Introduction: Across the Americas

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Late into the first decade of the twenty-first century, we are witnesses to, indeed participants in, a more profound sense of global connection and a more acute experience of national and regional division than world history has perhaps ever presented. Accelerated migrations of goods and peoples proceed alongside the execution of regional and imperial wars and deepened international and intranational inequalities. These are the paradoxes of globalization and empire at our front door, at every world citizen's door. It seems that political and academic inquiries into the nature of distinct global communities and into what constitutes historical ruptures and continuities are all in some basic way concerned with how, analytically, we will work out the apparent contradictions of connection and division.

Twinned imperatives, to contend with contemporary globalization's intensity and to understand globality's historical depth, shape any exploration of nation and empire. Locating such efforts in the geographical and imaginative possibilities of *region* is one way to introduce important questions of time and space into deeply politicized debates about how nation-states and their peoples

relate to one another. The Americas, as a political, economic, social, and spatial formation not of recent origin, animate global paradoxes in a number of powerful ways.[1] From the perspective of the United States, we look out into a fog of ironies. Latino Americans are now the nation's largest ethnic minority, and many estimate that by 2020, a full 20 percent of the U.S. population will be Latino. Latino majorities already exist in a number of southwestern cities and will increase regardless of attempts to stem that tide with new immigration regulations. Importantly, these populations are extraordinarily heterogeneous: they comprise U.S. citizens over more than one generation, children of documented and undocumented migrants, and those migrants themselves, from Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean, from a range of class backgrounds. The population as a whole defies attempts to make political generalizations and confounds the use of established models for inclusion (or exclusion). These demographic shifts have fashioned a broad and renewed public questioning about the nature of belonging and citizenship. The border, always a vexed topic in national imaginings and territorial stakes, acquires the status of anxious preoccupation for all of us. How can it be crossed, how is it patrolled, how has it become a site of racial anxiety in the "war on terror," how does it matter?

The border between the United States and Latin America — most seriously there, and so frequently transgressed — demands our attention at the time when other borders, arguably, are being broken down. This border's constitution gives us a window onto the Americas that we seek to explore in this book. Latino political power in the United States, fresh fruit on U.S. dinner tables in the middle of January: today's Americas are quotidian realities. But the Americas have long existed through connections of politics and culture dating back several centuries, and especially marked in the last hundred years. The question, of course, is how to define the Americas. On the one hand, policymakers tout the "free market" and hold up trade alliances and other forms of cooperation between the United States and Latin America, all to boost the Americas as a superior instance of globalization's production and consumption circuits. On the other, there is the distinctly regional flavor of trade and cultural agreements positioned against the United States, between Brazil and Chile, through Central America, and developing new possibilities of Pacific flows. And as we write, Latin America boasts a bevy of left-leaning political leaders — Luiz Ignácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, Nestor Kirchner of Argentina, Michelle Bachelet of Chile, Evo Morales of Bolivia — with others in the wings, whose programs revive, in-

deed rely on, Latin American cooperation in the face of U.S. desires to dominate the hemisphere. The end to the Washington consensus on Latin America (and a particular vision of the Americas) resounds in Hugo Chavez's offering cut-rate heating oil to poor communities in the northeastern United States, not to mention his enduring alliance with Cuba's Fidel Castro.

Many groups, and many interests, then, lay claim to the Americas and increasingly seek to derive social, economic, or political meaning from the regional formation that crosses so many divides yet leaves others intact. With this collection of essays, we willingly join that race. As humanistic scholars based in the United States academy, we suggest that now, more than ever, it seems urgent for scholars here to offer vigorous critiques of how regional and national categories of difference and dichotomy are politically generated. Inevitably, this is a question, we assert, about the global politics of disciplines and regions. It is in the fertile ground of such an inquiry that our own collaboration—of scholars, colleagues, and friends from, as it were, different sides of the aisle, U.S. American studies and Latin American studies, and also anthropology and history—has taken shape.

Recent geopolitical events that express connections, divisions, and flows do give the contradictions of the Americas a dramatic shape and content. But the existence of Guantanamo—within Cuba geographically, but maintained by the United States militarily—or Colombia's export of flowers and Chile's providing grapes to the United States might be seen less as specifically iconic of contemporary globalization, and more as terrifying reminders of banana republics: political-economic arrangements that spawned horrific violence and disenfranchisement for a range of workers and citizens. So this book emerges from a sense of the contemporary that is deeply steeped in the past. More precisely, it is the result of our efforts to debate the newness of today's global crisis alongside the limits and possibilities of how the academy organizes world regions and produces historical, literary, and ethnographic knowledge about such places. Our conversation first took formal shape in a special issue of the *Radical History Review* in which we proposed that the topic of the Americas might provide a space for rethinking histories of imperialism, nation, and area while at the same time outlining the full necessity of interdisciplinary ways of thinking.[2] In the present volume, we elaborate such ideas much further, suggesting how the Americas might constitute a new interdisciplinary field. This introduction aspires to provide a theoretical road map for thinking about where such an endeavor might take us, about what questions and tools are implied in such work,

as well as about the multiple traditions on which an interdisciplinary Americas scholarship must rest and build. The chapters that follow, in turn, each in some way engage with a central aspect of the larger, ongoing challenge that *Imagining Our Americas* invites.

Like many other transnational projects—from those stressing geopolitical cooperation to those seeking greater cultural integration among societies and nations in the continental mass that extends from southern Chile and Argentina to northern Canada—we find in José Martí's seminal essay "Our America" (1891) special inspiration for collecting exciting new work highlighting the cultural and political crossings of the term "the Americas" and the experiences of living and thinking in and through the region of the Americas. The figure of Martí has come to serve as a kind of shorthand for a formation that integrates "Latin America" and "the United States." And because Martí was a radical Cuban voice for national independence and an opponent of U.S. hemispheric domination, he can animate a version of union that is more inherently anti-imperialist and critical of capitalist development than "the Americas" one finds in neoliberal tracts of international relations and U.S. foreign policy manuals.

When Martí wrote, "The scorn of our formidable neighbor, who does not know us, is the greatest danger for our America; and it is imperative that our neighbor know us, and know us soon, so she shall not scorn us, for the day of the visit is at hand,"[3] he conjured up an impending imperial confrontation that would transform the political (and social) development of what were at that time the young republics (and enduring colonies) descended from Iberian empires. Of course he was right, in a more profound way than he could recognize at the time; North American invasions of, and interventions in, Latin America and the Caribbean did indeed soon come to pass and became routinized as a feature of life in the region. The pursuit of knowledge of the other, from the standpoint of the United States, took various forms, ranging from the development of anthropological obsessions in the early twentieth century to the initiation of formal "areas" of study in post-1940s Cold War educational programs. From and through Latin America, the United States was comprehended through intimate forms of contact, both exploitative and generative. Yet Martí's anxiety that the neighbors do not really "know" one another still resonates, as irreconcilable political divides between North and South obscure the persistent crossings that define this, as any, regional formation. The challenge, then, for this project is to at once deeply probe the cultural and political nature of an imbricated Americas, and at the same time remain attuned to the broader context that has produced hostilities, inequality, and acute division.

