

ISSN 1991-2773



Review
of
**International
American
Studies**

Vol. 1, No. 1
September 2006



Nº 1, VOL. 1 SEPTEMBER 2006 ISSN 1991-2773

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Review of International American Studies (RIAS) is the electronic journal of the International American Studies Association, the only worldwide, independent, non-governmental association of American Studies. *RIAS* serves as agora for the global network of international scholars, teachers, and students of America as hemispheric and global phenomenon. *RIAS* is published three times a year: in September, January and May by IASA with the institutional support of the University of Silesia in Katowice lending server space to the IASA websites and the electronic support of the Soft For Humans CMS Designers. Subscription rates for *RIAS* are included along with the Association's annual dues as specified in the "Membership" section of the Association's website (www.iasaweb.org).

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PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Welcome to *RIAS*, the *Review of International American Studies*, the online journal of the International American Studies Association (IASA). IASA, which held its first conference in Leiden in 2003, is organized around the understanding that in the twenty-first century American Studies, however that term is defined, can be properly discussed only in a global perspective. Many different views have been put forward as to what 'America' should mean—country, continent, hemisphere?—but the one thing on which most people are agreed is that in an era of increasing global circulation the international dimensions of American Studies can no longer be ignored.

RIAS, which will be available free to all members of IASA, is designed to facilitate that conversation. National associations of American Studies continue to make very valuable contributions to the subject, but much of their focus is necessarily on matters close to home: the protection of local programs, safeguarding faculty positions, attempting to raise the subject's profile in often difficult circumstances, and so on. IASA, by contrast, offers the possibility of complementary or contrary perspectives which can expose practitioners of American Studies to intellectual outlooks very different from their own. This is not an 'export' model of American Studies, but one based upon the idea of reciprocal interaction, of mutual exchange and enlightenment. For academics based in North America or Europe, seeing how things appear from Australasia or Asia, Latin America or Africa, can often appear as a salutary corrective to the insularity of ideas often assumed, wrongly, to enjoy universal validity. From an ideological point of view, IASA might in this sense be said to be an almost deliberately incoherent organization, one that offers its members the prospect of finding their home-grown views colliding with others working from very different premises.

The purpose of *RIAS* is simply to enable and promote the wide circulation of different ideas, so as to achieve more of a global balance in the rapidly internationalizing field of American Studies. Many interesting topics have been discussed and debated recently on the IASA Executive Council e-mail discussion list, and we hope that *RIAS* will help to bring these and other important issues to the attention of a wider audience. We invite contributions, both in the form of short position papers on topics of general interest, or through notices of forthcoming conferences, calls for papers, observations on developments in scholarship in different parts of the world, and so on. The function of *RIAS*, as indeed of IASA in general, is to enhance channels of communication among scholars concerned with American Studies in different parts of the world, so as to enable the subject to grow and develop in ways that may not be visible to any of us at the present time. While *RIAS* has no preconceived academic agenda, it will of course depend crucially for its usefulness on the participation of scholars in many different parts of the world. We hope that this e-journal will become a network of global intellectual exchange in American Studies, and, to this end, we warmly welcome contributions from all quarters.

Paul Giles
President, IASA

THE CUBAN CONTROVERSY

On March 2, 2006, The Associated Press issued a press report about Cuban academics being denied visas by the American government. The academics—58 philosophers, economists, and historians—were planning to attend the Latin American Studies Association Congress, which was held later that month (March 15-18) in San Juan, Puerto Rico, when they were told that they would not be allowed to enter the United States. Although only Cuban academics were barred en masse, at least a dozen other academics, from various Latin American countries, were denied visas as well.

LASA is the largest professional organization in the world engaged in the study of Latin America. Twenty-five percent of its 5,000 members reside outside the United States. The LASA International Congress, held every eighteen months, is the world's premier forum for expert discussion on Latin America and the Caribbean. Seventy-two percent of the 4,868 presenters in San Juan were non-US residents.

The AP report was spread among IASA members by Soraya Castro Mariño of the University of Havana. Here are some of the reactions it sparked.

March 6—**Djelal Kadir** (Pennsylvania State University, founding president IASA)

'Given the experiences of the last few years, it should be clear to LASA that the USA is no longer intellectually democratic or politically free as a venue for academic and scholarly discussion and exchange. Perhaps LASA should consider other venues than the US or its territories (Puerto Rico) where to hold its annual congresses. Should they do consider other options, we at IASA might consider how we could be helpful to our LASA colleagues.'

March 7—**Sonja Torres** (Universidade Federal Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro)

'[...] it's about time LASA woke up to the fact that, being a Latin American Studies association, perhaps they should move to other venues. But, frankly, I think they're pretty much in the same situation as the ASA; i.e., they probably HAVE to hold their meeting on US territory in order to guarantee funding, grants, etc. THIS is definitely a big advantage IASA has over exclusively US-based associations!'

March 8—**Cristina Giorcelli** (Università di Roma 3)

'Holding the Convention elsewhere would seem to be the solution. I do not see how the US membership would still insist on holding their Conference when so many of their Latin American colleagues are prevented from participating!'



March 14—**Jane Desmond** (University of Iowa, vice president IASA, Co-Director of IFUSS, International Forum for US Studies)

'Frankly, having dealt with the US attitudes toward Cuba for several years from this side when trying to work with Cuban colleagues, travelling there, and bringing graduate students on IFUSS projects there, I am not very hopeful of any change under this administration. However, it is important to register our strong disapproval to build momentum for change in the future and of course at the same time to express our continued desires to build and maintain working relations with Cuban scholars through email work, and through exchanges at scholarly meetings outside the US'.

March 9—**Manju Jaidka** (Punjab University)

'[...] we, in India, sometimes face such visa problems with Pakistan. Last year about two hundred of us were denied visas to attend a conference at Lahore. Security reasons were given. Understandable, I guess, given the violence that occurs sporadically'.

March 14—**Helmbrecht Breinig** (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg)

'It is not only unacceptable but also unwise that the US should join the ranks of those crippling academic dialogue. It would be detrimental to American political, cultural, and economic activities worldwide'.

On March 17, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* announced that the executive council of LASA was no longer planning on organizing its meetings in the US. Even though the association was already under contract to hold the 2007 conference in Boston, the executive council said that LASA would 'make every effort' to relocate the congress.

'As long as the United States government's current visa policy with regard to our Latin American colleagues persists, we can no longer, in good conscience, hold our congress inside the United States'.

LASA's president, Sonia E. Alvarez, a professor of Latin American politics and studies at the University of Massachusetts, stressed that the decision was made out of a concern for academic freedom, not ideology. 'We are an area studies association. We can't carry out our work if we can't dialogue with our colleagues from Latin America'.

Although, recently, there has been a lot of animus about the 'hemispheric' turn in American Studies, it is still an open question as to whether and how the field should be reconstructed to meet such an end and what kinds of implications this will bring along. We have asked four specialists from different quarters of the world (Giorgio Mariani, Manju Jaidka, Tatsushi Narita, and Paulo Knauss) to consider the main issues and challenges involved in reconfiguring American Studies along a hemispheric or transnational axis. The aim of these short statements is not to offer ready solutions to the problems involved, but to stimulate further debate about the future of American Studies in a globalized world.

TRANSATLANTICISM THEN AND NOW?

Giorgio Mariani

Università di Roma 1, 'La Sapienza'

In a recent review-essay entitled 'Transatlanticism Now', Laura Stevens notes that 'so many kinds of projects can be grouped under this rubric [i.e., transatlanticism] that it also threatens to lose specific meaning' (Stevens, 2004: 95). For example, the extent to which transatlantic studies may, or may not be seen as a new thing, depends largely on whether the great deal of comparative work done long before the 'international turn' in American Studies on the histories, cultures, and literatures of the Americas in relation to those of Europe should be seen as fitting into this category or not. Even though they may not have used the term 'transatlanticism', there is no question that Americanists operating outside the US have always been aware of the comparative dimension of their intellectual work. To stick to my field of specialization, European students of the literatures of the Americas have traditionally devoted considerable attention to both the ways in which American texts were received in various European countries and to the reception of European texts in the Americas. The question is, should we consider, say, studies of the Italian or German reception of Emerson's work, or of Emerson's use of Dante and Goethe, transatlantic or not? Regardless of how we answer that question—and I believe it is important that we find answers to it—do we all agree with Stevens that '[a] taxonomy of transatlantic studies would do much to forestall the possibility of overusing this term and thus draining it of meaning' (95)? I insist on this point because it seems to me that a lot of work done in the past by European scholars may be transatlantic to the extent that it deals with texts that crossed the ocean in one or the other direction, and yet such work may have been relatively uninterested in contesting explicitly a nation-based understanding of literary history. Should we reserve the term 'transatlantic' exclusively for work informed by certain kinds of theoretical premises? Or should the term designate any work that connects, in whatever ways, two different shores of the Atlantic world? When, and why, does a comparative study become 'transatlantic'? What are the advantages—if any—of defining it as such?



RIAS may provide a privileged forum for debating these issues as well as for the kind of taxonomical work called for by Stevens: the creation of an archive of 'transatlantic studies' would be of great help to all, especially in light of the fact that a sizable amount of transatlantic scholarship before the rise of contemporary transatlanticism was written in languages other than English. As a way of example, let me just remind you that it took nearly thirty years for the English-speaking public to discover a work as fundamental as Antonello Gerbi's *La disputa del Nuovo Mondo*, which appeared originally in 1945 but was translated into English only in 1973. A truly international mapping of the field can come about only through a great collaborative effort on the part of scholars of different nations.

What makes transatlantic studies so attractive today lies of course with the emphasis they place on the transnational, international, and/or post-national dynamics of cultural and social phenomena. Moving away from models based on rigid binaries and notions of isolated development, the best transatlantic work stresses connectedness, cross-fertilization, and reciprocity. Nations and nationalism (in literature and elsewhere) are no longer seen in terms of 'organicism' and teleological design. Routes are favored over roots, cross-cultural exchanges are highlighted at the expense of myths of uniqueness, the study of multidirectional flows and boundary-crossing replaces the attention traditionally paid to supposedly discrete national identities. Most importantly, perhaps, the renewed attention paid to colonialism, slavery, and the violence of nation-building has done a lot to restore a materialist basis to what remained for too long a dehistoricized area of inquiry. Yet, given these premises, it is certainly ironic that the most influential transatlantic studies have so far developed along a US–England axis (with occasional forays into France), thereby ignoring to a large extent the larger web formed by interrelations between Central and South America, Africa, and the rest of Europe. What do we think, for example, of Stephen Shapiro's charge in 49th Parallel that 'collapsing the Atlantic basin into a self-contained, mono-linguistic zone, transatlanticism risks reinstating a triumphalist Whig history, which disseminates an uncomplicated version of imperial events'? Personally, I find it both interesting and alarming, for example, that in the same issue of *American Literary History* in which the Laura Stevens article was published, the essay that immediately precedes it (by Kirsten Silva Gruesz) should lament 'the invisibility of translation as a critical term in American Studies discourse' (85). If Gruesz is right (some may think she is not), then we must certainly ask ourselves what kind of serious transatlantic work can be done without taking—at all levels—translation seriously. How can we convincingly deconstruct nation-based paradigms and epistememes unless we are aware of the role played by translation, both as a tool of empire and as a strategy of resistance?

Along these lines, a further problem may be worth keeping in mind. If broadly defined 'as the study of textual productions dating from the age of exploration to the present that originate in Europe, Africa, and the Americas' (the editorial statement of the new online journal *Atlantikos*), transatlantic studies comprises an immense field of inquiry. Regardless of how eager we may be to move

beyond one nation-paradigms, or simplistic single-nation versus single-nation comparisons, I wonder whether anyone can master the multilingual, multinational, multicultural expertise required to make sense of the transatlantic world as a whole. It seems to me that when a field becomes so large, we are inevitably faced with a conundrum quite similar to the one over which Franco Moretti, on the one side, and his critics, on the other, have been recently debating in relation to the question of how to study 'world literature', or literature as a global reality. Should we content ourselves with Moretti's 'distant readings' in order to draw very broad pictures of the transatlantic world, or should we instead be happy to 'remain rooted in the study of one region while reaching over to another' (Stevens, 95)? I suppose that ideally we would all like to move beyond 'a self-contained mono-linguistic zone' (as Shapiro would want us to), without making translation invisible (as Moretti's model stands accused of doing). How we can actually do so, however, is perhaps difficult to say. More generally, I wonder if we should see transatlanticism as a new epistemic key that would inevitably force us to redraw in major ways the boundaries of older disciplinary formations, or whether—given its still uncertain and contested contours—we should think of it as an attempt to extend and complicate American Studies that can coexist with extant institutional and curricular divisions.

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AMERICAN STUDIES IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT (NEPAL, BANGLADESH, AND INDIA)

Manju Jaidka

Punjab University

When we speak of 'American Studies', what exactly do we mean? This question came to my mind when I participated as Resource Person at an American Studies Institute held at Dartmouth where, under the rubric of 'American Studies' a variety of topics was dealt with, ranging from nineteenth-century Whitman studies to current topics like Abu Ghraib, from media and popular culture to interpersonal relationships among ethnic minorities, from academic experiments to racial eccentricities. Clearly, for the American audience attending the workshop, American Studies was anything and everything that dealt with the myriad hues of America.

Elsewhere in the world, however, the notion of 'American Studies' is somewhat different. In the Indian subcontinent, where I am located, while the basic premises remain the same, there is a more or less fixed component allocated to the discipline which involves the study of American history, political relations, literature, culture, and of late, multi-ethnic studies. American Studies was initiated in the mid-twentieth century, courtesy US government agencies, as a gesture of peace and goodwill. Most American Studies programs still operate through this conduit. American Studies here comprises an American component in the syllabus, some conferences, seminars, workshops or lectures on related subjects. The approach is fairly predictable in this part of the world.

The call for contributions on hemispheric studies for *RIAS* provided an opportunity for making a comparative study of American Studies in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. With this in view, I contacted colleagues in neighboring countries, asking for their opinions and inputs on the subject. While I received immediate responses from Bangladesh and Nepal, I did not succeed in making any contact with scholars in Pakistan. Apparently, not all scholars are computer savvy and not all institutions of higher education have updated websites that could facilitate the survey.

