

# Post-Nationalism, Globalism, and the New American Studies

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**C**urricula and scholarship in American Studies have changed significantly over the past decade, reflecting the important influences of women's studies, ethnic studies, postmodern and post-colonial theories. Earlier approaches, such as the Puritan Origins and Myth-and-Symbol schools, attempted to elaborate those features of American identity and social organization that are unique national characteristics. Often implicit in this nationalist approach to the study of U.S. culture was the assumption that the United States constitutes a model for democratic nationality that might be imitated or otherwise adapted by other nations in varying stages of their "development."

The criticism of such "American Exceptionalism" has focused on both its contributions to U.S. cultural imperialism and its exclusions of the different cultures historically crucial to U.S. social, political, and economic development. In response to concepts of American identity shaped by Western patriarchy and Eurocentric models for social organization, more recent critical approaches have focused on the many cultures that have been marginalized by

traditional American Studies or subordinated to an overarching nationalist mythology. In articulating the various cultures and social identities in the United States, scholars have often focused on the cultural, political, and economic boundaries dividing these cultures both from the dominant social order and from each other.

Such “border studies” of the intersections and interactions of the different cultures of the United States must also include a reconsideration of national cultural boundaries. If a single nationalist mythology of the United States no longer prevails, then our understanding of just what constitutes the cultural border of the United States is no longer clear. Immigration has always shaped the United States in ways that demonstrate the shifting nature of such cultural boundaries. More traditional American Studies relied on the model of a single dominant culture assimilating immigrant cultures in a gradual, evolutionary manner. In contrast, more recent approaches have stressed the cultural hybridities that have occurred historically among the many cultures constituting the United States. Attention to these hybridities requires scholars to look at the multiple cultural influences involved in important social formations; such cultural complexity is often invisible when historical changes are viewed primarily in terms of the assimilation of “minor” cultures to a “dominant” social system.

The borders of division and contact are also linguistic, and we should not equate and thereby confuse linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and national categories, even though there are many ways in which they may overlap and complement each other. In his recent “For a Multilingual Turn in American Studies” and his long-term project to republish non-English language works of U.S. literature, Werner Sollors has argued persuasively for the study of U.S. culture as a polylingual as well as multicultural discipline.<sup>1</sup> Despite the long history of an ideology of a monolingual United States—revived quite hysterically in recent years by E. D. Hirsch Jr. and Arthur Schlesinger Jr., among others—the United States continues to be a multilingual society with large segments of its population working and living successfully in multilingual contexts. Statistical studies do not support the fear prevalent among conservatives and many liberals that recent immigrants fail to learn English or that polylingual communities, such as major metropolitan areas, are linguistically, culturally, and nationally fragmented. Recent stud-

ies, in fact, have shown that immigrant populations in the United States in the last half of the twentieth century have learned English—even as they have often preserved their native languages—more rapidly and universally than immigrants at any other time in U.S. history.<sup>2</sup> Far more likely to divide recent immigrants from U.S. “national culture,” as it is sometimes called, are social disparities in educational and economic opportunities. Class hierarchies, in other words, are far more divisive of peoples in the United States in the late twentieth century than language or culture. Of course, class as a category is often bound up in social practices with historically established hierarchies of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion. As Sollors and many of the respondents to his essay in the recent “American Crossroads” postings argued, the new American Studies must address the multilingual reality of the United States in the curricular and scholarly reforms now under way in the field.<sup>3</sup>