During a time of reinvigorated U.S. militarism abroad, most notable today in Iraq and Afghanistan, we suggest that it does scholars some good to dwell on the particulars of alternative paradigms, of a transnational relationship that on the one hand has been profoundly structured by imperialism and on the other has given rise to political and cultural formations that may undermine the calcified boundaries between nation-states, those formations that are the ironic consequences of the operations of that imperialism. This is to say, in an age where the oppositions between East and West (which the late Edward Said so compellingly explained through his model of "Orientalism") are acquiring renewed energy in the U.S. popular and political imagination and yet being relegated to a safe distance away from our shores, it is more crucial than ever to examine the structuring dilemmas of imperial relationships that constitute the "front" and "back" yards of the Americas. These categories, elaborated most fully through U.S. Cold War projects in Latin America, prefigured and now help sustain the dichotomies of modern versus backward, democracy versus authoritarianism, and freedom versus terrorism at work in the United States' current "Middle East crisis."[4]

How, precisely, might we do the work of thinking across the nation, to construct a politically and intellectually rigorous formation of the Americas? In fact there are three subquestions here, one about newly conceiving objects of study, a second about devising theoretical maps, and a third about the materials that are rendered in such moves. That multifaceted inquiry forms the heart of this collection of essays, which we suggest represent important new directions in a field that we come to from different perspectives. As scholars who are each situated in Latin American studies and U.S. American studies, we have seen the boundaries of our methods and topics break down. In some respects, the relief is to be found not simply in some kind of ideal middle ground, some inclusive Americas that encompasses North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean, but in the very maneuvers that make it possible to conceive of any formation that acknowledges the necessary transnational dynamics that create it and the national forces that militate against it. That formation, of region or area, must also recognize its limits: surely the Philippines and Hawaii might, and should, be considered part of the Americas, but wherein the extensions of the Pacific and the Atlantic worlds?

This idea of the Americas, then, as a transnational and transregional formation defined across the notion of nation-states as well as against the central organizing principle of a North-South dichotomy, does more than reproduce the bounded space of area studies shaped by the Cold War. While

perhaps perversely the Americas does take *area* as its object, in this rendition, it works to conceive of nation and region in new and politicized ways, to resist the facile blending of distinct areas of the world that underlies the much-touted agreements of economic globalization. We are interested not so much in "comparative history"—the side-by-side examination of different "countries"—but in the experiences, imaginaries, and histories of interaction. These spaces of dialogue, linkage, conflict, domination, and resistance take shape across, or sometimes outside, the confines of national and regional borders and sensibilities and therefore allow for new epistemologies. Shared problematics, then, rather than a common geography, colonizing power, or language, might define an "Americas" inquiry that radically de-privileges the never fully inclusive Anglo-Iberian axis around which area studies currently constructs American "regions."

In challenging the analytical primacy of the nation, thinking across the Americas illuminates how many of the most significant social formations that mark the Americas' various regions and states were profoundly nonnational in character: diverse and complex indigenous societies, European conquest and colonization, African slavery, Enlightenment-based independence movements and republic-building projects, mass (im)migrations, populist welfare states, Cold War political cultures, neoliberal economies, to name but a few. Our goal is not to declare historical differences—or the power of nation-states in creating these differences—irrelevant; nor do we simply compel commonalities. Rather, we propose the need to think about how social formations such as colonization or migration are propelled by historical forces beyond the nation, as well as how they take their distinct shapes within transnational and transregional processes. Our work to develop a concept of the Americas, then, is to wrestle seriously with the importance of the global for contemporary scholarship that is historical at its very core.

Field Paradigms

The intervention of *Imagining Our Americas*, to simultaneously critique the boundary effects (not to mention political repercussions) of area studies topics and reimagine the space of a "region," emerges from a variety of specific institutional locales, each with its own complicated, and often troubled, history. We do not claim either to be the first to utilize the Americas as an object of inquiry or to be doing such work in a vacuum.[5] Americas work in the humanities and more humanistic social sciences has pushed beyond a concern with the

trade and formal concerns of a geopolitical formation to consider literary cultures and transnational connections that live beyond the nation-state. But that work, frankly, often evolves from one side of the border, to reach into an Other space without a sustained mastery of multiple locales. What would it mean to strive for a concept of the Americas that considers the United States and Latin America, Canada and the Caribbean, along with their histories, cultures, and political formations, to be similarly generative and influential, in a sort of *relation*? Even beginning to answer that question entails the elaboration of a more careful history of the components of the dialogue.

First we must necessarily engage with the scholarly paradigms of Latin American studies and U.S. American studies. Cold War formations both, these two fields emerged at a moment when the United States could not help but understand itself as embedded in a broader world of cultural crossings, if on a superior footing. Annexed to the specter of communism was the hypermodern sensibility of progress: cultural, political, and economic. Thus the origins of U.S. American studies are not separate from the nation-state's elaboration of curricula and scholarship on "Western civilization," an entity of purportedly unique human achievement that would be a model for aspiring non-NATO countries. In turn, Latin American studies began as an initiative to measure Latin America's capacity for U.S.-style capitalist democracy and military trustworthiness. It is worth remembering, though, that such modernization paradigms were not imagined by their creators as means to invade peoples around the world, however foundational many such paradigms were for the very real and widespread forms of oppression perpetrated by U.S. foreign policy. Rather, the disciplines of area studies were born as liberal solutions to global difference and inequality, and they aspired to shape the "developing world" in an altruistic manner. The ambitions and effects of area studies, as was true of all U.S. Cold War projects, varied hugely around the world, and it may be difficult to compare area studies in Latin America, say, and Asia, without deep contextualization and qualification.[6] Yet if the work that emerged under the rubric of area studies had productive consequences, they lay in the proliferation of deep knowledges about places that had been understudied within the U.S. academy. This is to say that the richness of the field of Latin American studies results directly from U.S. postwar aspirations for hemispheric dominance and the awareness that this required knowing one's neighbors much better. U.S. American studies, too, developed closely with the ideological imperatives of building and maintaining U.S. political and cultural hegemony.[7]

Neither U.S. American studies nor Latin American studies was ever a mere

tool of empire. Like the broader Cold War from which they emerged, area studies were politically contested and generated radical traditions that profoundly critiqued forms of domination. It was precisely U.S. American studies' self-assigned responsibility to map the specificity of cultural traditions in the United States that, in the aftermath of the social movements of the 1960s, helped make the field a hospitable space to work through pathbreaking paradigms for thinking about difference and inequality, including ethnic studies, feminist and queer theory, and Marxist-oriented cultural studies. But even earlier, scholars in U.S. American studies came to questions of "exceptionalism" in not always politically predictable ways. So too, in Latin American studies, the forced generalizations about what Latin America shared and how it differed from Europe and the United States often intentionally critiqued legacies of colonialism and imperialism, several decades before the contemporary contemplation of the "transnational." Many such critiques hailed from intellectual circles within the Latin American Left, where, for example, area studies categories energized dependency theory's famous indictment of Latin America's systematic underdevelopment by the developed world. And in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution, "Latin America as the Third World" imagined an international solidarity and moral alternative distinct from either superpower. While such paradigms flatly rejected the proposition that the United States might provide a model for Latin America's advance, they retained the area studies notion of Latin America's regional specificity as well as the fantasy of national modernization. Such homegrown reformulations of the Latin American, in turn, inspired within U.S. academic circles an outpouring of scholarship explicitly aligned with Latin American national-revolutionary struggles or, at the least, strongly sympathetic to Latin American aspirations for political, economic, and cultural sovereignty. This last incarnation of Latin American studies has been particularly long-lived, producing an array of highly nuanced scholarship that privileges the idea that local and national histories unfold within wider hemispheric or international matrices of inequality, conflict, and contingent alliance.

