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Outside American Studies: On the Unhappy Pursuits of Non-Complicity

POINTS OF DEPARTURE

I want to begin with three different stories, each of which says something about the affects and attitudes that have accompanied my travels *here*, into the contemporary terrain of American Studies and its ongoing internationalization. *Here* is not just *Rivista di Studi Americani* or even Rome, where some of the contributors to this volume first convened in 2007 for the workshop on “Pursuits of Happiness,” organized by Donatella Izzo and Daniele Fiorentino. *Here* is also the scene of this essay as it has been shaped by a series of encounters with scholars and scholarship whose Americanist itineraries are both similar to and quite different from my own.¹ *Here* is the place, then, on the other side of the stories that I can now tell about the ways in which I have become an American Americanist, not through place of birth or national venue of employment so much as through the discourses of internationalization that are now reshaping the critical practices, political horizons, and analytic capacities of the field of study in which many of my academic attachments have been formed.²

The first story I want to tell is the shortest. I was having dinner with colleagues at the American Studies Association conference in the U.S. when I reported that I would be visiting Italy for the first time, where I would be speaking at a seminar in Rome on “Pursuits of Happiness.” At the mention of the seminar title, my colleagues began to chuckle. “That’s so dated,” one of them said. “But Rome is magnificent,” said another. I understood the assurance that their laughter delivered. Indeed, “we” had never been so dated. But this “understanding” only heightened my shame, as I could see who my Italian colleagues would take me to be: another smug American, happy to visit Rome for free.

The second story is also about a conference, this time in Leiden at the inaugural International American Studies Association Congress. In his presi-

dential address, "Defending America Against Its Devotees," Djelal Kadir promoted his new organization's agenda by critiquing the national insularity and provincialism of American Studies in its U.S. formation. Under the imperative to internationalize, he argued, American Studies would need to differentiate itself from the priorities and perspectives of its national practice; it must "cease," as he succinctly put it in an essay published that same year, "to be American" (11). As the key word of the conference, "provincialism" was raised in every session I attended, including one in which an African American scholar talked about W.E.B. DuBois and the black intellectual tradition. Initially, I was confused. What was so provincial about DuBois or, more to the point, why was the study of U.S. practices of racialization described as nationalist and critically insufficient? After three days of these encounters – and with the charge of provincialism growing to include chauvinism and "navel gazing" – I abandoned confusion and turned to anger. How was it, I wanted to know, that in *this* economy of geography and identity, one was immune from the charge of provincialism by being from Leiden or Leeds or Darwin or Kingston or Minsk or Campo Grande or Saporro or Trondheim or 200 miles north of New Delhi – anywhere, that is, outside the geographical territory of the U.S.? The international was not an analytic, then, but an identity-oriented perspective grounded in place – and one purportedly capacious in its global reach as long as it did not inhabit the domestic (and indeed domesticated) space of the U.S. *How nice*.

That was before my last story, which concerns not a conference but a publication. In the years following Leiden, I wrestled with my own defensiveness about the identity politic that internationalization put into play and with both the political and analytic implications of the field turning to examine the very networks and historical shifts that had made its global organization as a knowledge practice so visible and urgent to practitioners in the first place. The essay that I first drafted, many drafts before this one, set out to consider how difficult it was to definitively parse the distinction that "American American Studies" was being used to generate, not because there was no such thing – there surely was and is – but because "American American Studies" was not and is not solely practiced in the U.S. university.³ It is not coincident with the national identity of the practitioner nor with her North American venue of employment. Neither is it internally coherent and, most important-

ly, for those who are in it or of it or in close proximity to it, it cannot be wished or willed away. Like the object of study that it names and interrogates, American American Studies has a history and is constituted by the political economy and cultural practices that attend the geopolitical fictions in which it is made and circulated, including of course the stories it tells about itself. In considering those stories, especially those that narrated the turn from the Cold War field apparatus to the New Americanism, I was struck by how much the discourse of internationalization specified American American Studies in the same language *it* routinely used to critique both the formation of the field it succeeded and the imperial practices of the U.S. state: as exceptionalist, arrogant, self-obsessed, universalizing, violent, parochial, deluded, paternal, and aggressive. How distinct, then, was the discourse of internationalization from the entity it sought to specify and displace? Or to pose the question from the opposite direction: to what extent was the discourse of internationalization, crafted in antithesis and disidentification with American American Studies, nonetheless reliant on its critical habits and progressivist political imaginary, such that in its critical motion to specify and displace it, internationalization was more aptly producing it?

These were the questions that animated my inquiries, until the editors of a volume intended to survey the current shape of the field of American Studies asked me to contribute my essay. This is where my third story finally begins. According to the table of contents, there were only two chapters by scholars from outside the U.S. and no deliberation other than mine on internationalization *per se*. At first I panicked. How, in *this* context, could I argue that internationalization was dependent on the critical habits of that which it most disavowed – American American Studies – when the volume’s political economy of knowledge production reiterated the internationalist’s most stinging critique: that Americanist scholarship that originated in the U.S. university took itself as constitutive of the field as a whole? Or more to the point, how could I defend myself against the inevitable accusation that we were all provincial without abandoning the analysis I was committed to about the ways in which internationalization and American American Studies were more than antithetically linked? In the end, I revised my essay to offer what I phrased as a “friendly critique” of the collection’s authorial geography, before venturing into my argument that internationalist discourse was dependent on

the New Americanist calculus of inclusion and exclusion that had reshaped the Cold War formation of the field in the U.S. I thus tried to have my cake and eat it too; I critiqued the volume's sparse inclusion of scholarship produced outside the U.S. in order not to be stung by the criticisms I had learned to hear, while also demonstrating how much the discourse of internationalization drew its critical logics from the rise of New Americanism in the genealogy of American American Studies itself.

When the editors reviewed my essay, however, they cut my "friendly critique," less to avoid criticism than because they found my criticism weak. Their volume, they explained, was organized around the concept of the transnational and had a great deal of work by well-established left academics – Amy Kaplan, José Saldívar, Lisa Lowe, Brent Edwards, Michael Denning, Robin Kelley, George Lipsitz, George Sanchez, Ruthie Gilmore, Phil DeLoria – all of whom had helped turn American Studies from its proto-nationalist formation during the Cold War era toward understanding the violent force of U.S. imperialism and the routes of transnational migrations of various kinds that had been carved out in support and resistance to it. In their terms, the analytic priority of the transnational answered the imperative to internationalize by turning American Studies outside identifications with the imperial project of "America" itself. The conversations that ensued were compelling and useful, and I found the editorial arguments for the analytic utility of the transnational both timely and persuasive. I understood, for instance, how the emphasis on the transnational performs an important reformulation of the genealogy of Americanist knowledges, such that one could resituate the field in an intellectual history traceable, in one of numerous trajectories, from Marcus Garvey, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, and Frantz Fanon to Paul Gilroy. It made sense to me to use the transnational as the analytic rubric to link this work to the scholarship on the border, immigration studies, the queer diaspora, media cultures, language debates, and various new social movements – indeed, to a whole range of objects of study that allowed for the creative and critical reshaping of the field from what many of us learned to critique as its myth and symbol hegemonies.

And yet, I remained haunted by the affect that the discourse of internationalization had produced in the various venues in which I had encountered it, and by my own suspicion that no matter how far the transnational might

travel analytically, it was not equipped to grapple with many of the dilemmas that internationalization had and was continuing to generate. All this, not because the transnational had no strategic value or lacked critical force, but because it was impossible to imagine a single resolution, let alone an *analytic* one, for the incommensurability between the political aim of American American Studies and the implication of the field in the extensive power of the U.S. knowledge industry. Of this much I felt certain. But what did it all mean? Was the transnational analytic functioning as the vehicle through which American Americanists could inoculate themselves against the critique of our global power and authority, such that we could imagine ourselves outside the nationalizing discourses and imperial agency of our object of study, regardless of how inside we were to the globalizing U.S. knowledge industry? Or could I use the aporia that opened here, between the analytic capacity of the transnational and the political economy of Americanist knowledge in its global production, as an occasion to explore the differentiated relations that the discourse of internationalization exposed? This would mean approaching internationalization less as a solution to the problems that it named than as a critical *aspiration*, one that functioned – and continues to – as a resonant symptom of all the disparities it wishes to undo.

In the following pages, I take this route, tracing some of the affective and analytic investments that animate the stories above. I begin by returning to shame and its perplexing cousin, happiness, in order to establish more fully the affective and critical terrain of that entity, American American Studies, which internationalization so powerfully seeks to specify and displace. In doing so, my essay dwells on the habits and assumptions of the field imaginary of New Americanism, with its deliberate critical investment in being outside the normative discourses of “America” and the objects of study and interpretative projects that have supported its imperial mission. My aim is neither to point to the ways in which New Americanism has failed to escape its own Americanness, to trope some of its most fervent critics, nor to defend it against such critiques, but rather to situate the discourse of internationalization both within and against it: that is, as one of its own self-animating critical horizons *and* as the figuration of an epistemological outside that is conceptually inassimilable to it. If the relationship between horizon and limit, expansion and boundary, is a familiar one to American Studies scholars, it is

not exceptional to this academic domain, as all interdisciplinary fields of study are driven by the imperative to produce their claim to “newness,” which routinely entails critical expansions of various kinds, including the call for new analytic investments and the critical practices to ensure them. In American Studies, the language of newness has its own ideological weight, to be sure, but the larger point is that the discourse of internationalization is the most recent in a long history of proposals for field transformation in American Studies. It bears the history of the new, which means that even as it seeks to interrupt the recognized horizons of the field, it draws on the normative practice of every field’s most insistent mode of self-reproduction. In the incommensurabilities that ensue – between interruption and continuity, between aspiration and the contingencies of the present – lies the conundrum of internationalization for the field imaginary of American Studies.