By the same token, the dominance of the United States according to the nationalist paradigm has often led to the neglect of other nations in the Western Hemisphere, each of which has its own complex multicultural and multilingual history, as well as its own interactions with the other nationalities of the region. The new American Studies tries to work genuinely as a comparatist discipline that will respect the many different social systems and cultural affiliations of the “Americas.” Rather than treating such cultural differences as discrete entities, however, this new comparative approach stresses the ways different cultures are transformed by their contact and interaction with each other. If we are to preserve the name “American Studies,” then we must take into account at the very least the different nationalities, cultures, and languages of the Western Hemisphere, including Canada. If we find this field too large and challenging, then we should consider “area studies” models that would redefine the American Studies taught at most U.S. colleges and universities today as “U.S. Studies” or “North American Studies.” Such comparatist work thus focuses with special interest on just the points of historical, geographical, and linguistic contact where two or more communities must negotiate their respective identities. This new interest in border studies should include investigations of how the many different Americas and Canada have historically influenced and interpreted each

other. With very different histories of responding to ethnic and racial minorities, as well as of constructing gendered and sexual hierarchies, these different Americas also help foreground the multilingual and multicultural realities of social life and economic opportunity in any of the Americas.

Such fundamental reconsiderations of what constitutes American Studies as a field (or *fields*) of study should be accompanied by theoretical investigations of our methodologies for conducting research and interpreting data. The history of the impact of various critical theories and methodologies on American Studies is complex and often contradictory; it is a subject especially in need of scholarly attention at this crucial moment in the reconceptualization of the field. As an interdisciplinary field, American Studies declared its theoretical purposes from its earliest years in the 1930s, and yet it has often been particularly intransigent with respect to new theoretical models, ranging from modernist theories—like phenomenology, the Frankfurt School, structuralism, poststructuralism, and deconstruction—to more contemporary approaches—like critical race theory, feminism, queer theory, and postcolonial theory.

A certain antitheoretical bias lingers in American Studies, sometimes disguised by appeals to “native” methodologies or vaguely defined traditions of “American pragmatism.”<sup>4</sup> At other times, an antitheoretical air surrounds those who insist that American Studies has anticipated (and often does better than) the knowledge-production claimed by new methods. Such has often been the case with defenders of the Myth-and-Symbol school and specialists in popular culture, especially in their responses to ideological criticism, new historicism, and cultural studies. Without even attempting to adjudicate these conflicting claims to “priority” for the centrality of “culture” as the key element constituting the object of study from the founders of American Studies to recent theorists and practitioners of “cultural studies,” I would simply point out that the very claim for priority by some scholars in American Studies ought to make new critical theories and cultural studies particularly appealing to them, rather than creating antagonists competing for scholarly attention and institutional space (Marx 54).

Indeed, many of the most compelling “post-nationalist” chal-

lenges to the study of the Americas as primarily (if not exclusively) coherent “nation-states” are the consequences of the impact of cultural studies on American Studies and related areas, ethnic, women’s, and gender studies. Developing in part out of earlier “critical studies of colonial discourse” and “colonial studies,” as well as the *Ideologie-kritik* of the Frankfurt School, the materialist criticism and attention to popular and mass media of the Birmingham School, and important traditions of Latin American, African, South Asian, and East Asian anticolonialist writings and political activism, cultural studies often investigates the relationship between the rise of the Western nation-state and the development of European imperial systems of economic, political, linguistic, and cultural domination.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the relevance of a post-nationalist perspective for the new American Studies is evident in the new work being done on U.S. national ideology and its concomitant imperialist ambitions in North America, Latin America, and outside the Western Hemisphere. The contemporary scholarly efforts to link the earlier “internal colonization” thesis of crucial American Studies’ scholars—like Robert Berkhofer, Richard Drinnon, Reginald Horsman, Annette Kolodny, Richard Slotkin, Ronald Takaki, and Jane Tompkins—with the argument that the United States has traditionally defined itself as a “global power” have obvious connections with the intellectual and political purposes of cultural studies’ general interest in the origins, legitimation, and perpetuation of Euroamerican imperial and neo-imperial forms of global domination.<sup>6</sup>

