

*SPECIAL FORUM*  
**AMERICAN STUDIES:  
CARIBBEAN EDITION**

**Introduction**

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It isn't news to suggest that the Caribbean constitutes the original "Americas." José Martí said as much in his landmark essay "Nuestra America" back in 1891 when, wresting the term from the stranglehold of Cuba's neighbor to the North, he proclaimed that "the real man is being born to America, in these real times."<sup>1</sup> He didn't mean the United States (although he was living there). What Martí meant is that the Caribbean is, as Junot Díaz reminds us today, the cultural "ground zero" of the Western Hemisphere, the place where the entire American project, in all of its disastrousness and promise, began.<sup>2</sup>

Still, although it is well known that the "invention of America" began in what we now call the Caribbean, this familiar fact of history is often parenthetical to American Studies. While the average elementary school student in the West can recite that it was in the "West Indies" that the 1492 adventure crash-landed, the average American Studies program proceeds with little more than a superficial regard for the Caribbean civilization wrought in the wake of Columbus' historic wreck. This is not to say that the Caribbean is left out of North American academic discourses. Quite the contrary; it has never been as much discussed in the American academy as in the present moment. Indeed, the Caribbean has acquired a certain prominence—fashionableness even—in academic discussions of hybridity and precocious postmodernities. Yet, despite this appreciation of the region's cultural complicatedness and affinity for the "mash up" as a valued mode of creativity, the

region has come to be somehow behind the very modernity it helped to produce. Within conventional Americanist scholarship, then, proper recognition of the Caribbean's enduring significance as the decimated scene of our modern beginnings remains rare.

Yet simply to observe that “America” has been monopolized by the British colonies reimagined as the US, and that this act of arrogation has come at the historical expense of serious intellectual reckoning with the rest of the hemisphere, is not really the point here. More novel and more urgent, we believe, is the attempt to break with presumptions that actually reinforce the view of the US as if it were, indeed, the exceptional “America” instead of what it is: the most materially prosperous and militarily powerful of the continent's many commensurable national communities. At stake is something more than the now-familiar critique of the arrogant nationalism that has dogged American Studies from its inception. There is already a vast and impressive literature opposed to the republic's patriotic self-portrait as uniquely destined to manifest the hopes of modern freedom.<sup>3</sup> Our purpose here, then, is to overcome the persistent influence of Cold War precepts that reproduces the idea of the US as an exception within the modern world of new nations.

Firmly established in the first decade after World War II, the academic study of “America” has been cast from inception within the Three World framework, a geopolitical paradigm invented and promoted in and for an anxious West.<sup>4</sup> One largely ignored result of the field's institutionalization in the context of this warring (and worrying) schematization of the globe has been the presumptive acceptance of a historically dubious exception among Americanists ever since. Given the tripartite description of the planet, postwar scholars on the United States (and Canada, less conspicuously) have been trained quite literally to except their “area” from its hemispheric historical situation. That is, while colleagues studying the rest of the Americas have been recognized as contributors to “Third World”—or, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, “postcolonial”—thought, North Americanists have been permitted to presume a First World slot for their intellectual discourse.

To be sure, since the late 1980s, the rigidity of this boundary between knowledge making about North and *Nuestra America* has been sapped by a series of critical scholarly turns—diasporic, imperial and especially transnational. Still, these innovations notwithstanding, it remains the norm in our post-Cold War present to treat the US and Canada as if both were analytically apart from other nations across the hemisphere and, indeed, commensurable with Old World European national communities.<sup>5</sup> It is this conceptual mode of exceptionalism and, effectively, scholarly segregation that the following Caribbeanist engagement with American Studies means to confront. American Studies, we contend, can benefit from a New World reorientation as opposed to its persistent First World (or North Atlanticist) disposition. In submitting this “New Worldly” frame, our central purpose is to end the evident yet unremarked segregation that has delimited the field ever since its

formal postwar establishment. Though hardly noted until recently, the practice of “American Studies” has been predicated upon a dubious scholarly discrimination between North America, on one hand, and the Caribbean and Latin America, on the other.<sup>6</sup> Taken for granted, this separation between both areas of study has come to appear innocuous, even natural. Yet nothing is a given about a knowledge-making arrangement that differentiates between work on the US and Canada on the one hand and places like Haiti and Argentina on the other. In fact, the now customary dissection of the New World into two distinct academic areas is of relatively recent vintage, dating back to the 1950s when Western academics began to embrace both American Studies and Caribbean Studies.<sup>7</sup> To recall this historical context, however, briefly, is to clarify the crucial role of Cold War thinking in the emergence and institutionalization of a continentally divided American Studies. It is also to justify the call for its desegregation.

