

**Zeitschrift:** SPELL : Swiss papers in English language and literature  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Association of University Teachers of English  
**Band:** 10 (1997)

**Artikel:** American internationalism in the 1990s : towards a new imperialism?  
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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-99937>

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# American Internationalism in the 1990s: Towards a New Imperialism?

André Kaenel

There are tensions between current moves towards internationalization within American higher education and, on the other hand, the counter forces which anchor the United States as nation-state and as symbolic construct and resist the internationalizing process. To put it simply, in the words of Bruce Robbins, "U.S. internationalism" is an "oxymoronic phrase" (97). Why that is the case and what consequences these tensions might have for the discourse and practice of American Studies is the broad subject of this paper. The question of empire and imperialism will come into the argument obliquely through my examination of the center-periphery dyad which, I shall argue, is constitutive of both American Studies and of the workings of empire.

Within American Studies in particular, these tensions are apt to occupy a variety of revealing institutional and discursive sites. My first example of such tensions is the juxtaposition in the pages of the American Studies Association *Newsletter* of June 1995 of a piece by Paul Lauter, then President of the ASA, entitled "A Call For (At Least a Little) American Studies Chauvinism," with an essay by Rob Kroes, then President of the European Association of American Studies (EAAS) on "Internationalizing the Study of the United States." Paul Lauter's explicitly progressive stance on the politics of American Studies and his active involvement in furthering the internationalization of the discipline coexist awkwardly with an unquestioned acceptance of the inescapable centrality of the U.S. in the post-Cold War world, a centrality which in his account is bound to increase the discipline's capital: "To be sure, in one sense American Studies is benefitting from the hard realities of power politics in a world in which every nation *must* in some degree study the one superpower, the United States" (3, my emphasis). While it is being refashioned from within, notably in the wake of multiculturalism and cultural studies, in Lauter's description, American Studies and the United

States itself, when projected onto the international, globalized scene in the 1990s, nevertheless manifest national and disciplinary coherence.

To be sure, Lauter's title is meant to ironize these perceptible tensions, and Lauter himself cannot be accused of celebrating the "chauvinism" for which he modestly pleads. But the tensions remain within the essay and they are highlighted by the proximity of Rob Kroes's piece whose gist is to relativize the internationalization of American Studies by describing the various structural mechanisms which contribute to perpetuate a strongly entrenched bifurcation between the center and the periphery (e.g. language, scholarly styles, publishing market). This bifurcation has been overcome, Kroes rightly points out, in the many successful international ventures in American Studies, quite a few of which he himself sponsored. However, in a reversal which indirectly reproduces the centripetal logic of Paul Lauter's plea for a modicum of American Studies "chauvinism," Kroes concludes by urging Americanists "at the periphery" to "now work to conquer the center" (4). On both sides of the Atlantic, as these two samples suggest, the discourse on the internationalization of American Studies often curiously mirrors itself in envisioning "America" as the discipline's inescapably magnetic center. Which of course it is, and has been since American Studies came into its own as a full-fledged, respectable scholarly discipline at home and abroad in the late 1940s. I shall return to these questions momentarily but let me first give another example of the power of the center in American Studies.

In their essay on "Resituating American Studies in a Critical Internationalism," Jane C. Desmond and Virginia R. Dominguez argue for a "concerted effort throughout the American Studies scholarly community to embrace actively a paradigm of critical internationalism as we move into the next century" (475). They deplore the "noncomparative . . . inward orientation" of most American Studies scholarship in the United States and plead for making "the internationalization of U.S. studies a top priority for American Studies scholars and to build internationalist perspectives into the 'doing' of American Studies" (479). But their vibrant injunction to americanists in the United States that they "give voice to foreign scholars" and sustain a "critical dialogue" with scholars in the U.S. and abroad is unfortunately belied by the monological, inward orientation of the essay itself: all their sources are in English and nearly all the scholars they cite are U.S.-based. The only exceptions are a handful of eminent international Americanists like Alexis de Tocqueville, Jean Baudrillard and Rob Kroes. In short, Desmond and Dominguez's otherwise valuable piece does little to redress their correct estimate that an "examination of American Studies

research, citation practices, and curricula in this country dramatically reveals the absence of foreign scholars' perspectives" (478). The rallying cry for the internationalization of American Studies is here couched as an inescapably political imperative as the U.S. approaches the twenty-first century, but one which is manifestly countered or resisted by the greater pull of the discipline's nation-bound scholarly protocols.

