INTERAMERICANA 7

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The International Turn in American Studies

PETER LANG EDITION

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Introduction: Transcending Borders: The International Turn in American Studies

Carolyn Porter's 1994 essay "What We Know That We Don't Know" is often cited as the first call "to break away from the bounded unit of the U.S. nation" (Levander and Levine, "Hemispheric" 397[1]), and at least since Janice Radway's provocative 1998 presidential address to the American Studies Association, in which she pondered the need to rename the ASA in accordance with ongoing changes and developments within the discipline, the definition of what constitutes the domain of American Studies has come under increasingly sharp scrutiny. As Djelal Kadir has confirmed in his own presidential address to the International American Studies Association in 2003: "The challenge of being an Americanist has become more challenging than ever" ("Devotees" 13). In very general terms, the debate's most controversial questions have centered on the need to redefine (i.e. extend) the field's geographical and disciplinary boundaries, and in his speech, Kadir provides a detailed sketch of the various forms that this internationalization of American Studies is currently taking: First, due to an ongoing series of geopolitical shifts, the U.S. has started to lose its former role as the main exporter and "sponsor" of American Studies programs abroad, especially in Europe, which in turn means that the U.S. gradually stands to lose its hegemonic role as "generator of [the most privileged] epistemic [and scholarly American Studies] paradigms" (Kadir, "Devotees" 14). In other words, at a time when American Studies practitioners in different parts of the world become more self-confident and independent of their U.S. role models, an increasing number of internationally influential scholarly approaches, methodologies, and analytical criteria no longer originate in the U.S. itself so that "we are witnessing," in Kadir's words, "a reconfiguration of American Studies as an international intellectual enterprise" (Kadir, "Devotees" 14). At the same time, the U.S. also increasingly loses its status as "an object of devotion" (as it used to be for many members of the Cold War generation of U.S.-based American Studies scholars as well as the Marshall Plan generation of European

1 See Levander and Levine's essay "Hemispheric American Literary History" for an exhaustive survey of early transnational publications.

American Studies scholars), and more and more often the U.S. has become a subject of criticism and even disidentification instead. All of this has led, thirdly, to an increasing challenge to the "ideologically circumscribed reduction of [the name] America, and of American Studies, to the U.S.," which leads Kadir to conclude that American Studies is currently turning more and more "into a transnational, hemispheric field" (Kadir, "Devotees" 22, 23).

Of course international, transnational, or hemispheric (economic, cultural, political) relations have shaped the literary and cultural productions in the Americas from the start, even if attention to this aspect by American Studies scholars has been selective and was often guided by specific national political or ideological interests.[2] According to Armin Paul Frank, internationality has been at the core of North, Central, and South American literary productions for centuries, and positioning themselves in relation to selected European "mediators" as well as to literatures on other continents has been a common strategy for authors throughout the Americas to develop the concept of a national literature (Frank, "An Invitation" 19).[3] Yet while scholarly attention to these international literary connections was strong during the early stages of ninetheenth-century U.S. literary historiography, for example, a narrowly national lens started to prevail from the early decades of the 20th century on and has dominated the field to such an extent that a turn towards internationalization could emerge as a "new" paradigm again during the 1980s and 1990s.[4]

While international, hemispheric, transatlantic, and transpacific relations have thus shaped literary and cultural productions in the Americas in earlier centuries as well, what can indeed be called new at this moment is the extent to which recent developments – including the cumulative effects of an accelerating global political

2 Marc Chenetier reminds us that most of what Kadir terms new developments in American Studies are very common practices for European-based Americanists and have been so for decades (7). For this reason, Jared Hickman argues that the current emphasis on internationalizing American Studies is both presentist and redundant because the U.S. has always been a nation of nations (11). On this question, see also the contributions to this volume by Fitz, Boyden, Salvatore, Göske, and Frank.

3 These international (literary) connections have been explored in depth by a range of publications developed under the aegis of the Göttingen Center for Advanced Study on The Internationality of National Literatures. See, among others, the volumes edited by Frank and Essmann, Frank and Mueller-Vollmer, Buchenau and Paatz, Frank and Lohse, as well as Kurt Mueller-Vollmer's studies on German-American literary transfer, including his most recent *Transatlantic Crossings* (forthcoming 2015).

4 For a detailed discussion of this increasing loss of an international perspective in the context of U.S. literary historiography, see Messmer, "Toward a Declaration."

and economic interdependence, as well as the increasing mobility of people and commodities worldwide – have, since the last decades of the 20th century, started to challenge many of the established assumptions of the discipline of American Studies and have thus prompted scholars to call for a radical redefinition of the entire academic field.[5] This redrawing of disciplinary boundaries has prompted Donald Pease to conclude in 2011 that "[t]he 'transnational turn' in American studies has effected the most significant reimagining of the field of American studies since its inception" (Introduction *Re-Framing* 1). In this context, "nationalized identity, nationalized belonging, regional classification, citizenship, borders, and territory" are increasingly scrutinized "not as givens but as fabricated categories, tropes, and narratives" (Pfister 17). This scrutiny may ultimately lead to a renaming of the entire discipline, as Radway had suggested, but it will most likely also include some degree of decentering of the U.S. within American Studies as well as challenging the dominance of what is frequently referred to as *American* American Studies.[6] Part of this decentering will also consist of challenging the still widespread hegemonic use of the term "America" as a synonym for the United States.[7]

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5 In this sense, nationalism is increasingly associated with provincialism, as Joel Pfister has observed (20).

6 Kadir, who wrote his presidential address in light of the U.S.'s invasion in Iraq, emphasizes that this international turn in American Studies, ironically enough, occurs "at a time when the most powerful nation in America, the USA, is exerting the greatest military and economic influence in the rest of the world," and adds that "[t]he very hyper-power and the quality of influence exerted by [the U.S.] at this historical moment may well be the ultimate cause of these shifts" (Kadir, "Devotees" 15).

7 The imperialist gesture to conflate "America" with the "United States" can already be found among the founders of the U.S.; Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* of 1776, for example, already uses America as a synonym for the United States (McClennen 397). Latin American authors such as Simón Bolívar, José Enrique Rodó, or José Martí have attempted – often in direct response to the Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine – to rescue "America" semantically and conceptually (in his invitation to participate in the Panama Congress of 1826, written in 1824, Bolívar, for example, refers to the previous Spanish colonies as American republics; cf. McClennen 399). Some, like Martí, however, then exhibited an analogous form of imperialism by conflating North America with the U.S. and omitting Canada/Québec. Amós Nascimento's contribution to this volume not only challenges the U.S.'s appropriation of the term "America" but also reminds us that "African American" is often used in a similarly reductionist way (to refer to the people of African descent currently living in the United States exclusively) and should, as a matter of course, be extended to include all people of African descent in the Americas.

Such redefinitions of the field have not remained without criticism, with Leo Marx being one of the harshest opponents. Agreeing with Alan Wolfe's 2003 diatribe titled "Anti-American Studies," Marx considers the majority of internationally oriented American Studies scholars "America haters" who have lost or abandoned their belief in the founding ideals, or what he refers to as the "ur-theory" of their discipline. Other critics such as Heinz Ickstadt have focused on the practical difficulties inherent in reorganizing teaching and research in light of transnational paradigms, while still others, including Bryce Traister – who views the current internationalization as yet another version of American exceptionalism and a form of "academic imperialism" ("The Object" 3, 17) – feels that if the nation is the enemy, we should study it rather than trying to transcend it because "without that national construct, understood as both practice and theory, … the practical value of Americanist inquiry loses far more than it gains" ("The Object" 23). A similar stance is shared by Winfried Fluck, in whose view it would be a mistake to regard withdrawing from "analyzing the center" as an effective point of resistance and a "saving utopia" ("Inside" 28) because "globalization does not mean that American power becomes porous or is going away" ("Inside" 29).[8] Drawing our attention to the ways in which current developments within American Studies have been viewed by other disciplines, Emory Elliott has reminded us that the international turn in American Studies "can also be seen as yet another infringement upon territories already occupied by scholars doing similar work in other departments and programs" ("Diversity" 9).

Still other critics have adopted a more strategic scepticism. In light of the fact that on U.S. campuses, many American Studies programs have started to be closed down due to financial reasons, and many ethnic studies programs have started to be assimilated into American Studies (Rowe et al., Introduction 11–12), many scholars have argued for a strategic need to preserve American Studies in its traditional form. As Amy Kaplan summarizes this view: "[T]here are strategic reasons, nationally and internationally, for maintaining the authority of American studies as a discipline" (Kaplan, "Violent" 11). Similarly, Winfried Fluck has repeatedly emphasized the distinctness of "American" Studies as a discipline and has voiced his concern that "'an association that redefines the object of study as a hemispheric system risks losing the rationale for the existence of American Studies, the specific relevance of the United States as a paradigm-setting modern society'" (qtd. in

8 In Fluck's view, "there is no automatic equation between outside location and outside perspective" because even those who are located outside the U.S. have often adopted U.S. research paradigms to further their academic careers ("Inside" 25).