Our call may be read less as an innovative “turn” than a return to a way of thinking familiar to scholars who plied their trade prior to the Cold War. Before the middle of the twentieth century, it must be remembered, no categorical distinction was made between humanistic scholarship on North America and on the rest of the continent. Up until World War II students of the US maintained a presumptive sense of historical commensurability across the New World. Not only did nineteenth-century historians like Herbert Adams acknowledge the historic significance of events in other hemispheric communities like Haiti, but their early twentieth century counterparts like Lothrop Stoddard published histories in which Haiti was featured as a New World peer of the North American republic.<sup>8</sup> Although North Americanists continued to display interest in the study of the rest of the continent over the course of the century, increasingly scholars would take places like Haiti not as familiar postcolonial American republics but as exotic sites of US imperial self-making.<sup>9</sup>

This observation of a mid-twentieth-century paradigmatic shift in thinking about the hemisphere should not be taken as an argument for the existence of some egalitarian Pan-American spirit prior to World War II. Back then was no halcyon time of hemispheric solidarity. To the contrary, a not-uncommon loyalty to Anglo-Saxonism in North America and, less selectively, to white supremacy across the continent, oversaw respectable scholarship that proved openly prejudiced against the indigenous, African, Latin and variously mixed peoples of the New World. Yet, even in that age of unabashed biological racism, it should be recognized, there was no dominant presumption that the US and Canada, because they were dominated by “whites,” should be studied as if they belonged to a separate cosmos from the rest of the Americas.<sup>10</sup>

A revealing example in this regard can be found in revisiting the work of Lothrop Stoddard. A Harvard graduate in history, Stoddard is now remembered largely as an academic embarrassment for having made himself one of the leading white supremacist patriot intellectuals in the interwar years. Less recalled is the fact that before his writings on the racial challenges of nationhood in the North American

republic, he produced scholarship that addressed the Caribbean as a commensurable area. Stoddard's very first book, published in 1914, was *The French Revolution in San Domingo*. Not surprisingly, the work showed little sympathy for the achievements of the revolution that bequeathed the first black republic.<sup>11</sup> Yet what merits remark here, far more than the racist conclusions of an author who counted Hitler among his admirers, is Stoddard's explicit understanding of the Caribbean as historically relevant and informative for thinking about "great communities" like the United States, Australia and South Africa. Little dark Haiti, he affirmed, existed as part of an ex-colonial historical situation in which North America was to be comprehended. The point here, of course, is not to commend or recapitulate the obvious and anachronistic racist content of Stoddard's argument; it is simply to realize its inherent conceptual distance from subsequent postwar geopolitical thinking that would refrain from analyzing the US as a familiar New World nation; that is, as an American post-colony.

Faith to Stoddard's genuinely hemispheric perspective (if not his infamous racial contentions) was maintained by prominent US academics up until the interwar period. Most remarkable in this regard might be Herbert Bolton's presidential address at the 1932 annual meeting of the American Historical Association. Delivered in Toronto, Bolton's address urged the guild to embrace a perspective that he called "Greater America." His was a call ultimately for the free traffic in ideas, analyses, research questions and scholarship across the continent. Congruent with our vision for American Studies, Bolton's good neighborly academic paradigm for studying the US would be for all intents and purposes abandoned during the next decade. His concept of a "Greater America" would become a casualty of a Second World War and the initiation of a Cold War. In fact, by the time of the bona fide birth of the nation as an area of academic study in the late 1940s (*American Quarterly* began publication in 1948-9), "euthanasia"—to use Arthur Whitaker's apt word—had been visited upon the hemispheric idea.<sup>12</sup>