Let me make it clear that my remarks on these three essays do not proceed either from a condemnation of "internationalism" nor from a spiteful realization that we, international americanists, appear doomed to outsider status. Instead of striving to conquer a putative center, international americanists ought to recognize and work through the differences that willy-nilly unite them with their counterparts in the United States. They should pause to rethink the tensions (domestic/foreign, national/international, center/periphery) through which the discipline of American Studies has been constituted since the late 1940s. To do so means, I want to argue, reconnecting two areas which americanist work too often keeps separate, in spite of the fact that they founded the discipline as a cultural export in the late 1940s: "America" as phantasmatic projection from without of European dreams, desires – and, occasionally, denial – and, by the same token, "America" as literal projection from within of specific national interests relayed by U.S. cultural diplomacy in the Cold War years. "American Studies" was born at a historical juncture characterized by the eruption of "America" (as object of study and mass supplier of a whole range of cultural goods), on the European scene and by the sudden consolidation of the United States as self-appointed international power invested with the holy mission to contain communism worldwide. To concentrate on the former while neglecting the latter, to disregard the articulation between the meaning of "America" and the various geopolitical contexts in which "America" circulated and continues to do so is for international americanists to deprive themselves of valuable tools for the necessary critique of that oxymoronic phrase, "U.S. internationalism," in the 1990s.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said offers an indirect explanation for the oxymoron and for the tensions apparent in the americanist discourse on internationalism: "Marginalization in American culture means a kind of unimportant provinciality. It means the inconsequence associated with what is not major, not central, not powerful. . . . Centrality is identity, what is powerful, important, and *ours*" (392, 393). The new imperial centrality of American culture, in Said's account, maps out a new pattern of domination which rests on control, consensus and consent and which is effected "through

a system of pressures and constraints by which the whole cultural corpus retains its essentially imperial identity and its direction" (392). Though not explicitly directed at American Studies, Said's critique nevertheless provides a sobering and even chilling view of the discipline's continued reliance on and hierarchization of, the center-periphery model. Viewed from the periphery, the hierarchy has not only been constitutive of the discipline since the late 1940s; it has also constituted its international practitioners' professional identity. Non-American americanists have been defined, given identity – and still are, if we accept Kroes's idea that "conquering the center" is our chief aim – through their relation to a centrality called "America."

In the volume of essays they collected under the title *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease uncover how the meaning of "America," in the foundational figure of Perry Miller, was "transformed into a field for study," and how the academic study of the (unacknowledged) American empire under the name "American Studies" coincided with the political *practice* of empire (6, 11). We understand better now, thanks to the work of Reinhold Wagnleitner, Frank Ninkovich, Richard Kuisel and Eric J. Sandeen, among others, what role culture and U.S. cultural diplomacy played in the exportation of the discipline to Europe from the 1940s on. We understand better, in particular how, in the words of Ninkovich, "cultural internationalism has always marched in step with commercial internationalism" (54).

Less documented, however, has been the interface between U.S. foreign policy and the development of American Studies during the Cold War, and the new alignment between both spawned by post-Cold War readjustments of U.S. geopolitical as well as commercial and cultural interests. While we may wish to subscribe, as americanists, to Paul Lauter's expression of gleeful resignation that "every nation must in some degree study the one superpower, the United States," we should also ponder the extent to which the United States' suddenly acquired centrality is, according to other accounts, shaky and uncertain in today's globalized, multipolar world. In fact, as Benjamin Lee, among others, has persuasively argued, the end of the Cold War has precipitated an erosion and decentering of U.S. global prominence.

