the other cultures that consume them? *Fabricating the Absolute Fake* applies elements of postmodern theory—Jean Baudrillard's hyperreality and Umberto Eco's "absolute fake", among others—to this globally mediated American pop culture in order to examine both the phenomenon itself and its specific appropriation in the Netherlands, as evidenced by diverse cultural icons like the Elvis-inspired crooner Lee Towers, the Moroccan-Dutch white rapper Ali B, musical tributes to an assassinated politician, and the Dutch reality soap opera scene.

A fascinating exploration of how global cultures struggle to create their own "America" within a post–September 11 media culture, *Fabricating the Absolute Fake* reflects on what it might mean to truly take part in American popular culture.

"A brilliant, thoroughly enjoyable work of cultural critique. . . . Jaap Kooijman takes seemingly exhausted concepts like "Americanization" and turns them on their head."—Anne McCarthy, New York University

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