

# Post-Nationalist American Studies

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# Introduction

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Our group was initially organized under the title “Post-Nationalist American Studies.” In the call for applications, the description beneath the title, however, emphasized the intersections between changing models of American Studies and “‘post-national’ models for community and social organization.” During our weekly conversations, we frequently talked about the differences between the terms *post-nationalist* and *post-national* as well as the implications of the prefix *post-* more generally. Some of us were wary of the implications of the *post-* in the phrase “post-national American Studies.” While *post-national* has gained a certain currency in discussions of globalization and in revisionary “New Americanists” projects, many of us worried about the term’s developmental trajectory and the sense of belatedness it evoked, as though the time of the nation-state had passed.<sup>1</sup> Although we agree that the flexible regimes of accumulation underpinning what David Harvey has described as the condition of postmodernity are dramatically changing the meaning and significance of nationalisms and the nation-state, none of us believes that the nation-form has been or will any time in the near future be superseded.

California’s passage of Proposition 187, which sought to withdraw benefits from undocumented workers, and the University of California Regents’ decision to rescind affirmative action in admissions and hiring made it particularly unsettling to meet under the rubric of “post-national American Studies,” because both national borders and citizenship privileges were once again being marked off in restrictive ways. Even as debates about the movements of capital and people across national boundaries intensify, nationalist nativisms are repeatedly mobilized to oppose immigration; transnational corporations continue to rely on nation-states for labor control; state intervention in “unstable financial markets” has become, according to Harvey,

more rather than less pervasive; and the “National Symbolic,” as Lauren Berlant puts it, with its “traditional icons, its metaphors, its heroes, its rituals, and its narratives” in many ways continues to “provide an alphabet for a collective consciousness or national subjectivity.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, in the current context, invocations of the post-national by U.S. intellectuals can function as disturbing disavowals of the global reach of U.S. media and military might. Our use of the word *national* thus refers to a complex and irreducible array of discourses, institutions, policies, and practices which, even if they are in flux or in competition with other structures and allegiances, cannot be easily wished away by the application of the *post-* prefix.

The term *post-nationalist*, of course, is open to many of the same objections. If we have not superseded the nation-state, neither have we superseded nationalism. On the one hand, the insistence that the fall of the Soviet Union means that the United States “won” the Cold War has re-engendered narratives of American global superiority. In some instances, especially in other parts of the Americas in the age of NAFTA, a “nationalistic emphasis on meaningful autonomy and independence” could provide a source of “resistance to the increasingly total consolidation of the system of international capitalism.”<sup>3</sup> Within the United States, moreover, it is important to distinguish between nationalisms which are aligned with the nation-state and those which challenge “official” nationalism. As George Lipsitz reminded us when he joined our seminar one week, despite their limitations, black and Chicano nationalisms, for instance, are not identical with or reducible to U.S. nationalism.<sup>4</sup> In other words, we need to critique the limits and exclusions of nationalism without forgetting the differences between nationalisms or throwing all nationalisms into the trash-can of history.

Despite the paradoxes and dangers of a post-nationalist approach to American Studies, however, that adjective does begin to describe the desire of those in our group to contribute to a version of American Studies that is less insular and parochial, and more internationalist and comparative. In this sense, our efforts to formulate a post-nationalist American Studies respond to and seek to revise the cultural nationalism and celebratory American exceptionalism that often informed the work of American Studies scholars in the Cold War era. If our post-nationalism wrestles with an earlier version of American Studies, it is also inevitably informed by our respective locations and workplaces. This residential research group was convened on a university campus in Southern California, where disputes about immigration, assimilation, and citizenship are debated daily in the local media. The New Year in this part of the country means festivities and celebrations, as well as an inevitable “border crack-down” to monitor more stringently the human traffic across the United States–Mexico border. The fall 1996 elections included a local congressional race in which Robert

Dornan, the loser, alleged that the victor, Loretta Sanchez, won because noncitizens had voted in large numbers.<sup>5</sup> The ideal of a closed American nation and a fixed national culture will only recognize outsiders by excluding or assimilating them. Yet the post-nationalist recognizes that even in moments like the present one—in which the American nation-state seems to be extremely hostile to the incursions of cultural and political outsiders—there is plenty of evidence of resistance to U.S. hegemony, and in particular to narrow definitions of national character.

As a critical perspective, post-nationalist American Studies values the work, both recent and historical, of scholars whose concept of the nation and of citizenship has questioned dominant American myths rather than canonized them. Of course, we refer principally to scholarship in Ethnic and Women’s Studies, at one time marginalized in the academy, but now key to a dynamic understanding of American culture and institutions, and the foundation of that critical practice which we call the post-nationalist. The post-nationalist is not a new critical practice; it builds upon previous work, within and outside of American Studies, that is critical of U.S. hegemony and the constructedness of both national myths and national borders.<sup>6</sup>

Despite a long history of dissent, nationalist paradigms and assumptions have held sway in the popular imagination as well as in scholarly discourse. “American exceptionalism” is the crucial term of order for such nationalist thinking. The origins of the doctrine of American exceptionalism are traditionally traced to two key documents in the history of the early republic: Washington’s “Farewell Address” (1796) and the Monroe Doctrine (1823). George Washington warned the young republic against entanglement in the affairs of Europe, while the Monroe Doctrine warned the nations of Europe to forego claims to their former colonies in North and South America and to end “interference” in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere. This turn away from Europe marks the primary meaning of American exceptionalism—the conviction that the United States marked a break from the history of Europe, specifically the history of feudalism, class stratification, imperialism, and war. Puritan tropes such as the “City on the Hill” and the “Errand into the Wilderness” were later reclaimed to figure American exceptionalism. John Winthrop’s words delivered aboard a ship bound for New England in 1630, “We shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people upon us,” came to define the persuasive image of the United States as literally above other nations, separate and inviolate, righteous and exemplary.<sup>7</sup>