It was easy getting in touch with scholars from Bangladesh and Nepal as we, in India, have had some interaction with them over the past few years, but with Pakistan there has been no exchange. Moreover, relations between India and Pakistan

keep fluctuating. Whenever there is an outbreak of violence in India there is a lot of tension between the two countries. Academics, for the most part, like to stay clear of controversies. As a consequence, there is little contact between institutions of learning in the two countries. Further, both countries seem to vie for Uncle Sam's attention—and this is another cause of strained relations between them.

Whatever the reason, the effort to establish contact with scholars in Pakistan was not successful. However, through the United States Educational Foundation in India I now have some contact addresses which will, hopefully, enable me to carry out my exploration of American Studies in Pakistan. I also hope to make similar contact with academics in Sri Lanka.

NEPAL

In the Universities of Nepal the English Departments introduced American literature in the mid-1980's as an optional paper. Most 'Americanists' are from American Literature but some scholars from International Relations are also into 'American Studies'. However, the discipline is not very popular, with barely 5% of the post-graduate students pursuing it. Invariably, it is the job market that determines the students' choice of subjects. Tribhuvan University tried for two years to run a full-fledged program in American Studies but the effort was not successful. There are few takers for American Studies because there aren't sufficient job prospects. Students generally prefer British Literature and Linguistics because these fields enable them to get jobs when they complete their masters.

No conferences are held in the field of AS but US agencies send scholars to the USA every year on funded fellowships. Scholars in Nepal are of the opinion that if more funding were made available for holding annual conferences, for bringing out journals and to send out more scholars for research in the US, interest in American Studies would increase considerably.

BANGLADESH

Turning to Bangladesh, a conversation with experts in the country reveals that the scenario is slightly better. American Studies was introduced in Bangladesh when a few scholars based in Dhaka—inspired by the American Studies Research Centre in Hyderabad—approached the US Information Service in 1987 to encourage the academic study of America in Bangladesh.

However, in Bangladesh, too, few scholars are attracted to American Studies. No university in Bangladesh offers it as a separate subject although the University of Dhaka had approved a Department of American Studies sometime in the 1990's. There is an 'American' component in diverse disciplines like Literature and the social sciences, but no 'specialization' in American Studies.

In 1987 the Bangladesh Association of American Studies (BAAS) was formed in Dhaka. Later, in the 1990's—two more associations, one based in Rajshahi University and another in Chittagong—were formed mainly because BAAS Dhaka was unable to reach out to people outside the capital interested in doing Amer-



ican Studies.¹ BAAS Dhaka (regularly) and BAAS Chittagong and Rajshahi (occasionally) arrange conferences and workshops on American studies for their own members and for college teachers of the country. BAAS Dhaka has brought out a journal which, though irregular, has produced nine issues. BAAS Dhaka works closely with the American Center in organizing almost all its events. The American Center funds seminars and workshops from time to time.

INDIA

In India, American Studies began with a fanfare in the 1950's and 60's. It came in the aftermath of the Cold War, promoting mutual exchange of goodwill across the globe. The initiative was taken by the US State Department through newly formed bodies like the Fulbright Commission, the American Center and the United States Foundation in India (USEFI). The discipline received tremendous encouragement and very soon academic institutions in India were teeming with 'Americanists'.

However, as they say, money makes the mare go. The saying could not be truer in the case of American Studies in India. By the last decade of the twentieth century, when the US funding sources dried up and the State Department pulled out, there was no money to support activities in the discipline any longer. The leading American Studies library in the country struggled for survival until it finally closed and scholars turned to other, better funded, areas. Today, some activity in the field of AS continues in the form of Conferences and Seminars but not all events are of the desired world-class standard.

A pertinent question that arises is—what is the use or relevance of AS in India today? Why do we need to study it if it does not relate to our local conditions? Faced with this question of relevance, a group of serious academics sought to bridge the gap between AS and the Indian scenario on the one hand, and AS and the global context on the other. Doing so, MELUS–India was launched as the India Chapter of MELUS, the Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States, which had been operating in the US for a couple of decades. The idea was to undertake comparative studies of multi-ethnic literatures of the US *vis-à-vis* Indian literary traditions. MELUS–India as a movement was successful and the association grew bigger, meeting annually over conferences that brought in scholars from other parts of the world.

Then, last year, the question of relevance again came up—why not relate AS to the global context? With this in view, the members of MELUS–India floated a parallel organization called MELOW for the study of World literatures. The same set of scholars/academics is thus engaged in both American Literature and World Lit-

¹ This formation of separate Associations is interesting. As we are aware, Bangladesh is a small country and distances between places/universities are not so great when compared with distances in India or the US. However, it is evident that in Bangladesh American Studies is conducted in isolated groups and not collectively on a big scale. The same has happened in the southern states of India where scholars got together to form a South Indian Association of American Studies, distinct from the Indian Association for American Studies. There has also been talk of setting up a South-Asian Association for American Studies, but apparently it has not taken off or we would have gotten more news about its activities.

eratures. The aim is to cross borders, expand horizons, and form an international network of scholars engaged in the study of literary traditions across the globe.

This is the scenario in the field of Literature, which, incidentally, is my field. In other departments—for instance, Art, History, or the Social Sciences—there has also been a shift away from AS. While Postcolonial Studies and International Relations have been center-stage for the last decade and more, AS gets pushed further into the background.

The present American Studies scenario in India is not as bright as it used to be fifteen years ago. However, the state of affairs can change if US government policy changes, if priorities change, if instead of continuing on a war-mongering path, the US decides to promote educational and cultural exchanges all over again. Academics in India look forward to such a turn of events!



ASIA/PACIFIC/AMERICA(S)

Tatsushi Narita

Nagoya City University

The goal of American Studies in a transnational direction would be to find a new frontier for American Studies. There should be little doubt that Transatlantic and Hemispheric American Studies would have an indispensable part to play in this. The problem is basically how to activate within American Studies the assets of multicultural studies hitherto accumulated. We may pose a question here: who are the true cultural Others of our day? An expected answer would be Islamic Others (or Oriental Asia). What about Confucian Asia and Buddhist Asia? I hold that, while Islamic Others are intrinsically homogeneous in the sense in which the European/Western world shares monotheism with them, Confucian Asia and Buddhist Asia are precisely non-monotheist heterogeneous cultural Others. If Americanists systematically encounter these heterogeneous cultural Others, then we should be able to move beyond limits within which we unconsciously stay and will begin to capture something indispensable to undergo a drastic change. In what ways can we advance American Studies from the perspectives of Asia, the Pacific and the Americas? In what way would we be able to contribute to 'Hemispheric American Studies'?

My suggestion is to seek to establish a new area of research by combining Transpacific studies and Hemispheric studies. If we succeed in so doing, we may be able to enhance an effective interaction of the research interests of fellow Americanists and bring the issues of 'homogeneous and heterogeneous cultural Others' to the foreground. (I do not necessarily mean that we should devote ourselves to the comparative area studies of religions. When I contrasted monotheism and non-monotheism in the previous passage I was being somewhat provocative. My intention has been to highlight the importance of cultural Others.) I would enlist here as possible topics 'Transpacific and Hemispheric Encountering with Cultural Others' and 'Orality, Literacy and Multiculturalism in the Context of Transpacific and Hemispheric American Studies'.

INVENTORY OF DIFFERENCES FROM A SOUTH-AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE¹

Paulo Knauss

Universidade Federal Fluminense

When we deal with the Western hemisphere, it is imperative to bear in mind that its economic, political, and cultural history has been marked by the hegemony of the USA. Thus, it is difficult to admit the implementation of any study that, at some moment, does not take a stand in respect of the impact of this North-American State on the hemisphere. On the other side, the history of the USA also stands for values that go hand in hand with the history of social and popular struggles on both American continents. For this reason, the responses to the experience of the USA in the Americas are fraught with contradictions, and this is something we have to reckon with to get a grip on the problems involved.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that reflection about the role of the USA on the Western hemisphere is strongly marked by meanings affirmed in the USA. Thus, probably the major source of ill feeling between the USA and the other countries of the Americas is the fact that the American ideal and the American identity have been shaped in the USA. The fact that the word 'unitedstatesian' sounds strange in the English language shows how self-representation in the USA is mingled with the idea of being 'American'. But even from the Latin-American perspective, it is hard not to consider the word 'American' as an attribute of the USA. There are numerous ways of going round this ill feeling, but practically all of them are insufficient. To fall back, for instance, on negative characterizations, such as 'gringo' and 'yankee', may reinforce existing prejudices and the ideological denouncement discourse, but they are no help for a good relationship among the peoples, nor for a critical reflection. In the politically correct South-American discourse, the word 'North-American' is gaining ground to identify the USA. But this usage confuses the perception of geography, by creating other ill feelings when installing a scheme that does not contemplate Canada or Mexico. Furthermore, nowadays, the idea of the Anglophonic or the non-Hispanophonic USA

¹The reflections in this text are mainly the result of my collaboration with Sonia Torres, with whom I edit *Transit Circle*—*Revista Brasileira de Estudos Americanos/Brazilian Journal of American Studies*. I equally want to thank IASA colleagues Patrick Imbert, Djelal Kadir, and Helmbrecht Breinig, who at some point helped me to develop my thoughts. It should be clear, however, that I alone am responsible for the ideas presented in this paper.



(as well as an image of Canada homogenized by the Anglo's) has become anachronistic, which further complicates the old cultural differences that have separated the USA from Latin America.

From a hemispheric perspective this tableau established the definition of the senses of Americanness as a central problematic. Well, the idea of America is at its origin a European construction that served to conceive of the New World as a generic counterpoint space of the European Old World. The idea of America, however, was reprocessed by the founding fathers in the USA to outline the exceptionalist belief that history had favored the creation of the first democratic nation. Yet, one cannot help but notice that, once more, it was the counterpoint with the Old World monarchies that justified this 'American' ideal. This time, however, this ideal was appropriate to demarcate a precise national territory—the USA.

The problem of the historical meaning of America does not only question the definition of a US identity, but interrogates the identity of all of the peoples of the Western hemisphere and creates another level of problems for their self-image. History evidences, however, that the hemispheric integration discourse has always had to face the difficulty of confronting a continental reality of non-homogeneous identities and of diverse interests that are not complementary, which shows not only in conflicts between North and South, but also in latent subregional conflicts in several directions. Thus, the belief in Americanness is always maintained in suspense as a counterpoint to the world we live in. The general consequence is that, in light of the huge caldron of the American hemispheric differences, the criticism of the exclusiveness of US conceptualizations of the American identity often fails to consider its own complicity in the establishment of such exclusive conceptualizations.

The 'us/them' paradigm within the Inter-American context becomes highly problematic, insofar as the traditional parameters of the hemispheric boundaries reveal themselves as insufficient, particularly in the debate about the USA. The study of the concept 'America' requires an approach that must deal with the hemispheric differences—as Sonia Torres has already pointed out (2003)—and also with non-US representations of the USA.

Such representations constitute the sources for debate about the production of the senses of Americanness in diverse contexts. This program could definitely be defined as an inventory of the differences between various representations of 'America'. Nevertheless, from the comparison surely emerges a relational problematization resulting from the fact that understanding the 'other' leads to a better understanding of oneself. This relational reflection seems to distinguish the transnational approach from the search for de-contextualized universalisms, disclosing crossed histories marked by the production of meanings that have to do with specific contexts. And, lastly, there is the inescapable fact that the theme of the differences among the American societies brings up a more profound issue: the social transformation challenge. And maybe this is the kind of response that the reflection about 'America' demands more broadly on both continents.

Finally, it seems relevant not to mix up American Studies with the study of the USA. This distinction challenges the foundations of American Studies as a discipline and, at the same time, implies a double move, which endeavors on the one hand to redefine the object of study and, on the other, to advance toward new study subjects, admitting multiple views and angles. Lastly, however, it is paramount to acknowledge that the history of the disciplinary institutionalization of American Studies programs and the construction of their objects of study reflect a US-centered perspective on 'America'. To disclose other knowledge subjects means acknowledging also other reflection trajectories about the USA that characterize an enlarged field of study about 'America'.

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ALL TOGETHER NOW

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INTRODUCTION

In what way, exactly, is IASA international? First let's acknowledge that the 'international' in the title is quite nicely ambiguous. On the one hand, it can mean that its subject is an international America. On the other hand, it can mean that it is an international association. And of course, in a neat conflation, it can mean both: it can be an international association engaged in the study of an international America. Either way—international America or international association—the idea of the *international* is right at the heart of IASA. But what does the word actually mean in this context? How do commonsense understandings of 'the international' shape the ways in which IASA is perceived and performed? These are the issues I would like to address in this short comment, concentrating in particular on the link between the idea of the international and the concept of scale.¹

While I think that this connection could be usefully explored in both of the dimensions folded into the association's name (subject and practice, international America and international association), I would like to focus primarily on the latter, because it seems to me that the burning question facing IASA today is the question of membership. Given that most potential IASA members already belong to at least one other American studies association, where is the incentive to join (or become active in) this one? A good argument for investing in IASA is that, as an international association 'one scale up' from the various national associations, all of its members should be equally 'at home'. In a multi-centered, international collective, nobody should be able to derive authority and authenticity from their literal or relational proximity to a dominant domestic center. But an alternative argument for joining IASA reads the association, just as cheerfully, as a space that is not so much multi-centered as uncentered, not so much the 'top layer' in an arrangement of scales as a space of constant internal realign-

¹ I would like to thank my colleagues Julia Leyda, Hiroshi Okayama, and Yujin Yaguchi for their generous and helpfully critical readings of earlier versions of this essay.

ments and co-presence, not so much an *inter-national* association as a *not-national* association.

This second way of reading the internationalism of IASA, of course, runs counter to the way in which the 'international' is commonly defined in terms of interactions and connections between nations: 'extending across national boundaries', for example, or 'involving more than one country'. This conventional definition implies that an international association exists primarily to facilitate interaction between already-existing nationally-defined groups. Within this definition of the international, even individual members of an international association are understood to embody existing national positions. Such an understanding of the international, as the arena for the interaction of nations, national groups, and nationally-defined individuals, seems to me to invoke and privilege an academic space of scales. Imagined vertically, this scale appears as a series of steps, starting at ground level with the individual, moving up to the departmental and the institutional, ascending again through the local and the regional and the national, and finally reaching the ceiling at the international. Within this kind of arrangement of scales, the local would often be assumed to be the more immediate, everyday, tangible, personal, engaged, and face-to-face, and the international the more distant, more complicated, more intermittent, and (often) more powerful: something towards which you have to 'work your way up', perhaps as the representative of a national or regional association. In other words, by the time the individual becomes visible at the top level he or she will be expected to have acquired, en route, a layered collection of scale-related identities.