To the extent that this essay has an argument, it is this one: that internationalization is crucial as a critical aspiration. It makes visible the importance of distinguishing between American Studies as an academic field and the particularities of its practice in the U.S. university. It interrupts the tacit reliance on nation and national rubrics for organizing knowledge, and it offers a means for considering language, culture, people, labor, commodities, territory, and capital in circuits of production, translation, and transformation that don’t reify their political and historical complexity. Most importantly perhaps, internationalization puts enormous pressure on the research practices of Americanist scholars by forging a reconsideration of area and national fields of study, university cultures, and the global knowledge industry more generally. But regardless of the multiple utilities it offers, it does not resolve the issues that it helps to name. Rather, it is most effective in staging, from numerous angles and in various vocabularies of critical passion, many of the problems it anticipates, describes, and seeks to ameliorate. Indeed, much like the object of study that names and configures the field, internationalization as an imperative for American Studies does not travel coherently; it too shifts emphasis depending on the location and perspective from which it is deployed; it too bears investments that are various, at times even contradictory across the analytic and geopolitical domains of its articulation. For these and other reasons that I will explore, my destination is the seemingly banal conclusion that American Studies is “not one,” to trope the famous line by Luce Irigaray.

Its enmeshment, translation, and iteration across national (and increasingly transnational) university systems in various regions of the world, no less than its complex engagement with local knowledge practices, histories of colonialism, class politics, and regional warfare – generate different critical aims, institutional politics, modes of production and consumption, even objects of study. What “America” means in any of the sites of its articulation and study, including within the territorial boundaries of the U.S. itself, is finally the open question that an internationalized field can explore, not an answer that it can promise to deliver. This is the case, in part, because the core problem that internationalization raises is not the geographical “fact” or the “imaginary” formation or the epistemological “privilege,” or the daunting “exceptionalism” of “America”; nor is it the haughty authority of American American Studies to determine the analytic path of the field, but everything that stands in the way of coming to terms with all of this at once, including the very habit of reading our critical practices as the measure and mode of identifying and ameliorating geopolitical complicity. *Everything*: that’s going to take some pages to explain.

TRAVELING AFFECT

I am ashamed of shame, of course, and I venture to say that *this* is not the characteristic that would make me most recognizably American. Rather, I would be taken as “American” because I am so ashamed of being American. My Americanist training, I admit, has cultivated in me the quintessential anti-Americanism of a certain generation of American Americanists, which was at work in no small measure in the dinner scene I described at the outset. No left U.S. academic of my generation or younger would turn willingly to happiness as a topic. It fell out of academic favor a good while ago. My research, cursorily I admit, shows a groundswell most recently in 1953 when Howard Mumford Jones published *The Pursuit of Happiness* and spawned a small discussion of the topic, mostly in the form of book reviews. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. offered a few words on whether or not happiness was a fundamental right in a free society in foreign policy debates in the late 1970s, but this conversation moved in a direction contrary to those pursued in American American Studies at the

time, which worked to highlight the systemic occlusions and omissions on which the American Dream of happiness seemed to depend. This does not mean that U.S. culture is not overly saturated by happiness as an idiom of ordinary life. Indeed, the phrase is ubiquitous. Rock bands and real estate companies use it, as do politicians and media pundits. It recently appeared in the title of government report, "Beyond Therapy: Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Happiness," which gave state backing to the pharmaceutical industry and its psychotropical approach to positive feeling for a population that is being diagnosed increasingly with manic depression. In the popular press, happiness appears as part of what needs to be defended, as in the recent *Renewing American Culture: The Pursuit of Happiness*, which hopes to parse a distinction between western imperialism and the global protection of the value of freedom.⁴ And Hollywood regularly recycles it, as with the 2006 film, "The Pursuit of Happiness," moralizing the road to economic accumulation by following Chris Gardner, an African American father, as he struggled from homelessness to wealth in 1980s San Francisco.⁵

Blockbuster Hollywood, of course, is a master of ideological repackaging. It loves to make dreams come true, and it often understands precisely where mass depression and doubt lives, such that it can work between the sites and scenes of capitalism's ongoing contradictions to retrofit the national past for a profitable future, one now conceived of as both national and international.⁶ But its role in the pursuit of happiness is not simply about narrative practice. The visual economies it delivers in transnational circuits and the pedagogy of voyeurism and absorption, alongside its ambivalent relation to inattentive and unthinking consumption, make it – as industry and representational practice, as cultural discourse and social event – central to the ongoing negotiation of an increasingly debilitating American self-recognition and an emergent yearning to be returned to or delivered into something else. The 2007-08 season of Hollywood anti-war films is a case in point, as they collectively register a kind of deft critical recognition of the politics of fear that changes the terms by which governmental power functions.⁷ At the same time, the affective range of these cinematic ruminations includes a good dose of melancholy, which makes them ambivalent about their attachments to what has come to be lost, itself differentially evoked as unknowingness, innocence, and agency, depending on the calculus whereby the film handles the facts of the

state's pursuit of torture as official defense policy, its justification of its actions for war through manufactured lies, and the repeated failure of objections from citizens or members of the intelligence community to make a difference.⁸

All of this is to say that cinema is an especially pointed arena for thinking about the resignification of happiness and its pursuit, and the taut dilemma the pursuit raises in a time of war, when shame as a mode of response to the U.S.'s own terroristic policies and actions in the world has cut a path across the national political spectrum far wider than the elections or other manufactured indices of mass opinion would suggest. Even the members of the U.S. women's bridge team – hardly an arena of political struggle – felt compelled to hold a sign during their championship photo in October 2007 that read, "We did not vote for Bush."⁹ They received serious rebuke, including fines, from the organization they represented, and anonymous emails that charged them with treason and sedition. But the anguish they expressed and the use of Shanghai as a venue for registering their disidentification with the U.S. state was a powerful and increasingly familiar gesture, as shame takes its place as the evocation of an internationally inflected national self-recognition. For this reason, it might be true to say that shame has become the contemporary currency of U.S. critical conscientiousness in the transformed world context in which it now operates. It is an affective relation that American Americanists began to pursue decades ago, as I will discuss below.

Not everyone, of course, is attuned to shame's itinerary, and there is an entire trajectory of popular culture that pursues unknowingness as a performative escape from historical consciousness in any of the terms in which contemporary American Studies might define it. The 1994 Best Film of the Year in the annual Oscars competition went to *Forrest Gump*, which might be taken as the first cinematic attempt in the post-socialist era to thematize the inoculation of the propertied white man against a knowing relation to his Americanist burdens.¹⁰ But the trajectory that not knowing has taken since then moves against the grain of *Forrest Gump's* own self-conscious grappling with the problem of conscious historical knowing. Today, the popular discourse is characterized by what I think of as a kind of "toxic stupidity," where narrative investments in not knowing (think *Dumb and Dumber*, *Wayne's World*, *Dude, Where's My Car?*, etc.) can aid in cultivating the illusion of historical and political transcendence, or at the very least can produce consumptive specu-

larity in the delight that we can live without trauma as the underside of conscious life.¹¹ If “America” is understood to be long ashamed of having no culturally rich past, its popular discourse suggests that it is also quite ashamed of much of its recent history, such that “stupidity” is now one of the affective registers in which the collective pursuit of happiness can be narratively achieved. From this perspective, then, we might say that the pursuit of happiness as a discourse in U.S. culture lives today as, at best, an ambivalent language for the conflict between capitalism, race, and democracy and, at worst, an idiom of consumption that makes thoughtlessness a mass value of the entertained life.

But the problem of national self-recognition in the era of Bush’s holy war of empire belongs not to white men alone, no matter how much U.S. popular culture has been obsessed for a good fifteen years, at least, with the pleasure of witnessing white masculinity’s spectacularly stupid disavowal. Much of the U.S. academic left, especially as it is articulated in and through American Studies, works within a field imaginary born of the historical era in which the consciousness of difference and the historical disparities that have protected the pursuit of happiness for some groups at the economic and psychic expense of others emerged. It is a field imaginary characterized by what I call *refused identification*, which entails a politicized dis-identification with the object of study as a means to both acknowledge and resist the ways in which American Studies is understood as implicated in the power and circulation of “America” itself. Following Frederick Crews and Robert Berkhofer, Jr., Donald E. Pease Jr. has elaborated this field as that of the New Americanists.¹² In this framework, which emphasizes the discernment of the underside of numerous national myths, along with the resurrection of the stories of those who failed to become its sanctioned heroes, one finds a wide variety of scholarly pursuits, but their affective range, no less than the affects they purposely study, lie on the far side of happiness and track a relation to the object of study that evinces melancholia, depression, and of course shame.¹³

I may be overstating the case, but the point I am making, then, is this: that the contemporary American Americanist, figured as the New Americanist, cannot approach the pursuits of happiness without finding herself at odds with the field imaginary in which her intellectual self-recognition has taken shape. If she laughs or if her laughter ignites in her colleague a wave of shame, it is

not because the topic of the pursuits of happiness has no intrinsic critical value, nor that the significance of its historical or cultural meaning has now passed. What “dates” the pursuit is not the pursuit itself but the progressive political narrative that underwrites American American Studies, which seeks to critically unburden the field from its prior nationalist attachments, especially those that are now seen as too defensively or affirmatively identified with “America” and its exceptionalist self-imaginings to manage the necessary critique of its violent imperial ambitions. Happiness, in short, is a casualty in the field’s New Americanist transformation, too weighty an emblem of nationalist self-obsession, too profoundly idealist for the grip of critique through which practitioners seek to defend themselves against the global power of their object of study.