Traditionally, this imagined break with Europe was seen as inextricably tied to the “Westward movement” of American history. The foreignness of Europe rhetorically domesticated claims to the conquered territories of the West. In Frederick Jackson Turner’s classic 1894 formulation, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” the advance of the frontier

meant “the steady movement away from Europe, a steady growth of independence on American lines.”<sup>8</sup> As Michael Rogin has argued, “the linkage of expansion to freedom instead of the acquisition of colonies” has shaped American nationalism “from the beginning.”<sup>9</sup> If American society was moving away from Europe, it could not be “colonizing” the North American continent as European powers had done; the United States was instead claiming land which was understood to be its “manifest destiny.” The frontier thesis shared the basic assumptions Amy Kaplan finds in Perry Miller’s *Errand into the Wilderness*: “That America—once cut off from Europe—can be understood as a domestic question, left alone, unique, divorced from international conflicts—whether the slave trade or the Mexican War—in which that national identity takes shape.”<sup>10</sup>

The Turner thesis has been thoroughly superseded as a historical paradigm by new western historians such as Patricia Limerick and Richard White.<sup>11</sup> But its power has always been symbolic. The assumption that American history moves from east to west remains deeply ingrained in cultural imagination. In such national narratives Chicanos and Asian Americans remain perpetual latecomers, cast in the role of “recent” immigrants and foreign nationals, as if the War with Mexico did not predate the Civil War or the transcontinental railway had not been built from west to east as well from east to west. Race has long been the fault line in the logic equating American nationalism with the expansion of freedom. Turner overtly offers his “frontier thesis” as an alternative to the argument that slavery was the “peculiar” feature of American culture and history.<sup>12</sup> Perry Miller, as Kaplan so adroitly foregrounds, came to his discovery of American uniqueness along “the banks of the Congo,” and had to actively suppress the past and present significance of Africa in his formulation of “the origins of America . . . from a dyadic relationship between Europe and an empty continent. . . .”<sup>13</sup> Scholars and intellectuals such as W. E. B. Du Bois and José Martí challenged such exclusionary racial and nationalist models long before the institutionalization of Ethnic Studies in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>14</sup>

The question of a “Post-Nationalist American Studies” also reminds us of the ways the birth and early development of American Studies were entangled with nationalist ideologies. Gene Wise’s famous essay, “Paradigm Drama,” and several addresses by presidents of the American Studies Association tell this history, which is worth a brief sketch here.<sup>15</sup> The field originated in the 1930s amid the social and economic upheavals of the Great Depression. It is rooted in anxieties about the special claims and desires of Americanists to legitimate the study of the United States in the university, especially in some of the elite universities where American Studies began. By the 1940s, when the first American Civilization Ph.D.s emerged from Harvard and then Yale and the University of Pennsylvania, American Studies was fully implicated in the wartime and postwar celebration of

American exceptionalism. A classic in American Studies scholarship of this time, John Kouwenhoven’s *The Arts in Modern American Civilization* (1948), bursts with pride over America’s unique styles and contributions, and the “consensus” scholarship of the 1950s continued the argument that American culture was exceptional both in its character and in its mission of spreading democratic liberalism around the world.<sup>16</sup> Daniel Boorstin’s *The Genius of American Politics* (1953) made the boldest claims for the “givenness” of American democratic experience, but Boorstin’s claims and mood pervade much of the American Studies scholarship of the 1950s and early 1960s, including David Potter’s *People of Plenty* (1954) and such classic myth-and-symbol studies as Henry Nash Smith’s *Virgin Land*, R. W. B. Lewis’s *American Adam*, and Leo Marx’s *The Machine in the Garden*.<sup>17</sup>

Of course, careful readers of some of this work will notice ambivalence in the claims, such as Potter’s doubts that American democratic traditions could be exported or Leo Marx’s worries about the givenness of American democratic traditions. But in general the scholars of American Studies from the end of the Second World War to the mid-1960s justified American exceptionalism, rarely challenged the assumption that the nation-state was the proper unit of analysis for understanding American experience, and endorsed an American ideal of internationalism. In the latter case, scholars of American Studies often developed notions of the United States as the economic, social, and political utopia toward which other nations ought to aspire, contributing thereby to a familiar Cold War ideology in which both the United States and the Soviet Union claimed international “destinies” for their respective worldviews.

Just when the consensus paradigm in American Studies came apart is hard to say; these things happen slowly. In retrospect we do see how the increasingly visible Civil Rights movement, then the Black Power movement, the women’s movement, the gay rights movement, and labor movements, such as that of California’s migrant farmworkers, meant that American Studies practitioners could no longer sustain the fiction that Americans “shared” a national character based on common experiences. The Vietnam war forced many scholarly communities, including the American Studies Association (ASA), to debate the proper role of intellectuals in the Cold War. As in many other scholarly societies, a “radical caucus” emerged in the ASA at the end of the 1960s and began pushing American Studies practitioners toward C. Wright Mills’s stance that the proper goal of the sociological imagination was “connecting private troubles with public issues.”<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, just as the radical caucus and others were assaulting the collaboration of American Studies with nationalist ideologies, new sorts of particularist nationalism emerged with the Black Power movement, a nationalist Chicano/a movement (La Raza), and a general move into identity

politics in the 1970s and 1980s. These social movements and their critiques of American nationalism showed up in the university as programs and departments of Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies. Those "left behind" in traditional American Studies programs struggled to avoid being perceived as "white heterosexual male studies" in the new constellation of programs and scholarly specialties. By the mid-1980s the ASA—as evidenced by the articles published in *American Quarterly*, its convention programs, and the diversity of its national council and officers—embraced a multicultural view of the American Studies project. But the question remained how the new American Studies would find a distinctive, interdisciplinary, scholarly and teaching role for the specialty without slipping again into a rhetoric that privileged national identity. How could the new American Studies take "nation," "nationality," and "nationalism" as phenomena that are simultaneously fictional and real?