So we have at this historical moment the benefit of over fifty years of knowledge about areas and fields, processed within debates about the politics of the global. Yet regardless of the diverse and sometimes oppositional ends for which area studies' arguments could be mobilized, their constitution of Latin America and the United States as historically juxtaposed had the effect of homogenizing and essentializing the internal dynamics of each area in relation to the other. In the case of U.S. American studies, this reinforced the tendency to look

at processes taking place only within the borders of the United States (or its eventual borders). Even the most sophisticated examinations of difference and power—the many superb U.S. American histories of race, gender, or labor, for example—have too frequently been narrated as implicitly unique to the U.S. American experience or have unfolded in ways that only obliquely reference how social relations in the United States were connected to processes of dominance and exchange abroad. Latin American studies has suffered from somewhat the opposite problem. On the one hand, it has strained to identify the unique historical "traditions" that justify membership within the term "Latin"; and at the same time, the field has had difficulty discussing Latin American difference in ways that avoid implications of imitation or deviation from North Atlantic models. Like U.S. American studies, Latin American studies has been concerned with establishing narratives of national experience—what is specific to Chile, Mexico, or Cuba—but its paradigms have overwhelmingly focused on questions of political economy and national political culture, themes that talk back to enduring accusations of underdevelopment. In contrast to U.S. American studies, Latin American studies less often prioritized dynamics of racial, gender, or sexual difference except in anthropological studies of "the ethnic"—indigenous and African practices that, almost by definition, seemed outside or marginal to histories of "the nation." Despite an outpouring of Latin Americanist feminist scholarship over the last two decades, gender and sexuality are only just now becoming widely accepted as indispensable to all social analysis.

Many differences between U.S. American studies' and Latin American studies' discussions of the nation emerge from the internal logic of area studies and the geopolitics that produced such categories. At times, Latin American studies' greater emphasis on sketching a more singular national experience flowed directly from the way the Cold War (and U.S. and European policy before 1945) deeply compromised the sovereignty of Latin American states, calling into question their national fitness. U.S. American studies never needed to first defend the existence of the United States as a nation, even if the discipline was passionately critiquing the inequalities and exclusions on which such a concept was based. Given how infrequently assumptions of national exceptionalism are examined in many works of U.S. American studies, one could argue that many explorations of multicultural difference actually rely on an implied goal of eventual inclusion in U.S. national formations.

A productive tension might also exist between studies of "region" in Latin America and studies of "national space" in the United States, different focuses

that in part reflect unequal and interconnected relationships to modernity. Not that Latin America has been only partially modern and the United States more fully so, but that—at least since the mid-nineteenth century—the modernity of many Latin American countries has been constituted partly through a denial of national autonomy, itself related to the way U.S. self-understandings of national autonomy and consequent modernity have been premised on ever-growing dominion within "its" hemisphere. More immediately, since the Cold War, these different and related trajectories of modernity have shaped area studies through the impact of the diverse social movements emerging from Latin America and the United States. In the United States, struggles for civil rights or against particular foreign policies always spoke most directly to issues of citizen empowerment, equality, and diversity within an already given nation. In Latin America, by contrast, leftist revolutionary struggles and pro-democracy movements grappled with how to take over (or take back) nation-states and wrest more economic control from "outsiders." We might say that the consequent result of these differences is that, within Latin American studies circles, modernist conceptualizations of state formation and national liberation have had a special urgency that they have often lacked in U.S. American studies, where the object of study was far less frequently "the state" or "national liberation," even when one was writing critically about "the nation."

It is also true that the solidarities forged between scholars and social movements in Latin America and Latin American studies articulated critical pan-regionalisms that offered a different set of economic, political, and cultural possibilities than the repressive imagined communities of the U.S. nation. The pan–Latin Americanism that area studies perhaps unwittingly bolstered, then, was of a politically charged nature and was an intellectual formation that disputed the hegemony of a variety of reactionary political projects. Ironically, it may have been in the cultural consequences of a Cold War–originated Latin American studies that one could find the logic of all sorts of challenges. These insights should urge us to resist the temptation to flatten the multiple trajectories of area studies into a singular, coherent project of rule. Likewise, we would do well to avoid collapsing the differences between all renditions of area studies, such as those in and of South Asia, East Asia, or Africa. And, finally and straightforwardly, it seems crucial to acknowledge that a great deal of what we in the U.S. academy know about Latin America is the consequence of area studies. It seems necessary to say both that area studies has too often falsely presented language or quasi-ethnographic detail as representative of bounded national cultures *and* that area studies projects have generated contestations

that in turn produced different frameworks and understandings that could no longer remain invisible.[8]

Two relatively recent developments in U.S. American studies also have some bearing on these questions. The first is the emphasis within the field (and its institutions) on "difference." U.S. American studies has long been extremely sympathetic to, and perhaps even annexing of, developments in African American studies, Chicano and Latino studies, and Asian American studies, each of which has interrogated the ethnicized and racialized cultures that make up the nation-state. So too, feminist studies' and queer theory's critiques of the gendered and sexualized politics shaping national subjectivity and other communities have found a comfortable perch in U.S. American studies. Diversity, more generally, then, has not been seen as antithetical to the "America" that the field of U.S. American studies constructed; very much to the contrary. This cuts two ways, opening up inquiry and perhaps capturing it within familiar narratives of "America" that elide fracturing conflicts of the nation-state. Turning a skeptical eye to that compatibility, of nation and difference, that is surprisingly nonexistent within more traditional disciplinary spaces, we might ask whether accounting for difference within the U.S. American nation has done little more than prop up the nation, affirm its mythologies of itself, and project unity in the face of extraordinary incoherence.[9] Many feminist and queer scholars, too, in their work on gender and sexuality, have addressed how gender and sexuality reveal the porousness of national borders and the exclusions of citizenship. The model of ethnic, gendered, and sexualized culture should stand in a critical relationship to the U.S. American nation, not simply as an outgrowth or a composite part of the whole.