Lee's main point is that "the liberal values that have guided teaching and research in the American academy can no longer adequately respond to the changes brought about by the internationalization of culture and communication" (561). For him, the multiculturalism debate in the United States proves to be a mirror image of a global situation characterized by a "tension between a decentering of the United States and the West in general

as the world economic order shifts, and a desire to protect its power and privileges. . . . As the domestic debates over multiculturalism heat up and the Cold War cools down, universities in the United States are beginning to go international" (568, 571). In Lee's persuasive reading, current efforts within the American academy to promote internationalism result from the combined pressure of fiscal crises and changing demographics at home and of increased economic competition abroad. The principal aim of such efforts is to seek to recapture for the U.S. an international prominence which has been seriously eroded or possibly lost with the global redistribution of power that followed the destruction of the Berlin Wall, the disappearance of the Soviet Union and the collapse of state communism in Eastern Europe. The older version of internationalism that rested on the institutionalization of a hierarchical distribution of knowledge and power between the domestic and the international, with the former posing firmly as the core of liberal values waiting to be internationalized, is today compromised, Lee writes. It "may simply worsen our cultural nearsightedness" (573), the undesirable offshoot of centrality. "Critical internationalism," which he advocates instead, seeks leverage outside the American academy via comparative and international perspectives which aim to "decenter" the debate over the universality of American values and, in the process, "overcome the separation of domestic and international perspectives" (584) and usher in new, refracted, ways for the U.S. of seeing itself in and through other parts of the world.

I find Lee's critique of U.S. internationalism – like Edward Said's critique of the imperial centrality of American culture mentioned above – to be especially suggestive for rethinking the relation, within American Studies, of the center-periphery relation. Lee's analysis of the bankruptcy of the older version of internationalism as the unquestioned projection outward of U.S. liberal values, assumptions and visions, almost perfectly describes the direction which the internationalization of the discipline has taken since the late 1940s and seems to keep on taking today namely, in Lee's words, a "desire to protect [U.S.] power and privileges" in the face of global economic shifts. Quite tellingly, given my earlier comments about the centripetal, incorporative force of American Studies, this critique is produced within the American academy by critics who are, by institutional or intellectual affiliation, external to American Studies. Why the sharpest critiques of U.S. internationalism (B. Lee) and of American imperialism (E. Said) bearing directly on the discipline's current reexamination of its national(ist) focus should come from outside is a vexing question. Possible answers once again return us to the quasi ingrained resistance of the field of American Studies to

reconceptualizing – which might well amount to jettisoning – the centrality of “America” and the grounds for its study.

The weight of “America” and of what are implicitly deemed to be the most appropriate critical protocols for its study, coupled with the fact that Lee’s advocacy of critical internationalism remains unheard even by sympathetic americanist readers, is exemplified by the Desmond and Dominguez piece I discussed briefly earlier. Although they invoke Benjamin Lee’s piece as providing the key frame of reference for “resituating American Studies in a critical internationalism,” Desmond and Dominguez stop short of addressing the full implications of Lee’s critique of internationalism: “Drawing on the work of Benjamin Lee and others, we define critical internationalism as more than internationalization. By critical internationalism we mean a conceptual orientation that resituates the United States in a global context on a number of terrains simultaneously: in terms of the scholarship that gets read, written, and cited and, most importantly, in the ways scholars conceive of new directions for formulating research” (475). Critical internationalism, in this account, is chiefly a matter of professional style, of the procedures which American Studies people ought to develop, this passage implies, in order to “resituate” their discipline in the contemporary global context. It is an internationalism voided of the critique of liberal values which informs Lee’s argument and which runs the risk of merely reproducing the older model of internationalism predicated on the centrality and transferability of U.S. disciplinary concerns to the rest of the world and on the inclusive, incorporative power of “America.” It is not clear to me how a *critical* reconceptualization of American Studies as an internationalist project might emerge from this view nor how it might help realize its authors’ wish for a new “interface” between the domestic and the international that would not simply reproduce the bankrupt binational or multinational comparative focus familiar to international americanists. Viewed from Europe, such internationalism, laudable as it is, is unlikely to alter the balance of power and the circulation of what counts, for the likes of Desmond and Dominguez, as recognizable American Studies scholarship.