Another crucial question for the new American Studies is how it will draw on previous traditions of scholarship. If the aims of American Studies have changed, then how are its practitioners to assess and use scholarship, much of it based on time-consuming empirical research, produced according to the nationalist paradigm? For example, there has been much work in a postmodern vein about diaspora, migration, and modern consciousness which nonetheless echoes (unknowingly, much of the time) the themes of the older immigration history (itself part of American exceptionalism) by scholars such as Oscar Handlin. The old version painted America as the melting pot of the world, reading sources such as Crèvecoeur, Tocqueville, and social scientific work on immigration, in order to portray American national consciousness as a unique process of transformation.

Current American scholarship has actively criticized that version of American exceptionalism, but much of the recent theoretical emphasis on global migration and movement has paradoxically left some of us wondering why it is that some Americans still feel unique, others look for more specific forms of identification within the nation-state, and others reject the very idea of national affiliation. Placing American national consciousness within the historical context of the rise of modern nationalism, ethnic consciousness, and cultural identity in general would be one way for American Studies to be self-reflective about the "American" part of the endeavor.<sup>19</sup>

If it does not exactly describe, prescribe, or proscribe, our use of "post-nationalism," like any act of nomination, certainly produces and performs; that is, it not only unsettles, but also acts in the world of critical practice. Most immediately, "post-nationalism" acts by addressing the question not only of how areas and objects of study within American Studies might change, but also of how methodologies might change. In fact, we want to suggest that efforts at "post-nationalist" American Studies ought to incorporate a thorough recognition of the dynamic imbrication of the method-

ological and the conceptual. Recent shifts in objects and areas of study within American Studies are calling forth new methods of study and paradigms of research, while engagements by American Studies scholars with multiple disciplines and methodologies are redefining those very objects and areas.

Our group's discussions about the methodological and conceptual shifts that a "post-nationalist" practice might bring to American Studies focused on the possibilities and limits of three current movements in this direction within American Studies: the embrace of "cosmopolitanism" or "critical internationalism;" the engagement with Postcolonial Studies; and the appropriation of Gramscian and/or the Subaltern Studies Collective's theories of subalternity.

In one sense, then, we join the current chorus of calls to move U.S.-based American Studies, Women's Studies, and Ethnic Studies away from uncritical nationalist perspectives and toward what has been variously called critical internationalism, transnationalism, or globality. In particular, we are concerned with how one negotiates among local, national, and global perspectives, while remaining vigilantly self-critical about the epistemologically and historically deep ties that American Studies has had to U.S. imperialism.

An essay by Jane Desmond and Virginia Domínguez in *American Quarterly* exemplifies a particularly pervasive version of the call for "cosmopolitanism" or "critical internationalism" within American Studies. Echoing Linda Kerber and Benjamin Lee, Desmond and Domínguez call for "an authentically cosmopolitan intellectual culture," a "true internationalization" of American Studies.<sup>20</sup> Concretely, Desmond and Domínguez advocate more interaction between U.S. scholars and international scholars, by which they mean that U.S. scholars should read more work by non-U.S. scholars on the United States; more international meetings and exchange programs should be held; new transnational technologies should be adopted more rapidly and democratically; and more funding for all of the above should be provided by departments, universities, and professional institutions (486–7). These steps could certainly open up opportunities for organized as well as chance encounters with non-U.S. scholars that could affect the transformation of U.S.-based American Studies scholarship. In fact, we would emphasize how the very possibility of such opportunities is currently being threatened by cuts in U.S. government funding of the humanities.

Yet Desmond and Domínguez stop short of a sustained discussion of what "new paradigms of research" a critical internationalism would involve. Rather, they seem to suggest that a certain international, intellectual equal exchange will necessarily erode the nationalist tendencies of American Studies and "generate" new, cosmopolitan paradigms of research (484–8).

But what, exactly, does the “cosmopolitan” mean when it is transformed from a practice of international intellectual exchange into a paradigm of American Studies research? Are we sure that such a “cosmopolitan” practice will overthrow, rather than export and reinforce, the imperialist and nationalist traditions of American Studies?

Desmond and Domínguez’s understanding of “cosmopolitanism” seems to stem from their agreement with popular celebrations of the death of the nation-state at the hands of the supposedly increasing globalization of capitalism. They take this increasing globalization of capitalism as a historical rationale for a shift toward “critical internationalism” within American Studies. However, the research of, for example, Karl Polanyi, Annales school founder Marc Bloch, Fernand Braudel, Ernesto Laclau, world-system theorists (such as Immanuel Wallerstein, Giovanni Arrighi, and Janet Abu-Lughod), and contemporary geographers (such as Peter J. Huggill), has shown that capitalist and even precapitalist economic and cultural systems have long been “global.”<sup>21</sup> If “globalization” is not, in fact, increasing in any simple, quantifiable, or progressive sense today, then we ought to ask from whence the optimism of American Studies critics, such as Desmond and Domínguez, derives? If the global is not progressively obliterating the national or the local today, but rather global, national, and local forces are articulating with each other in complex modalities, then the elucidation of these articulations rather than a celebration of them is the urgent task before us. A rush to celebrate what Desmond and Domínguez call the “cosmopolitan” runs the risk of entrenching current raced, gendered, and classed values of transnational capitalism at least as much as it challenges current U.S. hegemony within transnational capitalism. For us, then, “post-nationalist” names a negotiation among local, national, and global frames of analysis that seeks its justification neither in objective and progressive historical processes of globalization nor in implicit celebrations of the obliteration of the local and the national. What the result of this negotiation might look like, and how it might authorize itself, are crucial questions to consider. The questions themselves, rather than quick answers to them, would seem to be more fruitful occasions for a new American Studies.<sup>22</sup>

Other recent efforts at specifying “paradigms for research” for a “critically international” American Studies have engaged with Postcolonial Studies, while related efforts have mobilized the concept of subalternity to name and examine the marginalization of people of color in the United States. By making visible the white settler colonial history of the United States, such efforts can help overcome such founding American Studies myths—or, to borrow Houston A. Baker, Jr.’s use of Foucault, “governing statements”—as “the individual in the wilderness,” “migratory errand,” “self-reliance,” and North America as “*tabula rasa*.”<sup>23</sup> In addition, these efforts

can push Postcolonial Studies itself to consider the relationship of North American colonialism in general, and U.S. racial formations in particular, to Marxian narratives of, primarily, European colonialism and imperialism.