There have been more recent critiques of "America" within U.S. American studies that operate exclusively under the sign of the transnational.[10] In particular, there is a move to understand the social formations of migrants and other racialized peoples across multiple nation-states and regions. This has inspired scholars to resituate America in a global framework, in which other nations or imperial projects play a role in the U.S. national-cultural space. Transnational formation has also enabled a fuller discussion of U.S. empire within U.S. American studies, to much good effect, including the 1993 collection *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, edited by Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease.[11] And more recently there has been an efflorescence of works that take the charge of that collection, to integrate questions of empire into a study of the nation, seriously.[12]

Yet even throughout that important new work in U.S. American studies there

is a glaring absence of the appearance and thick description of other places in the world, not just as specters or victimized objects but as actors, producers, and sources within transnational circuitry.[13] Recent books on empire may do the important work of explaining in detail the role of the United States in the world, but they do so, often, without the cultural or linguistic fluency of those acted-upon sites that would help us understand the depth of impact and the possibilities for resistance.[14] We must ask here whether U.S. American studies can truly understand the imbrication of cultures that transnational exchanges produce, without the fine detail of national formations other than those of the United States. Even more to the point, an interconnected world produces more than the national formations themselves; it produces cultural, political, and social encounter that contains the possibility of something new. This is to say that our interest here in this book is not simply to juxtapose work from U.S. American studies and Latin American studies, nor is it to compare and contrast scholarship, but to develop a theoretical paradigm that can produce an argument about the relationship of areas of the world and the knowledges produced in, through, and out of them. If this project uses a vocabulary of encounter that may rehearse a sense of the Americas and Europe as embodying contrasting visions of time and space, it also reinscribes it in more dynamic global historical formations, such that no site can be wholly untouched by the other.[15]

Many of the ongoing differences between U.S. American studies and Latin American studies flow from the way these fields have differently responded to the vibrant critiques of modernist paradigms launched since the early 1980s by poststructuralist and postcolonial theories. We might say that whereas U.S. American studies more readily accommodated poststructuralism's rejection of the unified subject and postcolonialism's unveiling of Enlightenment conceptual binaries, Latin American studies was initially more resistant to such ideas, or at least more selective about how they were used. U.S. American studies, because of its interest in questions of culture and the imaginary, became a particularly receptive place for the new interdiscipline of "cultural studies" — a field with origins in Britain, in the Marxist traditions of the Birmingham school, and in the United States with particular affinities to literature. Imported debates about social theory, the place of ethnic and racial formation in challenging "national culture," and the role of the popular in developing new ideas about the social, as well as constructing audiences to experience the traffic in intellectual and political ideas across the borders of the ivory tower, inspired in U.S. American studies a sense of self-critique and self-reflection and have in turn provided

a model for recent transnational academic developments—a model that is not unrelated to trends toward studying empire and transnational cultures within U.S. American studies.[16] That model's structure might be resurrected here, too, for our own inquiry that seeks to produce intellectual and political exchanges among many kinds of "Americanists."

This is not to suggest that Latin American studies was entirely opposed to, or outside, the intellectual agenda set by the poststructuralist-postcolonial move. On the contrary, recent histories of Latin American *mestizaje* and racial hybridity, diaspora and migration, gender and sexuality, as well as a new attention to the transnational nature of Latin American political and popular culture, all speak to the ways that Latin American studies as area studies has been transformed in response to these newer paradigms.[17] Certain disciplines, such as literature and women's studies, engaged with poststructuralist-postcolonialist concepts from the beginning.[18] So too did particular national academic circles; for example, intellectuals in Brazil and Argentina "discovered" Foucault and Lacan at the same moment as their counterparts in U.S. American studies. Nonetheless it is difficult to resist the notion that Latin American studies as a whole has lagged in its consideration of issues of heterogeneity, representation, exclusions, discursive power, and the inherent instability of the nation. Even a cursory glance at the comparative offerings of recent meetings of the Latin American Studies Association and the American Studies Association reveals a significant, if narrowing, divergence precisely along these lines. Yet the very notion of "lag" points to an epistemological politics within U.S. American studies that many Latin Americanists have found worrisome: namely, they asked, was it not peculiar that "nation" could be jettisoned as an object of privileged study in U.S. American (and European) circles at precisely the moment when the achievement of greater sovereignty vis-à-vis the United States and Europe seemed on the horizon, if not at hand, among former colonies and "spheres of influence" elsewhere in the world? The post–Cold War geopolitics of permeable national markets under the benign umbrella of U.S. neoliberalism and military supremacy made this all the more troubling. But adding to the confusion was the fact that many postcolonialist paradigms, in particular, were being formulated largely within progressive circles, often by people of color or so-called "third world intellectuals in the first world," who fully shared the staunch criticism leveled by many within Latin American studies against colonialism and imperialism. So surely the poststructuralist move was something other than a plot to defang Latin Americanist critiques of political and eco-

nomic inequality. But then why did politically like-minded folks appear to be on such opposite conceptual sides?

One debate that generated particular mutual suspicion was the discussion over the future place of Marx. Poststructuralism had especially criticized Marxism for its rigid subordination of analytical narratives to the story of class within capitalism and for its failure to satisfactorily consider culture and language as fundamental and independent apparatuses of power. In its most polemical stance, poststructuralism tended to suggest that Marxism—as a body of thought steeped in Enlightenment notions of linear progress and unified subjectivities—might be nonrecuperable for scholarly and political projects aimed at overthrowing universalist categories. The response to such a proposition (including unfair caricatures of the proposition) by many within Latin American studies was a mixture of bewilderment and hostility. Indeed, a great deal was at stake in calling Marxism, and materialist frameworks more broadly, into question. After all, Marxist theory of various strains had long provided some of the most compelling conceptual frameworks in Latin American studies and had been central to Latin American studies' theoretical radicalism and oppositional politics.[19] Dependency theory, as well as the far more nuanced histories of colonialism and imperialism that followed, drew in creative ways from Marxian notions of capitalism as a world-historical process and the centrality of colonies or hinterlands to capitalist profit.[20] Of equal importance were Marxian notions of "class" as a relationship between human divisions of labor, and of "the state" as a site of political struggle among classes, or among momentary coalitions of classes.[21]

But Marxist-oriented Latin American studies have not always ignored culture. On the contrary, Marxist paradigms were prevalent in much of the pioneering work by anthropologists on indigenous societies and urban migration,[22] while the models provided by E. P. Thompson and other British Marxists for writing "history from below" inspired a generation of labor history that emphasized the everyday activities and the worldviews of peasants, slaves, and workers.[23] Since the mid-1980s, the revival of Antonio Gramsci's writing on hegemony has generated a virtual explosion of Latin Americanist scholarship on labor, popular culture, and state formation.[24] As was true of Gramsci's appeal to other intellectual circles—in particular, South Asian subaltern studies and British cultural studies—a focus on the relationship between state power and the cultural manufacture of consent, and its contestation, seemed especially helpful to scholars who were rethinking why so often "the masses" seemed to

support authoritarian projects that seemed counter to "their interests." More fundamentally, the turn to history from below and the study of cultural hegemony generated a radical revision of orthodox Marxist paradigms. In particular, the political lives of peasants (as distinct from industrial workers) moved to center stage, and considerations of capitalist imperialism became more nuanced accounts of simultaneously overlapping and conflicting orientations of foreign and national business interests and governments.[25] The scholarship of the contributors to the volume *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.–Latin American Relations*, edited by Gilbert Joseph, Catherine LeGrand, and Ricardo Salvatore, critically revised presumptions about U.S. cultural and economic control in Latin America and, along with the work of other scholars, gestured strongly toward the need for transnational histories that took Latin American influence on U.S. actors seriously.[26] There has also been an increasing attention by Latin Americanists to social and cultural formations that lie outside, or are opposed to, the arena of national political economy. Questions about indigenous and peasant resistance to national independence movements and revolutionary struggles as something other than "reactionary" became increasingly urgent.[27]