This understanding of the 'international' as the top-layer in a space of scales seems obvious in theory, but for me personally IASA—in practice, in the event, and on the ground—has emerged as an event-space with a much stronger sense of something local and engaged and personal, and a much weaker sense of something hierarchical and national, than this would suggest. Reflecting on my experience of the international event-spaces produced by the IASA so far, I think it might be useful in imagining one aspect of the potential attractions of its practical geography to experiment for a moment with an interpretation of the international as the not-national, the non-national or the un-national, reducing the prominence of the concept of scale implied in conventional interpretations of the term 'international' and emphasizing instead the idea of an academic event-space in which the organizing effects of scale, center, and 'leading edge' are absent. In essence, I imagine that for some potential members the key point to IASA might well be its ability to function as a flexible, even mildly chaotic, non-hierarchical and decentered academic space in which all kinds of constituent locations are equally 'here' and equally 'now', a space characterized by what the geographer Doreen Massey has termed 'coeval multiplicities' and 'radical contemporaneity' (Massey, 2005: 8).

SPACE

In a recent issue of the *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* Sallie Marston, John Paul Jones III, and Keith Woodward published a provocative paper



entitled 'Human geography without scale'. I would like to take up and redeploy for my own purposes some of the key terms used in this article, because I think that the shock value of the concept of a 'geography without scale' might facilitate the difficult process of willed estrangement from familiar spatial premises, thereby, for example, making it possible to defamiliarize and destabilize some of the common scale-related assumptions surrounding the concept of the 'international' in academic practice. I think that such a process of conceptual estrangement might make it easier to see that we are not simply subject to academic geographies but are also collectively responsible for producing the geographies within which we work—not only in terms of how we organize ourselves but also in how we talk about what we do.²

Critical engagement with the ways in which we perform conventions of spatial organization might help us to see how these practices and discourses render some kinds of scholarly interaction highly visible while relegating others, equally real and significant, to obscurity. We might reflect, for example, on the way in which the widely-assumed significance of national location in academic sorting springs from cycles of practice and perception rather than from some kind of environmental determinism. 'Japan-based American studies', in other words, emerges as a visibly coherent entity precisely because we have trained ourselves to look for patterns of coherence that can be mapped onto national territories. Coherence emerges in national shapes because we are looking for ways in which groups defined nationally can be differentiated. As Marston and her colleagues argue in relation to scale, as soon as we have become used to ordering space in particular ways, as soon (for example) as particular 'layers are presupposed', then it becomes 'difficult not to think in terms of social relations and institutional arrangements that somehow fit their contours' (Marston, Jones, and Woodward, 2006: 422).

This is, of course, not to say that coherence cannot be found in an entity defined as 'Japan-based American studies'—clearly it can. My point is simply that we should acknowledge the self-fulfilling circularity of the usual process: first, a frame is identified; then, coherence is detected within that frame; finally, the frame is read as the product of the pattern and not as its necessary precondition. That this frame should so often be national is far from surprising. American studies, as a field foundationally defined by reference to the nation-state, has typically tended to identify frames (i.e. sort scholarly interaction) by reference to the national; even those frames which are not literally national themselves have conventionally been defined in relation to the national, as 'less' or 'more' than national, above or below the national—as sub-national, for example, multi-national, or international. Nonetheless, the significance of the nation-based sorting of American studies worldwide is not an inevitable product of natural geography; national affiliation is a highly significant factor in American studies scholarship around the world because socio-spatial habits of academic training, sorting, networking, and affiliation have made it so.

² For more on this point, see Hones and Leyda (2004) and Hones and Leyda (2005).

In turning the national around in order to see its coherence as the product of socio-spatial practice, rather than as the frame within which spatial practice takes place, we are performing a shift in geographical thinking from space-as-container to space-as-product that has become an accepted and expected move in contemporary human geography. As Nigel Thrift explains, while geographers today disagree energetically about how best to conceptualize and talk about space, there is nonetheless broad agreement about the necessity to break out of the habit of thinking of it as a container in order to generate different ways of thinking about it as a product:

However different the writings about [...] different kind of spaces may appear to be, they all share a common ambition: that is to abandon the idea of any pre-existing space in which things are embedded for an idea of space as undergoing continual construction exactly through the agency of things encountering each other in more or less organized circulations. This is a *relational* view of space in which, rather than space being viewed as a container within which the world proceeds, space is seen as a co-product of those proceedings. (Thrift, 2003: 96)

SCALE

Scale is one of the most 'natural' and apparently obvious aspects of the common-sense geographies we routinely live within and (in living) produce. But for geographers scale is as controversial a concept as space, provoking fundamental disagreement over whether it even exists as a product of practice or is simply an organizational device or 'intuitive fiction'. Nonetheless, as Andrew Herod has pointed out, '[r]egardless of how scale is thought of ontologically, it is important to understand that the ways in which [scales] ... are presented rhetorically can fundamentally shape how we conceptualize the world and its social processes' (Herod, 2003: 234). The concept of scale is obviously useful; but we are so familiar with the concept of scale in academic interaction that it has become difficult to 'unimagine' it, even temporarily, to envision global scholarly exchange situated in some different kind of space than that characterized by the different levels of the institutional, the local, the regional, the national, and the international. Still, the attempt to think geography without scale might sometimes be useful for that very reason, in that it might help us to acknowledge alternatives to the discursive framing power of nation-related scale in academic practice. Even if scale is a way of seeing things, put into practice, that way of seeing things—talked into familiarity and put into effect—will have practical results. Without conceptual alternatives, these results will seem given rather than produced and it will become even harder to imagine interactions in space in any other (non-scaled) ways.

For example: if IASA is routinely imagined as the layer above the national, or as the container which includes the national, and if membership, even of the individual scholar, is nationally-inflected, then various concrete results are likely to occur. It may be taken for granted, for instance, that it is important to make visible IASA's commitment to worldwide inclusiveness (and the spatial distribution of input and power) by providing data on the current global locations of its exec-



utive articulated by reference to national affiliations. This way of demonstrating internationalism may seem nothing but commonsense, hardly worth noting, but in fact the point here is precisely that the role of IASA as a worldwide collective is being confirmed, performed, and certified in a particular commonsense way, by reference to the national. This common sense is based on the shorthand of scale: the simplest, most economical, and most immediately visible way to demonstrate that IASA is an organization geographically defined and yet not defined by territorial borders being to shift down a level and make visible the spatial spread of the different nations 'represented' at the sub-international (in other words, national) level. Of course, this way of authenticating "worldwideness" is almost brutally reductive. The complexity of the position of any individual scholar in a worldwide geography of American studies is hardly even hinted at by a one-word reference to a single national affiliation. To note that a scholar lives and works in, say, Poland certainly says something about her physical location in absolute space, and probably implies other interesting things about her location in other kinds of (relative, relational, virtual, textual) space. But it leaves a great deal of information about her locations in various time-space dimensions completely invisible, despite the fact that these locations are just as geographical, just as real, just as much a part of the 'worldwide', and just as significant as her literal domestic and institutional location within the borders of a particular national territory.

For example: consider the fictional case of two scholars teaching together one year in an American studies program at a Japanese university. Both have PhDs from US institutions, but while one is a member of faculty at the Japanese university, the other has tenure at an American college and is currently working in Japan for a year as a visiting lecturer. The first has recently published an article on international diplomacy in the *Japanese Journal of American Studies*; the second is working on a book about US–Japan relations for a UK-based publisher. Even a brief thinking-through of the complex 'locations' of these two scholars should reveal some of the reductiveness of articulating geography in terms of national location. The privileging of the national scale in identifying geographical diversity smoothes over enormous inconsistencies. To take one obvious example, even though the Japanese university may have a (different) visiting lecturer in American studies every year, the classes taught by those lecturers and the work they produce in their visiting year will not commonly be understood to be part of *Japan-based* American studies. The usual assumption is that in taking their classes students will somehow become temporarily relocated, once a week, into a US educational context. Similarly, work researched and written in Japan by the visiting lecturer, even if it is subsequently presented at a European conference or published in the UK, will sooner or later have its complex geographical history erased and will become absorbed into the mainstream of work produced within and understood to be characteristic of the context of US-based American studies.

Meanwhile, the teaching and research of the fictional Japan-based professor continues to be understood as firmly located in Japan. Her work is part of 'Japanese American Studies'. This is despite the fact that much of her training and research

was and is undertaken in the US and Europe, that she is an active member of academic associations registered in several different countries, and that she is preparing to take a sabbatical devoted to archival research in London and Geneva. When she writes for an English-language, on-line journal like the *Japanese Journal of American Studies*, she consciously writes for a potentially worldwide audience. This fictional professor is also, like the fictional visiting lecturer, a member of IASA. Perhaps, during the year in which they are working in adjoining offices and teaching the same students, the two of them collaborate in putting together a panel proposal for the next IASA world congress, meeting over beers in the university's faculty house. Their collaboration emerges on the conference program, however, not as something collegial, invented across a table, but as something *inter-national*, pulled together across an ocean, with one of them representing Japan and the other embodying the USA.

Obviously, maintaining (and making visible the maintenance of) geographical diversity on a world congress program or within an international association's executive is a good thing, and the fact that the most intuitive way to display that diversity tends to be by reference to national location is unsurprising. Nonetheless, the fact that the "worldwideness" of the conference and of the association is made visible primarily by reference to *national* affiliations, with the implication that individuals enter the international from below, as national representatives, both results from and contributes to the maintenance of an academic geography within which, as Marston and her colleagues point out, 'levels of scale are in danger of becoming "conceptual givens", reflecting more the contingency of socially constructed political boundaries and associated data reporting than any serious reflection on socio-spatial processes' (Marston, Jones, and Woodward, 2003: 422). In this way, within the scalar structure reinforced by IASA's performance of the 'worldwide' as the 'inter-national', individual scholars are expected to access the international from the level below, stepping up from and representing clearly distinct national positions.

SITES

Is it possible to be 'international' without being national? In their argument in favor of 'expurgat[ing] scale from the geographic vocabulary' Marston and her colleagues would certainly seem to suggest that it is worth trying to imagine these two conventionally distinct layers flattened out. But their argument does not suggest that this flattened-out space is a space of unchained fluidity: in fact, they characterize the openness celebrated by 'flow-enthusiasts' as a 'reductive visualization of the world as simply awash in fluidities', an alternative visualization that ignores 'the large variety of blockages, coagulations and assemblages [...] that congeal in space and social life' (Marston, Jones and Woodward, 2005: 422). So, in these terms, a non-national international would be a space that was neither rigidly scaled nor completely free-flowing: in fact, it would have to be a space amenable to constant reinventions made in response to constantly changing on-the-ground (or on-the-net, or in-the-mail) spatial relations, able to adapt all the time to new



'coagulations and assemblages'. One such coagulation might emerge, for example, when the two fictional professors started working in offices on the same corridor in the same university despite still being positioned in the ordering logic of the national (and conventionally international) scale in distant national territories. Of course, the collaboration and interaction of individual scholars is enabled not just by the physical proximities of sharing workspace or meeting at conferences, but also by the relational proximities enabled by online discussion lists, by long-distance co-authoring, by external examining, or by the deeply-buried networkings of the peer review system. In the course of all kinds of collaborations and interactions taking place in all kinds of different spaces, scholars individually generate their own unique academic geographies, taking up relationally-defined positions in various visible and invisible spatial contexts and combining particular elements of location, affiliation, and access to create highly idiosyncratic geographical positions linking multiple spatial dimensions.

As a result, when scholars interact or intersect, it is not only different individuals but also different multi-dimensional geographies that are being brought into contact and woven together, even if only for a few moments. The resulting highly unstable social sites emerge in a space the geography of which is enormously oversimplified when imagined in the terms of the inter-national layer of conventional academic scale. So in this sense the flattening together of the international and the national does not necessarily reduce complexity or deny difference but rather, by rendering less powerful the conventionally dominant national distinction, it enables many more differences and 'switching points' of knowledge and power and energy to become visible. Each of these contingent sites that emerge through practices cutting across scale and distance are, of course, constantly interacting with other complex sites, merging and separating, coagulating and assembling. This seems to me to be akin to what Marston, Jones, and Woodward are describing in their discussion of locations that are locations despite not being, in fact, literally (physically) located: *milieu* or sites 'actualized out of a complex number of connective, potential processes'. In this understanding

a social site is not roped off, but rather [...] inhabits a 'neighbourhood' of practices, events and orders that are folded variously into other unfolding sites. Thus, its complexity arises as the result of a number of different interacting practices—each potentially connected to other contemporary sites—and orders. (Marston, Jones and Woodward, 2005: 426)

While this may sound very abstract, what I am reaching toward here in linking this concept of the 'social site' to the geography of the international or non-national association is the muddy opposite of abstraction. The language of 'event-spaces' or 'non/localized sites' may be unfamiliar, and the concepts may sound theoretical, but in practice, at ground level, we inhabit and practice the worldwide academy in exactly this messy, scrunched-together, folded-and-ripped kind of a way. This is certainly no more theoretical and abstract than the elegant simplicity of the local-regional-national-international scale; it's just a different way of sorting chaos.

The non/localized geography of sites that Marston, Jones, and Woodward propose to take up as a replacement for what they regard as the inhibiting architecture of hierarchical scale is intended to facilitate, they say, a greater range of 'entry points' into progressive politics and to make imaginable a non-scaled space that enables greater connective flexibility between social sites. They are focused on the issue of engagement with and resistance to global capitalism, not the geography of academic organizations. But leaving aside entirely the problem of whether it is possible or even responsible to work with the concept of non-scaled sites of resistance, I think the concept of 'entry points' invoked here can be usefully applied to the question of IASA membership, as can the push toward an unscaled space, which in the context of IASA might be viewed as worldwide interactions not assumed to be of necessity sorted by reference to national positions. It seems to me likely that some potential IASA members will be drawn to the organization precisely because of its relative openness and lack of a long-established, hierarchically scaled internal structure. The two fictional professors for whom national affiliation was such an oversimplification, for example, might well be attracted to an organization that was not-national, an organization in which unscaled assemblages and coagulations were expected and acknowledged. They might, for example, be attracted to an IASA in which the 'international' was understood in terms of openness of access rather than in terms of scaled structure.