Yet, as Jenny Sharpe has argued, a number of problems attend the “refashioning” of Postcolonial Studies and theories of “subalternity” as American Studies or even Minority Discourse Studies.<sup>24</sup> What happens, Sharpe asks, to North-South or East-West power relations when the metropolitan North reclaims the margins of global power? What does the fundamentally political and historically specific analogy between the marginalized or minoritized subject in the North and the entire marginalized world of the South (from international bourgeoisie to rural subaltern) make visible and obscure? Sharpe calls on us to keep track of the gains and losses of appropriating critical terminology from Postcolonial Studies to analyze North America in general and the United States in particular.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time, as George Lipsitz suggested in a paper he presented to our group, these recent American Studies efforts to engage with Postcolonial Studies have roots in the Black Power and Chicano nationalist movements’ claims to the discourses of marginalization and resistance forged by the great decolonization movements of the twentieth century, claims realized in the “internal colonization” model as well as in powerful, if flawed and fleeting, transnational political alliances. Despite post-Bandung, “post-1968,” and post-Civil Rights era disillusionment, the “internal colonization” claims were too sustained and complex to be dismissed simply as naive or out of date. They offer us concrete attempts to negotiate methodologically and conceptually among local, national, international, transnational, and global frames and objects of analysis. While Sharpe’s caution gives pause to American Studies work that engages with postcolonial theory in general, and the notion of subalternity in particular, Lipsitz urges us not to simply eschew such engagement, but rather to proceed with a critical and active awareness of the “internal colonization” legacy.<sup>26</sup>

The intersections among formations of race, culture, and mass consumption are also crucial subjects for post-nationalist American Studies. Historians and critics have thoroughly examined U.S. mass consumption and consumer capitalism.<sup>27</sup> Critical work remains to be done on how race and culture have been commodified in these processes. At a macro-level, theorists of post-modernity have examined such phenomena, but new work is needed on social practices at a local level. Some of the most interesting insights regarding the commodification of culture have come from critics of anthropology, and a post-nationalist American Studies might benefit immensely from the transnational perspectives involved in criticizing imperial anthropology.

Racial and ethnic issues in the United States are often treated as problems specific to the multicultural United States, rather than as specific instances of divisions, hierarchies, and conflicts that can be found in virtually

every society. There is a need for a greater awareness of the commodification of racial difference and exotic cultures which lies at the heart of multinational capitalism. For example, an American Express television commercial of several years ago featured the founder of The Body Shop expressing her company's corporate policy regarding indigenous peoples around the world—they would pay “natives” for the products they produced, commodifying their authentically exotic origins, but in her words: “We don't touch the culture.” Her fantasy of benevolence and the nostalgic desire to “preserve” “primitive culture” have a long history dating back to the gunboat anthropology of Western imperialism. The “spread of the American Dream” requires a careful examination of the historical intersections between multinational capitalism, state power, and representations of race and culture.<sup>28</sup> Recent studies, such as *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, though suggestive, only begin to examine the ways in which the U.S. government and multinational corporations have imported and exported what they defined as cultural products.<sup>29</sup>

Over the past fifteen years, one of the major developments in American Studies across the nation has been the adoption of multiculturalism as a central, if not the central, organizing principle in how to study culture in the United States. As many faculty abandoned perspectives which focused on American exceptionalism, most American Studies programs emerged at the forefront of their campuses in integrating new writings on and by people of color into required courses for undergraduate majors and graduates, as well as into general education courses on U.S. society for the entire campus. In the early 1970s, prominent American Studies programs, along with Ethnic Studies programs, led efforts at hiring faculty of color. On campuses which did not establish Ethnic Studies departments or stand-alone programs focusing on specific racial populations, American Studies by the 1980s often played an umbrella function in providing courses which dealt primarily with issues of race and ethnicity in the United States.

During this same period, prominent programs and departments in Ethnic Studies have increasingly grown from individualized programs centered on a specific ethnic group—for example, African American Studies or Chicano/a Studies—to diverse settings whose intellectual role has become the theoretical study of race and ethnicity across various groups. Newly developed Ethnic Studies departments, like the one recently instituted at the University of California, San Diego, are not compartmentalized into separate ethnicities; instead, they take as their direction issues of race and ethnicity nationally and globally. Stand-alone programs in African American Studies, for example, have increasingly taken on a diasporic perspective which examines race not only in a U.S. context, but often in rela-

tion to discussions in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, not to mention other sites in the Black Atlantic, like Great Britain.

These intellectual developments have increasingly led to significant borrowings across the lines of American and Ethnic Studies. The disciplinary crossroads of American Studies should provide a fertile ground for the growth of various cultural studies, Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, and other enterprises which thrive on criticizing the dominant within American society. The perspectives of dominated and excluded classes or groups within America have long helped us to challenge the ideological and nationalist presumptions of American scholarship. To the extent that American Studies has sought or welcomed such critical points of view, and considering the critical tenor of much of what American Studies has produced in the last twenty years, it has probably been quite a while since many American Studies scholars have been involved in unreflective nationalist enterprises.