Pease, "Politics" 82). But beyond the so-called "American Century," the U.S. may never have been the only relevant paradigm-setting society in the world, and we should not forget the extent to which a U.S.-centric version of American Studies simply tends to foreground certain research paradigms that fall within the interests of the United States while at the same time obscuring at least as many alternative paradigms that concern other American nations' interests. Don Pease, finally, also warns us that it is difficult for many U.S. Americans and maybe others to replace patriotic loyalties "with loyalty to a nonterritorial transnation" – but "[p]erhaps the invention of such an imaginary describes the central political task of Postnational American Studies" (Pease, "Politics" 90). And Paul Giles asks whether American Studies "can [indeed] morph itself successfully into a [new internationally perspectivized] field" ("Response" 22), but his comment obscures the fact that the Americas have, from the start, been a relational project, while it was U.S. American Studies as a discipline that has ignored this fact for quite a long time. Fredric Jameson therefore rightly views these oppositional voices as "occupational hazard of American Studies programs" because they "have a vested interest in preserving the specificity of their object and in preserving the boundaries of their discipline" (Jameson 35; qtd. in Giles, "Response" 20). Yet at least since the end of the twentieth century, even hard-core Americanists such as the traditionally very nationalist ASA have started to recognize the need for reconceptualizing the field by demanding "new ways of thinking the relationship among geography, culture, and identity" (Radway 4).

In the debate about this most recent international turn within American Studies, a wide range of terms and concepts have been introduced, including trans- or postnational, international, or global American Studies, (trans-)Atlantic and (trans-)Pacific American Studies, as well as intercultural, hemispheric, transborder, comparative, or inter-American Studies, to name only some of the most frequently circulating ones.[9] While (trans)Atlantic American Studies has had a longer history in both the U.S. and Europe, three groups of terms have come to stand out as the most prominent and influential ones since the 1980s and 1990s, which I will examine more closely in the following: (1) transnational or postnational American Studies; (2) (critical) international American Studies (often

9 Often, connections are also drawn to related fields such as diaspora studies, subaltern studies, or postcolonial studies. In many ways, postcolonial studies with its "critiques of the modern nation-state as an ideological or 'imagined' construct of Western capitalist culture based on imperial or neocolonial forms of economic exploitation" can be viewed as a precursor of this current international turn, as Ralph Bauer reminds us ("Hemispheric Studies" 236).

used in opposition to *American* American Studies); and (3) hemispheric or Inter-American Studies. Some scholars use these terms almost interchangeably in an attempt to highlight the commonalities of current dynamics in the field, yet on closer examination, one can observe significant geopolitical and ideological differences in the usage of these concepts. In the following, I will first concentrate on the so-called post- or transnational approach, which has been favored by a substantial number of U.S.-based American Studies scholars since the 1980s and 1990s and which, within a U.S. context, has currently become the most frequently used concept (Pease, Introduction *Re-Framing* 1) that has assumed the role of an umbrella to cover different forms of internationalization. One reason for this preference, I will argue, is that many U.S.-based Americanists, feeling under a certain degree of pressure to adopt a more international perspective – were at first drawn to this paradigm because it allowed them to challenge traditional notions of U.S. nationalism and exceptionalism while at the same time retaining the U.S. and U.S.-based epistemological and theoretical research paradigms at the center of American Studies. The second approach, a (critical) international American Studies perspective (represented in this volume by Jane Desmond) can in many ways be seen as a more radical alternative to this paradigm, yet as Gabriele Pisarz-Ramirez demonstrates, whose contribution explicitly decenters the U.S. in a post-national approach to nineteenth-century African American texts, current uses of "transnational" have also moved beyond its earlier scope. The third approach, a hemispheric or Inter-American Studies paradigm, is seen by many critics – including Fitz, Nascimento, Pisarz-Ramirez, Raab and Salvatore in this volume – as a highly enabling alternative that transcends the limitations inherent in studying one nation in isolation and can successfully address the multifaceted economic, political, and cultural interrelations of the Americas in an age of global interconnectedness and migratory movements. Yet Inter-American Studies has also met with scepticism – in particular in its U.S.-centric variant – because of the ways it can and has been (ab)used as a form of neo-colonialism or neo-imperialism.[10]

Post- or Trans-National American Studies

At the start of this current wave of internationalization, a substatial number of U.S.-based interventions began to privilege a post- or transnational framework, with the two terms frequently being used and defined in interrelated or even synonymous ways. It was Shelley Fisher Fishkin's influential 2004 ASA Presidential Address

10 For a detailed discussion of this topic, see Fitz's contributions to this volume.

that placed the term center stage by calling for a "transnational turn in American Studies" and asking the famous question: "What would the field of American Studies look like if the *trans*-national rather than the national were at its center?" ("Crossroads of Cultures" 21). The increased relevance of transnational paradigms within a U.S. academic context has frequently been attributed to the U.S.'s early twentieth-century rise to the role of a global police force ("extending its jurisdiction across national boundaries" to control immigration or decide about who is a failed state [Pease, Introduction *Re-Framing* 11]), of worldwide migration movements, the global spread of capitalism, transnational and cosmopolitan forms of citizenship, as well as global challenges such as sustainability, security, and social justice that require the "coordination of military, environmental, and monetary policies" (Pease, Introduction *Re-Framing* 9). These developments have radically expanded the U.S.'s sphere of influence and hence "redefined the state's mission, requiring that it downplay its obligations to the constituencies within a bounded national territory so as to meet the extranational needs and demands of global capital" (Pease, Introduction *Re-Framing* 8).[11] The need to "investigate how transnational processes problematize the nation state as a point of reference for political, social, economic, and cultural systems" (Hebel, Preface 6) thus struck a chord. For many scholars, transnational American Studies has become "both the methodological tool and the political program to address [the] pressing issues of the 21st century" (Hornung, "Transnational" 628).[12] Since then, transnational American Studies has – especially within the United States – become a kind of umbrella term that is often employed to highlight the field's post-exceptionalist and anti-imperialist stance, but that in other respects refers to several different forms of internationalization.[13] A large number of journals, book publications and conferences have

11 Donald Pease has linked the rise of transnational American Studies also more specifically to the state of exception installed by George W. Bush in the aftermath of 9/11 in order to "regulate the national community's relationship to the social, economic, ideological, and cultural structures of exchange taking place across the planet" (Introduction, *Re-Framing* 8). At the same time, however, Pease also emphasizes the role of the nation-state as the guarantor of transnational rights (Introduction *Re-Framing* 10).

12 Some critics such as Günter Lenz have focused on the less political/politicized concept of trans*culturality* instead, emphasizing the extent to which it enables "a new processual and performative understanding of 'culture'" and allows for a non-neoimperialist cross-cultural perspective without simply dismissing the boundaries of the nation-state (Lenz, "American Transcultural Studies" 396).

13 Kristin Hoganson cautions us that this very use of "transnationalism" as an umbrella term "ends up reifying the very unit that transnationalism aims to challenge: the nation state. It implies that the nation is always a fundamental unit of analysis" (Hoganson 622).

contributed to the concept's proliferation, including the *Routledge Transnational Perspectives on American Literature* book series (launched in 2004), the journal of *Transnational American Studies* (founded in 2009), the collection of critical essays titled *Re-framing the Transnational Turn in American Studies* (edited by Winfried Fluck, Donald E. Pease, and John Carlos Rowe in 2011[14]), as well as the volume *Transnational American Studies* (edited by Udo Hebel in 2012) that collects contributions to the 2011 conference of the German Association for American Studies on the same topic.

While definitions differ and, in Pease's words, "multiple and contradictory versions" of trans- and postnationalism have appeared during the past 20 years (Introduction, *Re-Framing* 17), the concept originally evolved on the basis of a range of common denominators. Janice Radway's and Donald Pease's initial explorations of the concept can be illustrative in this context, as they also echo those of a much larger group of scholars who subsequently contributed to this debate (including Carolyn Porter, Lisa Lowe and Shelley Fisher Fishkin). In her famous 1998 presidential address "What's in a Name?," Radway insisted that "American national identity is constructed in and through relations of difference" (Radway 5) – a statement she expanded upon with the following definition of difference: "The very notion of 'the American' is intricately entwined with those 'others' produced internally as different and externally as alien through practices of imperial domination and incorporation" (Radway 6). Similarly, in his essay "The Politics of Postnational American Studies" of 2001, Donald Pease notes that post-national can have many different meanings, including "after" nationalism, "anti"-nationalism, "supra"-nationalism, as well as "sub"-nationalism. He then continues to suggest, however, that in his view, a postnationalist paradigm stages "the encounter between the historical nation and its internal and external others" (Pease 87), and it looks, among other issues, at globalization embodied by transnational corporations but also at "globalization from below" as represented by subnational collective practices (Pease 78).