STARTING OVER

So the American Americanist must travel to Rome to pursue happiness. What (and who) does she find there? International observers armed with enough dispassion and globality to be comprehensive in the face of complicit natives, who are too overwhelmed with proximity to know what they see? Of course not. But she does find herself confronted with the critical traveler’s dilemma, becoming not only more “American” and more decisively “American Americanist,” but more curious about the practices through which she is learning to become what others already take her to be – and more interested too in what they, at such a distance, may not find compelling about the institutional, political, and epistemological entanglements in which she finds herself. All this, even as she also knows that the multiple and disparate relationships in which she and others are made – along with the production and circulation of their objects of study – are never entirely comprehensible, and not simply because there are no perspectives *on* them that are not also produced from *within* them. The problem has to do with the difficulty of negotiating the present as much as with the enormity of accounting for the ways in which knowledges, like their practitioners, are situated in a range of differentially-produced geopolitical and analytic relations, ones so dense they are difficult to fully imagine, let alone enumerate.¹⁴ Certainly “internationalization” begs the question of

whether the field transformation it heralds is about catching up to a present that has already transformed us, or producing a relation to the future that can rescue us from what seems like the present's characteristic incoherence (why else do so many narratives of the present rely on the idea that it is more complex than any historical present before it?). Field transformation is routinely caught in this temporal dilemma, so much so, it seems to me, that part of the fantasy that propels it is that practitioners are the agents who generate the aporias that in turn become the compelling reasons for renovating the field – this instead of that more fateful recognition that our inquiries and frames of vision are generated by the very processes we hope to decipher and transform.

Let me suggest, then, that while one might be able to apprehend *the rhetorical power* of the demand for discerning both “America” as a global entity and the international formation of its field of study, there is no global entity to be found nor an internationalized field ready to be revealed. Each has to be invented, and while the imperial ambitions of the U.S. state and its compact with capitalist modernity are doing quite well on their own behalf to generate the former, there are good reasons to pause before acceding fully to the latter, no matter how much critical capital can be garnered through internationalizing or how important it is to interrupt nativist hegemony in the field. After all, it is not simply out of nowhere that scholars in American Studies have learned to read the imperial power of “America” onto the field's critical relations, such that renderings of hierarchy, discrimination, and complicity in critical practice have come to stand as *politics* writ large. What propels this conviction that field formation is a scene for exacting justice? Or more to the point, what critical assumptions, political commitments, and symbolic attachments produce the assurance that reworking the dynamics within the field – between practitioners and the object of study, and among practitioners themselves – will displace U.S. global intellectual and cultural hegemony?

Generally speaking, these questions are not unique to American Studies, internationalized or not, as many fields of study put their faith – I use that word purposely – in the making and remaking of their knowledge apparatus, investing in new objects of study, critical questions, and specific methods of inquiry to mark significant and field-claiming departures from prior critical habits. I think of this less in oedipal terms (though as you will see, it is certainly played out in quintessential oedipal form) than as part of the legitimiz-

ing structures of modern state institutions, where traditional and emergent practices and orientations compete for the novelty value of expert authority. Surely, from this perspective, it is no accident that many of the contestations between traditional knowledges and new interdisciplinary formations in research universities today can be traced quite directly to transformations in national and regional forms of political struggle of various kinds. American Studies in the U.S., along with sociology, have their roots here, in a populist emphasis on class and vernacular cultures. British Cultural Studies emerges from the routes of reclamation engendered by both postcolonial critique and the vestiges of working class analysis within popular British politics as a whole. South Asian Subaltern Studies takes shape as the critical counter to historical effacements produced by colonial education. Indeed, twentieth-century social movements as a whole – often collectively called de-colonization movements – have been armed to the teeth, so to speak, with knowledge projects, and many have taken both education as an institution and the knowledge practices they engage as primary targets for intervention. In this context, it is certainly possible to say that there are definitive linkages within the modern nation state form between education, social struggle, and academic field formation, and further that these linkages are not exceptional ones; they do not arise from the specific discourse of self-creation within one nation as opposed to another.

And yet, it is also the case that the much-heralded transformation of U.S. American Studies from the Cold War consensus model to the New Americanism was effected precisely by locating the question of politics at the level of the critical relationship. In conversation with identity knowledges (chiefly women's studies and ethnic studies) and in its own refashioning as one, the New American Studies learned to situate *itself*, in wish if not always in fact, as resolution to that which it critiqued. It thus became relentlessly focused on differentiating its critical act from the power of its object of study, which is part of the reason that its work has been associated far more with the humanities and interpretative social sciences than with empirical knowledges on the whole (and far less funded by state-based agencies). In doing so, the New Americanists turned their field practices away from such exceptionalist predilections as foreign policy studies, American "character" mythologies, and the explication of national origins in the "new world" toward the rhetorics of race, gender, empire, and coloniality, while also emphasizing research into

how communities have struggled in resistance to state violence and ideological negation. In their self-affirmed stance of elaborating a critical outside to American Studies as they took it to operate in the post-World War II era, the New Americanists now inhabit a field imaginary predicated on a refusal of identification with hegemonic power of every and all kinds – to the point, in fact, that any revelation of complicity in critical practice, even our own, can be taken as part of and not antithetical to New Americanist logics. It is this field imaginary that generates the paradox I am trying to track here: where the charge of U.S. centrism and provincialism can remain unintelligible at the same time that the refusal of identification that grounds the internationalist critique is fully at home as a critical maneuver within American American Studies itself. How is this paradox produced and sustained? A foray into the repudiative operations of New Americanism makes occlusions at work here more comprehensible than they at first seem.

REFUSALS

In the U.S. university today, scholars throughout the humanities and interpretative social sciences rely on what I am calling *refused identification* to generate a critical practice that evokes their commitment to academic knowledge production as a realm not of neutral or dispassionate observation but of political engagement.¹⁵ It might be true to say that refused identification was first deployed as a tactic for revisionary work in disciplines that had long claimed to be universalizing and objective, even as they routinely occluded both the specificity and the diversity of the human subject in gendered, racial, sexual, and economic terms. It is certainly true to say that whole generations of scholars have now been trained to practice refused identification as the means by which they challenge the normative assumptions of their disciplines, undoing canons, transforming methodologies, and resisting not simply particular disciplinary histories, but the privileges such histories ascribe to specific critical vocabularies and habits of thought. Think here of the deliberative refusals of the “critical humanities,” which have dismantled universalizing ideas of western masterworks and the hierarchies of “civilization” and authorial intention that have accompanied them. Or of cultural studies, which refuses to grant

value solely to aesthetics and its mode of understanding culture as high art by turning to everyday life and the complex agency that renders meaning productive, not merely consumptive. In numerous interdisciplinary projects – from postcolonial studies to ethnic, women’s, and sexuality studies – refused identification has provided the founding gesture, differentiating objects, analytics, and critical habits from those privileged by dominant organizations of knowledge. This does not mean that such knowledges have not also produced their own identificatory practices; indeed, part of what refused identification performs is a transference of identification to the dispossessed identities and categories of analysis that the dominant model is thought to have implicitly or explicitly abjected. These transferees not only transform the field in question by making both legible and legitimate new objects of studies, methodological priorities, analytic practices, and critical questions, but they establish an oppositional political imaginary through which practitioners understand their scholarship as socially significant and productively ethical.

In U.S. American Studies, refused identification has been the primary response to the purported exceptionalism of the Cold War object of study, opening scholarly investigations to a range of people, practices, and critical questions previously subordinated, if not conceptually excluded.¹⁶ The now generic narration of the New American Studies as an outcome of the counter hegemonic logics and ambitions of social movement dissent in the 1960s is critical to the refusal the field performs, as it establishes an origin for the field that is external to both the U.S. university and the state apparatus of which it is a part. But the consolidation of New Americanism as the Cold War successor did not take shape in the immediate aftermath of social movement dissent. Tellingly, its narrative began to emerge in 1988, a few short months before the world historical event that would mark the end not simply of a geopolitical era but of living alternatives to capitalism and its global pursuit. In a review essay, “Whose American Renaissance?” Frederick Crews would register the critical turn by deploying the neologism, New Americanist, and in the next few years, others would generate field-defining statements that countered or differently refracted the critical present that Crews lamented.¹⁷ Robert Berkhofer Jr.’s essay in 1989, a longer version of a paper he delivered at the American Studies Association meeting in 1988, put forward the idea that there was a “new approach to American Studies, if not a new American

Studies.” His essay supported the emergence of a new set of priorities: of ethnic and gendered differences over homogeneous national identity, dissensus over consensus, everyday life over aesthetic practice, and interrogations of culture over political history and the official narratives of the state. But Berkhofer was cautious, as the question mark in his title, “A New Context for a New American Studies?” suggests, about whether the new scholarship was developing an equally new critical capacity to handle the complexities of the relationship between text and context on one hand and past and present on the other. Would it, he wondered at his essay’s end, be as theoretically sophisticated in its historical narration as it was in its analysis of the social construction of “reality”? Or would it revamp the field in vocabulary and self-narration without substantively transforming the dominant habit of converting “the past into present use” (606)?¹⁸

The answers to his questions seem not to have been extensively debated, perhaps because Crews’s essay, cast as a review of seven recently published works of Americanist scholarship, was so negatively inclined toward the New Americanism it named and so prominently published (in the 25th anniversary issue of the *New York Review of Books*) that it generated immediate repudiation.¹⁹ (The ending was especially acerbic: “the New Americanists,” Crews wrote, are “destined to become the next establishment in their field. They will be right about the most important books and the most fruitful ways of studying them because, as they always knew in their leaner days, those who hold power are right by definition.”) By spring of 1990, Donald E. Pease Jr. had collected a set of new essays and published an introduction to them as the now signatory statement, “New Americanists: Revisionist Interventions into the Canon.”²⁰ Pease had not one but two books under review by Crews, and a good many pages of “Whose American Renaissance?” used his work to delineate the various failures of the New Americanism. “What chiefly marks Pease as a New Americanist,” Crews wrote, “is his eagerness for moral certainties about the relation between the books and the politics he admires.” In the end, Crews faulted Pease and the New Americanism for “self-righteousness,” along with “its tendency to conceive of American history only as a highlight film of outrages, its impatience with artistic purposes other than ‘redefining the social order,’ and its choice of critical principles according to the partisan cause at hand.” Pease’s subsequent essay – what might properly be called the

founding manifesto of New Americanism – repudiated Crews’s repudiation and established refused identification as foundational to New Americanism’s critical mode.²¹ Where Crews questioned what he saw as the New Americanist conflation of culture and politics, Pease affirmed their inextricable relation and read Crews’s resistance as symptomatic of the political unconscious of the Cold War’s liberal anticommunist consensus, which had operated through repression, including the repression of the historical violence of conquest. Pease thus defined the New Americanist project as linking the “repressed sociopolitical contexts *within* literary works to the sociopolitical issues *external* to the academic field,” such that “questions of class, race, and gender” could be returned to the field (Pease, “New Americanists” 31, 16). In this way, New Americanists “occup[ied] a double relation”: “For as *liaisons between* cultural and political realms, they are at once within the field but external to it. Moreover as representatives of subjects excluded from the field-Imaginary by the previous political unconscious, New Americanists have a responsibility to make these absent subjects representable in their field’s past and present” (Pease, “New Americanists” 31).²²