Unfortunately, these intellectual developments have occurred at a time in which American universities have been under attack on both political and financial grounds, and interdisciplinary perspectives have often been the main casualties of these attacks. Several Ethnic Studies programs have been significantly downsized or eliminated during the late 1980s and 1990s, and a few once-prestigious American Studies programs, like the American Civilization program at the University of Pennsylvania, have been entirely eliminated.<sup>30</sup> One would expect this period to have produced a new coalition politics among American and Ethnic Studies faculty, given increasingly similar intellectual perspectives and often common assaults on their intellectual integrity. On some campuses, this did occur as faculty and students decided to stand together and reshape existing programs to take into account the new, expansive intellectual and theoretical perspectives which took on questions of race and ethnicity in a wide-lensed fashion.<sup>31</sup>

On the other hand, at institutions as different as Columbia University and the University of Washington, student demands and protests for Ethnic Studies, often prompted by changing student demographics, were met with administrative proposals for American Studies. As George Sánchez argues in his essay, many college administrators, for both financial and ideological reasons, have tried to assimilate Ethnic Studies into American Studies. On some campuses, like the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Colorado, a large proportion of Ethnic Studies faculty fought against this incorporation to preserve long-standing Ethnic Studies departments and programs. It seemed to some as if American Studies now loomed as a new imperializing force, driven by fiscal crises and ideological imperatives to “control difference” under a rubric of newfound Americanism. As John Carlos Rowe points out in his essay, congressional reductions

in funding for the U.S. Information Agency also come at a particularly inopportune historical moment, when many international scholars need more than ever to understand the United States in terms of its multicultural realities and global ambitions, including the legacy of cultural imperialism to which the U.S. Information Agency has contributed.

A post-nationalist American Studies must find a way to incorporate the various intellectual traditions in a multicultural United States and the specific histories at different colleges and universities without assuming a position of ideological control over the study of race and ethnicity. Moreover, few faculty of color want to face the age-old question, "Are you American?" by having to decide to contribute either to an overarching American Studies program or a marginalized Ethnic Studies program. And certainly a multicultural curriculum can not be sustained without advances in the hiring and promotion of faculty of color who specialize in the study of specific racial/ethnic groups in the United States.

The increasing value of knowledge about racial and ethnic minorities has come to intersect with the need for more intellectuals of color within "white" academia; as a result, issues involving the commodification of ethnic knowledge and of racialized bodies have become intertwined. At times when most of academia ignored the existence of race in American history, intellectuals of color often chose to study racial and ethnic groups left out of American narratives. For such intellectuals, the value of their expert knowledge paralleled the need for their bodies to represent minority populations in academia. Not all academics of color studied race and ethnicity, though, and the conflating within academia of raced knowledge and raced bodies often led to awkward evaluations of intellectual worth. Belittled by standards applied only to them, intellectuals of color have had to fight against a ghettoization of their knowledge if they studied ethnicity, while those who did not study ethnicity encountered assumptions about their ethnic expertise because of the conflation between expert knowledge and racialized bodies.

Even with the success of equal-opportunity hiring practices and a commitment to affirmative action, universities remain alienating places for minorities, and much of the difficulty lies not in the continuing existence of racial hostility, but in the very ways by which race and ethnicity have been valued within academia. Despite claims to intellectual purity beyond the reach of the marketplace, higher education is embedded within the practices of American capitalist culture and society.

We need to examine the ways in which ethnicity and race have themselves become commodified by intellectuals in America. Beyond the often bizarre ways in which exotic knowledge and intellectuals of color have been commodified within academia, American intellectuals have had a problematic relationship with the workings of the capitalist market, founding their

critiques upon the assumption that they have been somehow removed from its operations. Academics who have long disdained the workings of the market paradoxically find themselves implicated in the commodification of ethnicity and difference in America. Intellectuals who have evaluated and treasured the exotic and the strange, the ethnic and the different, yet at the same time railed against the workings of mass consumption and mass production, find it strange to see corporate America outracing them in the effort to place a value on ethnicity. Consumer products such as leisure, sports, and fashion, seen from the perspective of the Frankfurt school and neo-Marxist theories of fetishism and alienation, are often objects of disdain among academic scholars, and their treatments of such subjects reflect such distaste. When such intellectuals themselves value racial and cultural difference, however, their own commodification of exoticism passes unnoticed within the larger context of racial and cultural commodification produced by global capitalism.

The quandary of placing a value on racial difference without succumbing to a bourgeois fascination with "authentic" and "exotic" cultures is related to the problem of public intellectual life. Whether intellectuals trivialize or exaggerate the importance of consumption in the production of social values, they must justify their work in relation to market forces. There is a need for public intellectuals who can engage with a listening and reading audience who see themselves not as the victims of a capitalist market, but as active and empowered consumers. An American Studies which sees as its main task the unmasking of bourgeois foibles is in danger of missing its own bourgeois, cosmopolitan values, but much more dangerous is the threat of public irrelevance. Put another way, how will the new American Studies define the responsibilities of the public intellectual in this postmodern situation?

The commitment of several members of the research group to holism represents an important group of scholars in the discipline of American Studies. The ideas of systems, holism, and pattern have a long and particular history in disciplines associated with cultural studies, and some might say that the ideas belong to a "consensus" view of history and society discarded with the sixties' awareness of conflict and diversity as characteristic of American experience. On the other hand, the pursuit of a holistic understanding of culture does not inevitably depend on a model of culture as a mechanism for "the replication of uniformity," as one anthropologist puts it.<sup>32</sup> Keeping the systems model or metaphor, we can see systems as complex constructions of diverse elements and still ask how the parts of the system might be connected. Old American Studies questions of style—such as inquiries into the ways modernism might be expressed in fiction, painting, architecture, music, and dance, to say nothing of religious and social thought—have not lost their salience, even if we now must sort out the connections between hip-hop styles and postmodernity in fiction. What is per-

Perhaps most important is that scholars debate openly the assumptions behind theories of American culture as holistic or differential.