In its claims to encompass the many cultures and political organizations in the Western Hemisphere, the new American Studies threatens its own kind of cultural imperialism, a tendency often overlooked even by the most ideologically attentive scholars. We are now familiar with the ways that American Studies of the post-World War II era “often was enlisted in the service of quasi-official governmental policies and institutions” and how its “success” as a field of study could sometimes be tied to the exportation of “American” cultural ideals based on extraordinarily limited models of American identity and experience (Marx 54). There are commonly overlooked practical factors driving the popularity of American Studies outside the United States, such as “the growing number of American-educated Ph.D.s teaching in other countries, the lure of relatively high-paying research grants and temporary teaching po-

sitions in the U.S., and the prestige of publishing in the U.S.” (Horowitz xv).<sup>7</sup> In short, the border dividing “native” and “foreign” versions of American Studies is increasingly difficult to draw. We distinguish the new American Studies from older versions not only for being more inclusive and diverse but also for its vigilance with respect to its possible uses in the cultural imperialist agendas central to U.S. foreign policies from the Marshall Plan in postwar Europe to the multinational “alliance” assembled to fight (and legitimate) the Gulf War. Yet, just what separates cultural understanding from cultural imperialism is increasingly difficult to articulate in an age of technologically accelerated human and cultural mobility.

Often what U.S. specialists in American Studies overlook is our tendency to universalize our own interests and to appeal, however unconsciously, to our own “nativist expertise” as implicated in a larger agenda of cultural imperialism that both includes and exceeds specific articulations of foreign policies. In another recent discussion of the “American Crossroads Project” electronic discussion group, Jim Zwick expressed his surprise at the equivocal response of non-U.S. scholars to his idea of a centennial conference on the Spanish-American and Philippine-American wars. Unaware that some non-U.S. scholars considered such a project as yet another effort by U.S. specialists to control the intellectual reception of these colonial wars, to disregard once again work already done by scholars in the Philippines, Spain, Cuba, and Latin America, and to publicize the latest U.S. theoretical approach (cultural studies, critical study of colonial discourse, etc.) as the most appropriate for specialists in other political and intellectual communities, Zwick found himself criticized for an intellectual “provincialism” he thought he was working to overcome (Zwick; Rowe, “Response to Jim Zwick”). Many recent scholars, like Paul Lauter, Emory Elliott, and Alice Kessler-Harris, have worked to increase the participation of non-U.S. American Studies specialists in the American Studies Association and the exchange of scholarly work at conferences (and now, by way of the Internet) for the benefit of both U.S. and non-U.S. scholars and in recognition of the very different purposes, interests, and institutional configurations American Studies may have around the globe.<sup>8</sup>

New institutes and forums for international scholars in Amer-

ican Studies are doing important work at many U.S. colleges and universities; such work is more important than ever, now that the United States Information Agency is being significantly downsized and its valuable programs lost to fiscal “exigencies.”<sup>9</sup> As we contribute to this important work, however, we should remember the dialectical and dialogical purposes of such intellectual exchanges. An older “international” American Studies in the 1950s and 1960s often drew on the cosmopolitanism of Euroamerican modernism but its implicit cultural mission was to “enlighten” the foreign cultures from which it drew many of its most avant-garde materials and ideas. The new American Studies requires a new internationalism that will take seriously the different social, political, and educational purposes American Studies serves in its different situations around the globe. Local political, cultural, and intellectual issues are often interestingly woven into the curricula and pedagogy of American Studies in non-U.S. cultures in ways U.S. scholars unfamiliar with those cultures (and their languages and histories) do not understand. Such hybridizations of local and international knowledges range from explicit efforts to circumvent repressive regimes and local censorship to subtler modes of responding to U.S. cultural imperialism by *transforming* the ineluctable importation of U.S. cultural “goods.” In short, U.S. and other Western hemispheric scholars have as much to learn from our international colleagues as they from us.