Not coincidentally, Latin American studies has more recently produced its own contributions to postcolonial and subaltern studies.[28] Innovative works in colonial history and literature have emphasized the importance of Enlightenment binaries and fantasies to the politics of possession.[29] And various writers took on some of these questions textually, and through a variety of cultural formations.[30] New studies in political culture have stressed the volatile heterogeneity of ideology and the limits of dominance.[31] Especially important work on transnational culture has taken on questions of consumption and hybridity: those that illuminate the very contradictions of the "global" network that constructs regional affiliations like the Americas. Néstor García Canclini's seminal text *Hybrid Cultures* has provided, if not a model, then certainly a language for understanding the postmodern cultural spaces where "first" and "third" worlds inevitably meet.[32] However, the extent to which Canclini's discussion of hybridity has been widely cited may also obscure the powerful cautionary notes that this and all his works have sounded about romanticizing cultural work that is embedded in the specific inequalities of late capitalism, and the ways that Latin American autonomy threatens to become compromised in the process. In many ways, this very problem is one that is central to any paradigm like that of the Americas that seeks to build a field of cooperation, for the particulari-

ties and, especially, the power dynamics threaten to become flattened out. The interests of a United States that makes claims to a more expansive "America" and an "America" that José Martí posed as a bulwark against North American imperialism may not be so easily massaged into a harmonious dialogue. The disconnect between those Americas must underwrite any claims, most of all our own, to organize solidaristic forms of knowledge.[33]

Theorizing the Global

Imagining Our Americas builds on, and also departs from, a variety of conversations that have sought to critically situate paradigms of the nation-state and area studies "regions." In retheorizing continental formation, we can stress the interconnected nature of North and South power relations. Historical understandings of the United States must be shaped by careful studies of empire, and Latin America may be seen, too, to impact the United States. Borderland studies, which has powerfully interrogated the fluid encounters and identities delineating the spaces between Mexico and the United States, in particular, is one such model for thinking through the place of the Latin American in the United States.[34] But we might push this still further, beyond the figure of "the Latino" or "the immigrant," to address even wider zones of dialogue. How, for instance, did the Haitian Revolution shape U.S. or Canadian political culture, or how did notions of racial hybridity officially promoted in Brazil and Mexico challenge racial formations to the North? Perhaps, in these moves, we can not only reverse the top-down view of imperialism as a one-way process of North-South domination but also construct the gaze from a number of standpoints. Here ethnic and feminist studies have much more to add than simply proposing new topics for the mix. These interdisciplinary projects have posited a set of subjectivities around "difference" that make all overarching frameworks—nation, region, empire—much more porous, contested, and in the process of becoming constituted. As such, the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean, not to mention a range of geographical possibilities within, become formations rather than fixed entities. Latin American nations as well as the U.S. nation are thus built more through fractures (of race, class, gender, sexuality) than shared interests. To put one example bluntly: Latin America or its component nations can no longer inhabit the space of the "ethnic" but must be subjected to analyses of ethnic formation. Nor can the "Latino/Latina" stand in for all the complex dynamics of imperialism and the history of capitalist development that has made the "America" of the United States.

If one of the main impulses of an Americas paradigm is to see transnational processes of domination, another powerful ambition, political as well as historical, is to locate instances of transnational solidarity against those dominations. Histories of slave rebellion, indigenous resistance, labor radicalism, feminism, abolition, socialism, revolution, or anti-imperialist projects, for example, all gain enormously from analytical approaches that privilege transregional forces and influences across borders. Beyond stressing the internationalism or transnationalism of these solidarities, an Americas paradigm may also reveal how very American they often were—resistances and counterhegemonic projects that linked people with shared regional subjectivities vis-à-vis their opponents, for example, uprooted African slaves against European masters; American Creoles against Spanish rulers; or defenders of the Mexican, Cuban, and Nicaraguan revolutions against U.S. foreign policy.

And yet, while we widen the lens to view transnationality more fully, we remain aware of the various historical projects, of slavery, of state formation, of social movements, that have been articulated nationally. The nation-state and nationalism have shaped all forms of modern cultural and social life throughout the United States and Latin America just as they have around the world. How to reconcile that fact with other developments across national borders is a central dilemma for a range of interpretive moments, like that of the Americas. And, relatedly, alongside connections within and across the Americas there has been disjuncture. Whether the Americas, then, is a fragmented or integrated entity is a question that should be accorded some degree of flexibility. Thinking in terms of the Americas enables us to think across nation while also always referencing and investigating the specificity of the multiple nations that have given the Americas their distinct and changing forms. Indeed, understanding transnational processes of imperialism or of emancipatory struggle often demands attention to the nation as the concrete site, goal, or experience of such processes. Likewise, because "nations" are often the objects of imperial politics or emancipatory struggles, thinking in terms of nation helps keep postcolonial theories (and we could also say theories of the Americas) from becoming ahistorical or collapsing different dynamics into one another. There are reasons to distinguish between the more colonialist activities of the United States in Hawaii, the Philippines, or Puerto Rico and U.S. military and economic imperialism in the Southern Cone, not to mention European colonialism and U.S. imperialism.

Much of the recent literature on transnationalism has pointed to the fluid and mobile nature of cultural formations that have mediated increasingly inte-

grated capitalist markets and labor migrations. Especially important in this debate has been the recognition of how "local" and "global" dynamics thoroughly inform one another, as well as of how capitalist expansion and globalization generate new forms of difference and hybridity, rather than simple homogenization. But to a fault, this scholarship has overwhelmingly focused on the twentieth century (and the late twentieth century at that), unwittingly suggesting that transnational (or, more appropriately, transregional) dynamics were less relevant at earlier points in time. While not refuting the intensity of more recent global formations, we argue for a more historical sensibility—not only a consideration of earlier transregional or transnational connections, but also an interrogation of how arguments about the past are mobilized to underwrite theories about more contemporary moments.

Recent discussions in world history seem especially relevant here. Often located within the analytical domain of political economy, new work in world history has reinvigorated older materialist debates about the origins and expansion of capitalism and the centrality of European colonialism and imperialism to modernity.[35] Many such arguments, it is worth noting, drew partial inspiration from Latin Americanist dependency scholars such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso and André Gunder Frank, who helped shape the conceptual language for Immanuel Wallerstein's famous "world systems analysis" that posited global exploitative relations between "metropolitan cores" and "peripheries."[36] But more recent scholarship, especially that by historians of Asia and Africa, has worked to challenge the strong Eurocentrism of world history's central plot about the West's action on "the rest."[37] Kenneth Pomeranz's comparative work about the profound congruence between eighteenth-century China and England has radically upended the idea that industrialization and its spread were ever inevitably "European" phenomena.[38] This underscores the crucial challenge of exploring historical contingencies, conflicts, even accidents, and calls on us to question whose history stands as the norm. Dipesh Chakrabarty, too, rethinks colonial and postcolonial cultural formations through a decentering of European paradigms for thought and influence, turning to "translate" not only cultural or linguistic difference but varied (and often opposed) historical experiences of capitalism and modernity.[39] If Chakrabarty's conclusions betray that famous "linguistic turn," his concerns also reflect the Marxist underpinnings of South Asian subaltern studies, which we might conceive of as a militant area challenge to area studies paradigms.[40]