Another traditional goal still important for American Studies is interdisciplinary thinking about American experience. American Studies can count as a success whatever it has contributed to the increased interdisciplinarity of the disciplines, especially history and literary criticism. But we note that with the success of "interdisciplinarity" has come a certain sloppiness in what gets called "interdisciplinary." Theories and methods in history and literary studies have crossed boundaries enough that we are tempted to call all the work in cultural studies interdisciplinary; in a real sense, it is. But before we get too self-congratulatory about this work, we should ask ourselves what disciplines we are avoiding as we do our work. To be "interdisciplinary" would mean to have the tools and frame of mind that prepare the teacher or scholar to draw from many relevant disciplines when thinking about a particular cultural studies question. So where are the theories and methods from some of the disciplines continually neglected in American Studies, such as political science, economics, psychology, rhetoric, and even the cognitive sciences? Our range of interdisciplinary inquiry often turns out to be embarrassingly narrow. The disciplines themselves are extremely internally diverse and in some cases change rapidly. People in American Studies are most likely to know and draw from work in the "cultural studies" corners of some disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology, but other disciplines remain poorly understood by American Studies practitioners. In addition, interdisciplinarity should mean more than reading historical or scientific texts, for instance, exclusively for purposes of *literary* interpretation.

In our view the new American Studies needs to face these tough questions about how we can be more interdisciplinary in our research and teaching. Researchers need aids, such as the "disciplinary access essays" that used to be published in *American Quarterly*.<sup>33</sup> The electronic revolution offers new formats for American Studies scholars to help one another with maps of interesting work in other disciplines, as the work posted to the T-Amstudy listserv and American Crossroads electronic discussion have demonstrated over the past few years.<sup>34</sup> Teachers and students need to develop an intellectual culture that keeps track of what is going on in all the relevant disciplines, including the hard (versus soft) corners of the social sciences. The American Studies program at New York University and the Modern Thought and Literature Program at Stanford require their students to become "literate" in quantitative methods of research, at least enough to read that research if not to replicate it. Following their leads, scholars in American Studies need to work toward the goal of minimal literacy in all the cultural studies disciplines.

No single curricular model and no general institutional definition can

address the different problems facing American Studies as a discipline today. Nevertheless, it is important for scholars to begin to address these questions in terms of the consequences of their intellectual and scholarly arguments. One of the common assumptions of the essays in this volume is that every scholarly argument has curricular and institutional relevance that should be made more explicit in our scholarly exchanges. The usual "Academic Darwinism" by which competing programs are imagined to survive or vanish as a consequence of competition for students, funds, and reputation should not determine the mutual futures of Ethnic, Women's, and American Studies. There must be a variety of curricular designs that will encourage the development of what is unique in each of these fields and yet find ways of identifying and thus sharing the several points where these fields intersect and complement each other.

Such intersections are profoundly historical, including as they do the critical moments of historical contact among different cultures—the history of slavery and its abolition, colonization and decolonization, diasporas of many sorts, and war, for example. They are also fundamentally theoretical, insofar as our most influential critical theories have attempted to generalize about otherwise disparate, uncanny, or incommensurate categories, the majority of which involve basic cultural and social differences. Every scholarly investigation of the concrete historical realities of African-American or Asian-American experience, for example, enacts a theory of how and why such histories and experiences have been variously excluded from the dominant model of "American Experience," often by way of specific practices such as slavery, segregation, and the Chinese Exclusion Laws. Theorizing such exclusions is one of our collective obligations as intellectuals committed to the various fields that claim commonly to represent knowledges that are otherwise unrepresentable in the liberal educational project.

All of this suggests the possibility that American Studies, either under this name or a different title, might begin to reimagine its curricular design in terms of such historical and theoretical intersections with the complementary disciplines of Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, and the several area studies belonging to the horizon of the Western Hemisphere. Such curricular models—there would, of course, be many—would no longer be committed to any sort of "coverage" of the many different historical, geographical, and theoretical areas that the new American Studies claims to encompass.

Once the coverage model has been abandoned, of course, then we have the more challenging task of justifying the education we offer our students at both undergraduate and graduate levels. If only "intersections" were studied in American Studies, then would we in fact be offering students

sufficient content to constitute competency in an intellectual field? “Intersectionality” should not be confused with interdisciplinarity, which too often has meant the incorporation of many different disciplines into a single research project or instructional situation. Of course, a certain degree of interdisciplinarity is crucial to the new work being done in the various fields represented in the new American Studies. But we must recognize that the claim for interdisciplinary inclusion within the traditional curriculum of discrete courses and individual instructors can lead to unachievable goals of “comprehensiveness” or troublesome choices of “representative” examples.

When we pose the related questions, “For whom and to what ends are we teaching (and writing)?” we should consider them to encompass the related question of how education and public policy are related. Earlier versions of American Studies, such as the myth and symbol school, have been criticized for contributing to the cultural imperialism integral to U. S. foreign policy in the post-World War II era. Leading figures of that approach, such as Leo Marx, have vigorously denied such connections, defending their commitments to criticize government policies and their identification with the great tradition of American dissent.<sup>35</sup> Yet, how our scholarly and instructional works are used outside the university does not always agree with our best intentions in writing and teaching; every message can be de-toured from its proper destination. The lessons of the recent “culture wars” certainly teach educators that we have an obligation to represent ourselves in the public sphere and thus take an active part in shaping those public policies that intersect with our areas of specialization. If we claim truly to be specialists in American cultures, then there should be many such intersections of our work with public policy. Rather than accept the caricature of contemporary scholars as ivory-tower intellectuals, we ought to show how the university is itself one of the important institutions in the formation of public opinions, behaviors, values, and thus policies.