Part of this openness is related precisely to the fact that, although IASA has so far tended to narrate its global reach and geographical diversity in terms of the inter-national, it is nonetheless possible to enter IASA directly, without going through a national association, and without declaring a national affiliation. For some members, one of the advantages of IASA is surely the extent to which it is *disconnected* from the structures of national associations. Individual members are able to sidestep the social and institutional complexities and obligations and hierarchies of sub-national, national, and multinational associations entirely and enter IASA from anywhere at all, several places at the same time, or nowhere in particular. Absent a supporting subscale of national territories, each with their own domestic center, IASA becomes able to generate a non-national, multi-dimensional space in which there are no centers at all, only contingent sites of interaction, and in which everybody is equally co-present in the here and now.

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COMPARATISMS

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Not literature but literatures; not works but networks.
(Roland Greene)

In her contribution to the 2004 American Comparative Literature Association report on the state of the discipline of comparative literature, Linda Hutcheon introduces an interesting metaphor for understanding current conditions in the field:

[...] perhaps the moment is ripe for looking for [...] positive terms of self definition for our discipline, paradoxically flourishing yet feeling beleaguered. I would like to suggest [...] [an] image [...] modest, but [...] apt: the humble but infinitely useful device without which few of us would travel these days to any other continent: the electrical converter. Like this compact, enabling device, comparative literature makes energy (in its case, intellectual energy) usable in different places and in different contexts. This intellectual energy is contrarian, even counter-disciplinary as well as meta-disciplinary [...]. And, if I may continue the electrical metaphor, another way to think about comparative literature's usable but not totally consumable energy—whether alternating or direct—is as power. (Hutcheon, 2006: 228–9)

Taking into consideration the 1994 American Comparative Literature Association decennial report's investigation of the impact of cultural studies, multiculturalism, and postcolonial studies on established notions of comparative literature, Hutcheon's analysis seeks to move the discipline beyond its traditional uncertainty in the face of its seemingly endless expansiveness and its lack of a clear-cut object, into a new understanding of its possibilities in the 21st century—which she also hopes will not entail burning bridges with its Eurocentric past, or what David Ferris has termed its 'Eur-iquity' (Ferris, 2006: 81). Through her inventive metaphor, however, Hutcheon introduces not only a new way of understanding the field, but also a new and innovative way of thinking about its larger cultural significance. What does it mean to consider comparative literature as it may be imbricated in notions of power? Does this 'power' refer to the significance of older conceptions of the discipline, in which it was held to an unbending roster of standards—'a knowledge of three literatures in their original language and a level of theoretical sophistication appropriate to the conceptual nature of a field no longer confined to national restrictions' (82)? Or might this 'power' mean something

else, something heretofore unexplored and unarticulated, surging below the critical surface, fully accessible—to follow Hutcheon's metaphor—only to those who have the right attachment, or critical method, to bring it to light?

Certainly, when considered in relation to comparative literature, the power of which Hutcheon writes must be a discursive one, and, like language, capable of molding itself to whatever is called for in each situation in which it finds itself. The mutability of linguistic signification in this context gives rise to a notion of 'comparatisms'—not one comparative literature, but many comparative literatures that, in their multiplicity, serve to reflect the hidden power to signify and to affect cultural understanding as identified in Hutcheon's imaginative metaphor. This unrecognized reality of multiplicity speaks directly to some of the most important concerns about the state of the field expressed in the 2004 ACLA report, as well as the three decennial reports which came before it.¹

The 2004 report answers the most pressing questions put forward by all of the ACLA reports regarding the identity of the field, through its own acknowledgement of the bankruptcy of singularity in conceptions of comparative literature. When comparative literature is imagined as one thing and one thing only to which it must refer, it becomes impossible to discern what 'institutional position it will be called upon to play as the university registers distinct shifts in what constitutes the meaning of foreignness as well as how it provides an educational experience' (Ferris: 82). Yet while practitioners of comparative literature seek to define, enumerate, codify and describe its 'new' form(s), comparative literature, through its corollary of comparative *practice*, is already exercising an unprecedented 'power', having 'won its battles', and now having found itself, through such practices, the 'daily currency of coursework, publishing, hiring, and coffee-shop discussion' (Saussy, 2006: 3).

Thinking about the field from this perspective provides a natural transition from which to consider its significance with regard to the new American studies. Inter-American, or hemispheric studies, as a comparative practice, necessarily represents one instance of the transformation of comparative literature, to which Hutcheon's notion of power can refer. Here, the age-old comparatist problem of language moves from simply a discussion of standards (whether or not a given text is to be read in the language in which it was originally written) to a discussion of how such standards may be derived in a more complicated world containing a veritable proliferation of languages, unequally valued—and, once (or if) such standards are determined, how exactly to implement them. In order to responsibly undertake the comparative literary study of all peoples and cultures of the Americas, it becomes immediately evident that language cannot be anything other than a crucial issue. It follows, therefore, that its discursive power to create, explain, interpret and/or produce cultural reality or realities must also be an inevitable consideration. Along with this realization, then, comes a host of questions, currently under-explored: which languages might best rep-

¹ See the 'Levin Report, 1965', the 'Greene Report, 1975', and the 'Bernheimer Report, 1993' in *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, pp. 21–48.



resent the literatures and cultures of the Americas? Should the emphasis be on languages such as French, Spanish, Dutch or Portuguese, or should proficiency in one or more 'native' languages also be sought? What sign of 'power' is given when a relevant language is included or excluded from consideration? What message might choosing English as a lingua franca send to non-English speakers? Which languages might best represent the goals and realities of hemispheric studies? What are the 'official' languages of the Americas, and how should these be determined? Where does/should/can the issue of translation fit in here? What kinds of implications with regard to potential audience do such linguistic choices entail? And, finally, how can issues of language be addressed within a comparative practice without losing the contours of comparative literature as a discipline, while on the one hand steering clear of the intellectual structures of the national literary department, and, on the other, embracing the sheer multiplicity of cultural and linguistic difference within the Western Hemisphere?

These are only a few of the problems surrounding the meaning of language in a comparative and hemispheric context. Between the lines, however, they represent a complicated tangle of cultural implications which can only be fully unraveled within new forms of comparative literature—comparatisms—unafraid to engage older models of comparative practice while simultaneously grasping their nascent, multiple, and wide-ranging discursive power. And it is only within these new and various comparatisms (like Inter-American studies) that what Hutcheon calls the 'intellectual energy' of the comparative approach finds its truest and most powerful expression, transformed into its deepest social effect—as the revelation of a boundless, democratic and inextricably intertwined cultural possibility only beginning to be unearthed and explored.

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WORLD-SYSTEMING AMERICAN STUDIES

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Thomas Kuhn argued that theoretical paradigms fall away when they become increasingly unable to explain the material effects that their evidence presents. Something similar is happening within American cultural studies with the recent calls to internationalize its perspective. What institutional impact this rhetoric will mean for the current hegemony by US-based scholars on the conference-journal-press nexus remains to be seen. The slogan, however, accurately reflects a demagnetization of the field's compass first noticeable with the growing interest in postcolonial theory. Could the study of a settler colony cite its own struggle against the European metropolis as authorizing credentials in the project of 'third-world' or 'Southern' anti-imperialism? Or was this desire to incorporate postcolonialist discourse another international division of labor with the consumption of theoretical models produced by those associated with the peripheral regions?

Postcolonialism's reception in American Studies can be traced through the ensuing interest in globalization and oceanic studies, like the New Atlanticism, but its best legacy might be with the interest in redefining American Studies through the historical sociology of world-systems analyses, mainly associated with the work of Immanuel Wallerstein.¹ The grand narrative of world-systems analyses offers a more judicious mechanism for evaluating the place of the United States within the world (which also has implications for how postcolonial studies defines itself), and one, for reasons explained below, that is more open for Americanists outside of US institutions to participate in as equals.

No program for a world-systems cultural studies automatically exists; it remains to be constructed, partially because world-systems scholars emphasize that they

¹ Because Wallerstein's writing builds specific arguments with reference to his entire oeuvre, readers can find it difficult to capture the horizon of a world-systems perspective in any single title. While Wallerstein's *Modern World-System* trilogy (Wallerstein, 1974; Wallerstein, 1979; Wallerstein, 1989) contains most of the basic formulations, new students might find a more enabling starting point with Wallerstein's and Goldfrank's article-length summaries of the project's formation (Wallerstein, 2004b; Goldfrank, 2000) as well as Wallerstein's monograph-length introduction (Wallerstein, 2004a). Other important landmarks to world-systems not authored by Wallerstein include those by Arrighi and Chase-Dunn. Shannon also provides a useful overview. For an attempt to provide a working kit for graduate students, see my syllabus on-line for a seminar on world-systems and world literature.



present a perspective, rather than a methodology, and partially because this approach, mainly developed within the intersection of political science, history, and sociology, lacks experience with cultural hermeneutics. While international relations has already had its 'moment' of encounter with world-systems writings, the one for cultural studies will inevitably have different preoccupations and points of debate.²

At its heart, world-systems analysis relates political geography and economic history by mapping long waves of economic expansion and contraction caused by the intrinsic falling rate of profit generated by capitalist regimes of accumulation against the spatial reorganization of commodity chains and production processes within a global core and periphery. These long-waves involve roughly fifty-year periods, so that world-systems is less interested in a historiography of specific dates, decades, or even generations. A commodity chain links all the exchanges between an object's production, its distribution through geographical transfers, and its consumption. The core is not a static point, but rather a zone, since it is analogous to the term 'middle-class', which refers to a set of elites who restlessly compete against each other for the accrued benefits from accumulation even as they collectively antagonize outsiders. Core regions consist of strong nation-states that define the traffic in goods and commodified labor-power to their advantage, while the periphery includes those weak state regions that become violently seized for the natural resources of its terrain, strategic location, and labor of its peoples. The contours of the topography alter in response to business cycles shaped by the law of (capitalist) Value as Marx described it. World-systems studies look specifically at the cycles within modern historical capitalism, which can often be characterized by the rise to power by an especially dominant State: for example, the Italian city-states of Genoa and Venice in the fifteenth-century, Spain in the sixteenth, the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth, England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the United States in the twentieth, and, most likely, China in the twenty-first.

With an explanation for why power relations and human geographies change, world-systems analyses can provide a more analytically rigorous context to our discussions, as well as reformulate our understanding of the historical formation of class and status groups. For instance, rather than talk generally about ethno-racial 'contact zones', world-systems notes that because the social action of the core region is too incommensurate with that of the periphery, the former requires a calibrating zone that can mediate and 'translate' the cultural and commodity economies of each sphere to one another. The semiperiphery is the sphere that receives, monetarizes, and forwards two kinds of commodities, the core's 'fictional' ones of credit, insurance, and contracts over rights to territorial claims and the periphery's labor-power and natural resources. As the 'transistor' space where two different segments of a commodity chain become articulated and receive their first

² For early debates about the encounter between world-systems and cultural studies, see King. Recent efforts to deploy a world-systems perspective for cultural and literary readings include Baucom, Derlu-gian, Dunaway, Moretti, and Shapiro (forthcoming).

pricing, the semiperiphery is the contact zone of socio-cultural transvaluation that makes it possible for the core and periphery to transmit value to the other through socially-conditioned markers, ranging from money to textual artifacts and performances of personal identities.

Because the semiperiphery is the space that mediates the traffic between the societies of the core and the periphery, it should not be considered as neatly contained within the borders of a particular political nation-state, but as a space that intersects and overlays different spatial levels. One example of semiperipheral spaces formed by core/periphery brackets is the city, which links the labor of domestic and foreign immigrants with an internationalized haute bourgeoisie's consumerism and financial dealings. Such a description of the metropolis as formed by cyclical pressures within the world-system overcomes the urban fetish of the 'global cities' school (Sassen, 1991), which often reifies and autonomizes urban experience; helps explain the mechanism of spatial scaling in ways more specific than language of the 'glocal'; and provides a more satisfying critical narrative for explaining immigration flows than the descriptive slogan of 'routes and roots', heard now in ASA circulars.

When the concept of the semiperiphery is thought of as a temporally-influenced materialization of the flows of social energy, it provides a new framework for rethinking the onset of new, mixed cultural forms such as those produced from the collision of highly institutionalized and consecrated 'high' (core) artifacts and popular, folk (peripheral) accents. Much of the arguments about cultural hybridity, heteroglossia, and modern/postmodern aesthetic bricolage could be meaningfully rescued from their current exhaustion when recuperated within a world-systems approach that explains why mixed forms might appear through the pressures of economic cycles that force new trajectories of human movement.

Another defining feature of world-systems approaches involves its emphasis on infrabourgeois competition, the squeezing out of the global petite bourgeoisie, as a key feature to cross-class conflict. Competition within the middle-classes has frequently been downplayed in favor of discussion of (racialized, engendered) bourgeois-plebeian/proletarian class struggle, but the one has no meaning without the other. For instance, while recent whiteness studies has foregrounded the social conditioning of racial identities as the attempt to construct a cross-class hegemony by encouraging the laboring-class to buttress an often national identity by assuming a position of superiority with regards to other exploited peoples, racial distinctions have also been produced as a result of jostling within the middle-classes for preeminence. If the Irish were made white in the nineteenth century, German-Americans were progressively threatened with exclusion from this privilege throughout the early twentieth century. Whiteness is a discursive field that establishes both inclusions and exclusions within hegemonic social formations.

By considering modern racial, gender, and sexual identities as status groups produced by the mesh of bourgeois competition and class-conflict, world-systems approaches have a de-essentializing explanation for the material produc-



tion of these identities via political economy that substantively differs from various flavors of deconstruction and may facilitate a reunion between the cultural materialism of Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson, and British Cultural Studies and later Foucauldian-derived modes of cultural discursivity. These two strands have driven major tendencies within American Studies, but their proponents often seem to glide alongside one another. American Studies has often held up its Emersonian lack of a method as a virtue, but this pragmatism has often functioned as a polite means of eliding theoretical encounters that ought to happen. A world-systems approach provides the rubric for such a meeting.