One can imagine similar reversals being helpful in any juxtaposition of

"Latin American" and "North American" histories. This is not an invitation to utopian speculation but an insistence that we formulate questions that scrutinize the winner's terms and not begin the story at its end. Revisiting Wallerstein's notion of world system through a postcolonialist lens, Walter Mignolo argues that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century colonialism in the Americas (especially by Spain and Portugal) provided the genesis for Western modernity, and that the Americas were imagined as Europe's extension rather than as a place of radical alterity.[41] It is only with the formation of national republics, amid Iberia's decline as a world power, that "Latin America" comes to inhabit a more ambiguous place vis-à-vis "the West"—not as Oriental Other but as stepchild and malformed version of its Anglophone sibling to the north. The Americas, then, offer something different to postcolonial narratives of the colonizing West and its colonized Other; historical and regional-local specificity can revise theoretical frameworks in important ways. A number of scholars, too, have emphasized the importance of granting particular agency and creativity to "subalterns," such as the indigenous, Creole, or slave, who did not emerge as victors in, or authors of, the story of the Latin American nation.[42]

Unorthodox reorderings of place and time have enabled many powerful critiques of colonialism and modernity. Paul Gilroy's seminal work on the now-paradigmatic black Atlantic, for example, constructed a new spatiality, in the words of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, a "rhizomatic" space of encounter. Here diaspora emerged as a formation to permit dialogue and conversation; there is disjuncture and difference, and yet a space for a collectivity to emerge.[43] But how striking that Gilroy should have elaborated a sensibility about the black Atlantic without drawing our attention to the crossings into and through Latin America, where the trade in African slaves was largest and most enduring. Partly this has to do with an emphasis on the Anglophone black diaspora, but the problem exposes the more general limits of the linguistic-based singularities of a variety of scholarly projects. We might ask, too, whether even the wonderful theoretical possibilities of a black diaspora structured by exchanges between the United States, Africa, and England would be interrogated and challenged by views from the south. Transnational blackness may, for example, have a different relationship to the state when we look at the case of Nicaragua in Edmund T. Gordon's work, where Creoleness was a relatively more empowered site for negotiating local identity.[44] The point here may be less about inclusion and expansiveness, and more about distinct maps of racial and ethnic formation that do not easily translate. And just as we cannot easily graft models of U.S.

ethnic-racial formation onto Brazil's mythical "racial democracy" or Mexico's "Cosmic Race," so too might we resist the temptation to recycle the categories of difference. It may be that thinking difference transnationally, through a paradigm of the Americas in which U.S. empire figures so prominently, would create both lasting connections among disenfranchised peoples as well as surprising renditions of mixture.

Interdisciplinary Americas

Our ambition to propose a body of work that moves across established boundaries of nation and region also necessarily strives to move across the borders of scholarly disciplines. We retain a belief in engaged disciplinary perspectives on the politics of economy, the everyday of ethnography, and the textuality of any given imaginary, and yet we argue that these can be interesting only if we conceive of what we do in new ways and commit ourselves to deeper inquiries into time, space, and meaning. Despite today's significant cross-pollination among disciplines—social history's debt to cultural anthropology and vice versa, literature's revitalization by critical theory, and the like—the allure of disciplinary work is precisely that it is disciplined, rigorously focused on questions of time (the past, the present, and the future), and spatially situated in a place, text, or community. In our thinking about the Americas, we insist on a notion of "the historical," not as a truth claim or background facts about specified places but as vital arguments about which pasts matter, what categories are employed to discuss the past, and how the past is mobilized in arguments about the present. The historical perspective that interests us, then, is discursive, representational, and lived, and its interdisciplinarity entails not merely a fusion of multiple disciplinary techniques but their use to interrogate how questions are asked and meanings are generated. The Americas as an interdisciplinary inquiry is at once integrated and made up of deeply dissonant parts and as such can be understood only through a theory that takes the constructed imaginary of a transnational space, and its national components, seriously. Just as the geography produced through the rubric of "the Americas" calls attention to the very formation of "nations" and "regions," so interdisciplinary epistemology emphasizes the intellectual forms in which knowledges of areas have been created.

Feminist and queer studies may offer particular lessons here, as they have managed to walk the fine line of the interdisciplinary, navigating critical conceptions of history as well as global-local tensions, with admirable finesse. This

is precisely because that work has *needed* to be theoretical, questioning the categories and how they have been constructed in hegemonic narrative, and political, dedicated to liberation on both personal and public levels.[45] And thus those paradigms help us think about transnational and world-historical processes in ways that speak directly to any project on the Americas. The centrality of gender and sexuality to European colonialism, not only as a metaphor for the politics of dominance and subordination but as concrete material organizations of power, including ideologies and practices of race, centrally sustains colonial projects both "within" Europe and "abroad." And much new scholarship has given substantial consideration to non-European and pre-Iberian conquest empires, which nicely cuts against the tendency to focus on "Western influence" or conflate "imperialism" with "European and U.S. expansion."

Importantly, too, the best of feminist and queer studies avoids essentialization by explicitly critiquing conceptualizations of "community," not only and especially "national communities" but also alternatives to the nation, including ethnic, religious, and diasporic communities. These too are structured by gender- and sexuality-based hierarchies and exclusions. As Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan noted in their edited collection on transnationalism and feminism, it is stunning that analyses of gender and sexuality have been almost entirely absent from many of the most celebrated scholarly examples of postcolonial cultural studies and globalization.[46] Such omission in world-historical projects has, as Ulrike Strasser observed, flowed partly from the tension between the meta-narratives of global paradigms and feminist and queer theories' long-standing criticism of "the big story" for rendering gendered and sexual subjectivities invisible, irrelevant, or at best secondary.[47] But it is precisely feminism's and queer theory's close attention to the local and specific that offers particular guidance for newly thinking about transnational and world dynamics. Following Gayatri Spivak's feminist reformulation of subaltern studies, we might see all subjectivities (individual or group) as perpetually relational and "irretrievably heterogeneous."[48] Similarly, we might embrace Grewal and Kaplan's notion of "scattered hegemonies" as a way to think across the transnational persistence, yet vast diversity and historical specificity, of gender and sexuality as sites of domination and resistance.

Inevitably our notion of an interdisciplinary Americas runs into the vexed issue of comparison: of nations, regions, literatures, languages, and, less literally but perhaps most importantly, ways of inhabiting the world. In the field of comparative literature there have been admirable attempts to use different lan-

guages and literatures alongside one another, to confront, contest, and compare one another, in a utopian manner. But as Rey Chow notes of these projects: "Because language as such tends to be viewed as a neutral fact, seldom is it pointed out in discussions of comparative literature that languages and cultures rarely enter the world stage and encounter one another on an equal footing."[49] Within the Americas that we put forward as an analytic, we face a similar problem, that despite the important goal of bringing cultures, social formations, and projects from Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America into contact, the relations of inequality make not only for varied access to a language that might be common but also for sensibilities that are at times deeply incompatible, untranslatable, as it were. Precisely because of the different political meanings of the nation across region, theoretical work on hybridity, the porousness of borders, and even the borderlands have uneven articulations across this formation we have produced as "the Americas."