But this is not to say, once again, that we should “conquer the center” (Kroes) nor that studying the “one superpower” (Lauter) is today an inescapable task. The reservations I am voicing about “American internationalism” should not be read as an endorsement of its mirrored other, American nationalism, in spite of the fact that my larger claim so far has been that “American internationalism” is in fact American nationalism writ large, or “innernationalism” (which is another explanation of why “American

internationalism" is an oxymoron). The truly thorny question for U.S.-based americanists like Desmond and Dominguez, Lauter and others who are working on a much needed rethinking of American Studies to enable it to address contemporary transnational realities is the following: how far along this path can the discipline be taken and still remain *American Studies*? Its inbuilt resistance to Lee's more radical version of internationalism (the latter being distinct, Desmond and Dominguez are right to insist, from internationalization, which has been the flip side of domestic American Studies for the past fifty years), is undoubtedly motivated also by the fear that, once internationalized in a truly *critical* way, American Studies might stop being American (whatever that means), might stop being the organizing institutional center it has been for about fifty years. An unconscious disciplinary anxiety may also inform the Desmond and Dominguez piece whose conservative proposals aim at resituating American Studies globally by merely changing the *contents* of its teaching and research. By contrast, Lee's critical internationalism, if deployed by and for American Studies, might very well signal the disappearance of the discipline as we know it in the U.S. – it might very well spearhead, also, a vast reorganization of disciplines in favor of what Lee calls "holding environments" where "the ramifications of this new wave of circulation of ideas and peoples can be explored" (590). The "logical places for thinking about new forms of collaborative work responsive to global changes" are, Lee writes, "area studies centers" through which could be created "sites within the academy which can continuously decenter our preconceptions both of ourselves and of others" (590-1). But American Studies programs in the U.S., since their traditional focus is the United States itself and not "the Other," stand outside the scope of "area studies," Desmond and Dominguez point out. There are indeed no American Studies *centers* as such within the U.S., though a few reputed ones exist in Europe and elsewhere (e.g. London, Amsterdam, Berlin, Hyderabad). In the absence of such centers, the decentering Lee urges, will have to take different routes for U.S. americanists – though not necessarily for their international colleagues.

The main issues, in the final analysis, revolve around questions of vision and perception of the U.S. in relation to its "others," questions of what visions of the U.S. and its interests prevail. Within the American academy, as Bruce Robbins has argued, different and often competing versions of U.S. internationalism are available. Although any of these, Robbins writes, is bound to reflect, "on some level, American assumptions and interests," there are "nevertheless good reasons for discriminating among the sorts of

Americaness that the different versions offer" (97). The problem, though, is that the "strongest version of U.S. internationalism now current [is] the version that identifies it with domestic multiculturalism and with the tradition of American pluralism and heterogeneity – in short with genuine Americanism" (98). This version too often leads to what Robbins identifies as "politically complacent internationalism" (99), namely the uncritical celebration of eminently exportable values and ideologies (since the U.S., after all, *is* the world). In other words, *E pluribus unum*, the motto which officially identifies the American political and cultural experience as the fusion of difference into one, becomes, in the internationalist scenario Robbins decries, the rationale for universalizing American principles to the rest of the world: it too could become one, in spite of its differences – with the non negligible help of American capital which, as Robbins reminds us, is aligned with the interests of the American government. Before they accuse Robbins of exaggerating American international influence or, worse, of demonizing the United States, americanists in the U.S., and abroad in particular, would do well to remember that the scenario he describes is the one that actually prevailed during the Cold War years when U.S. political, military and, above all, cultural influence abroad were manifestly underwritten by a universalist conception of the national interest of the United States in its drive to contain communism.