Its emphasis on constantly shifting rearrangements means that world-systems thought tends more to a Gramscian perspective on social and cultural formations that differs from either a formalist generic criticism or a left-wing tradition regarding social 'totalities' that runs through Lukács, the Frankfurt School, and Fredric Jameson. Because world-systems approaches descend more from the line of Lenin and Luxemburg on imperialism and Trotsky on combined and uneven development, they provide a means for American Studies to go beyond the cul-de-sac questions of cultural authenticity and the subversion-containment antimony by developing an underused intellectual resource of thought on mixed forms. Similarly, while a strand of postwar cultural studies is often mesmerized by the ethics of personal consumerism (Lee, 2000), world-systems approaches are more interested in treating consumption as a matter of collective markets. This may initially seem a turn away from questions of subjectivity and agency, but only because recent criticism has colored these terms in the tones of individual possession.

Because world-systems sees historical capitalism as operating in widening cyclical reformations, it suggests a new model of comparative studies that involves a non-sequential form of longitudinal study. By looking at similar analogous moments in the cycle, we have both a means of forming comparisons and an escape from arguments about a transhistorical 'spirit' or 'identity'. Simply because certain phenomena appear at similar moments in the cycle of American history with relation to the reformation of the world-system, this does not mean that a continuity or tradition exists. American cultural history has had several instances of evangelistic 'Great Awakening' tied to patriarchal cultural pessimism and imperialist landgrabs. Since these often emerge at moments of the transition between one phase of a long wave and another, we might consider them less as instances of essential characteristics than as responses by one alliance of middle-class interests in times of hierarchy reshuffling caused by changing global conditions. Furthermore, the comparison by dynamic similarities indicates ways in which a study of Spain, let's say, at one point in the cycle of its hegemony during the seventeenth century, may illuminate American developments at an analogous moment during the nineteenth, or how events in America's nineteenth century may foreshadow events in China or India later in our own. Because world-systems studies takes as its object the formation of historical capitalism as a non-geoculturally determined feature, it has no enduring commit-

ment to a 'eurocentrism' that sustains the separation of 'postcolonial' area studies from 'western' ones.

Non-US-based Americanists are ideally situated to explore and cultivate a world-systems approach because of its roots in and acceptance of Marx's economic and political writing. Understanding an intellectual tradition is not the same as endorsing it, yet any attempt to poach these terms without a sense of the underlying debates that produced those terms in the first instance will easily collapse and void their purchase. In the current climate, US colleagues exist within an environment that makes renewed collective education about the foundational terms and debates of world-systems analysis difficult to conduct. For scholars outside of this ideological pressure, our responsibility is to conduct the research our colleagues cannot.

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REDISCOVERING ISLAM THROUGH THE FULBRIGHT EXPERIENCE

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On a pleasant, breezy, mildly sunny evening in April 2005, in the 'city of Iowa city', Dr. Jane Desmond escorted me into the lecture hall in the McBride building. This was to introduce me to the young men and women who had opted for the Summer Seminar on 'US, Islam, and the Contemporary Crisis' that I was scheduled to teach as an international Visitor sponsored by Fulbright India and the International Forum of US Studies (IFUSS), directed by Drs Jane Desmond and Virginia Dominguez at the University of Iowa.

As I heard Jane speak about my career in International Relations, my interest in American Studies, my academic achievements, and my earlier visits to the University of Iowa, I surveyed the bright young faces of men and women in front of me—about thirty in all. I was informed earlier by the IFUSS office that it was the maximum permissible intake for a summer course, which had enthused me as well as alerted me to make this experience worth the efforts of all concerned.

The teaching of this course was meant to be an input in the ongoing efforts of all concerned within and outside the US to familiarize the young Americans with the basics of Islam as a religion, as a political movement, and as one of the most significant forces of contemporary international politics. This was to be discussed within the broad field of American Studies, within the parameters of US foreign policy, and with a specific emphasis on the Middle East.

What were the expectations of these young American men and women? Did they think of me as yet another apologist of terror, a proselytizer, a critic, an analyst, or as an academic version of their political 'Other'? Would they perceive me as an 'Agon' in terms of faith, race, nationality and culture? Or were they prepared to meet and interact with me within the secular domain of academia? Was it just the efficacy of acquiring a summer credit in the academic schedule that they had already chartered for themselves? Or was it a desire to discover the causes of the present turmoil? A turmoil that was caused by ignorance, misperceptions, and prejudice about the basics of the Islamic world by the Americans as much as by the prejudice of the Islamic world towards the US? If these young faces reflected doubts and disdain, they also communicated a need for familiarity, a certain eagerness to know, and a visible resolve to go through these four weeks of exchanges, dialogues and discussions.

The 'pro-seminar' (as it was described by IFUSS) on 'US, Islam and Contemporary Crisis' was designed within the format of contemporary International Relations/American Studies to introduce the basics of Islam, its growth and development in different parts of the world, and focused on the contemporary crisis in the Middle East in which US foreign policy remains a major actor. Meant primarily for those not familiar with Islam, the course focused not on theological issues and their myriad intricate legal implications but on those historical, social, and political factors that have led to the contemporary crisis in the Middle East. The major objective was to help provide an intellectual background for the understanding of Islam in its relationship with the US in the context of some recent developments in the Middle East through lecture/cum discussions in eight sessions of two hours, spread over four weeks. A brief response paper towards the end of the fourth week was to determine the credit at the end of the course.

These four weeks were to unfold for me a marvelous experience (and I believe for them too) of sharing worlds, of deconstructing the prejudices, of hoping for a common future for all humankind.

CRASH COURSE ISLAM

When I was informed about a year and half ago about the Fulbright program under the title 'Rapid Access to Islamic World', it reminded me of the US strategy of 'Rapid Deployment Force' in the Middle East. I was mildly amused at the routine American eagerness to accomplish a task quickly and to move on! Later communications revealed that the title was changed—appropriately—into 'Direct Access to Muslim World'. The described objectives provided a room for an interpretation of the present crisis between the US and the Muslims in political and historical terms rather than in terms of a clash between Christianity and Islam as faiths and civilizations.

Yet, again,¹ the Fulbright experience was to lead to my own re-education—this time about a faith into which I was born, a faith that I had taken for granted as a given. This reeducation implied for me a rediscovery of the histories and geographies of Islam within the context of International Relations, a renewed understanding of the basic meanings, spirit, and intent of the Islamic injunctions in the historical and social context over centuries, an exposure to the interpretations and misinterpretations of these injunctions by interest groups, and an understanding of the reasons behind the constant presence of the 'political' in Islam's imaginaries.

It also entailed a personal rediscovery at two levels. First, it enabled me, as an academic, to draw from different disciplines, to understand and to explain, to analyze, evaluate and to interpret, to associate with and to dissociate from the discourses across and within the disciplines, and finally to stake a claim for Islamic Studies within the broadening rubrics of American Studies. And, second, as an individual who happened to be a Muslim I became more convinced than ever before that

¹ I was a Senior Post-doctoral Fulbright Fellow at the Program in Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security (ACDIS) at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign during the year 1994–95. See Azam (1998).



much that is projected as authentic interpretations of Islamic injunctions in our times by some very vocal and powerful groups and individuals would never have been approved by the very founder of this faith! This exercise was to reaffirm my faith in my Islamic rights to seek 'Ilm' (knowledge) and to reclaim 'Ijtihad' (reasoning) under all circumstances, which would equip me to confront, explore, and understand worlds before, beyond, and after Islam.

The awareness of the existence of a vast body of literature on the different aspects of Islam as a political force, a social system, a fiercely monotheistic faith, and the reasons thereof, made my task intellectually rewarding and educative. As a Social Scientist, I had to interject this knowledge within the evolving parameters of US foreign policy towards Islamic lands over a hundred years. This was the most exciting part of the project, blurring the boundaries of International Relations and American Studies—the sites that have shaped my academic identity—through the use of Islam, which provided for an easy permeability between these two disciplines!

Though my students came from different milieus and from different disciplines, ranging from Nursing, Law, Anthropology, Arab Studies, Business Management, History, International Relations, to Philosophy, they shared a desire for a greater familiarity with Islam as much as they shared a critical objectivity in assessing the Foreign Policy compulsions of their own country. Women constituted more than two thirds of this group. There was one Hindu (female) and one Muslim (male) student, and the religious identities of the rest of the group, I assumed, ranged from Protestant, Catholic, and probably Jewish—information about this was neither sought nor offered.

What became obvious to me in the very early sessions was the complete absence of awareness of Islam's respectful acknowledgement of Christianity in the 'Quran' (the holy book of Islam). That a major chapter of 'Quran' is entirely devoted to Mary and narrates with reverence the anecdotes about her and Jesus was indeed a fresh revelation for my students with the exception of one young woman who was specializing in Arab Studies and had traveled all the way from New York to enroll.

The concerns expressed about the position of women in Islam were genuine and sincere, sharpened by the media coverage of the ghastly treatment of women by the Talibans in Afghanistan, and of the 'Hudood' laws in Pakistan.² That female genital mutilation is not a religious injunction in Islam but a continuation of tribal rituals preceding the advent of Islam was a pleasant surprise particularly to those students who came from the Nursing background. The discussions about the economic rights of daughters, the right of women to initiate the divorce proceedings, the religious obligations for yearly charities (Zakat), and the Quranic exhortations to pursue knowledge ('Ilm') across the universe, came as a surprise to all students. The damage that the so-called 'Islamic' administrations have done

² For Hudood Laws in Pakistan, see: <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/hudood.html> and http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/zia_po_1979/ord7_1979.html.

to this faith and its essence by their own distorted practices of faith even within the so-called Islamic world was obvious.

If the fate of the reformers and dissenters within the Islamic countries was lamented upon, so were the effects of Homeland Security and the Patriot Act within the US. For me, an Indian citizen outside the realms of both Islamic regimes and the US administration, who has been equally critical of certain aspects of both worlds, this was a defining moment—a moment in which we all, me and my students (Americans, Indians, Lebanese and others), cherished our small freedoms and hoped and prayed for the preservations of these freedoms across borders, cultures, faiths and political systems.

The role of the media—particularly certain television channels within the US—in further distorting the image of the Muslims in the US, drew a very lively debate, as did the criticism about the print journalism and the films. It was also very refreshing for me to listen to young Americans' critique of the Cold war priorities of the successive American administrations that eventually culminated in the creation of the Taliban and the present crises. The angst of young Americans about the impact of US involvement in 'other people's affairs' on their own lives, spoke volumes about the current emotional turmoil that they are trying to cope with.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH MUSLIMS? THREE PERSPECTIVES

I was pleasantly surprised at the impressions and reactions to the several topics discussed in and outside the lecture sessions. The response papers submitted at the end of the course revealed a certain freshness of approach and perceptions free of bias and marked by openness. Teaching about Islam's responses to US foreign policy within the wider canvass of American Studies introduced me to three very interesting authors renowned in their respective fields, who I may have missed within the prevailing discourses of International Relations—Ziauddin Sardar from the UK, Resat Kasaba from the US, and Irshad Manji from Canada. It was interesting to note that all three moved from their respective 'Islamist' backgrounds to, and have made homes in Western democracies, where their intellect has flourished and has been acknowledged, their opinions respected, and their works have received critical acclaim of a high order.

Though I had been familiar with some of the works of Ziauddin Sardar—a writer, broadcaster, and a cultural critic, I did not know his intellectual autobiography *Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journeys of a Skeptical Muslim*, which was published around the same time when I began my readings for the Fulbright course in Iowa.³ Blending his deep knowledge of Islam with his own experience of growing up as a young Muslim immigrant (from Pakistan) in the UK as well as his vast travels within the Islamic world, Sardar uses the techniques of travel writing, narrating facts with a self-reflexive subjectivity. His incisive analysis of the Muslim psyche rooted in faith but yearning for freedom seeks to reconcile western secu-

³ For a biography of Ziauddin Sardar, see: <http://www.criticalvoices.ie/speakers/display.asp?ArtistID=29>.



larism with the basics of Islam. *Desperately Seeking Paradise* was included as one of the core readings of the course 'US, Islam and the Contemporary Crisis', as I believe it is crucial for understanding the psyche of the contemporary 'Islamists' and their travails. Along with his analysis *Why Do People Hate America*, Sardar's book provided for me a perfect blend of the main themes involved in the course.

Narrating his understanding of Sardar one of the students of my class had this to say: 'I was struck by what I felt were several similar experiences that I felt growing up as a Christian. The struggle to come to terms with faith appears to be universally difficult for those open-minded rational thinkers that question the surface value of certain concepts. His book provides an interesting read because each chapter is continually filling in a historical back-story on some aspects of Islamic history'. And, 'It was surprising to see him remain a Muslim despite his seemingly overpowering doubts'. And finally, 'Most likely, no true faith can come without doubt, and so skepticism may provide the best way for getting to paradise in the end'.

I encountered Resat Kesaba—a Muslim of Turkish origin, presently an American citizen and a professor at the Henry Jackson School of International Studies at University of Washington, Seattle—in Prof. Virginia Dominguez's class. She had invited me to a discussion of his public lecture delivered in the wake of 9/11, on October 25th 2001. It was a good opportunity for me to know the response of young Americans to this lecture five years after 9/11. Entitled 'Do They Really Hate US?' Kesaba's talk formed a sequel to Sardar's *Why Do People Hate America?*

Kesaba reflected not just on the angst of being a Muslim in America after 9/11 but also provided a different contextualization of 'they' and 'us'. The 'they' of his talk—the perpetrators of the 9/11 attack were to be understood as 'a specific, ideologically motivated group with an extremely narrow interpretation of Islam'. The 'us' included not just the Americans, the perceived political enemies of the attackers. Rather, the victims of the attack came 'from many nations, varied in race, religion and economic status' and were the representatives of a 'true cross road of American society, a truly modern society full of people who crossed boundaries and borders every day'. He concluded that 'those who hate "us" must hate modern society' adding that the attackers had 'demonstrated this with deeds and words'.