In Pease’s hands, Crews’s essay became not only an ungenerous attempt to reclaim the field for the Cold War consensus but a politically-inflected psychic map of the ideological crisis that the New Americanism had already effected – one that did more than forward a set of new texts or critical questions. Indeed, for Pease, the New Americanism was an interruption of the field imaginary that had become dominant in the 1950s and that underwrote the institutional consolidation of American Studies in the U.S. university during the postwar period. It exposed the field’s “fundamental syntax – its tacit assumptions, convictions, primal words, and the charged relations binding them together” (Pease, “New Americanists” 11). While Crews was unable to register the identifications that had come to legitimate his own authority as a practitioner within the field imaginary that governed him, Pease’s refusal of identification with it both demanded and made possible the narrative transformation of the field that the essay described. But exactly how? After all, as Pease wrote, “A field specialist depends upon th[e] field-Imaginary for the construction of her primal identity within the field. Once constructed out of this syntax, the primal identity can neither reflect upon its terms nor subject them to critical scrutiny. The syntactic elements of the field-Imaginary sub-

sist instead as self-evident principles” (12). But on its own discursive terms, the New Americanism was not and has never been produced, either narratively or psychically, “within” the field; its generative refusal of identification with the field as previously constituted has enabled it to be situated, in Pease’s words, as “at once within the field but external to it” (31). Hence when a New Americanist “makes explicit the relationship between an emancipatory struggle taking place outside the academy and an argument she is conducting within the field, the relationship between instruction in the disciple’s practices and participation in emancipatory political movements can no longer be described as imaginary. Such *realized* relations undermine the separation of the public world from the cultural sphere” (Pease, “New Americanists” 19). Doing so in sufficient critical mass, Pease claimed, would “change the hegemonic self-representation of the United States’ culture” (32).

There is, of course, much to say about the political desire that underlies the claim for mobility generated by “the double relation” of New Americanism – the desire, that is, to retrieve the repressed interiority of the field’s Cold War imaginary without risking complicity with it or with the ideological sphere in which “America” might be said to secure its imperial and universalizing self-definition. To be situated in the mobility of “outside/in,” as Pease called it, enabled the New Americanism to assert its authority for field transformation from within the political imaginaries established by social movements, thereby placing it outside the field of American Studies – or in contemporary terms, outside American American Studies, conceived not as a territorial or identity formation but as the field’s fundamental syntax in the Cold War period. Because the terms of that syntax are inexplicable to the subject constructed within it, “an Americanist,” Pease writes, cannot delineate “uncritically held assumptions without disaffiliating himself from the field of American Studies” (Pease, “New Americanists” 3). He must, in other words, be outside the field in order to be inside its dominant logics. While critics might argue with the psychoanalytic vocabulary (of primal scenes, repression, and trauma) by which Pease delivers New Americanism to this complex location, it is my sense that most U.S.-based Americanist scholarship produced in the past two decades is beholden to the double relation that Pease defined. What the consequences of this are for American Studies as a whole today is an important issue, especially given the fact that the New

Americanism has established its authority, as Crews predicted, as the dominant formation of the field in the U.S.

But before I consider the present, which will return me to the pedagogy of affect from which I began, I want to track the course of refused identification, as it has underwritten some of the most prominent trajectories of scholarship that might now be said to have resituated U.S.-based American Studies within the field imaginary that New Americanism defines. In their collective turn away from the Cold War project of the field – through questions of empire, transnationality, borders, and diaspora, and in critical frameworks aligned with post-colonial, postnational, hemispheric, and comparative studies – each of these trajectories takes its externality to the nationalist “Americanness” of American Studies as the means to found its own critical and political self-definition. Their use of refused identification is profoundly a self-conscious maneuver, one aimed at disarticulating field practices from what are generally nominat-ed as past complicities wrought by overidentification with the object of study, its discursive exceptionalism, and a field imaginary that was in service, not resistance, to the state. Each trajectory thus marshals the utility of its own investigations and critical attachments as a committed formulation of the new politics of the field, and each perceives itself, often quite explicitly, as an essential part of critical efforts to attend to the enormous political implications of what has been called the “worlding of American Studies.”²³ Read less as a cartography of new subject orientations in the field than as a remapping of its political desires, these trajectories demonstrate how familiar internationalization is *as an idiom* within the New Americanist field imaginary and thus prepare the way, or so I hope, for considering the paradox that internationalization’s own turn to definitive self narration entails: being at once a discourse aimed at getting outside the Americanness of American Studies at a time when the dominant field imaginary in the U.S. understands itself to be committed to doing the same thing.

INSIDE AND OUT

In the years following the publication of his New Americanist manifesto, Pease began working with Amy Kaplan to chart more precisely the repressed

history of imperial ambition occluded by the Cold War warriors. Their 1993 volume, *Cultures of U.S. Imperialism*, now considered a landmark in the field, signaled the New Americanist shift from the powerfully iconic object of “America” to its more mortal figure of the “U.S.” Other scholars – most notably Laura Briggs, Gretchen Murphy, Lora Romero, Shelley Streeby, Cheryl Walker, and Laura Wexler – have followed in this vein, turning Cold War American Studies on its head by explicating the project of empire in U.S. nation-state formation, often with careful dissection of the dynamics of domestic/foreign and citizen/alien that have shored up the ideological narratives and subjects of conquest.²⁴ As a whole, this scholarship has been especially important in identifying a new archive for historical study, from the discourses and contexts of settler colonialism to forgotten U.S. wars (with Mexico, the Philippines, and Korea) to the counternationalist discourses produced in empire’s wake. By establishing the critique of U.S. imperialism as the generative force and critical destination of the field, this work refuses identification with both the exceptionalist state and its formalization in American Studies programs in the U.S. university in the mid-twentieth century.²⁵ Alongside this work is a *second* trajectory of scholarship shaped by the New Americanist emphasis on empire, what Lisa Lowe calls “the international within the national,” which disrupts the persistence of nativist approaches to cultural identity by foregrounding histories of transnational migration, such that the field turns its attention to the “material legacy of America’s imperial past [as it] is borne out in the ‘return’ of immigrants to the imperial center” (30). Lowe’s specific case is Asian American Studies and the subject formation it studies and transcribes, which she approaches not as a project of pronationalism on the part of a minoritized population, but as a response to the political economy of U.S. imperialism and the migrations of people which the routes of empire beget. Other scholars working in this vein – Eithne Luibheid, David Eng, and Martin Manalansan – continue the New Americanist critique of the Cold War knowledge apparatus by focusing on the contexts, ruptures, and continuities of migration and subject formation in the ongoing imbrication of capital formation and coloniality.²⁶

A *third* trajectory of New Americanism follows the concern with histories of imperialism to refute notions of both an epistemological and territorial inside/out by focusing on what José David Saldívar has generatively defined

as border studies.²⁷ Along with Jeffrey Belnap, Raúl Fernández, Mary Pat Brady, Maria DeGuzmán, Kirsten Silva Gruesz, and Ramón Saldívar, this work challenges the conflation of the United States with the American hemisphere, engages scholarship from Latin American Studies, and redefines culture and cultural practices in multi linguistic and postcolonial formulation: all in order to think about transcultural and transnational identities and the forms of cultural production, political practice, and everyday life that cannot be adequately discerned from within the territorial or cultural logics of nation.²⁸ Its signatory refusal collates around the geographical imaginaries that have sutured state formations to both identity and culture in earlier modes of American Studies, such that much new scholarship has moved to hemispheric imaginaries.²⁹ A *fourth* and compellingly related trajectory, black diaspora studies, draws most heavily from the intersection of African American and African Studies, and proceeds from new projects on modernity, the Black Atlantic, Black Europe, and other configurations of black intellectual traditions, from Fanon and C.L.R. James to Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy.³⁰ In many ways, this scholarship builds on even as it critiques the nationalizing discourse of U.S. ethnic studies, as in work by Carole Boyce Davies, Brent Edwards, Saidiya Hartman, and Michelle Stephens.³¹ Its geopolitical imaginary is multi-sited and increasingly grapples with the minoritized status of Africa in studies of globalization and in the discourse on diaspora more generally. New Americanist critique in this vein privileges displacement as an axis of interrogation and has the difficult task of attending to the symbolic weight of the U.S. in global histories of black identity formation. Its identificatory refusals take shape against nation-state organizations of knowledge and culture and, in the hands of some scholars, the Cold War era is itself being rewritten to rethink the relationship between anti-communism and U.S. civil rights.³²