It is interesting to note that both Radway and Pease define trans- respectively postnational as having an external as well an internal dimension.[15] The first, the

14 In his introduction to this volume, Donald Pease offers a very detailed critical discussion of the historical and geopolitical origins as well as current usages of the concept of "transnationalism," including its link "to the doctrine of Manifest Destiny to justify expansionist U.S. policies designed to realize what Thomas Jefferson described as an 'Empire of Liberty'" (Introduction *Re-Framing* 4).

15 John Carlos Rowe defines postnationalism in a similar way as having local, national, and global dimensions (Introduction 8).

external dimension, in both cases includes a critique of U.S. exceptionalism and U.S. imperial power relations, combined with an attempt to develop alternative, i.e. critical visions of U.S. foreign policy measures and U.S. economic policies as exemplified, for example, by Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease's volume *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (1993),[16] or Pease's most recent essays, including "Rethinking 'American Studies after U.S. Exceptionalism'" and his Introduction to *Re-Framing the Transnational Turn in American Studies*. While this version of post- or transnationalism does indeed go beyond the borders of the U.S. nation state, critics have nonetheless pointed out that this framework is at least "to a degree consistent with U.S. economic policies promoting globalization" and neoliberalism (Sadowski-Smith/Fox 23), a danger that is ultimately also recognized by Don Pease himself, who agrees that the post-national framework may be abused by "supra-nationalists" like Frederick Buell "who have reinscribed the foundational terms of the U.S. political vocabulary – democracy, capitalism, free enterprise, human rights – within the newly globalized discourse of neo-liberalism" (Pease, "Politics" 85)[17] – a maneuvre which might then, in Marc Chenetier's words, lead to a "'new' version of American transnational exceptionalism" (Chenetier 6). In his "Politics" essay, Pease has therefore included a section titled "Is Postnationalism a Form of U.S. Cultural Nationalism?" (Pease, "Politics" 83), and he goes so far as to conclude that the transnational elite of corporate managers can actually be said

16 Guantanamo is Amy Kaplan's example of "historicizing and defining the relational meanings of America," for example. The goal here is, in Wiegman's words, to "rethink … [the] material effects of the transnational history of U.S. empire" (Wiegman 581).

17 Cf. also: "Does not post-exceptionalist American studies also simply ignore the ways in which two of the core tenets of the discourse of American exceptionalism – the rule of law and neoliberal market ideology – have saturated the global processes in which America is embedded?" (Pease, "Re-thinking" 22). In this latter essay, Pease also quotes Farshad Araghi, who refers to globalization as "'invisible colonialism – the third phase of the Euro-American colonization of the globe'" (qtd. in "Re-thinking" 24). For this reason, Pfister asks whether "American globalizing" is not merely "a form of Americanizing" (20). Cf. also Pease's more recent comment: "Was [transnational American Studies] a form of disciplinary imperialism designed to refashion social relations and cultural practices after the U.S. neoliberal model? Did the transnational framework foster an alternative to U.S. cultural and economic hegemony or embody the standpoint that Americanization assumed in the present juncture?" (Introduction *Re-Framing* 2–3). Johannes Voelz has devoted an entire essay to the interdependence between transnationalism and neoliberalism yet emphasizes that most transnational Americanists do not see themselves as conscious "ideological agents of the normalization of neoliberalism" (Voeltz 359).

to reinscribe U.S. nationalism (Pease, "Politics" 85). Donatello Izzo has thus asked very poignantly: "Could it be that American Studies is turning into a U.S.-based transnational enterprise, displaying a remarkable capacity of homogenizing both its products and its practitioners within a globalized flow of cultural capital?"; or formulated differently, isn't transnational American Studies "an engulfing project intent on unintentionally reconfiguring the whole world as a 'contact zone'" with the U.S. yet again at its center? (Izzo 595, 598).[18] Winfried Fluck agrees, arguing that transnational American Studies has "merely extended long-dominant paradigms beyond borders" ("New Beginning" 379) because the fluidity, flexibility, and movement inherent in the concept of transnationalism "can also be seen, not as subversion of the political system but, on the contrary, as adaptation to a neoliberal logic in which movements of peoples and ideas are now the instruments of a new order of global capital" ("New Beginning" 379).

On the basis of such reflections, many scholars have started to emphasize the ambivalence inherent in the concept of transnationalism – in Pease's words: "Transnational initiatives can refer to efforts to expand the exercise of American power or to impede it." Transnationalism therefore has become a "mobile category" that has been taken up by people who are critical of the state and by those who are supportive (Introduction, *Re-Framing* 5, 6). Others, including Izzo come to the conclusion that, analogous to Derrida's *il n'y a pas de hors texte*, "American Studies [the version that is more and more often termed American American Studies] has no outside" (Izzo 598). This inherent U.S.-centeredness has most recently been confirmed by Bryce Traister, who observes: "Contemporary transnationalism as articulated by most North American critics, remains a deeply insular critique: one committed to and prompted by a largely U.S.-identified set of political, intellectual, and curricular problems; one largely argued by and for U.S.-identified Americanists; and one that makes the most sense, politically and professionally speaking, to U.S.-based scholars in American Studies" ("Everything Old" 160). While, according to Traister, international American Studies scholars are best equipped to contain "the insular, parochial, and self-serving tendencies of U.S.-based American Studies, … [t]he desire to be more 'like' American Studies programs in the United States continually impinges on our work." For this reason, Traister continues, "[t]ransnationalism, or the new globalism, has become an unavoidably 'colonialist' aesthetic, in which the interests of the center or national

18 Cf. also William V. Spanos, who argues that the "Global English of transnational capital" is not simply a neutral "vehicle of communication empty of ideological cultural content" but "an essential agent of transnational capitalism's project" that represents U.S. interests (398–399).

metropole (the U.S. academy) are exported to the international hinterlands for implementation" ("Everything Old" 161). Such sentiments are also echoed by Salvatore's, Boyden's, and Fitz's contributions to this volume, which highlight the extent to which many calls for transnationalization launched by U.S.-based American Studies scholars are actually covert attempts at recentering – rather than decentering – the United States within the discipline and hence can still be considered appropriative and neo-imperialistic gestures, or a form of what Amy Kaplan calls "imperial internationalism" ("Tenacious" 36).[19]

Yet what is even more striking in both Radway's and Pease's early definitions of transnationalism is the concept's internal dimension, which in effect refers to the multicultural composition of the U.S., i.e. to racial, ethnic, gender, class, or other non-dominant populations *within* the boundaries of the U.S. nation state.[20] But how and why can or should the U.S.'s internal cultural heterogeneity be regarded as a form of postnationalism?[21] Scholars like Pease and Radway argue that they view "multiculturalism and the politics of difference as postnationalist strategies" (Pease, "Politics" 84) because when the "work on difference" first emerged in the U.S. in the form of the so-called New American Studies during the 1960s and 1970s, it "explicitly began to engage the question of how American nationalism was actively constructed" (Radway 4) and it therefore "intended to discredit the foundational belief in U.S. exceptionalism" (Pease, "Politics" 84). As a consequence, "American Studies practitioners could no longer sustain the fiction that Americans 'shared' [one] national character based on [a common cultural identity as well as] common experiences" (Rowe et al., Introduction 5) and instead had to acknowledge the nation's internal heterogeneity.[22] In other words, the multicultural turn within American Studies "conceived [itself partly] … in opposition to older understandings of the American nation" (Radway, Gaines, Shank, von Eschen 3) – older understandings that had dominated the discipline from its origins during the 1930s right through the Cold War era, and which had

19 See also Siemerling and Casteel, and Gillman on this issue.

20 Pease reconfirms this sub-national dimension in his Introduction to *Re-Framing* 5–6.

21 In "Left Alone with America," Kaplan argues that the U.S.'s internal heterogeneity (in terms of race, for example) can historically be related to "the global dynamics of empire-building" (16).

22 Radway repeatedly refers to internally different communities as "non-national identification" (Radway 4), because "postnational might be described not only as what has come after but also as what has established a kind of resistance to U.S. nationalism" (Pease, "Politics" 85).

often emphasized the national unity and cultural as well as political and ideological coherence of the United States (Temperley and Bigsby 1).

Yet by locating what Lisa Lowe has termed "the international within the national" (qtd. in Wiegman 581), these critics tend to conflate the potential to transcend the boundaries of the U.S. nation state with what in practice results in a focus on subnational groups located within the U.S., an approach which helps to criticize specific, older understandings of U.S. nationalism but at the same time reaffirms the U.S.'s geopolitical borders.[23] It could be argued that this attempt to view the U.S.'s internal heterogeneity as an integral part of a trans- or postnational approach to American Studies is a very clever strategy that allows for a participation in the internationalization debate while at the same time reinscribing the U.S. firmly at the center of this debate.[24] What is more, by constructing a new "origin" myth according to which the international turn of the 1980s and 1990s has its roots in the multicultural turn of the 1960s (and thus within in the United States and U.S. academia itself), scholars like Radway or Pease implicitly suggest that the current impetus to internationalize American Studies has not come from abroad but has actually originated within the U.S. itself. In other words, it is not an external challenge to American Studies' disciplinary limitations, but a U.S.-based initiative.[25]

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23 See also John Carlos Rowe, who has termed the ethnic nationalisms of the ethnic identity movements during the 1960s "particularist nationalisms" (Rowe et al., Introduction 5). Djelal Kadir agrees with Rowe in regarding "debates about race, gender, and sexuality as nationalist" (Kadir et al. in Wiegman 583).