A common purpose linking these different versions of American Studies should be the critical study of the circulation of “America” as a commodity of new cultural imperialism and the ways in which local knowledges and arts have responded to such cultural importations—the study of what some have termed “cocolonization” (Wagnleitner). What some cultural critics have termed the capacity of local cultures to “write back” against cultural and even political and economic domination should be considered part of American Studies, even as we recognize the practical impossibility of expanding its scope to include all aspects of global experience simply because of global pretensions of First World nations like the United States. Nevertheless, the study of U.S. imperialist policies toward Native Americans should not be conducted without consideration of how native peoples responded to the specific historical circumstances investigated, just as the

Philippine-American War should not be studied exclusively from the perspective of the United States or the response to the Vietnam War studied solely through U.S. texts. The Native American, Philippine, and Vietnamese perspectives must be represented in such studies (whether published research or classroom instruction), once again in keeping with the comparatist aims of the new American Studies.

These are only some of the ways in which the new American Studies should begin to reconstitute its fields of study, especially as the United States (along with other First World nations) claims an ever greater responsibility for global economics, politics, *language*, and identity. I have written elsewhere about how we might adapt Mary-Louise Pratt's theoretical model of the "contact zone" to articulate a Comparative American Studies that would include as one of its areas of specialization "comparative U.S. cultures" (Rowe, "A Future for American Studies" 262–78). Like the geopolitical, linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and economic borders I discussed above as crucial to the reformulation of American Studies, the "contact zone" is a semiotic site where exchanges may occur from both (or more) sides, even when the configurations of power are inequitable (as they usually are). Intellectuals who work closely with peoples and issues relevant to the actual borders where immigration is controlled, economic destinies decided, and individual lives immediately and irrevocably affected often warn us not to generalize too casually or abstractly with regard to these "border regions."<sup>10</sup> We should heed their warnings and learn from their experiences, but we should also recognize that however "real" the border between the United States and Mexico or that separating Southeast Asian or Haitian boat people from safety in the United States, they are also discursively constructed borders made all too often to have terrible physical consequences for those forbidden to cross them. In other words, we can begin to reconfigure such borders by establishing intellectual and cultural "contact zones," where a certain dialectics or dialogics of cultural exchange is understood to be a crucial aspect of how the field of "American Studies" is constituted and how the related territories of "the Americas" and "the United States" ought to be understood. In this respect, teaching and scholarship become direct, albeit never *exclusive*, means of effecting necessary social changes.

How is it possible for us to accomplish work so vast in scope and involving so many different specializations? One of the most common reactions to the progressive aims of the new American Studies is to reassert the study of a "common" and "national" culture for reasons both ideal and practical. We must have a "common culture," Hirsch and others tell us, to avoid the intellectual anarchy into which we are already drifting. We must have a unified "American Studies" discipline, department, program, and professional organization—which usually means one devoted to some version of nationalist study or American exceptionalism—because we do not have the resources, the time, or the expertise to do more, Sean Wilentz and others warn us as ethnic, women's, gender and sexuality, and cultural studies proliferate as new programs on college campuses around the world (A56).<sup>11</sup> What, then, are the practical implications of the preceding description of what seems intellectually crucial for the new American Studies to pursue if it is to avoid the mistakes of the past and draw on the best of its traditions?

Part of the problem facing those committed to this new vision of American Studies is related to the increasingly antiquated model of the university, its disciplinary division of knowledges, and its model of instruction as the transmission of knowledge as information from an authority to receptive students. The conflict of the modern, Enlightenment model of the university and its liberal educational ideals with new conceptions of education, the character of knowledge, and the circulation of such knowledge is by no means unique to American Studies.<sup>12</sup> We may simply face it more directly and immediately because we are in the course of reconstituting our field, forced by the exigencies of rapidly changing ideas of the Americas, and because we have a heritage of challenging established academic procedures. But to achieve any part of what I have described in the preceding paragraphs, we will have to bring about fundamental changes in the way most modern universities *educate*.