In large part, our inquiry brings into sustained focus the dilemma of canons. This is to say that the historical events and documents, novels and other artifacts of the imaginary, and ethnographic moments and sociological "data" considered to make "Latin America" (or its countries) or the "United States" might be interrogated for both their representativeness and their explanatory power. Román de la Campa notes, quite importantly, that regional categories, most especially those of "other" places, can play a curious role in the construction of knowledge in the U.S. academy.[50] That tension may be addressed by what John Muthyala has proposed, for a broader view of the Americas, in "a critical pan-American localism that acknowledges the global dimensions of its contestatory and revisionary impulses."[51] Discovery, conquest, wars, social upheavals, then, all become necessarily more than nation-defining; their articulation to the global asks us to question local iterations of experience. The Iberian empires that have so defined Latin America cannot remain obscured from the historical narratives of the United States; cultural and political flows establish deeper dialogues between and among various sites of the Americas that we develop here. Likewise the literary imaginary of the Americas arrays magical realism alongside pastoral writing, retaining the special power that each of those discursive modes might have for a landscape, a history, or a community, but also questioning how it is that reading and writing experiences that employ border-crossing skills would transport particularized textual strategies out of their place and time.

Those new interpretive modes might have real impact on how we think about

disciplines.[52] If the object of the Americas asks us to consider how the past is mobilized within questions of social and political concern, we must move away from a notion of history as necessarily implying a linear chronology. Requiring a deep understanding of multiple national-cultural spaces, Americas work develops methodologies for multi-sited ethnography and sensibilities about what an anthropology of mobility could look like. And the Americas, as well, should destabilize the presumption of national literatures and implore us to see novels and other texts as global in their purview, and in the codes and signs of their production. The work of the essays collected here is precisely to do that difficult work of interpreting across areas of the world and fields of study. The historical "region" that emerges, then, is simultaneously geographic, cultural, and political.

The essays collected here provide an entree into that broader conversation about the Americas. None of them alone does the work of putting together North and South, history and literature, domination and resistance, but they all in some way question boundaries that have been drawn within and between U.S. American studies and Latin American studies and their regional objects. They range widely but do not cover all possibilities. Canada's relative marginality within both U.S. American studies and Americas studies, unfortunately, is mirrored in the offerings here. Yet, taken as a whole, this volume fundamentally speaks across conventional notions of American areas and challenges us to rethink categories of difference and discipline.

Several essays take representation seriously, subjecting any facile conception of literary practice to intense historical scrutiny and reading beyond origins or roots in place. While some essays employ close textual analysis to make their points, others emphasize detailed social histories. Some pieces here choose to illuminate chaotic cultural formations of empire through corresponding plays with narrative structure. There is necessarily some labor that is demanded of the reader to move from one approach to another, but that is partly the point. An interdisciplinary paradigm of the Americas emerges from the sum of its parts and thus requires a particular kind of openness to hear multiple epistemological voices. To be plainer, perhaps, we hope that Marxist historians and poststructuralist literary critics, and scholars in Latin American studies and U.S. American studies, will read one another's work, because they may be engaged in projects that would be well served by some kind of dialogue.

We are asked by the essays collected here not only to expand our canon

of representational forms but to rethink the correspondences that have become second nature to us, and, ultimately, to think about transnational politics and culture in new ways. Harilaos Stecopoulos, in "Up from Empire: James Weldon Johnson, Latin America, and the Jim Crow South," takes a paradigmatic national-race writer, James Weldon Johnson, and resituates him and his work in the hemispheric connections (and divides) that this book as a whole strives to elaborate. Just because Johnson embodied insurgent racial politics at home did not mean that he would necessarily oppose benevolent U.S. imperialism abroad. And his cultural work in the service of imperialism, not only his writings of popular musicals but also his position as U.S. consul to Venezuela, betrayed a complex and critical patriotism that was the result of powerful regional divides between North and South, and the loyalties that inhered, of the period. John D. Blanco's "Bastards of the Unfinished Revolution: Bolívar's Ismael and Rizal's Martí at the End of the Nineteenth Century" presents a different pairing, contrasting visions of anticolonial struggle in Cuba and the Philippines embodied in the respective writings of two literary giants and national heroes, José Martí and José Rizal. Blanco underscores that at the time these contemporaries wrote, both Rizal and Martí located their homelands within a broader "Spanish American" heritage; yet in just a few decades, the Philippines would all but disappear from conceptually belonging to the region of "Latin America." Blanco ponders how this vanishing, along with Rizal's and Martí's disagreements, emanated from differing resolutions of, and possibilities for, anticolonial liberalism. And Caroline Levander, in "Confederate Cuba," explores how Cuban race relations have been central to U.S. imperial aspirations as well as to U.S. domestic politics since the early nineteenth century. Levander argues that Cuban racial formations both enabled and disrupted U.S. national fantasies of imperial mastery, a thesis that strongly suggests the porous and mutually constituted nature of "domestic" and "foreign" dynamics.

Susan Najita shifts our attention to Hawaii, an area that sits somewhat uneasily in conventional interpretations of what and where the Americas are, showing, indeed, how Hawaii's transnational cultural production following the islands' annexation by the United States might newly illuminate region, empire, and race. In "Pleasure and Colonial Resistance: Translating the Politics of Pidgin in Milton Murayama's *All I Asking for Is My Body*," Najita discusses how pidgin language developments of Japanese, Hawaiian, and English functioned as a way for nisei to critique Hawaii's plantation labor systems as well as the Japanese family's hierarchies of gender, generation, and race. She suggests that the local production of transnational "immigrant" identities may at times

flow as much from the relinquishing of diasporic and familial commitments as from a sense of displacement from homeland. Nicholas Turse's "Experimental Dreams, Ethical Nightmares: Leprosy, Isolation, and Human Experimentation in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii" signals the material effects of an imperialism that hardly respects the boundaries that "area" disciplines may have reified. He explores the production of leprosy as a "tropical disease" delineating colonialist boundaries between U.S.-European authority and native subjugation, *haole* whites and indigenous Hawaiians, civilized and primitive, healthy and sick, and effectively documents the aggressive enforcement of segregated leper colonies by U.S. authorities following Hawaii's incorporation as a U.S. territory. Also addressing the "Asia Pacific" as an occasion to rethink the deep cultural contradictions of living transnationally through a global capitalist framework is Rob Wilson's essay "Tracking the 'China Peril' along the U.S. Pacific Rim: Carpetbaggers, Yacht People, 1.2 Billion Cyborg Consumers, and the Bamboo Gang, Coming Soon to a Neighborhood Near You!" Wilson's, Turse's, and Najita's Pacific Rim gives this collection an important comparative dimension and also effectively puts the brakes on any contentment we may feel about the expansion of national-regional categories. Much of the Americas proper borders the Pacific and yet disassociates itself from various "Asian" formations. At the same time there are significant efforts within neoliberal political cultures of South America, especially, to follow in the footsteps of Pacific Rim economies. Wilson takes up the ambivalent future that Asian worlds represent by looking closely at fantasy projections of what he calls "neo-Orientalisms" in and of films like *Lost in Translation* and recent contemporary political moments, all of which sit rather comfortably with security apparatuses of the U.S. nation-state.