24 John Michael offers an interesting explanation for this phenomenon, arguing that "a fascination with, and affection for, excluded identities … who have suffered injustices in the form of 'exploitation, abjection, and disdain' at the hands of the dominant national discourse" (413) allows U.S.-identified Americanists to be both critical of as well as loyal to their nation and discipline, concluding that "[c]ritical distance does not equal exteriority" (Michael 417).

25 With this critique I of course do not wish to imply that the multicultural challenges to the consensus paradigm and the preconceived unity and coherence of U.S. national identity have not and do not produce highly valuable and immensely important work. In this context, Werner Sollors's pioneering project "Multilingual America" particularly stands out as a response to the paradoxical situation that many studies exploring multiculturalism within the U.S. still adhere to a monolingual ideal. Sollors himself has commented on this fact, reminding us that language is "the blind spot in the debates about multiculturalism in the United States" (13). Cf. his books and also his anthology *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature* (edited together with Marc Shell, 2000). To my knowledge, Sollors's Longfellow Institute at Harvard is currently the only U.S.-based institution devoted to the study of the multilingual United States, but it has made clear, as Olm Øverland has formulated it, that "[o]ne challenge now facing

International American Studies vs. *American* American Studies

Apart from scholars engaged in trans-/post-national work, a group of U.S.-based critics, including, among others, Djelal Kadir, Emory Elliott, John Carlos Rowe, Jane Desmond, and Virginia Dominguez, have started to call for a more radical and less ambivalent version of internationalism, or what Jane Desmond and Virginia Dominguez have termed critical internationalism (Rowe et al., Introduction 7).[26] This form of international American Studies strives to dismantle the power differential between U.S.-based and non-U.S.-based American Studies institutions and radically critiques "the organizational hegemony of U.S. American Studies, and the *American* Americanist" (Wiegman 579) as well as the hegemonic place of so-called *American* American Studies within the discipline by "emphasizing foreign-based scholarly perspectives on U.S. culture … [and] thereby resituating the field's traditional institutional sites of power" (Desmond and Domínguez, 1998, qtd. in Sadowski-Smith/Fox 6). In Rowe's words, "[t]he new American Studies requires a new internationalism that will take seriously the different social, political, and educational purposes American Studies serves in its different situations around the globe" (Rowe, "Post-Nationalism" 27–28). While many American Studies scholars have always encouraged dialogue between U.S.-based and non-U.S.-based scholars, the former have often tended to over-emphasize, as John Carlos Rowe terms it, their "nativist expertise" (Rowe, "Post-Nationalism" 27). This attitude has radically been challenged by Emory Elliott, who reminds us that "[f]ar too often, we do not see ourselves as others see us" ("Diversity" 4), and who therefore insists that "genuine inclusiveness and broad international collaboration are especially crucial

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the community of American Studies scholars is that of the theoretical, practical and organizational questions involved in recognizing that the 'American Mind' does not function in English alone" (Øverland 4). Many comparatists and Americanists in the larger sense of "Hemispheric American Studies" (like Doris Sommer or Debra Castillo) have also started to challenge this monolingual ideal at the core of American Studies; cf. Debra Castillo, *Redreaming America: Towards a Bilingual American Culture* (2005).

26 For my purposes here, it is important to distinguish between definitions and actual usage. Ian Tyrrell has pointed out that, on a basic level, "'international' concerns state interactions," while the term "'transnational' additionally incorporates non-state actors" (Tyrrell 82), yet concrete usage has revealed that "international" has come to be employed in a much more radical way (dislocating the U.S. from the center of American Studies while highlighting the significance of other national actors) than "transnational," which, as has been demonstrated above, has served as an elegant way to direct attention back to both national as well as subnational dimensions within a U.S.-centric context.

to our work in the twenty-first century" ("Diversity" 6). For this reason, Elliott, who draws an enabling link between the current turn towards internationalization and diaspora studies, reminds us that "it is our responsibility" "[to] speak out as 'citizens of the world' against American imperialism, militarism, unilateralism" ("Diversity" 2), and "[g]iven the many pressing problems we face today, we need to and can approach multiple problems on multiple fronts" ("Diversity" 10). In other words, we should not waste our energies in fighting for the recovery or perpetuation of an overarching meta-narative that holds together the discipline of American Studies but instead concentrate on training future generations of scholars to recognize the value of multiple points of view.[27]

Apart from the European Association of American Studies (an umbrella organization consisting of 23 national American Studies organizations), which, as Rob Kroes has recently outlined, constitutes an influential community of European American Studies scholars that strives for greater independence from U.S.-inspired scholarly paradigms (qtd. in Chenetier 6), thus creating a counterweight to the preponderance of "nativist expertise," one of the most important initiatives in this respect has been the founding of the International American Studies Association (IASA) in the year 2000. In his presidential address at their inaugural conference in Leiden (The Netherlands) in 2003, Kadir provocatively called "for a transcendence of the 'tautological Americanness of American Studies' through [placing more emphasis on] perspectives that do not 'originate in America itself'" (Kadir, qtd. in Wiegman 582). In other words, he emphasized the need for "non-Americanized Americanists" (Kadir, "Devotees" 21–22), i.e. Americanists whose outlook is neither ideologically inflected nor circumscribed by so-called *American* American Studies.[28] Such "international perspective[s]" are increasingly "born in the refusal to identify with American American Studies, [a development] which would enable the field 'to arrive,' as [Kadir] puts it, 'at a discriminating and self-critical position by and on America'" (Wiegman 583). Kadir in this context also rejects as too strongly nationalist (i.e. "defined by U.S.

27 In this context, Amy Kaplan has cautioned us against an overly simplistic reification of geographical location, as U.S.-identified scholars are also found outside of the U.S., and any rigid division between U.S.-based and non-U.S. based practitioners "risks resurrecting the rigid binary divisions between inside and outside" ("Tenacious" 37); cf. also Fluck in fn 8 above.

28 Kadir thus views *American* American Studies as a discipline in the full sense of Foucault's notion of governmentality, i.e. as a discipline that has "disciplined the practitioners of American Studies to deny that their practices form and are formed by a discipline" (Kadir, "Devotees" 27).

cultural politics") the disciplinary priorities that have dominated the field in the U.S. for quite some time (including literature, history, popular culture, and ethnic studies) and pleads for a stronger shift of emphasis to other disciplines such as political science, international relations, economics, information technologies and media assessment (Kadir, "Devotees" 14; cf. also Wiegman 582–583). Kadir concludes his essay with the words: "The best hope for American Studies … is for it to cease to be American" (Kadir, qtd. in Wiegman 583), and he welcomes all non-Americanized Americanists to IASA with the words that "being outside American American Studies today is one of the most intriguing and paradoxical ways to make one's home within it" (qtd. in Wiegman 584).

Inter-American and Hemispheric American Studies

A third paradigm that currently receives much attention in the context of American Studies' international turn is the hemispheric or Inter-American Studies approach. In very broad terms, an Inter-American Studies paradigm challenges traditional Old World-New World configurations by focusing on the American hemisphere (inlcuding Canada, the United States, Latin American nations, and the Caribbean) and is built on the premise that "the United States is not synonymous with America or the Americas" (Rowe, *Post-Nationalist* xvi). Usually Inter-American Studies practitioners foreground this perspective by drawing heavily on scholarship produced in the context of Latin American Studies and "by refusing to limit [their] understanding" of the culture of the Americas to a mono-lingual one [in English only] (Wiegman 581–582). In his survey of the potential inherent in Inter-American Studies, Wilfried Raussert observes that "Inter-American Studies … conceptualize the Americas as transversally related, chronotopically entangled, and multiply interconnected. In that sense Inter-American Studies envision a post-territorial understanding of area(s)," "a horizontal dialogue beyond constructed areas, cultures, as well as disciplines" ("Mobilizing" 63). Far from agreeing with Donald Pease's critique of the concept of "inter" as a mode of analysis in which "either nation in the transaction will remain self-enclosed" (Pease, Introduction, *Re-Framing* 5), Raussert links the concept of "inter" to the notion of "entanglement" that goes "beyond closed national and area spaces" ("Mobilizing" 63) and strives to deconstruct the binary between hegemony (U.S.) vs. periphery (Latin America).[29]

29 Some scholars, including Pease, as I have pointed out above, emphasize the advantages of the concept of "trans" over "inter" in this context because the former "forecloses the possibility that either nation in the transaction will remain self-enclosed" (Pease, Introduction, *Re-Framing* 5). Yet for a critical commentary on the limitations inherent

Quoting Ana Luz, Raussert defines "inter" as "overlapping, concurrence, layers of interaction, juxtapositions, connectivity," in this way envisioning the focus of Inter-American Studies as the analysis of "multi-layered connections, multidirectional flows, conflicted and overlapping imaginaries and complex entanglements within the Americas" ("Mobilizing" 69). For Raussert, Inter-American Studies often builds on comparative methodologies but should also employ "relational and processual strategies" that examine power constellations, movements, developments, translocations as well as "the channels, circulations, flows, itineraries and shifting imaginaries that have crisscrossed and transversally linked the Americas from the colonial times to the global present" ("Mobilizing" 69–70). Raussert thus envisions the Inter-American project primarily as collaborative and transdisciplinary, as moving beyond the limitations of earlier versions of area studies paradigms ("Mobilizing" 63) by "challeng[ing] the artificially drawn boundaries between academic fields, disciplines, and departments" and "complement[ing], bridg[ing], and fus[ing]" their insights ("Mobilizing" 91).