The passing of this New World scholarly perspective, along with the rise of the "North Atlantic" alternative, can be traced in a couple of telling introspective academic essays published over the course of the decade. It appeared in early wartime writing that urged the US to join European allies across the Atlantic and, accordingly, to disregard any sense of security in its hemispheric geography. In 1941, for example, a penetrative, political piece on geopolitics by Eugene Staley went as far as to dismiss the concept of a continent as a "myth."<sup>13</sup> A few years later, at the 1945 annual meeting, the American Historical Association president Carlton Hayes signaled the growing consensus that the future of American Studies lay in the exploration not of "Greater America" but of the "North Atlantic" world. Hayes, speaking in Washington DC, used his powerful professional perch to encourage a reframing of the US as a trans-Atlantic extension of Christian Europe. Abandoning Bolton's "Greater America" good-neighbor paradigm, he proposed a view of North America as the western frontier of Atlantic "civilization." With World War II just ended and the

Cold War looming, it was important, argued this wartime US ambassador to Spain, that the nation's professionals appreciate that the time had come in which historical solidarity with Europe, not the Americas, was most urgent.<sup>14</sup> Hayes, as Bernard Bailyn has noted, stands effectively as the author of the Atlanticist Charter for US historiography.<sup>15</sup> It is worth stressing that Hayes should also be remembered for pushing North Americanists to discover analogies between their "area" and Northwestern Europe. Hayes, in other words, made himself a pioneering booster of the North Atlantic idea, an advocate effectively of the Cold War vision of North American scholarship as a "First World" field *avant la lettre*. The ascendance of his approach among students of the US spelled the death of the continentally integrated idea of the field offered by Bolton.

By the time American Studies and other "area" studies took off in the academy a decade later, Hayes' Eurocentric framing of the US became the geopolitical convention. Scholars began to conceive of the North American republic explicitly as a First World power. The rest of the New World, meanwhile, was consigned to the Third World. Thanks to the tripartite Cold War imagination of the planet and the accompanying sociological rationale of "modernization theory," the Americas was redefined in academic practice as a separate and unequal continent.<sup>16</sup> Ever since, this scholarly segregation has been presumptive in the North Atlantic academy.

Nevertheless, there has existed a notable tradition of transgressing this conceptual apartheid inherent in the postwar "area studies" model. In particular, scholars concerned with the predicament of what once was referred to as the New World Negro have long employed a "plantation America" frame that fundamentally worked across the borders prescribed by Three World thinking.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, at the very moment that Hayes was downplaying hemispheric commensurability, Frank Tannenbaum was achieving the opposite in practice. Over the next decade and a half, other students of slavery and racism—names like Carl Degler, David Brion Davis, Stanley Elkins and Eugene Genovese—would follow in Tannenbaum's trail and demonstrate their New World interest. Yet, these scholars fell significantly short of a Greater American frame. Their work confined their comparisons to specific themes; unlike Bolton or Stoddard, they didn't see commensurability across national projects. Thus, while studies of slave resistance in Haiti or Jamaica or Brazil could be pursued with analogies from the US in mind, it remained mostly unthinkable that the US itself could be treated as a formerly colonized nation, not unlike Haiti or Jamaica or Brazil.<sup>18</sup>

Thus it was under the new regime of geopolitical thought that the study of North America was exceptionalized and upgraded alongside Northwest Europe into western civilization's premier categorical province, the *soi-disant* First World. Meanwhile, the Americas south of Canada and the US became its opposite. Here was the Third World; it would become the conceptual category to contain students interested in Latin America and the Caribbean. Effectively disintegrated, as a result, was the New World idea.<sup>19</sup> Thanks to the Cold War tri-partitioning of the planet, the

Americas had become redefined as a separate and unequal. This segregation of the continental space has been presumptive in the North Atlantic academy ever since.

More than two decades after the Cold War ended, then, the argument for a desegregation of the academic study of the Americas appears nothing but reasonable. To be fair, the discriminatory effects of academic segregation have been mitigated by “turns” in humanities scholarship in the past two decades. Embrace of “imperial” and the “transnational” perspectives, in particular, has afforded a certain amount of passing across the lines drawn for area studies. Still, inasmuch as we scholars continue to conceptualize North America as part of the (North) Atlantic (in other words, the “First World”), we maintain, however unwittingly, the old Cold War academic color line that separates the study of US and Canada from that of the rest of the New World.