However sweeping such changes may seem when described in this general manner, they may be realized in many small steps. First, we should not rush to defend "American Studies" as a program or department, especially against emerging programs in ethnic, women's, and gender and sexual studies that often devote much of their curricula to topics relevant to the study of the

United States, the Americas, and the “borders” or “contact zones” I have described above. As part of the work of our research group at the University of California’s Humanities Research Institute in the fall and winter quarters of 1996–97, we met with faculty in American Studies and related programs on the different campuses of the University of California system. On each campus, important curricular changes were under way in the several fields relevant to American Studies, most of those changes reflecting various intellectual and educational responses to the issues discussed above. Each campus had very different ideas about the “future” of American Studies as a formal program on that campus, and it was instructive to discover how important local institutional and political factors were in shaping these attitudes. Whereas established American Studies programs at UC Davis and UC Santa Cruz are working to help focus and organize curricular changes in their own and collateral disciplines, there were no plans to revive UC Riverside’s program, which was discontinued in the late 1970s, or UC Irvine’s Comparative Cultures program, which was discontinued in 1993, or to expand a small, primarily instructional undergraduate American Studies program at UCLA to include a graduate (and thus more research-intensive) component.

Open forums we held at the 1996 American Studies Association Convention in Kansas City and the 1997 California American Studies Association Convention in Berkeley confirmed our sense that there can be no general model for the institutional “future of American Studies” in U.S. universities, even when interested faculty for the most part agree with the aims of the “new American Studies” I have outlined in this essay. Different local issues, both specific to the university and its surrounding community, affect institutional arrangements in ways that can only be generalized in terms of a “new intellectual regionalism” that must be taken into account as we discuss the multiple “futures” of American Studies and the established and emerging disciplines with which American Studies must collaborate in the coming decades. This intellectual regionalism is often inflected by the new regionalisms established by the different demographics, ethnicities, and global economic and cultural affiliations characterizing such important border or contact zones as Southern California’s relation to Asia, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean; greater Houston’s relation to

Mexico and the Caribbean; Atlanta and the Southeast’s relation to the Black Atlantic; Miami’s relation to Cuba, Haiti, and Latin America (Clough M1, M6). Universities ought to mediate between local and international knowledges, and the new regionalisms (not to be confused with older, more discrete regional identities), even those shaped in the major period of European immigration, ought to be taken into account by academics reconstituting American Studies and related fields on their different campuses.

Our consideration of the academic implications of these new regionalisms should also inform the “internationalizing” of American Studies I discussed above—an internationalizing that should avoid the one-sided, often neo-imperialist cosmopolitanism of an earlier American Studies but instead complement established international relations (cultural, economic, political) already shaping the college or university’s local community.<sup>13</sup> Because new sources of academic funding, especially in support of the sciences, are following the channels of this new regionalism, there will be growing pressure from academic administrators for us to follow such leads. Properly vigilant and often resistant as American Studies scholars have been to the ideological consequences of certain academic funds—a vigilance as important in today’s private funding situation as when the Department of Defense was our secret source—we should make serious efforts to direct some of this funding to cultural understanding and criticism, as well as to the expansion of foreign language instruction. Regard for these new regionalisms should, of course, avoid provincialisms of their own; University of California, Irvine students need to know about the Black Atlantic as well as the Pacific Rim, Mexico, and Latin America. In short, our consideration of these local conditions should be contextualized in a larger understanding of the United States in the comparative contexts of Western hemispheric and, finally, global study I have described earlier.

Despite the booming U.S. economy, colleges and universities continue to operate in a state of fiscal crisis as a means of justifying the downsizing that includes drastic transformations of the research mission, especially in the humanities, and the “consolidation” of academic programs. Smaller, newer, underfunded programs are, of course, at the greatest risk, even though the overall savings they offer most universities have little impact on the total

budget of the institution. In this academic climate, established American Studies programs should work cooperatively with traditionally allied programs in ethnic, women's, gender and sexual, and cultural studies and critical theory by spelling out protocols for sharing courses, existing faculty, and the definition and recruitment of new faculty positions. Successful American Studies programs should be aware of inclinations of administrators to use them to "consolidate" different programs those administrators often view as "fragmented," "incoherent," or "needlessly proliferating," especially when those programs are leading the changes in our understanding of the limitations of traditional knowledge-production and its established disciplines.