This hemispheric turn within the discipline of American Studies has led to the founding of a number of new research centers, including, among others, the Center for the Americas at the University of Groningen (The Netherlands), the Center for the Americas at the University of Graz (Austria), the Center for Inter-American Studies at the University of Innsbruck (Austria), and the Inter-American Studies program at the University of Bielefeld (Germany). In addition, France has established a nation-wide research institute called Institut des Amériques in 2007, and on a global scale, this approach has found its most visible representation in the founding of the International Association of Inter-American Studies in 2009 and its electronic journal *Forum for Inter-American Research* (*fiar*), which, in its December 2014 issue, has collected a wide range of contributions that strive to offer a foundation for *Theorizing Hemispheric Studies of the Américas*.

What has led to the popularity and proliferation of this approach is the realization that an increasing number of (contemporary as well as historical) problems and issues (including economic and political interdependencies as well as migratory movements across the Americas) can only be fully understood by considering the dynamics within the American hemisphere as a whole. This has prompted scholars such as Juan Poblete, for example, to reflect on the potential inherent in a more intense cooperation between Latino/a and Latin American Studies. One

in the notion of "trans" and the enabling potential of the alternative concept of "inter" as connector that foregrounds interactions, see Amós Nascimento's contribution to this volume, as well as Raussert's essay "Mobilizing."

of the first areas within American Studies to adopt a more hemispheric approach was the field of Early American Studies.[30] Another discipline that has started to profit immensely from a more international and in particular an Inter-American perspective is the field of Native American/First Nations/indigenous studies.[31] As Helmbrecht Breinig reminds us, "Native Americans … are a case where 'the nation could not contain or even describe the forms of life and power' that one finds in the local: the specific that is simultaneously sub-national and, in terms of sovereignty claims, transnational" (620). This combination of subnational and transnational aspects could make indigenous studies an ideal candidate for a transnational approach as discussed above.[32] Other scholars, however, have also emphasized the relevance of the Inter-American paradigm for the field of indigenous studies. Two comprehensive proposals for a hemispheric approach to the Native communities of the western hemisphere have been launched by Earl Fitz and Antonio Barrenechea/Heidrun Moertl.[33] Yet while emphasizing the need to recover the "'larger coherences'" of native cultures across the borders of contemporary nation states, Barrenechea and Moertl also caution us against the "pitfalls of an undifferentiating pan-tribal approach" that mimics colonialist strategies of homogenization ("Hemispheric Indigenous Studies" 113, 110), and they argue instead for the need to negotiate "between pan-Indian and tribally specific critical and cultural contexts" ("Hemispheric Indigenous Studies" 113). While emphasizing that "the recognition and embracing of difference … lies at the heart of the comparative method," Earl Fitz even goes so far as to insist that "Native American literature represents the cultural and historical foundation of the entire inter-American project" because it is "our common American denominator" across all American nations ("Native American Literature" 142, 124, 125).

30 See the pioneering work of Ralph Bauer in this context.

31 Even though the three terms are used interchangeably here, I do not wish to obscure the fact that "Native American" is commonly used in the context of the U.S., while "First Nations" is the preferred choice in a Canadian context, and "indigenous" is often employed to refer to the native populations of Latin American countries.

32 Breinig cites "the new alliances of indigenous peoples … across the Pacific or in circumpolar formations" as prime examples of a need to transcend the nation-state approach (620).

33 Additional examples include the collection of essays titled *Comparative Indigeneities of the Americas* (2012), edited by Castellanos et. al.; *Native America* (forthcoming 2015), edited by Den Toonder et. al.; as well as a special forum in the 2012 edition of the journal *Transnational American Studies*, edited by Huang et al.

Yet, as Earl Fitz points out in his contribution to this volume, the current revival of the Inter-American Studies paradigm within American Studies should not obscure the fact that Inter-American Studies per se is not a new approach; it is, in fact, an approach with a long institutional history, and it is this history that some critics also consider its liability. For an in-depth evaluation of the potential inherent in the Inter-American paradigm, see Fitz's, Raab's, Nascimento's, and Salvatore's contributions to this volume. I will in the following restrict myself to briefly addressing three of the major concerns that have been raised in the context of a hemispheric turn within American Studies.

"Inter-American Studies as Imperial American Studies?"[34]

Institutionally, as Salvatore also outlines in his contribution to this volume, Inter-American Studies begins to find a place in academia during the phase of the so-called Good Neighbor Policy between the U.S. and Latin America (roughly from 1933 through 1945). During this time, in 1932, Herbert E. Bolton delivered his influential presidential address to the American Historical Association – titled "The Epic of Greater America" – in which he argued against a purely nationalistic, U.S.-centered vision of American history, which he termed "chauvinistic" (qtd. in McClennen 404), and instead advocated a broader understanding of American history as ranging from Canada to Tierra del Fuego.[35] These developments led, in 1959, to the foundation of the *Journal of Inter-American Studies* by the Institute for Inter-American Affairs, established at the University of Florida during the 1930s; in 1965, "a group of businessmen led by David Rockefeller founded the Center for Inter-American Relations" (McClennen 405); and in 1966, the Latin American Studies Association was established. However, as Sophia McClennen has pointed out, very soon after WWII, the Cold War ideology started to overshadow most of these enterprises, and knowledge generated under the Inter-American paradigm was from then on for the most part used "to support [U.S.] hegemony" (McClennen 407) and to protect and promote U.S. interests in Latin America. This Cold-War ideologization of the Inter-American Studies paradigm has thus led critics such as Sadowski-Smith to argue that a hemispheric

34 This subtitle is based on Sophia McClennen's essay title.

35 Similar proposals were launched by Latin American scholars around the same time. The Mexican Lucas Alamán, for example, observes in 1926 that "the similarity of their political institutions has bound [the countries of the Americas] even more closely together, strengthening in them the dominion of just and liberal principles" (qtd. in Levander and Levine, "Essays" 4–5).

approach to American Studies "may simply extend American exceptionalism to the Americas" by "expanding the national framework spatially to the hemisphere" ("Introduction: Comparative Border Studies" 277). It is for these reasons that this approach (especially in its "U.S.-led hemispherism" variant [Fox, Introduction *Critical Perspectives* 391) is currently viewed with a lot of scepticism, especially by Latin Americanists. In an essay provocatively titled "Inter-American Studies or Imperial American Studies?," Latin Americanist Sophia McClennen, for example, asked in 2005: "Do inter-American studies represent the latest variation on the Monroe Doctrine [?] … What do we make of the fact that inter-American studies blossoms just as Latin Americanism becomes increasingly more powerful in the academy?" (393).[36] And Claire Fox wonders why Latin American Studies, which has, for a very long period of time, already been "transnational, comparative, and polylingual, and … historically engaged with the U.S. 'empire' in ways that U.S. Americanists are just beginning to explore," is so rarely cited as a role model for the internationalization of American Studies (Introduction to *Critical Perspectives* 387).[37] Similar to Emory Elliott, Ralph Bauer, highlighting the "explosion of hemispheric scholarly activity" in American Studies since the year 2000, also worries about the potential overlap with the research agendas of disciplines such as Latin American Studies or Comparative American Studies ("Hemispheric Studies" 235).

While these concerns are well-founded, one could nonetheless argue that in the context of current efforts to internationalize the discipline of American Studies, Inter-American Studies also has the potential to become a paradigm "committed to disarming the intellectual hegemony of the United States" (McClennen 402), and in this way it might also be able to displace U.S. culture and U.S.-based American Studies approaches from the center of American Studies scholarship (McClennen 393–394). One form that this decentering of the hegemon could take has been outlined by Claudia Sadowski-Smith in her proposal for "Comparative Border Studies," which explicitly moves beyond the U.S.-Mexican border "as a privileged site for the emergence of transnational models of study" and includes an invitation to develop comparative models that focus on borders in the Americas, Asia, and Europe in order to "examine[] the impact of globalization on borders;

36 Cf. also "What would an inter-American studies housed in English and History departments in the United States and taught by monolingual faculty be, if not an example of U.S. intellectual expansionism?" (McClennen 402).