The note of apology, studied caution, and veiled complaints in Kesaba's talk were to be replaced by different idioms, and modes of complaint in speeches that have followed more recently by others occupying public offices. Partaking in Virginia's discussions and analysis along with her students brought a new dimension to my understanding of the young Americans' response to the present crisis outside the vocabulary of Political Science and International Relations.

Listening to Irshad Manji and to the discussions after her public lecture entitled 'What is wrong with Islam?' was refreshingly different.⁴ Irshad Manji, a Muslim of South Asian origin born in Kampala, Uganda, arrived in Richmond, British

⁴ For more details, see Irshad 2002 and 2003. For her biography, see her official website: <http://www.muslim-refusenik.com/aboutirshad.html>.

Columbia as a child along with her family escaping the edicts of Idi Amin. Now a Canadian citizen, Manji has been an activist, a journalist, an author, and is widely known and admired for her courage in calling for reforms in Islam.

Here was a young Muslim woman critic of Islam, fearlessly sharing her views on a public platform, not only about Islam but also about her youth in Canada, her personal preferences and her encounters with her critics. She was articulate, intelligent, attractive, courageous, and a very engaging speaker. I wondered how fortunate it must be to be placed in open societies, in environments that nurture freedom and individual choices and provide space for fearless expressions of individual freedom. As I listened to her, I could not but feel proud of the Mukhtaran Mais and the other unsung heroines in Islamic societies, who still make a difference by sheer courage and fortitude while suffering the worst possible fate that one can imagine, and who remain the symbols of infinite possibilities of what a human will can accomplish within the formats of their faith.⁵

During the discussions we were also exposed to a mild critique of Manji's recollections of her Islamic childhood when a senior woman professor from Cairo pointed out that one cannot generalize about 'growing up Muslim', and that these narratives reveal the impact of multiple modernities on specific societies, under different historical, social and economic conditions. She pointed out that Manji's experience and encounters with the teachers of Islamic theology were indeed sad, but all this need not be true of other societies and other cultures. I felt that my own experience has been very different from that of Manji's and was closer to that of Zia Sardar's, where the task of inducting youngsters in the teaching of Islam was performed by responsive, enlightened and open minds (in Sardar's case by his mother).

I came back with a feeling that the content of Manji's talk merited the title 'What is wrong with Muslims?' for that appears to be one of the most pertinent questions of our times.

To be able to locate, select, adopt, and adapt these and other varied discourses to the disciplinary rigor of my own discipline of International Relations; to be able to use these as tools of understanding the contemporary scene in American Studies; and to critically resituate political Islam in contemporary times; these were the most precious rewards of this Fulbright program that came to me as 'an experience of the mind' (see Phelps 2005), helping me to rediscover myself yet again in relation to worlds and peoples, faiths and systems that I believed I had always known and yet discovered had not known enough. And, therefore, the quest continues.

⁵ Mukhtaran Mai was the Pakistani woman who was subjected to extremely inhuman treatment but fought her way back and now devotes her time and money to the education of girls in her community. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mukhtaran_Bibi&oldid=62909271.



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AMERICAN DIPLOMACY AT WORK: AN AMERICAN STUDIES CONFERENCE IN BEIRUT

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I would like to share with the IASA community my candid impressions of an 'American studies' conference I attended during the past academic year (18–21 December 2005), in Beirut, Lebanon, a city that has recently been tragically at the forefront of the news. The conference was entitled 'America in the Middle East/The Middle East in America' and took place at a point in time when, after a period of recovery from the ravages of the quarter-of-a-century-long Civil War (1975–2000), Beirut had again plunged into a kind of torpor with the assassination, first of Rafik Hariri (1944–2005), the former prime minister (1992–1998 and 2000–2004) who had literally rebuilt Beirut after the Civil War, and then of journalist and member of parliament Gibran Tuani, the son of a well-known personality in Lebanon. This last murder happened just a few days before the conference was to start, and the organizers had to coax the participants to attend, reassuring them (through e-mail messages) that there was no risk. Indeed there was none, but in the meantime Beirut had become a pallid imitation of what it once was.

The rationale of the conference, as stated in the call for papers, was that '[t]he September 11 attacks and the Iraq War have thrust the people of the Middle East and North America into direct and intense contact. The goal of this conference is to explore these current encounters through contextualizing and questioning'. What I remember especially about the conference is the fact that its participants were not the usual ASA–EAAS–IASA crowd; and that it was, more than anything else, a subtle American diplomatic endeavor, although perhaps consciously not so devised by its organizers, which showed once more to what extent American studies is enmeshed in international politics—still, a quarter of a century after the end of the Cold War.

The conference took place at AUB, as it is called, the anagram standing for 'American University of Beirut', a 'private, independent' institution of higher education. Once back in Turkey after the conference, to my surprise I found out that the way I pronounced the name of the university sounded to my compatriots like *Eyyoubi*, a word familiar to them, and they found it natural that there should be such



a university in that area.¹ It must sound that way also to many in the region, for whom the word is even more familiar, thus allowing the university to blend smoothly into the life of the land. In fact, AUB was initially a college founded by US missionaries in the second half of the nineteenth century when Beirut was one of the major cities of the Ottoman empire.² Alongside AUC (the American University in Cairo) and AUCA (the American University in Central Asia located in Bishkek, founded after the demise of the Soviet Union), AUB is now one of the showcases of American culture outside the USA. The institution seems to emanate the same atmosphere as the Salzburg Seminar: there is this eerie, surreal feeling that some upper-class New England establishment has been transplanted on alien soil.

The conference was the first major activity of a center that had opened in 2004 at AUB: CASAR, the Center for American Studies and Research, run by an able and hardworking group of American scholars headed by Patrick McGreevy, professor of geography on leave from Clarion University in the USA. What is noteworthy about this center is that the Saudi prince, Alwaleed bin Talal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, whose gift of \$10 million after 9/11 to NYC was turned down by Mayor Rudolf Giuliani, has donated \$5.5 million of that amount to AUB for the establishment of CASAR.³ One recurrent question during coffee breaks at the conference was why the Prince, after having been snubbed by Americans,⁴ would want to give money to a new center of American Studies in Beirut rather than to one of the local institutions in the region, which often lack sufficient financial means. The conference that had convened in 2003 in Beirut to discuss the planning of the center had assembled an international group of American studies scholars, such as officials of major international American studies associations like the EAAS, and for instance Kousar J. Azam of Hyderabad (plenary speaker at the IASA conference in Leiden), who does not mince her words when she wishes to criticize the USA. This had given the impression that, just like EAAS membership is on principle composed of non-Americans, the center would on principle be operated by non-Americans.

The participants of the conference constituted four distinct groups: the first and largest group consisted of American studies scholars from Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, who usually do not have the financial means to attend American studies conferences in the West; second, there were some European scholars whose research touched upon matters taken up at the conference; the third group comprised a number of American studies scholars from the USA

¹ The Eyyoubi state (1171–1348) was founded by Saladdin Eyyoubi (1138–1193), known in history as having been victorious over the Crusaders. Eyyoub is also a common boy's name.

² At that point, it was called the Syrian Protestant College. At the time of its establishment in 1866, it was the second American institution of higher learning outside the USA, Robert College—which opened in 1863 in Constantinople, the then capital of the Ottoman empire (today Istanbul)—being the first. It became the University of Beirut in 1920 and is today one of the best universities in the region.

³ He gave the remainder to AUC for the establishment of a similar center.

⁴ The reason his gift was turned down was, as widely reported in the US press in October 2001, because he had said the USA should 'reexamine its policies in the Middle East and adopt a more balanced stand toward the Palestinian cause'.

who had taught in the area in the past and wished to return even if for a short visit; and, finally, there were a number of Americans having little or nothing to do with American studies, but who occupied a post in one of the Arab or other Middle Eastern states. As a result, the conference was as much about the Middle East and its culture as it was about the USA and US culture, since the fourth group wished to know more about the Middle East itself. This was apparent from day one, from the choice of the keynote speaker, Juan Cole, a scholar of Middle Eastern studies at the University of Michigan and the current president of MESA (Middle Eastern Studies Association). Cole, one of the authorities on the region, did not even bother to couch his words within an American studies rhetoric. He spoke on the 'Library of Americana Translation Project', undertaken by the Global Americana Institute of which he is the president. The Institute wishes to have the classics of American thought and history (essays by Thomas Jefferson as well as those of the other founding fathers, Martin Luther King Jr.'s letters and speeches, the works of Susan B. Anthony, etc.) translated into Arabic. We were made to understand that the Institute would realize this project via donations, and Cole spoke with the assurance of a man who seemed to have already obtained substantial contributions.

I should add that, while most participants enjoyed their stay in the luxurious four-star hotel *Le Méridien Commodore*, as well as being wined and dined (those whose plane tickets had been paid by CASAR were especially grateful), all this talk of money going around, while scholars of the region doing American studies work are not getting any, was rather frustrating to listen to.

Despite being a new center, CASAR churned out a full-blown conference, with concurrent sessions that had presentations as good as at any such gathering. McGreevy himself has published a report on the conference in the ASA newsletter of March 2006. All in all, there were more presentations on Arab-Americans and Middle-eastern-Americans in general and on fiction written by these than are found usually at the ASA, IASA, MELUS, or MESEA conferences, and this was one of the pluses of the conference. One session all participants attended was a workshop on 'American Studies in the Middle East', but naturally there were so many participants wishing to express their views on the subject or relate past teaching experiences that each of them could only speak for a few minutes, and not much came out of it. The suggestion that an association of Middle Eastern Americanists (a kind of regional EAAS) should be formed, and which would thus have to contain a considerable Israeli contingency, was met with icy silence by Arab participants who in other instances were voluble and ready to make plans.

The closing speech was given by Melani McAlister (George Washington University), author of *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945–2000* (2001). In the spring of 1998, Melani McAlister, as the writer of one of the best dissertations in American studies at the time, had been selected to present the theme of her dissertation at a seminar Werner Sollors organized at Harvard University. In November 2001, right after 9/11, when the American scholar scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the ASAT (American Studies Association of Tur-



key) convention of that year got cold feet and decided not to fly to Turkey, Melani volunteered—and was the keynote speaker. In short, hers is one of the meteoric careers I have witnessed during the last few years. At the CASAR conference she spoke about the current activities, or as she put it, the ‘global visions’ of the American Evangelists. To one of the questions that were addressed to her afterwards, she made this remark, which I think sums up the main idea of her lecture: ‘Instead of making fun of and/or belittling the Evangelist movement, what you should do is realize that Evangelism is here to stay and that it is what is shaping US foreign policy at present’. After the movie clips she had shown and the facts she had given (which showed the Evangelists as an aggressive, belligerent group that would stop at nothing), these words were like a threat, almost like a slap in the face. For those from the Middle East, it was as if they had been made to assemble at this conference to get the *coup de grâce*, to abandon all hope. I must say that because of this lecture it is with a bitter taste that the conference ended.

Nevertheless, with a day-long trip to Baalbek that was offered the next day by CASAR, which included wine-tasting in a winery run by monks in the Bekaa valley (yes, it is not only Hezbollah’s abode), the conference appeared to me as one of those subtle exercises of American diplomacy—of the kind that is at work, for example, at the Salzburg Seminar. While ostensibly it was the Saudi Prince’s largesse that made the CASAR conference possible, in the end it was a very American affair: smoothly run, it could have taken place on US soil, with all the patrician amenities thereof. The Americans who attended got an impression of the outlooks, the feelings and sensibilities of the inhabitants of the region that were, most of the time, already packaged for them in the scholarly discourse of their colleagues from the various countries in the Middle East.

Were some people already calculating possible future reactions? I would conclude by saying that the intricacies of the Saudi-USA connection need to be probed further than they have been so far.

And today, it is with great sadness that I write these lines, thinking all the while of all the local people I met then, and not knowing what their fate has been. Patrick McGreevy, to whom I wrote when the bombings started, has been sending e-mail dispatches since. Unlike many foreigners who left as soon as it was possible, Patrick and his wife decided to stay, and are there right now, undergoing all the bombings. I would like to end by paying tribute to the courage they have shown.

Çeşme, Turkey, August 2006

WORKS CITED:

- McAlister, M. (2001) *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945–2000*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- McGreevy, P. (2006) ‘America in the Middle East/The Middle East in America’, *American Studies Association Newsletter*. 29 (1): 1, 13.

INTERNATIONAL AMERICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION (IASA) 3RD WORLD CONGRESS, 20–23 SEPTEMBER 2007 TRANS/AMERICAN, TRANS/OCEANIC, TRANS/LATION

If 1492 marks the advent of modernity, this congress will investigate the implications of the Columbian exchange on the development of culture and identity in the Americas. As a result of the exchange of seeds, plants, animals, the exchange of languages and transplantation of peoples, particularly the extraordinary reach of the African slave trade, the subsequent arrival of peoples from Asia, and the impact of violence against Native peoples in the New World, the Americas have been a particularly fruitful site for exploring the meaning of modernity.

We welcome comparative papers apropos of the congress title that explore themes across national geographies in the Americas, across the Atlantic and Pacific spaces of intercontinental contact, or across language traditions in the Americas. We also welcome papers focused on particular nationalities, including the United States, that help to illuminate the effects and ramifications of a modernity fostered by exploration, conquest, settlement, and globalization. The aim of the congress is to address, among others, the following questions: What kind of entity called 'America' is it we study when approached across national, oceanic, or language boundaries? How do we reconcile the liberating potential of hybridity, creolization, or other forms of transculturation in light of the histories of forced transplantation and migration and oppression that characterize much American experience? What are the future prospects for an American culture considered in this broad context? What is the role of a globalized American culture produced by the United States thwarting or unwittingly enabling the emergence of new cultural forms? How have the modern media, modern means of transportation, and other means of intercultural communication shifted the meaning of 'America' since early colonial contacts? What characterizes sites of resistance to the homogenizing effects of a globalized American culture?

As an interdisciplinary organization, IASA welcomes papers and workshops that address these and related questions in the context of analyses of cultural, historical, political, and theoretical material.

Venue

Faculty of Letters, University of Lisbon

Deadlines

— 300-word abstracts and proposals for thematic workshops to be submitted no later than 31 December 2006.

— Notifications of acceptance will be sent out no later than 28 February 2007.