As much as those of us at colleges and universities without formal American Studies programs might wish to have the opportunity to realize some of the ambitions of the new American Studies in established curricula and degree requirements, we ought to work toward those ends in cooperation, rather than competition, with colleagues in African American, Asian American, Latino and Chicano, Native American, women's, gender and sexual, and cultural studies and critical theory.<sup>14</sup> Local, national, and international interests should be worked out in cooperation among such complementary fields. What eventually emerges from such collaborative work may well be different from any of the "American Studies" or "Women's Studies" programs we have known before, and this flexibility with respect to the emerging knowledges and institutional means of producing and sharing such knowledges should help us avoid the failed intellectual orthodoxies of the past and perhaps bring about unexpected changes in traditional departments, where many of us working for such ends hold our primary appointments. Just such an openness to emerging fields, whose methods and objects of study are still debated and contested, characterizes the attitudes of many scholars who are in no hurry to revive or inaugurate formal American Studies undergraduate or graduate programs at colleges and universities presently lacking them. The absence of formal programs, in other words, need not indicate a lack of vitality on the part of the new American Studies, especially when it anticipates its future strength as a consequence of educational coalitions with ethnic, women's, gender and sexual, and cultural studies and critical theory.

Cooperative work of this sort is based on our intellectual experience with the many fields now involved in American Studies and the challenging theoretical questions the coordination of these fields involves. No scholar can claim to "command" any part of "American Studies"; the field is not just multidisciplinary, it is also a cooperative intellectual venture. No matter how innovatively we design curricula, cross-list courses, or bring in "visitors" to our own classes, we can never approximate this collaborative and collective intellectual enterprise until we transform the classroom from the traditional "scene of instruction" (often a theater of cruel disciplining or trivial imitation) into a joint venture involving many scholars, including our students as active researchers. Team-teaching, coordinated classes, and other traditional responses to the active/passive and master/servant models of teacher/student relations can today be considered crude versions of the sorts of alternative learning situations offered by the Internet, distance-learning, and other electronic means of instruction. Electronic MUDs (Multi-User Dimensions) and MOOs (Multi-Object Orientations), virtual conferences, and hypertext databases should be used as more than merely *tools* in traditional classroom education and conventional research; they should be imagined as means of achieving changing ideas of what constitutes "education" and "knowledge" in the humanities and social sciences. In these ways, we might also balance our national and international aims with different local interests.

The American Studies Association's support of Randy Bass and Jeff Finlay's "American Crossroads Project" and their "Teaching American Studies" (T-Amstudy) at Georgetown has led the way for many other academic professional organizations in experimenting with education that transcends specific university sites (Bass and Finlay). There are, of course, ideological consequences to the use of the Internet in education that must be recognized; as primarily an English-language medium and a technology often shaped by U.S. information-industry protocols, the Internet is in its own right another topic in the study of U.S. cultural imperialism. Yet, as a medium that we can use to put faculty and students from around the world in regular and immediate contact with each other, increasingly in a variety of languages, the Internet can be employed to criticize, resist, and perhaps transform such cultural imperialism. Many "virtual research centers" already link in-

ternational faculty and students for a fraction of the cost of IRL conferences. Our work as scholars must also be complemented by academic publishers, who must now take the initiative in defining the directions for the future of the electronic dissemination of scholarly work and in assuring that appropriate standards for the quality of publication are met even as they guarantee the variety of different approaches and subjects.<sup>15</sup>