37 On the contrary, it seems, according to Fox, that knowledge production about Latin America is increasingly shaped by the U.S. academic marketplace "in which the role of the professoriate, the publishing industry, and the very languages of Latin America are structurally marginalized" (Introduction to *Critical Perspectives* 388).

the enforcement of national boundaries in response to nation-states' security concerns; the relationship of borders to ethnic, national, and regional identities; the development of border cities; and struggles for environmental protection and natural resources in border zones" ("Introduction: Comparative Border Studies" 273, 275).[38]

This gradual displacement of the U.S. from the center of attention is all the more realistic, I would argue, in the context of the above-mentioned critique of U.S. imperialism as well as the critical forms of internationalism that have started to dominate American Studies discourses, and which have, in Robyn Wiegman's terms, produced a generation of Americanists who refuse to fully identify with their object of study. As Wiegman formulates it: "[W]hole generations of scholars have now been trained to practise refused identification as the means by which they approach the normative assumptions of their disciplines, undoing canons, transforming methodologies, and resisting not simply particular histories, but the privileges such histories ascribe to specific critical vocabularies and habits of thought" (Wiegman 579).[39] In other words, what could emerge at this point is a form of what Caroline Levander and Robert Levine have termed a polycentric (Inter-)American Studies paradigm based on a "polycentric American hemisphere with no dominant center" (Levander and Levine, "Essays" 7; Levander and Levine, "Hemispheric" 401; see also Fitz's contributions to this volume). Such a polycentric approach would also lead to diverse forms of internationalization (depending on specific local contexts [Rowe, "Post-Nationalism" 31]) and would entail "fundamental changes in the way most modern universities educate," including their disciplinary organization (Rowe, "Post-Nationalism" 29). In a more extreme version, this polycentric approach could then even be complemented by an Inter-Latin American Studies variant (McClennen 394; see also Sadowski-Smith/Fox 12), which, in its most radical form – as suggested by Claudia Sadowski-Smith and Claire Fox in an essay that has been reprinted in this volume – could even bypass the U.S.: "we do not imagine that all inter-Americas scholarship will necessarily contain a U.S. component" (Sadowski-Smith/Fox 23).

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38 In an earlier essay titled "Canada-U.S. Border Narratives," Sadowski-Smith had already argued that Inter-American border studies need to move "beyond their current emphasis on the Latin-American-U.S. relationship" by including the U.S.-Canadian border as well (63).

39 Wiegman defines "refused identification" as "affective investments that have motivated [young post-Cold War and post-Marshall Plan generations of] Americanists everywhere to find a means for transcending complicity with their object of study" (Wiegman 579).

Hemispheric American Studies vs. the Role of Nation States

A second criticism that has frequently been levelled against a hemispheric American Studies paradigm in the context of current debates on internationalization is the question of how relevant a transcendence of national borders actually is for Canada and Latin American nations.[40] Sadowski-Smith and Fox, for example, emphasize that both Canada and Latin American nations view the nation state (as opposed to nationalism) more positively "as a potential vehicle for the protection of its citizenry against neoliberal forms of corporate globalism and as a guarantor of sovereignty from the United States" (Sadowski-Smith/Fox 8). In addition, these countries also find the nation state a tool that may help them to "protect natural resources in the face of transnational corporate expansion" (Sadowski-Smith/Fox 9).[41] Moreover, as Helmbrecht Breinig and Ralph Bauer have pointed out, the concept of the nation state also still has a great significance for indigenous American populations (Bauer "Hemispheric Studies" 238), especially in the context of land claims and sovereignty assertions. Yet, as Bauer adds, while Latin American Studies scholars recognize this significance of the nation state, their discipline has never had a "narrowly nationalist orientation" ("Hemispheric Studies" 236).

But even in a U.S. context, as John Carlos Rowe has observed, the nation-state still plays a crucial role: "[D]ebates about the movements of capital and people across national boundaries intensify, nationalist nativisms are repeatedly mobilized to appease immigration; [and] transnational corporations continue to rely on nation states for labor control" (Introduction 1). Similarly, Johannes Voelz argues that globalization has not weakened all nation states to the same extent since the U.S. "largely controls international institutions like the International Monetary

40 One might also pose this question in more general terms, i.e. how relevant is an inter- or trans-national American Studies research paradigm at a time when, despite the global spread of neoliberalism, "the number of national borders has actually increased since the dissolution of former Eastern Bloc countries" (Sadowski-Smith, "Introduction: Comparative Border Studies" 273). Yet Sadowski-Smith continues to answer her own question by highlighting the *simultaneity* of U.S. border enforcement and U.S. global involvement, and she cites Wendy Brown, who has argued that "[n]ew and reinforced national borders … do not so much signal the resurgence of state power as the attempt by nation-states to performatively symbolize their sovereignty in a context where they actually can no longer govern many of the powers unleashed by globalization and late modern colonization, including transnational flows [of migrants, for example], neoliberal forces, and international economic and governance institutions" (Brown 20–24, qtd. in Sadowski-Smith, "Introduction: Comparative Border Studies" 274).

41 A similar view is shared by Ralph Bauer ("Hemispheric Studies" 236).

Fund (IMF) and the World Bank" (365). Moreover, globalization is also not a phenomenon that is external to the nation state but rather "permeates it, e.g. by altering the nation state's internal structure," in this way "making the nation-state significantly less democratic by reducing checks and balances" on the executive, for example (Voelz 365). This paradoxical and deeply ambivalent simultaneity of both weakened and strengthened nation-states and national borders is at the core of Mita Banerjee's edited volume *Virtually American?*, which addresses the fact that "[t]his is a time seemingly without borders, an era of an unprecedented flow of goods, capital, and labor," while at the same time, "particularly after September 11, 2001, borders are being policed," even militarized, and citizenship rights acquire a new significance (blurb on Winter Verlag website).

One way to address this paradoxical simultaneity would be to combine a hemispheric approach with the realization (central to the earlier-mentioned "critical internationalism" paradigm) that any transcendence of national borders "of necessity entails an ongoing recognition of the process through which nations are embedded in and develop gradually out of local and transnational circumstances" (Levander and Levine, "Essays" 6) and should therefore be complemented by a "'critical internationalist' awareness of our own institutional locations" (Sadowski-Smith/Fox 7). This could result in, as both Earl Fitz and Sadowski Smith/Fox propose, an "'inter-Americas studies' that would enable the collaboration of a larger number of national (U.S.-based and non U.S.-based) institutions and disciplines which have traditionally studied the hemisphere, including Latin American and American Studies, Comparative Literature, Canadian Studies, Caribbean Studies, as well as Latina/o and other ethnic studies" (Sadowski-Smith/Fox 6; see also Fitz's contribution to this volume).[42] Yet it is important to remember that the opposition national vs. international may be a false binary altogether, as John Carlos Rowe reminds us, as global, national, and local forces (and frames of analysis) are intersecting in more and more complex ways (Introduction 8).

42 A good example in this context is the anthology *Hemispheric American Studies* edited by Caroline Levander and Robert Levine: they emphasize that they do not wish "to abandon the concept of the nation" completely "but rather to adopt new perspectives that allow us to view the nation beyond the terms of its own exceptionalist self-imaginings" (Levander and Levine, "Essays" 7); they view the nation as a "relational identity that emerges through constant collaboration, dialogue, and dissension" and intend to examine national issues (a national literature, for example) in the context of a hemispheric paradigm (Levander and Levine, "Essays" 5).

Practical Considerations

Last but not least, one of the pioneers in the field of Inter-American Studies, Earl Fitz, has also drawn our attention to a range of methodological problems and institutional barriers that Inter-American Studies often had (and in some cases still has) to face (see both of Fitz's contributions to this voulme). First and foremost, language competence remains a core issue. Frequently neither students nor teachers in traditional American Studies departments are trained well enough in languages other than English (and perhaps Spanish),[43] which is why Fitz maintains that scholars trained in Comparative Studies are frequently much better equipped to practise Inter-American Studies than traditional American Studies scholars. Another factor that Ian Tyrrell foregrounds in his discussion of why U.S.-based historians are still so reluctant to embrace an international paradigm is the structures of the commerical textbook market as well as the national history requirements at U.S. high schools ("In the Shadow" 91). Yet rather than allowing such limitations to pre-determine the scope of research, as Sean Wilentz has insisted,[44] such practical matters most certainly need to be addressed in a structural way by implementing changes in our curricula and in the way we train future generations of American Studies scholars.