The distinction is emphasized by the association of North America with an inherent globalizing capacity while, despite the above-noted occasional transgressions, the Caribbean remains linked to the “local”: local politics, local culture, local influence. In this imagining, the two-way flow between the United States and the Caribbean consists of the Caribbean sending its people to the cosmopolitan centers of New York and Miami as raw labor, and the United States sending back the “product”: consumer goods, political ideas, popular culture, aid, influence. Derek Walcott recently complained that critics in North America and Europe, upon viewing one of his plays, still ask him if it’s his debut as a playwright.<sup>20</sup> Yet Walcott has always been a playwright, one whose works originate in the Caribbean and then move elsewhere. It is ironic even now, when the term “global marketplace” has attained the status of well-worn cliché, that the critical reception of one of the Caribbean’s most famous citizens can still be shaped by the view that Culture in its non-working class forms must originate in the supposed centers of New York and London and then move outwards to the supposed margins of the Caribbean, as opposed to the other way around.

The “academic color line” between the majority white societies of North America and the darker-hued societies of Latin America and the Caribbean is not the only line we wish to erase in this project. Insofar as the Caribbean is largely a black space, the essentially American character of scholarship on the Caribbean is often subsumed within the field of African diaspora studies. This diminishes the American identity of the Caribbean on two fronts as, in the current academic marketplace, African diaspora studies’ global dimensions risk becoming an outpost of the African American experience.

Clearly this has something to do with the dictates of the contemporary marketplace, not just the history of American exceptionalism. The American academy is the largest, most powerful humanities organization in the world. It hires the majority of scholars who produce most African diaspora scholarship. And of course it makes sense that most of these scholars are hired to primarily teach and research the primary African-descended community in the US. Advertisements for such scholars

often reflect an emphasis on those who specialize in African American and African Diaspora fields, with “diaspora” always abutting the US focus.

Yet, at the risk of saying the obvious, African American Studies and African Diaspora Studies are not the same thing. African Diaspora Studies, in its original conception, is the study of the displaced, interlinked, African and African-descended communities of the globe. Its roots are in Pan Africanism, the philosophical idea sprung from the anti-colonial Pan-Africanist movements of Africa and the Caribbean in the late nineteenth century. Pan Africanism is predicated on a belief that African and African-descended peoples constitute a community onto themselves, and has long advocated for the political union of, and independence for, black communities around the globe. Regardless of the various ideological perspectives, Africa is firmly at the center of Pan Africanism.

By contrast, the history of engagement between African Americans and West Indians transcends the political formulations of Pan Africanism or the global context of African diaspora studies. It is very much a story of the creole Americas. Afro-Jamaicans Claude McKay and Marcus Garvey were, yes, Pan Africanists, but they were also part of a regional conversation that, for the most part, moved dynamically between the centers of Harlem and Kingston. That intellectual dynamism has its roots in the region’s history. African American communities such as many of the Creoles of New Orleans trace their roots to the Caribbean. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, with the advent of mass literacy and US-bound migration, the emerging black and non-white middle classes of the English-speaking Caribbean were increasingly interested in the fortunes of African Americans; Booker T. Washington’s *Up From Slavery* was a familiar text in many literate Caribbean households.<sup>21</sup> The interest may have extended both ways: African American author William Wells Brown, for example, favorably reviewed Afro-Jamaican writer Henry Garland Murray’s vernacular-inflected lecture, “Life Among the Lowly in Jamaica,” when Murray toured Boston and New England in 1872, and upheld him as one of the “representative men and women” of the African race.<sup>22</sup>

These are African diaspora histories in the sense that they focus on the interaction of different African-descended communities, but if we read them solely within the frame of African diaspora studies not only do we de-center the regional specificity of these histories, we also obscure their context within multiracial creole societies. Whether the emphasis is US- or Caribbean-centric, such scholarship lies within the realm of American Studies, and that is our primary point here. To investigate the relationship among African-descended peoples of the Caribbean, Latin America and the US should be a core feature of American Studies. Influential recent contributions to African diaspora scholarship, such as Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic* (1993), Brent Edwards’ *The Practice of Diaspora* (2003), and Michelle Stephens’ *Black Empire* (2005), provide useful examples on how an African diaspora project might also be centrally located within American Studies, even as they also reveal the limitations of trying to do both.<sup>23</sup> Gilroy’s observation that the circulation