Michael Clough, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, a research associate at the Institute of International Studies at UC Berkeley, and cochair of the New American Global Dialogue, wrote recently in an op-ed piece in the *Los Angeles Times*: "For better and worse, it is less and less possible for nationally minded elites, sitting in Washington and New York, to construct policies that simultaneously protect and promote the interests of Los Angeles, San Francisco and other emerging regional metropolises. Instead, a new, much more decentralized model of governance, one capable of accommodating the growing diversity of the American politico-cultural economy, must be developed" (M1). A specialist in international relations, Clough is not thinking about the "futures of American Studies," but rather about the new American Studies that has been developing in its own way in the direction of a more "decentralized model," one that is attentive to the different intellectual "regions," or "contact zones," that represent more adequately the domestic and foreign determinants of the United States and the Americas than previous American Studies. Nationalisms and neonationalisms of all sorts are, of course, very much alive not only in the politically, culturally, and linguistically diverse United States but around the globe. The persistence and even revival of nationalism need not prevent us from trying to think of social organizations in contexts other than "national consensus" and its stereotypes of "national experience" and "character." *Post-nationalist* thinking about what constitutes the United States and the Americas may well offer us our best chance of learning from, rather than repeating, the past.

### Notes

1. Sollors, Marc Shell, and other scholars are working through the Longfellow Institute at Harvard and with Johns Hopkins University Press to publish the Longfellow Institute Series in American Languages and Literatures, "the first

systematic attempt to republish historically, aesthetically, and culturally significant works written in what is now the United States and published in languages other than English." The Longfellow Anthology has already been published, and it will be followed by bilingual and trilingual translations of individual works (Sollors, "From 'English Only' to 'English-Plus' in American Studies").

2. In his response to discussion of his essay on the "American Crossroads" list, Sollors notes: "It is also simply not true that monolingualism reduces illiteracy or technological ineffectiveness. . . . It is a myth that bilingualism lowers language performance in first languages. . . . It seems doubtful to me whether 'English only' education, based on the false myths of a monolingual past and of better language skills of monolingual people, makes for more civic cohesion than would a fuller understanding of the pervasive multilingualism in U.S. history and society" ("From 'English Only' to 'English-Plus' in American Studies").

3. Paul Lauter, in his response to Sollors's essay on "American Crossroads," July 26, 1997, makes a particularly important point about the need to study the ideological assumptions behind previous foreign-language requirements for graduate programs in American Studies. Earlier arguments favoring the so-called "tool languages" of French and German, usually to the neglect of Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and many other languages crucial to the history of nations and immigrant populations in the Western Hemisphere, and the virtual repression of the study of Native American languages, except by specialists, have played their parts not only in reinforcing the monolingual ideology of the United States but also in perpetuating what I would term the heritage of Eurocultural colonialism in the United States.

4. I do not include here rigorous accounts of "American pragmatism" as a methodology, theory, and philosophy in its own right, but rather a vaguely invoked synonym for "American character." For an excellent account of American pragmatism in a precise sense, see Bauerlein; for a version of how "American pragmatism" can be used as a substitute for "American (national) character," see Poirier (*Poetry and Pragmatism, Renewal of Literature*).

5. Nelson provides a concise and relevant manifesto of cultural studies, outlining what cultural studies at their best ought to achieve (64–70). Missing from his manifesto, however, is any consideration of "nationalism" and "imperialism" as central topics for cultural critics.

6. I am thinking here of my own recently completed study, *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism: From the American Revolution to World War II* (forthcoming), a book that develops just this thesis about U.S. nationalism and imperialism from the first decades of the U.S. republic—the Alien and Sedition Acts, for example—to the 1940s, and of the work of Amy Kaplan, who is also writing a book on literature's contribution to U.S. imperialism in the early modern period, from the Spanish-American to the First World wars. There are, of course, many scholars working in this area, several represented in Kaplan and Pease; and Pease.

7. The essays in Horwitz's collection by U.S. and non-U.S. specialists in American Studies offer interesting complements and case studies to my argument.

8. Emory Elliott initiated this work as former chair of the International Committee of the ASA. Like Paul Lauter, Elliott has visited many international American Studies programs and helped bring many international scholars to the United States for extended visits.