But another way of alleviating these concerns would be by promoting what John Carlos Rowe has termed a "new intellectual regionalism" with different American Studies approaches practised at different institutions (depending on local resources), combined with a structural cooperation between emerging and established institutions and between local and national or international resources (Rowe, "Post-Nationalism" 33, 30).[45] These cooperations should not be limited, as Günter Lenz reminds us, to an analysis of "the impact of a politically and economically more powerful culture on other cultures," but should instead lead to "a genuinely dialogic notion of cultural critique" (Lenz 474). As Djelal Kadir insists: "The America we have to investigate, historicize, and teach today, … is certainly hemispheric, global, transnational, transoceanic, intercontinental, omnipotent,

43 And of course, as Fitz argues, English and Spanish alone are not sufficient (Fitz, "Inter-American"15).

44 "[W]e must … have a unified American Studies discipline, department, program, and professional organization … because we haven't the resources, the time, or the expertise to do more" (qtd. in Rowe, "Post-Nationalism" 28, fn 18).

45 Cf. also Donald Pease and Robyn Wiegman, who argue that at this point in time, the field of American Studies cannot be reduced to a single overarching paradigm, and they thus envision several futures for the discipline, including a comparativist, differentialist, counter-hegemonic, and posthegemonic one ("Futures" 4, 23).

and ubiquitous" (Kadir, "Devotees" 27), which "makes a revisioning of American Studies as an international field imperative" (Kadir, "Devotees" 28). Yet such a revisioning can only be accomplished if American Studies scholars across the globe develop ways to cooperate more closely, and if everyone's voices are heard, no matter their position.

A crucial technical tool in realizing this vision could be Shelley Fisher Fishkin's recent proposal to develop so-called "Digital Palimpsest Mapping Projects" or DPMPs (pronounced "Deep Maps") ("Mapping" 47). Such Deep Maps would be "multilingual digital archives in multiple locations" ("Transnational" 621) that "embed links to archival texts and images (along with interpretive materials [and translations]) in nodes on an interactive map"; they would focus on "events, topics, people, or phenomena" "that cross borders, and would include links to texts and images in different locations" ("Mapping" 47, 48, 47). By drawing on materials that are already available in digital form while spurring the digitalization of new materials, Deep Maps could "lay the groundwork for new [i.e. truly international as well as truly interdisciplinary] collaborative modes of research" ("Mapping" 48). As Fisher Fishkin envisions: "Literature scholars may find themselves … seeking out conversations with scholars in diplomatic history and international relations, in foreign language departments, and in translation studies," which will eventually make artificial disciplinary divides that nonetheless still tend to shape many academic environments around the globe "look increasingly arbitrary" ("Mapping" 64). "By requiring collaboration – across borders, languages, nations, continents, and disciplines – Digital Palimpsest Mapping Projects would bring our interdependence – as scholars, as citizens, as human beings – to the foreground" ("Mapping" 66).

This collection of critical essays intends to offer an intervention in the ongoing debate on the internationalization of the discipline of American Studies by bringing together a selection of current perspectives that evaluate both its potentials as well as its pitfalls. While most recent publications in this field tend to focus on only one, or a small selection of, specific concepts and paradigms (e.g. transnationalism), it is the express aim of this collection to address a wider range of different and often competing terms, including trans- and post-national, international, global, (trans-)Atlantic, (trans-)Pacific, as well as hemispheric, trans-border, Inter-American and comparative American Studies. By combining both theoretical reflections and actual case studies, this collection of essays tries to provide possible answers to the question of "What happens once cross-fertilization is no longer merely our object of study but also the reigning paradigm of research practices, which in turn become both cross-disciplinary and solidly comparative?" (Benesch 617). Mindful of the fact that, as Klaus Benesch has observed, "the gains and losses, the universal and the parochial, the liberating and the reactionary …

are … often snuggly nested together" (618), this volume attempts a reassessment of the international turn in American Studies at this juncture when, as Kristin Hoganson reminds us, "[o]ur enthusiasm" for internationalization "should not blind us to boundary drawing and border-making"; it should not blind us to the fact that patterns of connectivity almost always also produce patterns of exclusion (Hoganson 624). "It may mean that American Studies is a place we set out from and return to instead of the place where we always stay" (Hoganson 624).

Positionality – and in particular concerns about the neo-imperialist reinscription of the U.S. at the center of many new versions of international American Studies constitutes a recurrent theme for several of our contributors, in particular Ricardo Salvatore, Earl E. Fitz, Michael Boyden, and Claudia Sadowski-Smith/Claire F. Fox. Many of them explore the question of how, in Bryce Traister's words, "transnationalism [might] look as a non-U.S.-identified set of critical practices" conducted by non-U.S.-based and/or non-U.S-identifed Americanists ("Everything Old" 162). Placing the current hemispheric turn in the context of Herbert Bolton's call for a comparative history of the Americas during the early twentieth century, Salvatore, for example, warns us that calls to "widen the horizon" are often tied to hegemonic political designs and interests. Concerned that U.S.-based scholars trained in American Studies, despite their critical perspectives on the U.S., still tend to follow U.S. intellectual agendas, Salvatore sees most current forms of internationalization as new versions of U.S. hegemony or neo-imperialism prone to replicating old forms of appropriation and colonization typical of the 1930s and 1940s (when Hispanic American history projects flourished in the context of the U.S.'s Good Neighbor Policy and Pan-American foreign policy interests).

Salvatore's concerns are shared by Michael Boyden, who analyzes the rise of the so-called New Americanists through the lens of social systems theory and concludes that, rather than moving from self assertion (i.e. celebrating the U.S.'s democratic and exceptional role in the world) to self-criticism (i.e. challenging the U.S.'s manifold forms of oppression and imperialism), the international turn of the New Americanists actually constitues a new form of self-assertion *through* self-criticism. Focusing on interrelations between Latin America and Canada, and proposing an inter-Latin-American-Canadian Studies approach, Sadowski-Smith/Fox share this position, criticizing the postnational approach favored by many U.S.-based American Studies scholars as nothing more than an attempt to internationalize U.S.-based American Studies methodologies and theory paradigms. They insist that Canada and Latin America should not just be seen as passive recipients of what the U.S. academic industry has to offer.

Sadowski-Smith/Fox as well as Earl E. Fitz, and Ricardo Salvatore also draw attention to the fact that Canada (especially francophone Québec) and Brazil are

still far too often excluded from current hemispheric studies of the Americas due to the linguistic challenges they pose.[46] Especially hemispheric turns launched from within the discipline of American Studies, according to Fitz, are often limited to a dyadic study of the U.S.'s relation to Spanish America, thus placing U.S.-based Americanists in a kind of "hemispheric isolation." Other disciplines, in particular Comparative American Studies or Comparative Latin American Studies, but also indigenous/Native American Studies (understood in Nascimento's sense of including all aboriginal populations of the Americas), or Caribbean Studies (with its multilingualism and its bridging function between North and South America, as Édouard Glissant describes it) are much better equipped, in Fitz's view, to take the lead in internationalizing American Studies because the professionally trained comparatist by definition avoids the hegemony of and does not grant any exceptionalist stance to any single nation as "the question of nation hardly obtains" (Fitz). Earl Fitz's contribution offers a powerful assessment of the current state of the field of Inter-American Studies as well as a convincing proposal for a comparative hemispheric methodology as the best training for future generations of scholars who should study at least three of the languages of the Americas (English, Spanish, French, Portuguese) plus one of the main Native languages and hence would be able to understand all of the Americas in their full complexity rather than limiting their analyses to a dyadic U.S.-Hispanic America axis (which ultimately just enshrines the hegemonic role of the U.S. again).

Liam Kennedy's 2009 essay (which has been reprinted here), finally, offers a slightly different slant on positionality by comparing the various foci of U.S.-based Americanists and European Americanists. Insisting that even for non-U.S. based Americanists, there is no "neutral" or external position, i.e. no truly ethical stance, Kennedy observes that for European Americanists, the United States has for a very long time been the site of the new, the dissenting, the subversive. Hence we as European Americanists cannot simply blame U.S.-based scholars for their potentially biased (i.e. U.S.-centric) perspective but also need to be aware of the limitations inherent in our own perspectives by acknowledging the fantasy image of the U.S. that structures our own sense of what American Studies should be or do.[47] A similar view is voiced by Jane Desmond, former President of the

46 Cf. also Braz, who has drawn attention to "Canada's (non)place in inter-American discourse" (79), and Adams and Casteel, who fear that, as a young discipline, Canadian Studies might ultimately just be absorbed into a hemispheric framework in a kind of "neo-imperial conquest" (7).