A *fifth* trajectory of New Americanist scholarship calls for a comparative perspective that de-centers the U.S. from its universal representation as the quintessential national form, thereby locating operations of culture in cross-national formulations that are multi-national in both critical practice and analytic scope. This work, represented by John Carlos Rowe, Gunter Lenz, Rob Kroes, Rob Wilson, Paul Giles, Djelal Kadir, and others, situates itself within reconfigurations of the knowledge industry on a global scale as it encounters and seeks to rethink area studies models with more fluid and flexible

ideas about nations as imaginary formations with deeply material effects.³³ Its identificatory refusals are aimed at exceptionalist approaches to U.S. nation formation and the state-based organizations of knowledge that have ensued. My *sixth* and last trajectory builds on much of the preceding work to explore the relationship between the national and the international in the modes of knowledge production at work in American Studies as a global scholarly enterprise. Elaborated by Ron Robin, Jane Desmond, Virginia Dominguez, Sheila Hones, Julia Leyda, and others, it pays attention to the uneven distribution of power – in resources, cultural capital, and critical authority – that accompanies the production and circulation of American Studies across national university systems, and calls attention, as Desmond writes, “to the different goals, stakes, and histories of U.S.-based, and non-U.S.-based scholarly communities” (Desmond, “Transnational American Studies” 18-9).³⁴ Within this framework, which is often allied with comparative and postnational approaches, scholars have begun to map the political economy of American Studies in the local, national, and regional contexts in which it is embedded, which has had the triple effect of rendering American American Studies both critically distinct and an object of internationalist critique, *and* of placing New Americanism in closer proximity to its Cold War predecessor than it would otherwise choose to think.³⁵ A key component of this trajectory of work entails reconsidering the priority placed within New Americanism on race, gender, and sexuality (or multiculturalism more generally), such that a “critical internationalism” emerges as distinct from any project that locates itself within the province of peoples or cultures of a territorially bounded United States.³⁶

This list is meant to be suggestive, not definitive or comprehensive. Scholars work in more than one area, areas overlap, and there are, no doubt, whole arenas of contemporary criticism that I have failed to make coherent or legible. Hemispheric studies, for instance, could be a trajectory of its own or allied with comparative post-nationalism. Diaspora might operate as a generic formulation, used to include the Pacific Rim or to frame queer theoretical emplotments of sexuality and globalization. Comparative ethnic studies and the diverse histories of colonialism and sovereignty that such perspectives generate could also be highlighted, or the entire list could be fashioned around theoretical attachments (New Historicist, feminist, cultural studies, psychoan-

alytic, Marxian, intersectional, etc.). My point, however, is not to seek to *represent* the breadth of content or even the contours of all the scholarly trajectories that have been generated by the critical turn to New Americanism but to offer a glimpse of how thoroughly reliant they all are on refused identification to generate the externality that Pease identified as fundamental to the emergent field imaginary. In those trajectories that critique the imperial state, scholars position themselves outside the nationalist discourses of the Cold War object of study in order to trace, through pre-national and post-national frameworks, the colonial paths of U.S. economic, military, and ideological expansion from the false unity and domestic enclosure of its territorial “inside,” an “inside” peopled well before European arrival. When the destination of critique extends to the configurations of people and cultures that are displaced by the brutality of nation building, as in both border and diaspora studies and in the incorporative modality that Lowe calls “the international in the national,” New Americanists follow the transnational routes of travel that empire has generated, the imaginary delineations it has drawn between people, and the modes of affiliation and collective life it has engendered, often through resistance, in the process. At this scale of analysis, Cold War models of cultural and national homogeneity are rejected, and the New American Studies makes culture and nation both antagonistic and distinct. In this way, the critic’s identificatory refusal works to restore to cultural and critical legibility the subjects, processes, and cultural forms of production that have been exteriorized by official national U.S. culture and by a prior field formation taken to endorse it.

The pivotal distinction here between cultural formation and the apparatus of the nation-state grows less discernible in the latter trajectories I have defined, as the critical externality to the object is increasingly performed by the analytic dispensation of a geographical outside. These projects are deeply invested in de-centering the U.S. from within the scene of its academic self-reference by thinking at a comparative scale of analysis about nation and region, and by establishing both international venues and internationalized genealogies for the collaborative production of the U.S. as an object of knowledge. The latter point is most clear in the collaborative and multi-national inflection of the scholarly genealogies I cite, where non-U.S.-based Americanists have produced some of the most influential theoretical accounts of transcultural and comparative studies. Still, it has to be noted how the very history of compet-

itive empire that shaped the founding nationalist gesture of U.S. colonial migration from western Europe is symbolically and materially traceable in the scholarly collaborations documented here, giving credence to the sense, apparent elsewhere, that the self-consciousness with which Americanists now approach the project of internationalization is the effect of contemporary urgencies whose histories are not, critically speaking, our own. I will have more to say shortly about the tendency in American Studies to manage the historical situatedness of its practitioners in de-historicized and increasingly moral terms, such that the reliance on conscious refusal perpetuates a critical idiom overwhelmed by the fantasy specter of non-complicity. For now, however, the point is simply this: that regardless of their divergent critical agendas, each of the trajectories I cite participates in materializing what the field imaginary of New Americanism has promised to make real – that through the cultivation of new scholarly attachments and critical vocabularies, Americanists can situate their work both outside and external not only to the imperial state apparatus and the national mythos that accompanies it, but to the history of the field's implication in each.

TIME ZONES

Mappings of every kind, of course, tend to flatten the terrain over which they hover, requiring for actual travel a more proximate rendering of the territory one inhabits, encounters, or hopes to flee. But proximity in U.S. American Studies has long been the key problem that the field has sought to correct, not a situation that it desires, let alone a political goal. To be in the interior, on the ground, at home, or in any of its nationalizing time zones has been and continues to be the affectively loaded scene of contamination and abjection; indeed, it is the very source of New Americanist shame, as I have been discussing. Hence, the New Americanism works hard to exchange the imaginary of the wilderness that enabled a mythological outside to the trauma of colonial extermination for the knowledge orientations provided by recovering the scene of violence, a scene of violence inassimilable to the national mythos. It does this from the complex psychic and epistemological spaces of exteriority, where anger, guilt, dis-identification, and mourning coalesce into an invest-

ment, in Pease's terms, to "change the hegemonic self-representation of the United States' culture" (Pease, "New Americanists" 32). This investment is no minor political desire, even if it might be taken, as it has, as a self-aggrandizing grasp for power or as the mirror inversion, through the syntax of dissent, of the kind of provincializing nationalism of that which it sought to displace. Both of these critiques rehearse, in gesture as well as plot, the mood and manner of New Americanist disaffiliations from the Cold War field imaginary that it has come repeatedly, I want to say compulsively, to cite. This compulsivity is an important feature of New Americanism – indeed I take it to be constitutive, which means that as much as it narrates its own historical supersession, the New Americanism cannot live a day without the figure of the Cold War consensus to define that which it is not. This is no surprise, of course, because in a certain sense, New Americanism *invented it*: invented the very monolithic power of the Cold War apparatus it now foundationally rejects. Invented it: by consolidating all of its contradictions into a narrative of complicitous identification with the state. And now, in much the same motion, internationalization promises to pay New Americanism the same honor, refusing identification with it as a means of constructing its own generative authority, one in which its promised exteriority will free the field from the complicity of "America and its studies," as Kadir has put it, once and for all.

These are impossible desires, of course, but that's not a reason to dismiss them. In fact, I take seriously the work that refused identification performs, even if I find its relentless commitment to consciousness and the ethical utility of its own critical agency exhausting. After all, transformations of any field, including American Studies, are effected by much more than critical or political intention. They arise from historical forces, institutional impulses, and political ir/rationalities quite separate from the subjects who come to identify with and against them. And yet the critical exercises through which identity fields of study have come to be narrated have their own familiar cast of characters, with omniscient narration, totalizing evil, and heroic resolution – or in even more familiar terms, prescient critics, corrupting state power, and a sophisticated theoretical agenda armed for radical change. The temporal structure of these exercises typically splits the past from the present and the dead from the living (or the nearly retired from the more recently employed), such that the future is always owned by the present; indeed it is what the pres-

ent lives for. If the language I use here relies on the technologies of fiction, not the determining social realities sought by documentary history, it is not that narratives of field formation jettison claims to material authority. In fact, what is striking is how often they present themselves as historical description against the animating failure of the field's past complicitous projections.³⁷ Hence, the double relation that authorizes the New American Studies organizes the field into two time zones: a past that can never *not* be unconsciously aligned with the imperial state, and a present and future that thrives on its conscious and conscientious escape from such complicity.³⁸ That this psychic temporality is oedipal is certain – the New Americanism is mobilized by a critique of founding fathers, and its rebellion is routinely emplotted as the refusal to be domesticated by ideological fictions and state managements of various kinds, which is why, in the logic of its “newness,” it is forever young. But when taken up by proponents who call for a wholly new internationalized field, New Americanism is stopped dead in its tracks, its animating self-propulsion returned, in temporal retrogression, to prototypical national time where it shares kinship with its Cold War predecessor.³⁹ The refusal that internationalization generates here is double-edged: it takes the New Americanist revolt as a failure of critical self-recognition, resituating it within a continuous history of American Americanist identificatory attachments; in doing so, it consolidates the New Americanism as symptom and agent of the imperial ambitions of the state, refusing the former as a means of generating dissent from the latter.

I take Kadir's founding presidential address to the International American Studies Association conference in 2003, “Defending America Against Its Devotees,” as a signal moment in establishing internationalization as the historical impetus and critical force of a field-transforming turn, one that shares the familiar emplotment from proximity to externality, from complicitous past to hopeful future. In it, he situates the war in Iraq as the watershed event that has “paradigm-altering” implications for American Studies, as large as those of the Vietnam War, but “with the difference that the global scope of American Studies today will resist the re-absorption of these changes into a national and nationalist project of US Americanism” (135). His manifesto begins by turning America outside itself.⁴⁰ Once an “object of devotion,” “a generator of epistemic paradigms for its own assessment,” “a continentally

defined geopolitical territory,” “an unquestionable ideological imaginary,” and a nationalist “sponsor of American Studies” as a field, America today, he writes, has been fundamentally resituated “as an international object” and “subject of investigation” (136-7). He thus calls forth the “common endeavors” of the International American Studies Association to foreground the study of America from “criteria and scholarly principles that do not originate in America itself,” which means placing the perspectives of “non-Americanized Americanists” – those who “have known all along” that the U.S. was not the center of the world, at the forefront (136, 143). To be sure, Kadir acknowledges that American Studies in the U.S. ceased “some time ago” to approach its object of study as “a univocal, celebratory occasion”; nonetheless, he repeatedly positions the New Americanism as part of a recuperated exceptionalism, deaf to its own insularity, such that the turn it inaugurated in the aftermath of Vietnam remains nationalist, in part because it never traveled into the global arena but stayed, as he characterizes it, within the domain of “the inequities in America’s racial, ethnic, economic, and gender history” (139, 148).