of music and other cultural commodities within the black Atlantic offers a different template for the study of African-descended peoples of the Americas, but his focus is the black *North* Atlantic, not the Americas, and emphatically not Africa. Focusing on the intellectuals of the African diaspora and the Harlem Renaissance, Edwards' important intervention argues that certain kinds of arguments about black identity can only be staged outside of the US. It remains a valuable reorienting of American Studies to a more international frame; however, it orients that internationalization towards the black expatriate communities of Paris, London and other metropolitan centers, and not towards the Caribbean. By making both New World Harlem and Old World Paris a part of the same "Negro World", Edwards' study "of black transnational interaction, exchange, and translation" suggests a desire to claim historical parity between the two. In so doing, he obscures the asymmetrical "postcolonial" relationship between New World US and Old World France. The material conditions of such asymmetry is further evinced by his suggestion that "It would be equally possible to investigate links between Harlem and Port au Prince during this period (when the United States was occupying Haiti.)"<sup>24</sup> A Caribbean or New World conceptual orientation refuses a collapsing of literary cityscapes.

Stephens' project is perhaps closest to our own in that it establishes the dynamic engagement of African American and Afro-Caribbean immigrant intellectuals within the context of both US and Caribbean intellectual histories. Both Americanists and Caribbeanists have paid far too little attention to the historical relationship between the two. Her study reveals how rooted in Caribbean Studies are crucial redefining moments in American Studies such as the black Atlantic turn, the turn to critique American Empire, to the most recent emphasis on the various link-ups between African descended peoples, with antiracist and anticolonial movements across the globe—what scholars like Penny Von Eschen and Nikhil Singh call the "worldliness" of African Americans.<sup>25</sup> These then are central features of Caribbean-centered Americanist discourse. Of equal significance is that a Caribbean lens forces an acknowledgement of just how much space matters; it therefore does not elide the historical and material distinctions between metropolitan cityscapes versus those within the region.

The idea for this special forum on Caribbean studies came from the recent annual American Studies Association conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 2012, one of the first ASA conferences held outside of the contiguous US. Answering the ASA's call to reflect on the powerful effects of "geopolitical strategies and discourses," these essays represent a Caribbeanist initiative toward transgressing the twentieth-century conceptual color line that has maintained an exception of North America from *Nuestra* America. Here we invite readers to consider what a Caribbean-centered reading of the Americas offers the field of American Studies in terms of content, method and conceptual orientation. Rather than "subsuming the rest of the world under the banner of America,"<sup>26</sup> we ask what happens when we incorporate the US within the larger postcolony history of the Americas? What lessons, keywords,

methods become available for how we do a study of the Americas? The following essays demonstrate that such a methodology informs content as it challenges the language of exceptionality, pushes back originary dates, challenges definitions of genre, and complicates key words.

Explicitly or implicitly foregrounded in these essays is the imbrication of class and culture categories at the heart of American Studies discourse on the Caribbean. It has never been an issue that the Caribbean maintains a familiar presence of sorts in the US and Europe through raw goods sold (bananas, tobacco, bauxite), an immigrant laboring population (the nanny, the migrant worker), and a longstanding tradition of importing popular musical and dance forms (rumba, salsa, calypso, reggae). What is obscured from this interpretation of the US/Caribbean relationship is the circulation of ideas themselves, whether ideas through goods and services, popular culture forms, migrant labor, political negotiations, or other forms of intercourse.

For example, Mimi Sheller reveals the ideas behind the raw materials when she places Caribbean studies at the heart of a transnational American Studies practice through her exploration of the US's involvement in the Caribbean's aluminum industry in "Mobile Methodologies for Transnational American Studies."

Also employing the wide lens are Michelle Stephens and Brian Roberts in their essay, "Archipelagic American Studies and the Caribbean." Stephens and Roberts make a complex argument for the value of an inclusive, archipelagic American Studies that recognizes the specificity of its own hemispheric, regional boundedness rather than engage in an anti-insular discourse of American Studies that reproduces the frame of US exceptionalism at the expense of the Caribbean and Latin America.