9. Giles Gunn has conducted a valuable program for international scholars in American Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara since the summer of 1996, with extramural funding from the U.S. Department of State. The Rockefeller Foundation is funding an International Forum for U.S. Studies from 1997

to 1999 at the University of Iowa. Giles Gunn, Chris Newfield, Elliott Butler-Evans (UC Santa Barbara), Jeff Peck (Georgetown), Mark Poster, Gabriele Schwab, and I (UC Irvine) have been working with American Studies scholars in Europe, led by Günter Lenz, at Humboldt University (Berlin) on a transatlantic cooperative research and teaching project since 1995.

10. During her participation in the Minority Discourse Project at the University of California's Humanities Research Institute in 1993-94, Norma Alarçon took colleagues on a tour of the U.S.-Mexico border, both to familiarize them with an important site of political and social conflict and to remind them that all "border studies" must be mindful of the actual border zones and their consequences for individual lives. I agree that Alarçon's purpose is an important one for us to keep in mind, but I also think that the U.S.-Mexico border is discursively constructed long before physical barriers are erected (by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, for example), and discursively as well as physically policed.

11. Buell argues that "nation and culture aren't coextensive, but neither are they disjunct" (89). Acknowledging that the "familiar debates about national identity vs. cultural particularism" have been replaced by "the issue of whether a model of cultural identity at any level can hold its ground against a model of cultural hybridization or syncretism" (89), he concludes with a markedly colonialist metaphor for the apocalypse facing American Studies scholars who abandon the nationalist and exceptionalist models of the previous generation's work: "The more decentered so-called American literary studies becomes, the more suspect the category of nation as a putative cultural unit, and the more likely United States literature specialists may be to oscillate between clinging to discredited assumptions about national distinctiveness vs. throwing ourselves wholly, *amor fati-like*, on the pyre of postnationalism (in a kind of subdisciplinary suttee)" (91). It is quite a rhetorical stretch to link post-nationalist discussions with the outlawed practice of Hindu suttee, but Buell's choice of metaphors reveals his intention of suggesting thereby the "primitivism" of other cultures—a "primitivism" American Studies must avoid. Buell's Orientalism in this instance is interestingly, albeit predictably, complemented by appeals to scientific rationality and the rhetoric of Christian belief: "[I]f we're *truly rigorous* in trying to get to whatever *empirical bedrock underlies* those assumptions while at the same time remaining attentive to the distinction between culture and nation (and with this the promise of border, diaspora, and global culture studies), then we will be *faithful* to our *posts* as post-American Americanists, whatever the outcome of the culture wars" (91, emphasis added). It is interesting that the "rigor," "empiricism," and "bedrock" demanded by such an investigation should culminate in a merely rhetorical flourish, redolent of religion (now of the Euroamerican Christian varieties, to be sure): "faithful to our posts as post-American Americanists."

12. For a more general treatment of the problem of the Enlightenment university and the new modes of knowledge, see Lloyd.

13. Paul Gilroy's model of the "Black Atlantic" is being used as one model in an international exchange program planned by Southern universities—Miami, Florida, LSU, and Houston, among others—to enable their students to study at European, Caribbean, African, and Latin American universities that will share in this curriculum. Rethinking the educational aims of "education abroad" programs in terms of the global significance of American Studies should thus be one of our tasks.

14. Jesse Vasquez, president of the National Association for Ethnic Studies and Professor of Education and Puerto Rican Studies at Queens College, responded to Wilentz's "Integrating Ethnicity into American Studies" in an understandably

angry letter to the *Chronicle* (31 Jan. 1997), concluding an otherwise sensible critique of Wilentz's arguments by challenging: "It may be that it is ethnic studies that now should consider taking over American studies, and not the other way around" ("Opinion" B3).

15. The Columbia Online Project, which makes available portions of recent scholarly books published by Columbia and Oxford University Presses, and *Literature Online* from Chadwyck-Healey, an electronic publisher, are steps in this direction, but academic presses have been incredibly slow to adapt to the electronic means of scholarly dissemination currently available.

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