Official languages of the congress: English, French, Portuguese, Spanish

Congress URL: www.iasa2007.eu

E-mail address: iasa2007@fl.ul.pt

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International American Studies Association (IASA)

3º Congresso, 20–23 de Setembro, 2007

Trans/americano, trans/oceânico, trans/lativo

Se 1492 assinala o advento da modernidade, este congresso examinará as implicações das viagens de Colombo para o desenvolvimento da cultura e identidade das Américas. Como consequência da troca de sementes, plantas e animais, da permuta de línguas e da transplantação de povos, em especial do extraordinário alcance do comércio de escravos em África, da subsequente chegada dos povos asiáticos e do impacte da violência contra os nativos do Novo Mundo, as Américas têm constituído um espaço privilegiado para a exploração do sentido da modernidade. Convidamos à apresentação de propostas de comunicação de índole comparatista investigando temas que cruzem as geografias nacionais das Américas, os espaços de contactos intercontinentais tais como o Atlântico e o Pacífico, ou as línguas das Américas e suas tradições. Serão também tidas em consideração comunicações que tratem de nacionalidades específicas, incluindo os EUA, e sejam especialmente relevantes para a clarificação dos efeitos e ramificações de uma modernidade engendrada pela exploração, conquista, colonização e globalização. É propósito do congresso abordar, entre outras, as seguintes questões: que espécie de entidade é esta chamada 'América' que estudamos através de fronteiras nacionais, oceânicas e linguísticas? Como conciliar o potencial libertador de formas de transculturação como a hibridização e a crioulanização, por exemplo, com as *histórias* de transplantação e migração violentas e de opressão que caracterizam muita da experiência americana? Que perspectivas se abrem no futuro a uma cultura americana considerada neste contexto alargado? Pode uma cultura americana globalizada produzida pelos EUA funcionar como obstáculo ao surgimento de novas formas culturais ou, pelo contrário, involuntariamente facilitar a sua promoção? De que modo os modernos meios de comunicação, de transporte ou de contacto intercultural têm transformado o significado de 'América' desde os tempos coloniais? O que caracteriza os lugares de resistência aos efeitos homogeneizadores de uma cultura americana globalizada? Enquanto organização interdisciplinar, IASA convida à apresentação de comunicações e 'workshops' sobre estes problemas, não excluindo outros que com eles se relacionem, no contexto de análises de natureza cultural, histórica, política e teórica.

Local

Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa

Prazos

- Até 31 de Dezembro de 2006: entrega de resumos de comunicações de 300 palavras e propostas de 'workshops' temáticos.
- Até 28 de Fevereiro de 2007: envio de notificações de aceitação.

Línguas oficiais do congresso: português, espanhol, francês, inglês.

Calls for Papers and Contributions

URL do congreso: www./iasa2007.eu

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International American Studies Association (IASA)

3º Congreso, 20–23 de septiembre de 2007

Trans/americano, trans/oceánico, tra(ns)ducción

Si 1492 marca la llegada de la modernidad, este congreso examinará las implicaciones de los viajes de Colón para el desarrollo de la cultura y de la identidad de las Américas. Como consecuencia del intercambio de semillas, plantas y animales, del contacto entre lenguas y del trasplante de poblaciones enteras – especialmente la extraordinaria influencia del comercio de esclavos africanos, la posterior llegada de población asiática y el impacto de la violencia contra los nativos del Nuevo Mundo –, las Américas han venido representando un espacio privilegiado para la exploración del sentido de la modernidad. Invitamos a presentar propuestas de comunicación de naturaleza comparatista, que investiguen temas que crucen las geografías nacionales de las Américas, los espacios de contacto intercontinentales, como el Atlántico o el Pacífico, o las lenguas de las Américas y sus tradiciones. También serán consideradas comunicaciones que se ocupen de nacionalidades específicas, incluyendo los EE.UU., y que sean especialmente relevantes para iluminar los efectos y ramificaciones de una modernidad engendrada por la exploración, conquista, colonización y globalización. El propósito del congreso es abordar, entre otras, las siguientes cuestiones: ¿qué especie de entidad es ésta llamada ‘América’, que estudiamos a través de fronteras nacionales, oceánicas y lingüísticas? ¿Cómo conciliar el potencial libertador de formas de transculturación como la hibridización o la criollización, por ejemplo, con las *histoRIAS* de migración y trasplante violentos y de opresión que caracterizan gran parte de la experiencia americana? ¿Qué perspectivas se abren en el futuro a una cultura americana considerada en este contexto amplio? ¿Puede una cultura americana globalizada producida por los EE.UU. funcionar como un obstáculo para la aparición de nuevas formas culturales o, por el contrario, puede facilitar involuntariamente su promoción? ¿De qué modo los modernos medios de comunicación, de transporte o de contacto intercultural han venido transformando el significado de ‘América’ desde los tiempos coloniales? ¿Cuáles son las características de los lugares de resistencia a los efectos homogeneizadores de una cultura americana globalizada? Como organización interdisciplinar, IASA les invita a presentar comunicaciones y ‘workshops’ sobre estas cuestiones, sin excluir otras relacionadas con ellas, en el contexto de análisis de naturaleza cultural, histórica, política y teórica.

Lugar

Facultad de Letras de la Universidad de Lisboa

**Plazos**

— Hasta el 31 de diciembre de 2006: entrega de resúmenes de comunicaciones de 300 palabras y propuestas de 'workshops' temáticos.

— Hasta el 28 de febrero de 2007: envío de notificaciones de aceptación.

Idiomas oficiales del congreso: español, francés, inglés, portugués

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International International American Studies Association (IASA)

3ème Congrès, 20–23 Septembre, 2007

Trans/américain, trans/océanique, trans/latif

S'il est vrai que 1492 signale l'avènement de la modernité, ce congrès examinera les incidences des voyages de Christophe Colomb sur le développement de la culture et de l'identité des Amériques. L'échange de semences, de plantes et d'animaux, mais aussi de langues, la transplantation de peuples, et notamment l'extraordinaire portée du commerce des esclaves en Afrique, puis l'arrivée de populations asiatiques et l'impact de la violence exercée contre les indigènes du Nouveau Monde, tout cela a fait des Amériques un espace d'exploration privilégié du sens de la modernité. Nous vous invitons à présenter des propositions de communications à caractère comparatiste par la recherche de thèmes qui entrecroisent les géographies nationales des Amériques, les espaces de contacts intercontinentaux, tels que l'Atlantique et le Pacifique, ou les langues et les traditions des Amériques. Nous tiendrons compte également de communications traitant de nationalités spécifiques, y compris les USA, et apportant une contribution importante à l'élucidation des effets et des ramifications d'une modernité générée par l'exploration, la conquête, la colonisation et la globalisation. L'objectif du congrès est d'aborder, entre autres, les questions suivantes: quelle sorte d'entité est donc cette «Amérique», que nous étudions au travers de frontières nationales, océaniques et linguistiques? Comment concilier le potentiel libérateur de formes de transculturation, comme l'hybridisation et la créolisation, par exemple, avec les violentes histoires de transplantation, de migration et d'oppression, qui caractérisent pour une bonne part l'expérience américaine? Quelles perspectives s'ouvrent-elles à une culture américaine considérée dans ce contexte élargi? Une culture américaine globalisée, produite par les USA, peut-elle fonctionner comme un obstacle au surgissement de nouvelles formes culturelles ou au contraire faciliter involontairement leur promotion? Dans quelle mesure les moyens modernes de communication, de transport ou de contact interculturel ont-ils transformé le sens du mot «Amérique» depuis les temps coloniaux? Qu'est-ce qui caractérise les lieux de résistance aux effets homogénéisants d'une culture américaine globalisée? Comme organisation interdis-

Calls for Papers and Contributions

ciplinaire, IASA invite à présenter des communications et des ateliers sur ces problèmes, sans en exclure d'autres ayant des rapports avec eux, dans le contexte d'analyses de caractère culturel, historique, politique et théorique.

Lieu du congrès

Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Lisbonne

Délais

— Les résumés des communications (300 mots) et les propositions d'ateliers thématiques doivent nous parvenir jusqu'au 31 décembre 2006.

— Les avis d'acceptation seront envoyés jusqu'au 28 février 2007.

Langues officielles du congrès: français, anglais, espagnol, portugais

URL du congrès: www.iasa2006.eu

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MELUS–INDIA & MELOW: CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MELUS (The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States India Chapter) & MELOW (The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the World) will hold a conference on LITERATURE IN TIMES OF VIOLENCE in Chandigarh, on: 22–24 March 2007

Theme for MELUS India—Literature in Times of Violence: The American Response

The Keynote Address will be delivered by Prof. Emory Elliott Distinguished Professor of English University of California Riverside, CA

Theme for MELOW—Contemporary World Literatures in Times of Violence

This will be the Eighth International Conference of MELUS–INDIA and the Second International Conference of MELOW. The MELOW Conference will dove-tail into the MELUS-India Conference.

The major theme—

Out of the quarrels with ourselves, if we believe Yeats, literature is created. In fact it is not just the quarrel with ourselves but also the turbulence of the times that is responsible for the production of literature. These are times of upheaval and violence when one is assaulted physically, emotionally and psychologically from all quarters. Despite the trauma, however, one survives and carries on the best way possible. Artists continue to produce works of art, musicians create music and writers compose their masterpieces. But, one may ask, how does literature respond



to the legacy of mass violence and political conflict? Does the creative mind buckle under the pressures or does it rise above them all to create mournful music? And how does the reader respond to the various tensions that go into the making of great literature? What models are available for understanding these literary responses to the turbulence of the times? Do poetry, fiction, drama and film help us find words and images to understand national catastrophe? Can literature narrate mass violence? Does it try to escape violence? Can it be a substitute for violence? Is it a cure or a panacea?

We are looking for papers that discuss the theme, problem, object, or practice of violence.

The MELUS–India 2007 Conference will explore these and related issues, taking up diverse genres literature, cinema, theatre, media, popular culture, etc. The focus will be American Literature but papers which cross borders and disciplines are encouraged. 250–word abstracts related to the theme are invited.

Tentatively, the conference will be divided into (but not restricted to) the following panels:

- The American Frontier—violence and conquest
- The Civil War—Edmund Wilson's Patriotic Gore
- Racial Violence—Black Experience
- Domestic Violence—confessional women's poetry
- Vietnam Experience
- Film and Fiction after 9/11
- Violence and Visual Interpretation
- Violence and Hollywood Film/Reggae and hate music
- Empire and Egalitarianism Issues of History, Empire and Culture in American Literature.

The MELOW 2007 Conference will explore the same issues, focusing on literatures of the world. 250–word abstracts are invited, related to literature of the last fifty years.

- The tentative division of panels will be:
- Ethnic violence
- Gender related violence
- Violence of Partitions and Borders
- Revolutionary Violence
- Violence of Exile and Displacement
- Violence and the African Experience
- Relationship between boundaries and violence
- The Holocaust experience
- Violence of exile

For both conferences we are seeking papers that deal with issues related but not confined to race, ethnicity, identity, and gender, in literary texts, films, popular culture, media. Comparatist and interdisciplinary perspectives are encouraged. 250 word abstracts may be emailed latest by Sept 30, 2006, (as part of the text and NOT as attachment) to mjaidka@sify.com, with a copy to anilraina@glide.net.in

Members and non-members of MELUS–India / MELOW may submit abstracts (with the understanding that they will attend the conference). Abstracts received will then be examined by the Conference Committee. Delegates whose abstracts are accepted will be invited to submit individual papers.

Abstracts may be submitted on any topic that relates to the themes of MELUS–India or MELOW but only one abstract will be accepted from an individual. All abstracts should include the following information:

- Name, brief CV and contact information of the participant.
- Whether the abstract is being proposed for MELUS–India or MELOW.
- Title of the proposed paper.

Calls for Papers and Contributions

— Main issues to be examined in the paper.

Note: Membership of MELUS–India / MELOW is not required at the time when abstracts are submitted. Non-members may join the Association after the acceptance of their papers.

Deadlines: Abstracts of Individual papers to be sent by: August 30, 2006. Acceptance of Individual abstracts will be dispatched by: Oct 1, 2006.

For any clarification contact: Manju Jaidka (Secretary, MELUS–India, MELOW), email: mjaidka@sify.com or Anil Raina (Treasurer), email: anilraina@glide.net.in.

ACLA — TRANS, PAN, INTER: CULTURES IN CONTACT AMERICAN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING CALL FOR PAPERS

Puebla, Mexico
April 19–22, 2007
www.acla.org

Co-Chairs: Lois Parkinson Zamora, Enrique Pérez Castillo, Michael Schuessler

Program Chairs: Efraín Kristal, Kathleen Komar

Organizing Committee: Margaret Higonnet, Miguel Cabañas, Wendy Faris, Dan Russek, Oscar Fernández

Advisory Committee: Djelal Kadir, Silvia Spitta, Adriana Méndez Rodenas, George Handley, David Damrosch, Christopher Winks, Nancy Worman, Haun Saussey, Tobin Siebers, Peter Connor, Dan Chamberlain, Deborah Cohn

Contact information: Lois Parkinson Zamora: lzamora@uh.edu
or Michael Schuessler: mschuess@barnard.edu

Trans, Pan, Inter: Cultures in Contact

We encourage papers on all comparative topics, not just those dealing with Mexico or the Americas. Below we suggest subtopics but, as usual, individuals may suggest seminar topics of their choosing. Proposals for seminars are to be submitted to the ACLA website by October 1, 2006, and individual paper proposals by November 1, 2006.