The full force of Kadir’s critique of New Americanism emerges in an essay published later in 2003, as the introduction to a special issue of *PMLA* on hemispheric American Studies. In this essay, which names the names that his public address at the IASA Conference did not, Kadir refers to Janice Radway’s presidential address to the U.S. American Studies Association in 1998, “What’s in a Name?” as a “national soliloquy” of “nation-centered and nationalist discourse,” and chastises the New Americanism for its work as yet “another tactical turn in the predictable pattern of chronic self-reconsolidation through self disruption” that characterizes “American discourse” (Kadir, “Introduction: America and Its Studies” 22-3 note 3; 18). The focus of his strongest identificatory refusal is, not surprisingly, Pease, whom Kadir positions, with no self-irony, as an agent of self-canonization, the self-promoted leader of the New Americanist guild. For Kadir, the externality that Pease ascribes to New Americanists, as wrought by the political imaginary of social movements and captured by the concept of postnationality, “emerges as a more capacious nationalism that reinscribes the nationalist project, whose cultural dominant proves nothing less than a more variously differentiated nationalism ... a ruse in the perennial nationalist project of self-affirmation

through self-differentiation, broadened in its scope, base, and illusionary political unconscious to the identity formations of ‘minorities’ or ‘disenfranchised groups’” (19). In this, there is, Kadir continues, “no space between these variegated American identities and the identification of American American studies taken in as naturally and as inexorably American. All fissures have been sealed, the circumscription completed, the wagons impenetrably circled, and America, once again, is securely interred within itself” (20). The sweep of Kadir’s historical condemnation pivots on an ironic juxtaposition of the baptism, as he calls Crews’s 1988 essay, of New Americanism with the first George Bush’s post-socialist declarations of the New World Order following the official end of the Cold War. Indeed, for Kadir, this is more than juxtaposition; it is an “uncanny simultaneity” that begets an unconscious affiliation, a way for American Americanists to banish all recognition of the U.S. as one among many, to forward instead the self-narrating and self-fulfilling image of itself, auto-mythic and still innocent everywhere it goes. By this logic, he writes, in his essay’s most astounding rhetorical moment, “To do American studies as a non-American . . . is to engage in un-American activities, or – as Bush II would have it in his historic congressional address on terrorism, counterterrorism, and their regimes of truth – if you are not with us, you are one of them” (19).

As is no doubt clear, Kadir’s masterful reduction of New Americanism to a repetitious discourse of self-confirming national narcissism simultaneously tropes, even as it refuses, the critical idioms and historicizing logics of the New Americanism in its own gestures of Cold War disavowal. But more than this, the goal that he seeks – of “an exogenous assessment of America” – echoes the very externality claimed by Pease even as he excoriates Pease, in the tenor of Pease’s earlier excoriation of Crews, for being retrogressively invested in nationalizing mythologies and in orders of knowledge that make no identificatory break with “America” (Kadir, “Introduction: America and Its Studies” 22). Thus, when Kadir insists that Americanists must “resist interpellation into the ideology of state apparatuses” and “pursue, consciously and assiduously, a comparative and relational refocusing of America in the larger world context,” he hears no echo of his project in New Americanism, in part because the psychic temporality of past and future has been split and the roles of complicity and its negation consigned. Internationalization – no agency of state power,

no discourse of recuperative potential, no product of national imaginaries – stands now on the other side of the new great divide between what was and what is not yet: an American Studies that will “cease to be American and an instrument of official state policy and become, instead, an independent, international field of inquiry and teaching” (Kadir, “Introduction: America and Its Studies” 11). But what is an independent international field? And on what terms can we ascribe things deemed American to an unquestioned conjunction with the official operations of the state? After all, if the New American Studies is formulated in various ways by the impact and idiom of internationalization, and if its focus on identity and difference can be read as transnational and transcultural, not simply as insular and internal, as it surely can, then how do we arrive at this new Manichean framing of Americanist knowledges? Or more to the point, what position or analytic or epistemological perspective enables the transcendent recoding that inspires it, and how will critics know when “America” has been banished from the realm of its studies once and for all? These questions cannot be answered, in part because internationalization is an aspiration, as I stated at the outset, not an agency. And nothing in these conversations leads me to want to render it into one – certainly not *one* that seeks to account for relationality on a global scale in the language of marked national subjects and determinate complicity.

But let me not end by simply reciting the tendency to habitual reinscription, such that my readers take the problem I am tracking to be the operations of refused identification through which Kadir makes himself at home in the field imaginary of the very New Americanism he would otherwise reject. When it comes to the conundrum of internationalization, there’s more going on here than this. After all, if Kadir’s refusal of identification with New Americanism can be said to occupy its field imaginary, against his own wishes, then New Americanism bears the capacity to incorporate as part of itself even those critiques that would seek to challenge it, such that the project of getting outside American American Studies lands him right in the middle of it. Such incorporative power has long been understood to belong to hegemonic operations of all kinds; indeed, as Kadir himself discusses, the incorporation of dissent is one of the chief descriptions of America’s exceptionalizing idiom: that it absorbs critiques of its imperial violence and structural discrimination by converting its failures into projected ideals, to be forwarded around

the world as uniquely its own.⁴¹ All this could quite powerfully suggest that New American Studies departs in identification from its object of study only long enough to restore it, as Kadir insists, but it also means that internationalization might be less the means to escape the hegemonic force of America than the very vehicle that extends and renews it as an internationalized object of concern everywhere. I want to say both yes and no to each of these propositions. Yes, to the possibility of reading the complicity of New Americanism with the object of study it seeks to escape. Yes, to the failure of internationalization to defend itself against the charge of its own desire for global mastery. But also, no. No, to the generative assumptions that consolidate the field with the operations of its object of study and the discourses that generate the object's universalist pretensions. No, then, to the tendency in American Studies (ah, finally my own refusal) to use critical practice in precisely this way: as a privileged domain – indeed *the* privileged domain – for simultaneously discerning and doing battle with “America” itself.

NOT ONE

It is no doubt strange for me to ascribe so much seeming agency to a critical operation, as though internationalization actually *is* something. But in what sense is this not true? Left critique in many parts of the world has long been convinced that ideas have material effects (think ideology) or that, in fact, they *are* material (think the idea of race). But there is no agreed-upon understanding of precisely how they take on a life of their own, which is why at this late date there are still regular contributions to that publishing industry devoted to debating the relation of theoretical abstraction and the empirically real. (Don't worry, this really is my conclusion, so let me just say that the one description of happiness I can imagine entails witnessing a general academic acceptance that no critical concept, theoretical discourse, method, or object of study is ever adequate to what we want to use it to do.) The more salient point is that conceptual entities such as internationalization may lack ontological or material definition, but they do *do* something, and that something is often more immediately tangible in the realm of affect and critical investment than in everyday life as a disaggregated whole. This is one way of

explaining why I began my discussion by suggesting that a primary value of internationalization was its aspiration, and by situating its animations and effects not on the terrain of its claims but of its desires – that is, not in terms of its success or failure to revolutionize the ways in which Americanist knowledge is produced and practiced around the world, but in the affective domain where the passages of shame, anger, and resistance register the emergent inscriptions of internationalization's relational marks. Affect, not conscious formulations. Relationality, not refusal. Implication, not non-complicity.

The difficult issue then is not about ascribing false agency to internationalization. It has to do instead with what lurks beneath internationalization's aspiration to craft a set of critical practices and priorities that relieve American Studies of being implicated in the power or history of everything that generates our need to study it in the multiple parameters that the discourse of internationalization implies. This is not simply the belief, as I have suggested above, that the relationships both between practitioners and their objects of study *and* among practitioners themselves are indices and inscriptions of the social relations of U.S. global hegemony, but that we can attend to one as a means of attending to the other. What enables *this* particular fantasy is less the field imaginary in which Americanist knowledge is produced, internationalist or not, than the *imaginary of the field* through which the disciplinary apparatus of academic production takes hold. This imaginary proceeds by assuring us, in a set of seemingly obvious relations, that, among other things, there is "a field," that its operations are secured by a shared object, that its object has value, and that we have critical agency in relation to it. The imaginary of the field is the necessary precondition that gives authority to every gesture of field transformation. It is the practitioner's first and most enduring romance. It is this imaginary that enables internationalization to travel the distance from the idioms that differentially cite it – the transnational, postnational, global, postcolonial – to the fantastic wish for an uncontaminated future that it will try, but fail, to deliver. Implication, as I said, not non-complicity, which means an internationalized American Studies that finds itself not *one*.

Notes

¹ This paper began as an address to the Australian and New Zealand American Studies Association in 2004 and has benefited, in its various iterations, from conversations with audiences and colleagues at the Dartmouth Institute for American Studies, the Nordic American Studies Association Conference, the Italian Association of North American Studies Seminar, and the German Network of American Studies workshop. I especially want to thank Eva Cherniavsky, Donatella Izzo, Liam Kennedy, Janice Radway, Sabine Sielke, and Zahid Chaudhary for their invaluable comments, and Jayne Fagnoli for permission to reprint portions of my essay, "Romancing the Future: Internationalization as Symptom and Wish," in *American Studies: An Anthology*, eds. Kevin Gaines, Janice Radway, Barry Shank, and Penny Von Eschen (Malden: Blackwell, 2009).