We do not pretend to answer all of these questions in the essays that follow. Each of us was also working toward his or her book-length contribution to the “new American Studies” as we wrote our respective parts of this volume, and those nine books might be considered fuller developments of our different interpretations of post-nationalist American Studies. These conventional qualifications aside, we do think that the essays in this volume provide a good index to the more inclusive, culturally diverse, and comparative American Studies today urged in many scholarly quarters. Because we also think that these scholarly questions must be connected directly with curricular and pedagogical concerns, we have included sample syllabi for courses, real or imagined, that we consider appropriate to the topics discussed in our essays. Like our essays, these syllabi are not prescriptions for how to “do” American Studies; they are instead, like that aggravating title,

“post-nationalist American Studies,” intended to provoke discussion, research, and teaching.

## NOTES

1. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Donald Pease, “National Identities, Postmodern Artifacts, and Postnational Narratives,” in *National Identities and Post-Nationalist Narratives*, Donald Pease, ed. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994), 1–13.

2. See David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 168; Lauren Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 20.

3. Alok Yadav, “Nationalism and Contemporaneity: Political Economy of a Discourse,” *Cultural Critique* 26 (Winter 1993–94): 213, concludes that this “implies not simple endorsement of nationalist projects, but rather contestation for the meaning and direction of nationalist discourses and their appropriation for progressive projects.” It is not always easy to cleanly separate “progressive” aspects of nationalist projects; anticapitalist nationalisms often thrive on xenophobic sentiments. While U.S. labor unions oppose transnational capitalism, for instance, the nationalist frame of their vision of worker solidarity has in most cases made it difficult to forge cross-border ties to other workers. As Masao Miyoshi suggests in “A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State,” in *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), “How to situate oneself in this . . . configuration of transnational power and culture without being trapped by a dead end nativism seems to be the most important question that faces every critic and theorist the world over at this moment” (91).

4. See Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2d ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 35–50. Despite their trenchant critique of race-as-nation paradigms, they agree that the “great insight of nation-based approaches has always been their ability to connect U.S. conditions with global patterns based in the legacy of colonialism” (50).

5. Since then, a Congressional investigation has rejected Dornan’s claims, and Loretta Sanchez was reelected to Congress in the November 1998 election.

6. By stressing the many different cultures of the Americas, José Martí and C. L. R. James have influenced the comparatist dimension of post-nationalist American Studies. By focusing on the cultural and geographical contact zones of Mexican, Mexican-American, and Euroamerican cultures, Americo Paredes anticipated the new interest in “border studies.”

7. John Winthrop, “A Model Of Christian Charity,” in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 4th ed., vol. 1, Nina Baym et al., eds. (New York: Norton, 1994), 180. See Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956) for the most influential appropriation of Puritan metaphors as Americanist tropes.

8. Frederick Jackson Turner, *Frontier and Section* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1961), 37–62.
9. Michael Rogin, “‘Make My Day!’ Spectacle as Amnesia in Imperial Politics [and] the Sequel,” in *The Cultures of United States Imperialism*, Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease, eds. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), 510. See also Michael Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (1975), and *Ronald Reagan, the Movie and Other Episodes in Political Demonology* (1987); Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (1980); Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* (1973), *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800–1890* (1985), and *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (1992).
10. Amy Kaplan, “Left Alone with America: The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture,” in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, 7.
11. See Patricia Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (1987); and Richard White, “It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own”: A New History of the American West (1991).
12. Turner, *Frontier and Section*, 53.
13. Kaplan, “Left Alone with America,” 6.
14. Internationalist critiques of United States nationalism run throughout both men’s careers. See especially W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade* (1896), and *Dusk of Dawn* (1940); and José Martí, *Our America: Writings on Latin America and the Struggle for Cuban Independence*, trans. Elinor Randall, Juan de Onís, and Roslyn Held Foner (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977).
15. Gene Wise, “‘Paradigm Dramas’ in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement,” *American Quarterly* 31 (1979): 293–337.
16. John Kouwenhoven, *The Arts in Modern Civilization* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1948).
17. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); David Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954); Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950); R. W. B. Lewis, *American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955); Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).
18. C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959). The Radical Caucus named its journal *Connections* and subsequently named itself The Connections Collective.
19. “Identity” as an analytical device seems all the rage right now, offering a neat way of understanding the bridge between present-day identity politics, ethnic/nationalist consciousness, and political battles over narratives of the historical past. We need to examine a little more what we mean by identity, and the history of how we came to think about identity as an analytical concept. The problems we have with anthropological conceptions of culture (that culture as an analytical tool is too holistic, static, ahistorical, and structural) have been pointed out by critics of anthropology such as James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century*

*Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988). In trying to replace the culture concept with something more dynamic, situational, historical, and contingent, historians have suddenly become popular intellectuals, eclipsing anthropologists and sociologists. Identity, as a mode of understanding which is dynamic and involves historical narratives of self and group consciousness, appears to offer a solution to the problems of overly synchronic structural analyses. The intellectual history of the “identity concept” still needs to be examined in order to place its rise within the historical context of modernity.

20. Jane C. Desmond and Virginia R. Domínguez, “Resituating American Studies in a Critical Internationalism,” *American Quarterly* 48 (1996): 483–97. Further references given parenthetically in the text.

21. Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System, A.D. 1250–1350* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1994); Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L. A. Manyon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, Fifteenth–Eighteenth Century*, vol. 1, *The Structures of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981 [1979]), vol. 2, *The Wheels of Commerce* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982 [1979]), and vol. 3, *The Perspective of the World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); André Gunder Frank, *World Accumulation, 1492–1789* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978); Peter J. Huggill, *World Trade Since 1431: Geography, Technology, and Capitalism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Ernesto Laclau, “Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America,” in *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory: Capitalism, Fascism, Populism* (London: New Left Books, 1977); Jorge Larraín, *Theories of Development Capitalism, Colonialism, and Dependency* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989); Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957 [1944]); Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalism System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis,” in *The Capitalist World-Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), *The Modern World-System*, vol. 2, *Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600–1750* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), and vol. 3, *The Second Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy, 1730s–1840s* (New York: Academic Press, 1989).