Robbins's polemic against the universalization of Americaness as the driving force behind current internationalism thus inevitably sends us back to the relations between universalism and its alternative, particularism, within American foreign policy thinking. According to John Lewis Gaddis, in American political history, a "universalist" approach to international affairs has sought to make the world resemble the United States as much as possible on the assumption that a homogeneous or at least convivial world would no longer pose a threat to the nation and its security. The "particularist" approach, by contrast, has insisted on the necessity of preventing threats to the nation, irrespective of whether the world resembles the United States. In the latter case, security is predicated on diversity. For the universalist, harmony in international affairs is conducive to American interests, while the particularist views such harmony as utopian and security as best achieved through a careful balance of powers and interests. These two versions of U.S. interests, the legalistic-moralistic on the one hand and the pragmatic-realist on the other, were in conflict throughout most of the Cold War – and still are today. Against the universalist position that held that it was the mission of the United States to police world affairs and contain communism at all cost (e.g.

the 1947 Truman Doctrine), George Kennan insisted instead on the necessity for the United States to restore a balance of power in Europe and Asia.<sup>1</sup>

Kennan's argument for U.S. foreign policy rested on a strong culturalist argument. For him, as for other government officials, in the early Cold War struggle to contain Soviet power the "most influence that the United States can bring to bear upon internal developments in Russia will continue to be the influence of example: the influence of what it is, and not only of what it is to others but what it is to itself" (Kennan, "America and the Russian Future," 125-126.) On other occasions, Kennan returned to the idea that if Soviet power were one day to crumble, it would do so for internal reasons brought about by indirect influence rather than as a result of direct foreign intervention. In the next forty years, America's culture and way of life would become the preferred channel for implementing these policies.

The Cold War is now over and the Soviet Union is no more but, interestingly, Kennan still argues for the relevance of exemplarity as a valuable principle of U.S. foreign policy:

The world now is, of course, different [from that of John Quincy Adams] in many respects. There are those who will hold the gloomy view that such is the variety of our population and such are the differences among its various components, racial, social, and political, that it is idle to suppose that there could be any consensus among them on matters of principle. They have too little in common. There is much to be said for that view. This writer has at times been inclined to it himself. But further reflection suggests that there are certain feelings that we Americans or the great majority of us share, living as we do under the same political system and enjoying the same national consciousness, even though we are not always aware of having them. One may further suspect that if the translation of these feelings into principles of American behavior on the world scene were to be put forward from the highest governmental levels and adequately explained to the people at large, it might evoke a surprisingly strong response ("On American Principles," 122).

Opposing the "gloomy view" according to which the United States has become a mosaic of irreconcilable interests, Kennan's argument stresses the commonalities that he thinks obtain between unity and diversity within an overarching American "national consciousness," a sort of political unconscious which "the great majority" of Americans supposedly share. *E pluribus unum* rather than *Plures ex uno*.

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<sup>1</sup> On Kennan and particularism vs. universalism, see Etzold and Gaddis (eds.), *Containment*, esp. 25-30 and Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 25-33.

Kennan's argument should be familiar to students of American cultural history and to observers of the contemporary debate about multiculturalism and the so-called "culture wars," with which it shares a similar rhetorical structure and comparable ideological assumptions about nationhood, even though it differs in its thrust from the most stringent expressions of anti-multiculturalist angst to which readers on both sides of the Atlantic have been subjected. What interests me particularly is Kennan's own move towards the universalization of the American example to the rest of the world, what he calls the "translation" of these "feelings" which in his mind most Americans share, irrespective of their racial, political or social situation. Kennan is well aware of what he calls elsewhere in his essay the "increasingly global nature of our problems and the myriad involvements connecting our people and government with foreign countries" (123). What he is recommending for U.S. foreign policy in the new "global" situation it is confronting is that it replace the "hard" political and military interventions in the affairs of small countries by the "power of example" ("The best way for a larger country to help smaller ones is surely by the power of example," 125), the example of what the United States stands for socially, politically, culturally as a nation of nations.