² It is true that other terms have circulated in American Studies to describe the field's attempt to attend both to the exceptionalist legacies of its formation in the U.S. and to transformations wrought by globalization since 1989, including the concepts of the postcolonial, postnational, and the transnational. I am using the "international" as a general framework here, in part because of its nominative use in new organizational bodies (The International Association of American Studies) and its ubiquity in conversations about American Studies across world regions. On the specification of "internationalization" for American Studies, see Desmond and Dominguez; Lowe; Giles, "Virtual Americas"; Lenz, "Internationalizing American Studies"; Shamir; Hones and Leyda. For specific discussions of the analytic capacities of the postcolonial, see Cherniavsky; King; Ickstadt; Brian Edwards; Schueller; and Park and Schwarz. On the postnational as a critical rubric, see Pease, "National Identities, Postmodern Artifacts, and Postnational Narratives" and "The Politics of Postnational American Studies"; Balkir; Buell; Rowe, ed., *Post-Nationalist American Studies*; and Shapiro. For considerations of the transnational, see Giles, "Reconstructing American Studies" and "Transnationalism in Practice"; Wald; Thelen; Moya and Saldívar; Shelley Fishkin Fisher; Kroes, "National American Studies in Europe, Transnational American Studies in America"; and Medovoi. A touchstone essay in conversations about the transnational, though not focused on American Studies, is Miyoshi.

³ The origin of the phrase, "American American Studies," is not entirely clear, but in 1979 Ron Clifton referred to "American Americanists" in his essay, "The Outer Limits of American Studies: A View From the Remaining Frontier" (365). For Clifton, the remaining frontier was American Studies abroad where, he strikingly noted, "many opportunities [exist] to become founding fathers all over" (367). How strange, given the present context, that Clifton saw the possibility of getting "outside" the U.S. based project as a way to extend its nationalist discourse! In that same anniversary volume, Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., would take up the topic of the specificity of U.S. American Studies quite differently. See Berkhofer, "The Americanness of American Studies," and more recently, Kennedy. In recent conversations about internationalization, the term has been used in a variety of confounding ways, sometimes as a synonym for either U.S. American Studies or U.S.-based American Studies, at other times in contradistinction to both. When deployed as a synonym, American American Studies plots a geographical identity that is simultaneously national and nationalist in origin and

identification – it is rather literally a field “made in the USA” by people “made in the USA,” with all of the familiar self-centered national affections and afflictions attached to the discursive production of “America” in the United States. When used to denote a distinction from U.S. (based) American Studies, American American Studies indicates trajectories of identificatory nationalism in Americanist knowledge practices without analogizing the field to territory and nativity. In this deployment, an Americanist working anywhere, born anywhere, in the world can be an American Americanist, just as a U.S.-based Americanist is not an American Americanist by default. This later distinction is not widely used; indeed I think it safe to say that the critical dissection of the terms meant to differentiate Americanist scholarship globally has not been sufficiently developed. This is the case in part because of the way that the “international” garners authority from the global rise of formal internationalized political arenas, which are marked by the very uneven development, superpower overreach, and U.S. centrality its collation is aimed to address.

⁴ See Mallach and Massey. In online press materials, the book, part of the series on “Conflicts and Trends in Business Ethics,” is described as a response to the urgency of global change. “There is a great hunger for a culture based on a renewed, broadened, and intellectually charged affirmation of life and the pursuit of happiness. Cultural and academic leaders in particular need to embrace change; business and government leaders, too, need to understand better the humanistic and moral purposes that direct commerce and policy. The emerging idea of ‘spiritual capital’ is critical to this new understanding.” See www.mmscrivenerpress.com/ctethics_book2.html.

⁵ Wrapped in the star quality of Will Smith (and his real-life son, Jaden, in the role of Gardner’s son), “Happyness” uses an Italian director, Gabriele Muccino, for the pursuit’s symbolic renewal. Smith received an Oscar nomination as best actor for the role, while Jaden won the MTV Breakthrough Performance award. The film box office totaled \$162 million; rentals yielded \$50 million. The film is based on the book, *The Pursuit of Happyness*, by Chris Gardner with Quincy Troupe. For the flavor of reviews, see Dargis.

⁶ The issues of the relationship between the nation and the state, so central to conversations about emergent forms of global governmentality and the reformulation of sovereignty under empire, are slightly extrinsic to the paths of my discussion here, but I would like to pause long enough to say that I do not think that the language of a new world order and the theories of temporal or epistemic breaks that attend it are adequate to understanding the contiguity of the present with the recent past. The significance of the loss of civil society in western democracies with the official end of the second world as an organizational and ideological counter to the first is more important, it seems to me, than the war on terror for the reorganizations of state power vis a vis nation formation. It is the longer *durée* of the ongoing recalibration of nation and state that needs to be written into the narrative practices of American Studies, especially in its U.S. iteration where the intoxication with emergency and states of exception is currently reanimating what I think of as an exceptionalist anti-imperialism. To be sure, this exceptionalism is very different in political aim than its Cold War nationalist predecessor, but it nonetheless functions as a mode of exemplary representation, reiterating the New Americanist field imaginary in which analytic intentions and critical dis-identifications are invested with the power to counter state practices themselves. For a long deliberation on the relationship

between criticality and the political, see my forthcoming *Object Lessons: Essays on the U.S. Knowledge Politics of Identity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP).

⁷ Fear is hardly a means of negotiating the relationship between the state and its citizens; indeed, it works to eviscerate the sovereignty ascribed to the citizen altogether. See *Lions for Lambs*, Dir. Robert Redford (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2007); *A Mighty Heart*, Dir. Michael Winterbottom (Paramount, 2007); *Redacted*, Dir. Brian DePalma (The Film Farm, 2007); *No End in Sight*, Dir. Charles Ferguson (Red Envelope Entertainment, 2007); *Rendition*, Dir. Gavin Hood (New Line Productions, 2007); *Road to Guantanamo*, Dir. Michael Winterbottom (Roadside Attractions, 2006); *Southland Tales*, Dir. Richard Kelly (Cherry Road Films, 2006); and *The Valley of Elah*, Dir. Paul Haggis (Blackfriars Bridge Films, 2007).

⁸ The ACLU has published a book, *Administration of Torture: A Documentary Record from Washington to Abu Ghraib*, edited by Jameel Jaffer and Amrit Singh, that copiously documents the Defense Department's development of torture as "policy" and the many objections, from Pentagon and FBI officials, leveled against the promotion of interrogation tactics that violated international human rights agreements. At a public lecture with one of the book's authors in Seattle (Town Hall, November 9, 2007), members of the audience were keen to discuss the ways in which the Bush administration's policy seemed never to have been "secret," but openly defended and avowed, so much so that by 2007, "water boarding" was a ubiquitous media word.

⁹ See Strom.

¹⁰ See *Forrest Gump* and my discussion of it in "Whiteness Studies and the Paradox of Particularity."

¹¹ Judith Halberstam has written about this genre and its satisfying exposure of the stupidity of white masculinity, but her interest arises from investments in the genre's anti-elitism and non-normative narratives of adulthood. See her *Dude, Where's My Theory: The Politics of Knowledge in the Age of Stupidity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, forthcoming). For the cinematic archive of "stupidity," see *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, Dir. Steven Herek (DeLaurentis Entertainment Group, 1989); *Dude, Where's My Car?*, Dir. Danny Leiner (Alcon Entertainment 2002); *Dumb and Dumber*, Dir. Peter Farrelly (Motion Picture Association of America, 1994); *Harold And Kumar Go To White Castle*, Dir. Danny Leiner (Endgame Entertainment, 2004); and *Wayne's World*, Dir. Penelope Spheeris (Paramount, 1992).

¹² For early deliberations that named and shaped the emergence of New Americanism, as I will discuss shortly, see Crews, "Whose American Renaissance?" and "The New Americanists"; Berkhofer, "A New Context for a New American Studies?"; and Pease, "New Americanists: Revisionist Interventions into the Canon." For more recent considerations, see John Carlos Rowe, "Post-Nationalism, Globalism, and the New American Studies"; Ali Fisher; and Pease, "9/11: When Was 'American Studies After the New Americanists'?" See also "Futures," *The Futures of American Studies*, eds. Pease and Wiegman.

¹³ On melancholia, depression, and shame, see especially Eng and Kazanjian; Eng and Han; Cheng; Forter; and Johns, Schmader, and Lickel. On political depression, see the Feel Tank project at www.feeltankchicago.net.

¹⁴ These relations include scales of analysis that do not necessarily converge: from the specific implications of place in local, national, regional, hemispheric, and global formulations to

the transits of people, commodities, and cultural forms in circulations that mimic and transform the routes of capital, labor, and empire; from the histories of national university systems and the organizations of knowledge in which the study of language and culture has been generated to the powerful ways in which contestations within a national political sphere are played out through struggles over and within the knowledge apparatus as a whole; from the cultural migrations and translations of systems of meaning and interpretative forms to large and small scale political economies and labor formations; from practices of belief, modes of belonging, and identity inheritances to legal regimes, forms of governmentality, histories of political contestation, and discourses of identification and resistance. This list, of course, goes on, revealing the complexity in which both objects of study and their practitioners are situated *and* the refracted angles of vision that bring them into view.

¹⁵ In a very different context, Judith Butler writes about refused identification in “Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification.”

¹⁶ Gene Wise is often credited with most incisively elaborating the field’s struggle with its object of study. See “‘Paradigm Dramas’ in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement”; and more recently, Radway.

¹⁷ For Crews, “the New Americanists are broadly poststructuralist in sympathy; they refuse to draw categorical distinctions between literature and history, foreground and background, art and advocacy, and they distrust all ‘foundational’ claims, whether they be for fixed aesthetic quality, authorial autonomy, a specifically literary kind of discourse, or scholarly detachment. But they scorn the daisy chain of indeterminacies with which the once dandyish but now crestfallen Yale deconstructionists used to caper. For a New Americanist, social struggle must always be kept in view, and any concepts obscuring it – concepts, for example, of the ‘American character,’ of the representative masterpiece, of the impish freeplay of signifiers – are to be not just rejected but exposed as ideology.” See “Whose American Renaissance.” Please note that additional citations in the text are from the online link, which is not paginated.