47 As mentioned above, the extent to which an "external" (e.g. a European) perspective can have positive effects on the discipline has been controversially discussed. While

International American Studies Association, who discusses some of the practical pitfalls in the process of internationalizing American Studies by drawing on her experiences of organizing IASA's second World Congress in Beijing, China. She illustrates how orientalism and occidentalism still subtend Western (i.e. U.S.-American *and* European) thinking today, reminding us that even as we are aware of these discourses, we are not immune to them. Desmond's current essay is thus in keeping with her earlier work, which had also focused on the local specificities of "doing" American Studies and in this way highlighted "in concrete practices the limitations that cross-national collaborative work by its very nature will encounter" (Wiegman 582). By focusing on the specificities of knowledge production in national university systems, Desmond also recognizes "the continuing importance of nationalism and national contexts in shaping knowledge" (Wiegman 582). To address this issue, she had earlier (together with Virginia Dominguez) called for new, cosmopolitan paradigms of research developed on the basis of international cooperation[48] (qtd. in Rowe et al., Introduction 7), and she returns to this idea in her contribution to this volume by proposing Edward Said's concept of "an ethic of cosmopolitan care" as a viable remedy. As all of these essays addressing the problem of positionality illustrate, all of us, irrespective of the geographical region we hail from, need to reflect very carefully on the far too often hidden and unconscious epistemes that shape our thinking. They may have an unanticipated and larger-than-expected impact on our international and cross-cultural collaborations as we enter into the project of internationalizing American Studies from our respective vantage points.

It is in particular critical race and ethnicity studies that can profit immensely from a transnational, international, or Inter-American paradigm that neither stops at national borders nor subdivides ethnic or racial minorities into pre-defined, monodimensional identity categories that often acquire essentialist overtones. Amós Nascimento, Josef Raab and Gabriele Pisarz-Ramirez draw attention to this limitation inherent in traditional American Studies approaches to race and ethnicity by offering both conceptual discussions and specific case studies that illustrate

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Emory Elliott has explicitly called for a more diasporic approach to American Studies, and Paul Giles believes that European American Studies scholars will be able to escape the lure of U.S. exceptionalism, Kennedy is more sceptical in this essay, regarding distance not necessarily as beneficial but as potential source of disengagement or mistakes.

48 Cooperation between U.S.-based and international scholars has also been at the heart of Emory Elliott's efforts, as discussed above, even though, as Marc Chenetier highlights in a recent *EJAS* article (2008), European and other international ways of doing American Studies still remain pretty unknown to U.S.-based scholars (3).

how an Inter-American (or transnational, or critically international) approach by definition challenges both national *and* subnational boundaries. Arguing in favor of the highly enabling insights gained by expanding critical race studies to the entire Western Hemipshere, Josef Raab compares Barack Obama's and Evo Morales's approaches to race, arguing that during public appearances Obama tends to relativize the divisive potential of race in his attempt to create post-racial unity and cohesion within the U.S., while Evo Morales emphasizes his indigeneity, thus taking a more separatist approach to difference. At the same time, however, Morales has also tried to form alliances with indigenous groups in the U.S. and Canada, in this way highlighting the extent to which transnational ethnoscapes and mediascapes have led to the deterritorialization of ethnic groups as well as to transnational forms of collectivization. In addition, the possibility of or the need for multiple affiliations has moved center stage, as Raab illustrates through an analysis of new indigenous movements in Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Mexico, Canada, and the U.S., for whom race is often only one of many factors (in addition to class, gender, sexual preference, religion, age, language, education, political leaning, regional background, nationality, or consumer orientation) in the creation of solidarity for strategic purposes on issues that are linked to but at the same time also transcend the context of race (and include questions of political representation, neoliberalism, or ecological issues). These developments illustrate how group identities and coalitions have become more flexible and shifting since the Civil Rights era: "[W]hat exactly the distinctive marker of collective identity is, depends on the situation and issues at hand" as identity groups keep redefining themselves through context-specific acts of self-positioning (Raab). For this reason, Raab proposes "belonging" as an alternative for "race" as the former concept is better able to capture the dynamic, fluid, and non-exclusive nature of the communities that are forming throughout the Americas at this point in history. In the twenty-first century, as Raab argues, differences have not decreased, but they have become more dynamic and more complex.

Illustrating the importance of a hemispheric paradigm for African American Studies, Amós Nascimento's contribution focuses on the experiences of dislocation by people of African descent in the Americas and demonstrates how an Inter-American approach, by transcending national boundaries, allows for a new perspective on and new answers to issues such as slavery, racism, and citizenship struggles. He argues that these experiences are only insufficiently captured by traditional disciplines such as African American Studies (which only focuses on the U.S.), or Latin American Studies (which often tends to neglect the African dimension in the Americas). Inter-American Studies is furthermore uniquely equipped, according Nascimento, to shed light on the lacunae in traditional forms

of Black Atlantic Studies, Caribbean Studies, and Brazilian Studies, all of which offer important insights but often fail to notice interactions that transcend their specific disciplinary or nation-based boundaries. For Nascimento, the *inter* in Inter-American Studies thus functions as an important connector. His case studies on Afro-Brazilian *quilombas*, *confrarias*, and *terreiros de candomblé* illustrate his points and show why this Inter-American paradigm and its redefinition of African Americans as people of African descent in all of the Americas should also influence the way African American Studies is practised in the U.S.

Gabriele Pisarz-Ramirez's contribution, which likewise focuses on African American texts, offers a vivid illustration of the extent to which an Inter-American Studies approach can complement traditional transatlantic perspectives on the revolutionary and early national period in the U.S. Arguing that during this period, temporal discourses are at least as important as spatial ones in the construction of nationhood, Pisarz-Ramirez demonstrates that between the 1780s and the 1850s, many African Americans living in the U.S. constructed their cultural and political identity in a transnational, Inter-American framework because for them, the Haitian Revolution, for example, was far more important than the U.S.'s war of independence against Britain for negotiating their own role within U.S. society.

Pisarz-Ramirez's contribution thus illustrates the importance and relevance of an international, hemispheric American Studies approach also for earlier periods within U.S. history, a conviction that is shared by several other contributors, including Armin Paul Frank, Daniel Göske, and Earl E. Fitz. All three of them, additionally, address this issue in the context of the question of how "new" this current turn towards internationality actually is. According to Fitz, the current trend towards internationalization has only recently been discovered by the discipline of American Studies but has been at the center of Latin American Studies, Canadian Studies, and Comparative American Studies for decades. In the context of European American Studies, the analysis of transatlantic connections also has a long tradition as an established variant of internationalization that has shaped the discipline of American Studies since its inception during the post-WWII years. Armin Paul Frank's and Daniel Göske's contributions focus on this dimension, thus providing a historical contextualization for current forms of internationalization. According to Göske, who specializes on German-American relations, the current international turn's historical foundation lies in the internationalization of the transatlantic literary and cultural scene around 1850. Göske (like Frank) insists that internationality was a commonplace during earlier historical periods but needs to be re-emphasized and re-kindled today in an age of decreasing language abilities and declining forms of intercultural literacy. One of Göske's central insights is the fact that internationalism does not necessarily have to contradict

national interests since much depends on the specific forms of nationalism and internationalism that are favored by an author (some literary authors may move away from British influences and open up to German ones instead, for example). Armin Paul Frank's contribution builds on his research conducted within the framework of the Göttingen Center for Advanced Study on the Internationality of National Literatures and proposes a complex and nuanced model for producing an international history of national literatures in the Americas by highlighting the significance of what he terms "enclave-exclave" writers, i.e. writers that are frequently excluded from conventional literary histories because they fail to fit traditional categories (in the U.S.'s case, this often includes American authors writing in languages other than English). Drawing on Ole Edvart Rölvaag as a case study, Frank foregrounds the limitations inherent in traditional forms of classification (is Rölvaag a Norwegian-American author or an American author writing in Norwegian?) by contextualizing his work in relation to European-Norwegian literature, to Norwegian-American literature, to English-American literature, as well as to other enclave literatures (especially German) produced within the U.S. In this way, Frank proposes the concept of "reading culture" (rather than nation-based labels such as "Norwegian-American") as a more productive research paradigm that allows for the analysis of a much wider range of factors shaping the work of a literary author (including the transfer and transformations associated with moving from Europe to the U.S., as well as book markets, distribution centers, or the inscriptions of other works into the author's own), which might lead to a much more comprehensive history of the literatures of the Americas.

What all of the contributions collected in this volume highlight is the range, but more importantly, the complementarity (rather than competition or mutual exclusiveness) of the many different and innovative strategies that have been devised to internationalize American Studies. As Paul Giles has put it very aptly:

> [I]t would seem absurdly utopian to imagine that nationalist templates could ever simply mutate into a benign hemispheric [or international] multilateralism. What is more interesting to consider is the way in which hemispheric [or international] studies might interface and interfere with dominant national typologies, deconstructing their ideological agendas and elucidating various blind spots in their intrinsically self-perpetuating narratives. ("Commentary" 652)

What we need, in other words, is no new orthodoxy or "ur-theory" of American Studies, but instead an encouragement towards heterodoxy (Giles, "Commentary" 654), an encouragement that all contributors to this volume have wholeheartedly embraced.