Another group of essays critically considers the concept of mobility. Michelle Stephens rethinks Atlantic history's production of indigeneity in "Uprooted Bodies: Indigenous Subjects and Colonial Discourses in Atlantic American Studies." Using Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Almanac of the Dead*, Stephens argues for seeing the indigenous through paradigms like the polycultural that foreground movement rather than rootedness or stasis. This results in an important new way to imagine the historical-cultural connections that have made the Americas, not only from outside but also from within. Rachel Adams provides a bridge from the paradigms of the black Atlantic to those of borderland studies to explicate several histories of African American presence in Mexico and Chicano communities in her essay "Blackness Goes South: Race and Mestizaje in Our America." Beyond recovery, Adams's work wonderfully illustrates how rethinking histories of race outside the (official) national narrative reveals

the very constitutive nature of national borders and racial or ethnic communities. Ian Lekus, in "Queer Harvests: Homosexuality, the U.S. New Left, and the Venceremos Brigades to Cuba," recounts the deeply moving but equally troubled history of U.S. gay and lesbian solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. While the emerging U.S. gay rights movement saw its own aspirations for liberation and equality mirrored in the promises of a new Cuba, widespread homophobia among both Students for a Democratic Society and the revolutionary government worked to silence and ultimately exclude U.S. homosexuals from international work as well as to abet the quashing and persecution of nonheterosexual identifications within Cuba.

The Cold War has been a subject of sustained focus for new work on the Americas. Rebecca M. Schreiber, in "Dislocations of Cold War Cultures: Exile, Transnationalism, and the Politics of Form," provides an interesting, if compelled, instance of cultural work situated in the Americas during that period. Schreiber discusses how African American artists and writers who deliberately chose exile in the rich context of Mexico developed hybrid work that must be understood through movement and circuits of influence that ultimately challenge the boundedness of national cultures. And Alyosha Goldstein, in "The Attributes of Sovereignty: The Cold War, Colonialism, and Community Education in Puerto Rico," explores how U.S. foreign policy ideas about community and development played out in the context of hemispheric ambitions in and of Puerto Rico.

What does it mean when cultural forms migrate? is a question posed by Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste in "All Cumbias, the Cumbia: The Latin Americanization of a Tropical Genre." Providing a comparative discussion of the diverse ways that *cumbia*, a musical genre that emerged first in Colombia, is incorporated into the "national music traditions" not only of Colombia but also of Argentina, Peru, and Mexico, Fernández L'Hoeste pays particular attention to the diverse racial and class meanings that cumbia assumes as it moves transnationally to create distinct national cultures.

And with an eye to our ambivalent political futures, Victor Bascara, in " 'Panama Money': Reading the Transition to U.S. Imperialism," reads dangerous moments of transition within U.S. imperialism through Paule Marshall's literary work and life. In Marshall's imaginary, the building of the Panama Canal becomes a flash point for understanding not only the future geopolitical connectivity between Latin America, more formally defined, and North America, but also the cultural crossings that would produce new subjects who live transnationally and ambivalently. With such cultural occasions, Bascara's essay and

others also help us read the narrative of globalization back into the past, as much for historical specificity as for ways to think about our violently transnational present.

Ultimately these essays collectively suggest that confronting globalization is only one way of rethinking what we have come to call the Americas. Whether we consider them to be productive or destructive, the connections across various countries in Latin America, North America, and the Caribbean (and the Philippines and Hawaii) prompt a reconsideration of our very object of study. Region, area, and continent are all bounded categories that by their very natures set up limits to be crossed and perhaps transgressed. If our conclusions, from scholars based in the U.S. academy, seem at one moment to have a particularist emphasis, they must also point to comparisons with other places in the world and gesture at other organizing principles for associated knowledges. This is to ask whether, in fact, "the Americas" are either really that different from "Asia" or "the Middle East" or are constructed so discretely, apart from other regions. We invite, indeed insist on, conversation about the extent to which our ideas are shared, or are in dialogue, in the spirit of work toward a more productive, and perhaps utopian, sense of the global.

Notes

1 In this essay, we intentionally shift between references to singular and plural forms of the Americas, alternately indicating a singular Americas paradigm and the plural territorial spaces/nations of the Americas. That the Americas might serve both as a conceptual framework and as multiple geographical sites of study is, we argue, a productive tension.

2 "Our Americas: Political and Cultural Imaginings," special issue of *Radical History Review* 89 (spring 2004), edited by Sandhya Shukla and Heidi Tinsman. We especially thank the contributors to this journal issue: Néstor García Canclini, Martin Hopenhayn, Rossana Reguillo, Arturo Arias, Ian Lekus, John D. Blanco, Aimee Carrillo Rowe, María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, Aisha Khan, Paul Giles, Salah D. Hassan, Patricio del Real, Carlos E. Bojorquez Urzaiz, Enrique C. Ochoa, Ian Christopher Fletcher, Diana Paton, John Beck, Gemma Robinson, and Kate Masur.

3 José Martí, "Our America" (1891), in *The America of José Martí: Selected Writings of José Martí, translated from the Spanish*, ed. Juan de Onis (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1954), 149–50.

4 See Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006).

5 Other important examples of work on the Americas include Matthew C. Gutmann,

Féliz V. Matos Rodríguez, Lynn Stephen, and Patricia Zavella, eds., *Perspectives on Las Américas: A Reader in Culture, History, and Representation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003); Neil Larsen, *Determinations: Essays on Theory, Narrative and Nation in the Americas* (New York: Verso, 2001); Jeffrey Belnap and Raúl Fernández, eds., *José Martí's "Our America": From National to Hemispheric Cultural Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Paul Giles, *Virtual Americas: Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); and José E. Limon, *American Encounters: Greater Mexico, the United States, and the Erotics of Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998).

6 Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian, for example, make a number of important observations about area studies in the introduction to their collection *Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), but their experiences are largely of the projects as they took shape in East Asia. The case in Latin America, as we shall see, offers a different sort of picture.

7 Paul Bové, in "Can American Studies Be Area Studies?" in Miyoshi and Harootunian, *Learning Places*, 206–30, makes an argument for the sustained separation of the cultural effects of American studies projects from the operations of the U.S. nation-state. In large part, our move to take the U.S. state seriously is precisely to address that disconnect.

8 On area studies, see also David L. Szanton, ed., *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

9 See Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 9.

10 On transnationalism, also see *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity and Nationalism Reconsidered*, ed. Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton Blanc (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1992); and Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1994).

11 Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993). John Carlos Rowe's edited volume *Post-nationalist American Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) has also productively opened up many of these questions.

12 For example, Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945–2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

13 Jane C. Desmond and Virginia R. Dominguez forecasted this problem over fifteen years ago in "Resituating American Studies in a Critical Internationalism," *American Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (1990): 475–90.

14 An example of this tendency is Mary Renda's book *Taking Haiti: Military Occupa-*

tion and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), which quite wonderfully uses U.S. documents to analyze and critique imperial ventures in Haiti but deals very little with Haitian sources or discourses from the Caribbean.

15 In a sense, then, we take both the power of the critical framework that Tzvetan Todorov develops in *The Conquest of America*, trans. Richard Howard (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), originally published in French in 1982, and also the criticisms of the dichotomized cultures that underwrite his analysis (for example, Deborah Root, "The Imperial Signifier: Todorov and the Conquest of Mexico," *Cultural Critique* 9 [Spring 1988]: 197–219), seriously.

16 See Graeme Turner, *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (London: Unwin-Hyman, 1990); and Joel Pfister, "The Americanization of Cultural Studies," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 4.2 (1991): 199–229.

17 For example, Richard Graham, ed., *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); Nancy Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Jeffrey Gould, *To Die in This Way: Nicaraguan Indians and the Myth of Mestizaje, 1880–1965* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Eileen Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870–1920* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); Marisol de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos: The Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Rosemblatt, eds., *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

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