¹⁸ Berkhofer wrote: “Should we assume that the changing vocabularies during the past four decades represent progress in refining our terminology in the light of increasing conceptual sophistication, or merely altered intellectual and political preferences? Should we tell the story as one of changing climates of opinion (old vocabulary) or struggles for intellectual and political hegemony (new vocabulary)? Should it be emplotted according to the trope of irony – or of romance? Has the American Studies movement entered its own postmodern phase because of its engagement(s) with poststructuralist, post-Marxist, postfeminist, and even posthistoricist theory and practice? Does this answer depend upon one’s choices of narrative plotting and viewpoint or perspective on discourse and politics? Should we postulate a rupture or continuity, and what difference does each plotting make for what and for whom? Will the return to a neo-Progressive version of American history as overall context bring back a simpler link between text and context, between language and social reality that denies the more skeptical implications of the linguistic turn for interpretive security and political certainty? Only the future can reveal the answers to these questions, but will the construction of that history be plotted any differently in form than what now converts the past into present use?” (606).

¹⁹ The books were: Walter Benn Michaels and Donald E. Pease, eds., *The American Renaissance Reconsidered*; Russell J. Reising, *The Unusable Past: Theory and the Study of American Literature*; Sacvan Bercovitch and Myra Jehlen, eds., *Ideology and Classic American Literature*; Donald E. Pease, *Visionary Compacts: American Renaissance Writings in Cultural Context*; Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860*; David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*; and Philip Fisher, *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel*.

²⁰ The essays appeared first in a special issue of *boundary 2* 17.1 (Spring 1990) and were published later in Pease's New Americanist book series; see Pease, ed., *New Americanists: Revisionary Interventions into the Americanist Canon*. A second special issue appeared in 1992, also to be subsequently published as a collection. See Pease, ed., "New Americanists 2: National Identities and Postnational Narratives," and *National Identities and Post-Americanist Narratives*.

²¹ Philip Fisher, also a figure whose work was under review by Crews, edited a special issue and volume of essays in the early 1990s like Pease. That collection, *The New American Studies: Essays from Representations*, might be thought of as the road not taken, as it offered a pragmatist map of the new American Studies, shifting critical emphasis from myth to rhetorics and from national unity to regionalism – with race and gender serving as the material content of the regional. As Carolyn Porter pointed out in a 1994 review essay, Fisher's formulation of New Americanism neutralized the very revision of the field that he sought to remap. "For a field so defined," she wrote, "relieves its practitioners of any theoretical need or capacity to address cultural differences as anything other, or more, than new essentialisms predestined for homogenization through the 'subtraction of difference.' It also – and not accidentally – affords no critical standpoint on the cultural work of American literature other than the pragmatist's.... It is precisely because of these deficiencies, in my view, that this version of 'the new American studies' is all too likely to prevail" (496). While Porter's prediction missed its mark, her discussion of the possible futures for new Americanism is a stunning explication of the critical terrain of the early 1990s.

²² I don't have time in this essay to explore fully the implications of the use of race and gender as two of Pease's key figures for externality. To be sure, both ethnic and gender studies programs in the U.S. university routinely offer a narrative of origin that locates social movement as both their anti-institutional beginning and their ongoing left political credential. But by ascribing race and gender to the realm of the public and as the frame for the representation of "absent subjects," this narrative, in Pease and elsewhere, also functions to consolidate race and gender to minoritized bodies, leaving them outside the very knowledge apparatus that interdisciplinary fields of study implicitly claim. For a deliberation on the problematic that has ensued along these lines in Women's Studies, see Brown; Lee; and Wiegman, "The Possibility of Women's Studies."

²³ See the special issue of *Comparative American Studies* on "Worlding American Studies," edited by Susan Gillman, Kirsten Silva Gruesz, and Rob Wilson.

²⁴ See Kaplan and Pease; Briggs; Murphy; Romero; Streeby; Walker; and Wexler. Also see Kaplan's "Manifest Domesticity" and *The Anarchy of Empire*.

²⁵ In a recent review essay, Susan Gillman considers the "main moves, terminologies, and innovations in US empire studies, post-1998" (196).

²⁶ See Luibheid; Eng; and Manalansan.

²⁷ See José D. Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies and The Dialectics of Our America: Genealogy, Cultural Critique, and Literary History*.

²⁸ See Belnap and Fernández; Brady; DeGuzmán; Gruesz; and Ramón Saldívar.

²⁹ Numerous notable journals have featured special issues on hemispheric studies in recent years. See Kadir, ed., "America, the Idea, the Literature"; Moya and Ramón Saldívar; Shukla and Tinsman; Fox; and Levander and Levine.

³⁰ See especially Fanon; C.L.R. James; Hall, Morley, and Chen; Hall; and Gilroy.

³¹ See Davies; Davies, Gadsby, Peterson, and Williams; Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Uses of *Diaspora*" and *The Practice of Diaspora*; Hartman; and Stephens.

³² See Baldwin; Borstelmann; and Dudziak.

³³ See Rowe, "A Future for American Studies: Comparative U.S. Cultures Model," *The New American Studies*, and his edited collection, *Post-Nationalist American Studies*; Lenz, "Toward a Dialogics of International American Culture Studies," and Lenz and Milich; Kroes, *If You've Seen One, You've Seen the Mall: Europeans and American Mass Culture*; Wilson; Giles, *Virtual Americas: Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary*; and Kadir, "Introduction: America and Its Studies."

³⁴ See Robin; Desmond and Dominguez; Desmond; Torres; Hones and Leyda.

³⁵ A number of scholars – most notably Eva Cherniavsky, Donatella Izzo, Scott Lucas, and Sabine Sielke – are working on the intellectual and political specificity of American Studies programs, paying attention in various degrees to national and regional political histories, funding patterns, and organizations of knowledge that shape the field's frames of reference, critical vocabularies, and research priorities as well as its relation to U.S. American Studies and "America" itself. The "thick" history being developed thus demonstrates the conflicting and multiple stakes of American Studies. Cherniavsky's work focuses on post-socialist eastern Europe and various funding agencies (such as the Soros Foundation) that have and continue to underwrite the development and expansion of American Studies programs there, where universities seek to negotiate their relationship to westernization, understood as both western Europe and the U.S. Izzo charts the history of American Studies in Italy and its complex relation to Fascism in intra-national and European debates in the mid twentieth century, while Lucas discusses the formation of British American Studies. In a lengthy consideration of the practice of American Studies in Germany, Sabine Sielke traces field forming conversations about methods and theories across disciplinary domains to consider its potential transdisciplinary future. See Eva Cherniavsky, "Post-American Studies, or Scattered Reflections on the Cultures of Imperialism," American Studies Association Meeting, Philadelphia, October 16-19, 2007; Izzo; Lucas; and Sielke.

³⁶ For instance, Kadir writes of the "postnationalism" of the New Americanism as "a more capacious nationalism that reinscribes a nationalist project, whose cultural dominant proves nothing less than a more variously differentiated nationalism," one that serves "the perennial nationalist project of self-affirmation through self-differentiation, broadened in its scope, base, and illusionary political unconscious to the identity formations of 'minorities' or 'disenfranchised groups'" ("Introduction: America and Its Studies" 19). In less scathing tones, Desmond and Dominguez remark on the tendency of scholarship on multiculturalism "to limit discussion of

cultural diversity . . . to issues affecting populations living within the United States. . . . Although it is important that contemporary U.S. debates about cultural diversity produce an expansion of courses, textbooks, and museum representations of, by, and about minoritized U.S. populations, it had been our hope that these debates about cultural diversity would also produce . . . dialogues about the many other societies, cultures, and issues elsewhere in the world, including the perspectives of foreign scholars on the humanities in the United States" (476).

³⁷ There are numerous examples of the generic form I am citing here. For an excellent diagnosis of the operations of the field forming narrative in feminist studies, see Hemmings.

³⁸ For an interesting meditation on the status of the state as the complicity object in American Studies, see Bérubé.

³⁹ In his controversial essay, "On Recovering the 'Ur' Theory of American Studies," Leo Marx makes a similar argument to Kadir but for entirely different analytic reasons. Arguing that the New Americanists share continuities with the Cold War field apparatus that they refute, Marx seeks to rescue his own generation from political condemnation. In my terms, his essay demonstrates the ways in which refused identification operates as a consolidation of the contradictions and heterogeneity of the prior field formation, exchanging any account of its historicity for the power of its symbolic force in the emergent field imaginary, one that functions to guarantee its own political and critical authority. See Marx, and responses to his essay by Lipsitz and by Kaplan, "A Call for a Truce."

⁴⁰ In her response to Kadir, Amy Kaplan, then President of the U.S. American Studies Association, agreed that the field "must address the current international crisis" and that this would require "both new collaborative efforts of international networks of scholars and the emergence of new archives to remap the terrain of the object of study" (154). But she warned against the slide in his essay from American American Studies to American Americanist and the problematic reification of geography thus inscribed as an unquestioned "politics of location": "The production of knowledge circulates too globally, unevenly, and circuitously to fit neatly into this inside/outside model. . . . Furthermore, if one posits the possibility of viewing the United States from a purely external vantage, one risks recuperating a vision of the nation as a monolithic, cohesive, and unitary whole, even from a critical perspective" (155). See Kaplan, "The Tenacious Grasp of American Exceptionalism."

⁴¹ I must remark here on how completely attuned to this rhetorical project is Barack Obama's bid for the U.S. presidency, as demonstrated in any number of his speeches, but see especially his victory speech following the Iowa Caucuses on January 3, 2008: www.nytimes.com/interactive/2008/01/03/multimedia/20080103_IOWA_VIDEO.html#.

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