- Crossing Borders and Boundaries of All Kinds
- Mythic Subtexts, Modern Texts
- Commodities and Cultures
- Literary Translation: Textual and Contextual
- Across Art Forms and Disciplines: Theory and Practice
- Comparative Cuisines
- Travel Literature
- Transculturation, Mestizaje, Creolization
- Transatlantic and Transpacific Encounters
- Indigenous Literatures and Languages in Mexico and Beyond
- Challenges of Non-Western Cultures to Critical Theory
- Gendered Transactions: Literary and Cultural Constructions of Sex and Sexuality
- Comparative Approaches to Literatures of the Americas
- Colonialism and Classicism



- Caribbean Languages and Literatures
- Jewish Literature in the Americas
- Canada and Mexico: “So Far from God, So Close to the United States”
- Immigration and Exile in/to the Americas
- US Latino Literatures
- Latin American Studies and Inter-American Studies
- Mechanisms of Literary and Cultural Production
- Borders: US-Mexico, Mexico-Guatemala, Mexico-Belize
- Performance in Mexico
- Popular Culture and Literature
- Ecocritical Approaches in Comparative Context
- Violence and Testimonial Literature

About Puebla

Puebla is located 50 miles southeast of Mexico City at an altitude of 7100 feet, in a broad valley bordered on the west by the Sierra Nevada and its legendary volcanoes Popocatepetl and Iztaccíhuatl, and on the east by the Sierra Madre Oriental and its snow-capped volcano La Malinche. Puebla preserves a strong colonial flavor. Over five hundred buildings and seventy churches, many in the Baroque style, have been beautifully restored in the city center, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987. The folk Baroque flourishes in nearby villages, where churches reflect the syncretic forms that resulted from the meeting of indigenous and European cultures. Important pre-contact indigenous sites, including the pyramid of Cholula and the ceremonial center of Cacaxtla, are also nearby and open to the public. Puebla has played a role in the Mexican political and economic landscape since its establishment in 1531; here, the Cinco de Mayo battle was won against the invading French in 1862. The city is famous for its cuisine, including mole poblano, chiles en nogada, chalupas poblanas, and for its beautiful Talavera ceramics and glazed tiles, which grace tables and embellish façades, fountains and interior patios. For basic information about Puebla, go to: <http://www.virtualmex.com/puebla.htm>.

Culturas en Contacto — Transculturalismo, Panculturalismo, Interculturalismo Congreso Internacional (2007) American Comparative Literature Association

Universidad Autónoma de Puebla
Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades
Puebla, México, Abril 19–22, 2007

www.acla.org

Coordinadores: Lois Parkinson Zamora, Enrique Pérez Castillo, Michael Schuessler

Coordinadores del programa: Efraín Kristal, Kathleen Komar

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Departamento anfitrión: Posgrado en Ciencias del Lenguaje , ICsYH

Culturas en Contacto **Transculturalismo, Panculturalismo, Interculturalismo**

Se incluirán ponencias sobre todos los temas comparatistas, y de preferencia los que se relacionen con México y con América Hispánica, Portuguesa, Anglo y Franco parlante. Abajo se listan algunos temas sugeridos. Además, individualmente se pueden sugerir temas de seminarios y mesas redondas sobre tópicos específicos

Las propuestas para seminarios deben enviarse al sitio web del comité de la ACLA antes de Octubre 1, 2006, y las propuestas y resúmenes de ponencias individuales antes de Noviembre 1, 2006.

- Cruzando fronteras y barreras de todas clases
- Subtextos míticos, textos modernos
- Artículos de consumo y culturas
- Traducción: literaria, textual y contextual
- Al través de formas artísticas y disciplinas: teoría y práctica
- Cocinas comparativas
- Literatura de viajes
- Transculturación, mestizaje y criollización
- Encuentros trasatlánticos y traspacíficos
- Literaturas y lenguas indígenas de México y el resto de América
- El desafío de las culturas no occidentales a la teoría crítica
- Transacciones genéricas: constructos culturales y literarios del género, el sexo y la sexualidad
- Enfoques comparatistas de las literaturas del continente americano
- Colonialismo y clasicismo
- Lenguajes y literaturas del caribe
- La literatura judía del continente americano
- México y Canadá: tan lejos de Dios y tan cerca de los Estados Unidos
- Inmigración y exilio hacia y dentro del continente americano
- Literaturas latinas de los USA
- Estudios latinoamericanos e interamericanos
- Mecanismos de producción cultural y literaria
- Fronteras: México/USA; México/Guatemala; México/Belice
- Representación dramática en México
- Culturas y literaturas populares
- Enfoques ecocríticos en un contexto comparatista
- Violencia y literatura testimonial.

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THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN AND CANADIAN STUDIES: CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Journal of American and Canadian Studies is a peer-reviewed annual, published in bound and online form by the Institute of American and Canadian Studies, Sophia University, Tokyo, and reaches over two thousand readers throughout the world. The Journal seeks scholarly articles from across the discipline(s) of North American studies. Fields of study represented in recent issues include, for example, diplomatic history and foreign policy, African American literature, media studies, and US and Canadian ethnic studies. For submission guidelines and back issues please see the Institute's home page: <http://www.info.sophia.ac.jp/amecana/E2/journal.htm>.

DE/CONSTRUCTION OF ETHNICITY AND NATIONHOOD IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The age of globalization has witnessed a redefinition of ethnicity as well as the (re)emergence of nationhood, while at the same time witnessing the deconstruction of both. Bi-, multi- and poly-cultural societies more than ever have to confront issues generated from such efforts, which aim at shaping and reshaping identities. While current political developments exacerbate such phenomena, pacts of forgetting and other silent alliances that had been established during the Cold War as well as post—and neo-colonial paradigms are now being interrogated and challenged.

Contributions are invited for a volume focusing on these issues to be published by MESEA, following a symposium organized in September 2005 in Istanbul. The articles should be 5000 to 7000 words in length and follow the MLA style of documentation. Please send abstracts of 100–200 words by 1 October 2006. Complete essays are due 31 January 2007.

Send your abstracts to:

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ICLA CONFERENCE

The city of Rio de Janeiro (and the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) is the official site for the XVIIIth ICLA (International Comparative Literature Association) Congress, to be held July 29–August 5, 2007. Please follow the link for more info: <http://icla.byu.edu/www/congress/index.html>

WRITING AMERICAN IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH: SPECIAL ISSUE OF CAS

What is the language of American literature? A special issue of *Comparative American Studies* coming out this September (2006) probes this matter and demonstrates, in a number of brilliantly argued essays, that it need not at all be English. Guest-edited by Gönül Pultar, and with an introduction by Werner Sollors, the issue features essays by Michael Boyden and Helder de Schutter, Wolfgang Hochbruck, Holly Martin, Orm Øverland, Peggy Pacini, and poems in Turkish with English translations by NYC-based Turkish-American poet Mustafa Ziyalan, introduced by Murat Nemet-Nejat. While writings in languages other than English have generally been—and continue to be—ignored or neglected in US literary historiography, recent developments in postcolonial theory and the ‘cultural turn’ in literary studies require a fresh look at those few texts that have been acknowledged. The essays of the special issue not only offer interesting new interpretations of such and other texts but also problematize the complex dynamics at work behind writing in non-mainstream tongues, resulting in an insightful, memorable issue.

AMERICANISM AND AMERICANIZATION

Mel van Elteren, *Americanism and Americanization: A Critical History of Domestic and Global Influence* (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland, 2006) ISBN 0-7864-2785-X

Informed by a history of relevant developments on both sides of the Atlantic since the early nineteenth century, this volume presents an in-depth critical analysis of the Americanization process. Beginning with a survey of early European preoccupations with things American, the book goes on to discuss European concerns regarding American influence after World War II until the present. The work then looks at Americanism and its influence within the United States itself, especially regarding developments during the New Deal and beyond. This culminates in an analysis of the conservative Americanism that emerged in the 1980s, and today’s new nativism and exclusionism in the U.S. The primary goal of the analysis is the construction of an interpretive framework, allowing for a more balanced approach to the study of Americanism abroad.

Written from a critical, social-emancipatory perspective, the author’s approach blends economic, military, social, political, cultural and psychological dimensions as well as an examination of the ways in which these areas interact. Finally, Americanism is examined as part of a US-style corporate globalization at the turn of the twenty-first century.



HEARTS OF DARKNESS: MELVILLE AND CONRAD IN THE SPACE OF WORLD CULTURES

PRESIDENT OF POLAND BECOMES A PATRON OF A IASA-SPONSORED CONFERENCE

It is our great pleasure to inform you that the President of the Republic of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, has agreed to become the Official Patron of the Tall Ships' Races Szczecin 2007 and all its events, including the "Hearts of Darkness, Melville and Conrad in the Space of World Culture" Conference, an event sponsored by IASA. On behalf of the Organizers and Participants of the Conference, we wish to express our sincere gratitude for the recognition of the importance of our event and the honor of the Presidential Patronage.

We are absolutely delighted that the Conference has attracted eminent scholars, younger and more senior, from around the world: Japan, Italy, Lithuania, Switzerland, New Zealand, South Africa, Israel, Palestine, France, Canada, Spain, Turkey, Italy, the U.K., Poland, and the U.S. The imaginative paper proposals, many of which deal with both Melville and Conrad, are bound to create some fascinating discussion in Szczecin and open up new areas of scholarship in the coming years. We received 60 excellent proposals by the 25 June deadline, a compilation of which is available at the Conference website (<http://www.melville.us.edu.pl>).

Paweł Jędrzejko
University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland

Kouzar J. Azam retired recently as a Professor of Political Science at Osmania University in Hyderabad. She has had a distinguished career with several national recognitions, international awards, academic assignments, and teaching responsibilities in India and abroad. She served as the Senior Academic Fellow in Social Sciences at the American Studies Research Center at Hyderabad from 1995 until 2000. She was a recipient of a Research Associateship at the Department of Political Science at Birmingham University (1974), a Post-doctoral Ford-ACDIS Fellowship (1990) and a Senior Fluorite Fellowship (1994-95) at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship (1999), and she was a Fulbright Visiting Specialist at the International Forum for US Studies at the University of Iowa (2005). She is the editor of *Rediscovering America: American Studies in the New Century* (2000).

Manju Jaidka, Professor and former Chair of the Dept of English, Punjab University, Chandigarh, has been actively engaged in American Studies in India for more than three decades. She has been the recipient of a Fulbright postdoctoral award, two fellowships from the Rockefeller Foundation, and a Text Book Award from the University Grants Commission in India. The author of seven books (two of them co-edited), articles and research papers in India and abroad, she has lectured at universities and colleges in the USA and the UK. The chief functionary of MELUS-India and now MELOW, she is part of a team that organizes international literature conferences annually.

Cyraina Johnson-Roullier is Associate Professor of English at the University of Notre Dame, where she teaches modern literature, cultural theory and Literature of the Americas. She is the author of *Reading on the Edge: Exiles, Modernities and Cultural Transformation in Proust, Joyce and Baldwin*, and she is currently working on a second study, entitled *Invisible Wo/Men: Gender, Modernity, and the Representation of Race*, for which she received a Ford Foundation Minority Postdoctoral Fellowship. She serves as Program Director for the Program on the Americas and Global Cultures in the University of Notre Dame's Institute for Latino Studies.

Sheila Hones teaches in the Department of Area Studies at the University of Tokyo and is currently editor-in-chief of the *Japanese Journal of American Studies*. Her work focuses on the role of narrative in the circulation of commonsense geographical knowledge, and the paper in the present issue of *RIAS* is an offshoot of her collaboration with Julia Leyda on geographies of knowledge production in American studies. Their co-authored papers on this topic have appeared in *American Quarterly* (2005) and *Comparative American Studies* (2004).

Paulo Knauss is Associate Professor at the Department of History and Coordinator of the Laboratory of Image and Oral History at the Universidade Federal Fluminense, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Dr. Knauss is former president of the *Brazilian Association of American Studies* and co-editor of *Transit Circle – Revista Brasileira de Estudos Americanos / Brazilian Journal of American Studies*. One of his numerous publications is *Oeste Americano: quatro ensaios de história dos Estados Unidos de Frederick Jackson Turner* (2004), a translation of Frederick Jackson Turner's famous essays about the US.

Giorgio Mariani received his PhD from Rutgers University. He is Professor of American Literature at the University of Rome 'La Sapienza' and one of the editors (with B. Cartosio and A. Portelli) of *Ácoma*, an Italian triquarterly of American Studies. He is currently serving as secretary of the Italian Association of American Studies and he is also a member of the Executive Council of IASA.



He has written, edited, and co-edited several books, including (with Donatella Izzo), *America at Large. Americanistica internazionale e nuova comparatistica* (Milano: ShaKe Edizioni, 2004) and (with S. Di Loreto, C. Martinez, A. Scannavini and I. Tattoni), *Emerson at 200. Proceedings of the International Bicentennial Conference* (Roma: Aracne, 2004).

Tatsushi Narita is Professor of British and American Studies at the Department of British and American Studies, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nagoya City University, Nagoya City, Japan. He is a member at large of the Executive Council of IASA and is also Founding President of the Nagoya Comparative Culture Forum. He was Visiting Scholar at Harvard University on several occasions; right now he is Honorary Visiting Scholar at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri. His present interest is in Transpacific American Studies. Narita is the author of over forty articles and three books and he has edited three books. He has given conference papers in Japan, the UK, the USA, the Netherlands, Poland, Korea, India, Cyprus and China.

Gönül Pultar is the founding chair of the Cultural Studies Association of Turkey (2005), and was the founding chair of the Group for Cultural Studies in Turkey (1999–2005) until it was dissolved to give way to the association (www.cstgroup.org). A graduate of Robert College, she received her doctoral degree in English at Middle East Technical University (1994). After an early career in journalism, she turned to teaching and has taught at Middle East Technical University (1982–1990); Bilkent University (1992–2002); and Boğaziçi (Bosphorus) University (2004–2005). At Bilkent University, she also served as the founding deputy director of the Center for Turkish Literature (1998–1999), and the coordinator of Bilkent University Seminars in Literature, Society and Culture (2003–2004). Dr. Pultar was a fellow at the Longfellow Institute of Harvard University in 1998.

Stephen Shapiro teaches American culture and writing in the University of Warwick's Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies. His study of early American textuality and trade, *The Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel: Reading the Atlantic World-System*, is forthcoming from Penn State Press. He has co-edited *Revising Charles Brockden Brown: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality in the Early Republic* (Tennessee) and an edition of *Edgar Huntly; or, Memoirs of a Sleep-walker* (Hackett). His most recent publication is 'The Technology of Publicity in the Atlantic Semi-Peripheries: Benjamin Franklin, Modernity, and the Nigerian Slave Trade' in *Beyond the Black Atlantic*, Walter Goebel and Saskia Schabio, eds. (Routledge).

RIAS welcomes submissions from all disciplines and approaches and from all parts of the world, provided that they pertain to 'America' in the broadest implications of that term.

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