In a movement which parallels the examples discussed above, Kennan's vision proceeds from the center outwards as it takes as its starting point a set of particular national characteristics and values which it then applies to the world situation. The continuity of Kennan's thinking on these matters is remarkable. As head of the Policy Planning Staff in the Truman administration, he had made a similar claim as early as 1948 in a document entitled "Review of Current Trends" which distinguished between universalist and particularist approaches to international affairs. He notably expressed his belief that "in our pursuance of a workable world order we have started from the wrong end. Instead of beginning at the center, which is our own immediate neighborhood – the area of our own political and economic tradition – and working outward, we have started on the periphery of the entire circle, i.e. on the universalistic principle of the UN, and have attempted to work inward" (Etzold and Gaddis (eds.), *Containment*, 99). But Kennan's consistency is also emblematic, as the man himself is, of the many significant continuities in U.S. conceptions of its "Others" (Desmond and Dominguez), be it in the area of foreign policy or in the assumptions underwriting the flow of academic knowledge in the age of internationalism, both of which proceed from the center outward via the universalization of American exemplarity. The logic implicit in such arguments and their

translations into foreign policy ventures across the globe, has always been geared, at least since the late 1940s, toward the maintainance, extension and reinforcement of what Kaplan and Pease call “United States imperialism,” and what others call “hegemony” or “dominance”: the alignment, all the more visible in the 1990s, of the national interest of the United States with the globalization of capital and (American) mass culture. The displacement of the center of gravity from the United States to the so called “emergent countries” of Southeast Asia or to the European Union, however, has relegated the U.S., in key areas like economics, finance and trade, to a secondary position – which nevertheless remains an imposing one. Not surprisingly, given the growing economic importance of these areas in the post-Cold War world, American internationalism has followed suit by redeploying itself towards such competitors as Southeast Asia and Europe (as well as toward the former communist bloc countries).<sup>2</sup>

Since the end of the Cold war, actually, for a variety of different yet converging reasons, the world and Europe in particular have been witnessing a whole range of major and often dramatic (e.g. the war in Bosnia) geopolitical, economic, ethnic and cultural realignments across the increasingly porous borders of existing nation-states. Europe itself, the historic theater of the Cold War is, slowly but surely, heading towards a workable form of transnational incorporation along political, economic, financial and commercial lines (social and cultural integration is notoriously slower to realize), as it contemplates extending its influence eastwards towards its former adversaries beyond the Iron Curtain. As Europe looks to itself and to the East, the time seems ripe for European americanists (and for other international americanists as well) to reexamine “American internationalism,” especially as it is promoted by the American Studies community in the United States, by the ASA and by other organizations (e.g. the Organization of American Historians (OAH) which has also embraced the cause of internationalism), and by individual scholars. These efforts should continue and be encouraged – but they should not be sheltered from criticism whenever necessary. For there is nothing inherently good, uplifting or progressive about internationalism. Some versions of it, Bruce Robbins has shown, are even politically suspect. Instead of promoting a view of internationalism as constituting an inherent shift away from the traditionally

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<sup>2</sup> The main players in the European Union, France and Germany, have themselves been making repeated openings to economic giants like Japan and China, thus explicitly acknowledging the displacement of economic power that has accompanied the decentering of the US that Benjamin Lee describes.

nationalist focus of American Studies, as most U.S. americanists do, internationalism should itself be turned into a subject for *critical* scrutiny by the recipients of internationalist efforts, namely international americanists themselves. I recognize the difficulty of the task (one does not gladly bite the hand that feeds one) and the resistance historically built into the discipline (no matter how much effort and good will is expended on the job, the focus of American Studies is likely to remain the study of America – all the more so abroad; to put it crudely, we are stuck with the nation-state as the motor of the discipline) but let me make the following suggestions to European americanists who share with me a concern for the way they are represented by the proponents of internationalism in the U.S., and who wish instead to represent themselves as European/international americanists to themselves and to their U.S. counterparts.