22. In his visit to our group as part of a forum entitled “Studying U.S. Racial Formations in a Global Frame,” David L. Eng discussed Mark Chiang’s “Coming Out into the Global System: Postmodern Patriarchies and Transnational Sexualities in *The Wedding Banquet*,” one of the essays included in an anthology Eng has coedited with Alice Y. Hom, entitled *Q & A: Queer in Asian America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998). Chiang’s interpretation of Ang Lee’s film offers a crucial caution to notions of “cosmopolitanism” that are based on a celebration of, or optimism about, the current period of globalization. By showing how the film offers an “antihomophobic or homophilic resolution,” which simultaneously secures the subordinated place of Asian women and an Asian underclass in the capitalist world-system, Chiang’s essay takes the “cosmopolitan” itself as its object of critique and carefully negotiates among local, national, and global perspectives (384).

23. Houston A. Baker, Jr., *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 18–19.

24. Jenny Sharpe, “Is the United States Postcolonial? Transnationalism, Immigration, and Race,” *Diaspora* 4: 2 (Fall 1995).

25. When "subalternity" is used generally to mean marginalized or oppressed subjects of First World states, it runs the risk of erasing the international division of labor and thus silencing the very subjects to whom "subalternity" had so carefully and tenuously referred.

26. Excellent examples of this kind of careful yet active interpretation of U.S. racial formations were presented to our group by four scholars who shared their work with us at the forum entitled "Studying Racial Formations in a Global Frame": Vilashini Cooppan, who presented unpublished research on the intercultural traffic between black political activists and theorists in the United States and in South Africa; David L. Eng, who presented work from his coedited anthology mentioned above; Colleen Lye, who presented unpublished research on the representation of the Asian American "anomalous minority" as a racial ideology at the crossroads of domestic and geopolitical discourses of imperialism; and María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, who presented research on the relationships between *mestizaje*, *indigenismo*, and citizenship in Mexico and in Chicano nationalist discourse, forthcoming as "Who's the Indian in Aztlán? Re-writing *Mestizaje*, *Indigenismo*, and Citizenship from the Lacandon," in *Ungovernability and Citizenship*, John Beverly, Milagros Lopez, and Ileana Rodriguez, eds. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press).

27. For theories of modernization, see Larrain, *Theories of Development*; and Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*. For theories of modern and postmodern mass consumption, see Stuart Ewen, *All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Richard Wightman Fox and T. Jackson Lears, eds., *The Culture of Consumption, 1880-1980* (New York: Pantheon, 1983). For historical analyses of the globalization of mass consumption, see John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (New York: Routledge, 1993); and Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

28. The imperialist trope of saving "authentic cultures" from obliteration by the modern forces of imperialism and capitalism can be seen at the heart of the missionary and anthropological efforts which accompanied imperialism, and Americans are still left with the remains of such a narrative structure for purveying "other" cultures. For a wonderful example, see the Polynesian Cultural Centre on Oahu, operated by Mormon missionaries at the nearby campus of Brigham Young University. Displaying a static and ahistorical representation of a lost Polynesian past, the Mormon center employs converts from all over the Polynesian islands, making money from displaying them as "primitives" while converting them to Mormonism and modernity.

29. Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War*, trans. Diana F. Wolf (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

30. American Civilization at the University of Pennsylvania was discontinued in 1997-98, and its faculty positions assigned to other departments, such as Anthropology and History. Graduate students in the program with dissertations in progress at that time are completing them. Comparative Cultures at the University of California, Irvine, which was primarily an American Studies program housed in

the School of Social Sciences, was discontinued in a similar manner in the mid-1990s.

31. New interdisciplinary programs in Ethnic and Women's Studies at the University of California, Irvine, gained institutional identity in the mid-1990s. A curriculum in "Comparative Americas" was designed at the University of California, Santa Cruz, around 1995 and is being tried out as the possible foundation for a Ph.D. or graduate emphasis in the field. Variations on the "Comparative Americas" have appeared at several different universities, including New York University and Northwestern University.

32. Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Culture and Personality*, 2d ed. (New York: Random House, 1970).

33. For a taste of these interdisciplinary "access essays," see Albert E. Stone, "Psychoanalysis and American Literary Culture," *American Quarterly* 28 (1976): 309-23; Marsha Peters and Bernard Mergen, "'Doing the Rest': The Uses of Photographs in American Studies," *American Quarterly* 29 (1977): 280-303; L. Ling-chi Wang, "Asian American Studies," *American Quarterly* 33 (1981): 339-54; John L. Caughey, "The Ethnography of Everyday Life: Theories and Methods for American Culture Studies," *American Quarterly* 34 (1982): 222-43; Dell Upton, "The Power of Things: Recent Studies in American Vernacular Architecture," *American Quarterly* 35 (1983): 262-79; and Michael Denning, "'The Special American Conditions': Marxism and American Studies," *American Quarterly* 38 (1986): 356-80.

34. See John Carlos Rowe's essay in this volume for a discussion of these electronic resources, sponsored jointly by Georgetown University and the American Studies Association.

35. Leo Marx, "Pastoralism in America," in *Ideology and Classic American Literature*, Sacvan Bercovitch and Myra Jehlen, eds. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 62-6, quite ingeniously but erroneously interprets the New Left as an elaboration of the main thrust of American dissent developed by Marx in his classic study, *The Machine in the Garden*. To do so, Marx must ignore the association of his own Jeffersonian utopianism with what by the sixties had become reactionary political and cultural positions, and he must force "pastoralism" as a utopian goal of the Civil Rights and antiwar movements by exaggerating the influence of such works as Charles Reich's *The Greening of America: How the Youth Revolution Is Trying to Make America Livable* (New York: Random House, 1970). Recognizing the importance of television news and other electronic media in shaping social reality and thus public policies, both the Civil Rights and antiwar movements incorporated technology into their political theories and praxes in ways that marked a sharp departure from what Marx had interpreted as the American "pastoral ideal" in *The Machine in the Garden*.