What I am proposing, quite simply, is that European americanists remember the origins of their discipline in the late 1940s and rededicate themselves to what was then one of its incidental tasks: the reconstruction of Europe via the fostering of personal or institutional ties enabled by the transnational study of the United States. The situation we are facing in the 1990s resembles that of the late 1940s insofar as Europe is (yet again) reconstructing itself, although this time around it, together with the European Association of American Studies (EAAS), is looking east rather than west (e.g. the newly admitted national associations of Greece and Turkey). I have in mind, in short, a shift of vision of the sort Rob Kroes advocates in the piece I mentioned earlier: “Thus, one important role that EAAS has played in Europe has been precisely in redirecting the gaze of American Studies scholars in Europe, making them aware of work done by others in Europe, across national borders, weaving them into the larger texture of a meaningful community of European scholars” (Kroes, 4.). Though I part company with Kroes, for reasons I have sketched out above, on the desirability of “conquer[ing] the center,” the cultivation of a European gaze, freed from the anxiety of American influence and scholarly legitimation, would be a positive step towards imagining ourselves as a community of scholars participating, in a modest way, in the creation of a transnational Europe. Let me hasten to add, though, that our vision as international americanists is by necessity bound to remain bifocal, in the same way as our cultural, linguistic and scholarly localizations themselves are also, in most cases, necessarily double as we shuttle back and forth, in print, person or spirit, between the U.S. and wherever and whatever “home” or “abroad” happen to be. An exclusively self-centered redirecting of the americanist gaze towards Europe,

which is not what Rob Kroes has in mind anyway, would be as undesirable as the very American centeredness it meant to counter.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly, then, internationalism is not only a concern for American Studies in the United States. European American Studies (another oxymoron?) is going international as well as it expands eastwards. This eastward incorporative move, which is paralleled by Europe's own economic and political extension to the east, begs the question of what "Europe" and "European American Studies" might mean in this enlarged context. Is Turkey, for example, part of Europe? If so, what conceptions of "Europe" underwrite such incorporations? As the U.S. redefines its post-Cold War role with a view to its own interests, and as Europe in turn contemplates incorporations of its own, can European americanists, who are positioned, like most of their international colleagues, at the juncture between America's internationalization of itself and of knowledge about itself (they consume and teach "America" at a distance) unquestioningly celebrate the new internationalism, be it that of the ASA or of the EAAS? After all, as an ironist cannot help notice, the incorporation of Greek and Turkish americanists by EAAS is happening almost exactly fifty years after both Greece and Turkey became the cornerstone of the Truman Doctrine. The Cold War may be over but the legacy of its double geopolitical logic of containment and incorporation is very much with us still.

Because internationalism is an acquired idiom which, like English, international americanists have been practicing for some time, they are well equipped to contribute critically to the debate about current efforts to

<sup>3</sup> We are in need of a comprehensive history of American Studies in Europe that would go beyond, and integrate, the many existing accounts of particular national situations of the sort that can be found in the pages of *American Studies International*. Several such accounts of the rise of American Studies in the United States exist, from Tremaine McDowell's groundbreaking *American Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948) to David R. Shumway's *Creating American Civilization: A Genealogy of American Literature as an Academic Discipline* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). For Europe, the last comprehensive effort, by Sigmund Skaard, goes back to the 1950s. We also need accounts that explore the convergence during the Cold War between American cultural diplomacy and foreign policy, and that analyze how this convergence affected the development of American Studies. See for example Reinhold Wagnleitner's *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994) whose detailed account of the mechanisms of American influence and whose findings extend beyond the case of Austria, though it only deals in passing with American Studies. See also my "Les Etudes américaines en Europe, modèle et conquête." *L'Amérique comme modèle, l'Amérique sans modèle*. Ed. Jacques Portes. Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1993. 165-174; and "After the Cold War: Region, Nation and World in American Studies." 'writing' Nation and 'Writing' Region in America. Eds. Theo D'Haen and Hans Bertens. Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1996. 73-81.

internationalize the study of the United States and about the place of the U.S. in the post-Cold War world. They can do so by situating the debate within the history of the exportation of the discipline. For them to address critically the internationalization of American Studies is a step towards writing that history. It is also a step towards ensuring that the second phase in the development of their discipline, the new international impetus given by the disappearance of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, address the global realities of the 1990s of which Europe and the United States, among others, are inextricably part.

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