Other essays explore country-specific examples of the dialectical interplay of ideas. For example, in "The Problem with Violence" Deborah Thomas takes on the pervasive belief, both within and without the Caribbean, in the "culture of violence" argument, which explains why "exceptional" violence-plagued Caribbean and Latin American societies like Jamaica have not taken advantage of post World War II opportunities for development. In historicizing the cultures of violence that produced the New World, Thomas asks us to consider how, when and why the US is written out of these historical narratives, and yet also central to them. In challenging the exclusion of the US from the regional narrative of "exceptional" violence, Thomas lays bare the ideological motivations that undergirds the language of US exceptionalism to begin with.

Always cast as the most destitute state in the Americas, Haiti is perhaps the clearest example of a Caribbean society that is relegated to the status of object in the US imaginary. The presumption of Haiti as economic and political charity case requiring US intervention is given a fresh perspective in Millery Polyné's essay. In "Democracy as Human Rights" Polyné reveals how Haitian human rights exiles in New York City during the 1960s did not simply seek succor from the US but actually contributed to international human rights discourses during that time.

The remaining essays resituate scholarship on African-American and Caribbean relations by placing the Caribbean context closer to the center. In “Transcendental Cosmopolitanism,” Donette Francis argues that Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson’s influential concept of New World slavery—and black New World subjectivity beyond emancipation—as “social death” has been limited by the US-centered deployment by scholars. It can only be fully understood, she asserts, through geographically rerouting the concept of social death out of the US and into the anti-colonial, post-independence 1960s Jamaican setting of Patterson’s early writings as a Jamaican novelist. Using as case study historical Caribbean attitudes towards Booker T. Washington and his Tuskegee Institute, in “Good Enough for Booker T. to Kiss” Faith Smith examines the ways in which US African Americans have influenced black subjectivity in the Caribbean.

This special forum, regretfully, does manage to reproduce some of the ongoing problems that plague academic discussions of the Caribbean: it is overwhelmingly Anglocentric in focus (ironic, in a special forum which emphasizes Martí’s pan-American concept of *Nuestra America*). Nevertheless, we hope that our aim to recast America in ways that help us to a better historical sense of the region’s defining moments, is made clear by the essays in this special forum. In each case their central aim is clear: whether implicitly or explicitly, each undermines the conceit of containing the US as part of a First World/North Atlantic society somehow historically more “modern” than the rest of “Third World” *Nuestra America*. And after all, what better place to rediscover the wonder of a genuinely integrated American Studies than the Caribbean?

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> José Martí, “Our America” (1891), reprinted in *José Martí: Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. Esther Allen (New York: Penguin, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2007), 1.

<sup>3</sup> For the most influential recent critiques of American exceptionalism in the revisionist discussions on American Studies see Donald E. Pease, Winifred Fluck, John Carlos Rowe, editors, *Re-Framing the Transnational Turn in American Studies* (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2011); in particular, see Donald Pease’s introduction, “Re-Mapping the Transnational Turn”; see also, Donald Pease, *The New American Exceptionalism* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009); and Amy Kaplan, “The Tenacious Grasp of American Exceptionalism,” *Comparative American Studies: An International Journal* 2, no. 2 (2004): 153-159. For earlier influential critiques see also Michael Kammen, “The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration,” *American Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (March 1993): 1-43; Amy Kaplan, “Left Alone with America: The Absence of Empire in the Study of

American Culture,” in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, eds. Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham: Duke University Press 1993), 3-21.

<sup>4</sup> For critical discussion of the invention of the Three Worlds view, see Carl Pletsch, “The Three Worlds or the Division of Social Scientific Labor, circa 1950-1975,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 4 (October 1981): 565-590; Leslie Wolf-Phillip, “Why Third World? Origin, Definition and Usage,” *Third World Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (October 1987): 1311-1327. For deliberate reconsideration of ‘third worldism’ see *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (special issue 2004).

<sup>5</sup> See Ann Laura Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American and (Post)Colonial Histories,” *Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (December 2001): 829-865.

<sup>6</sup> For a more sustained elaboration of this division in American studies, particularly in its intersection with Caribbean studies, see Harvey Neptune, “The Lost New World Of Caribbean Studies: Recalling An Un-American Puerto Rico Project,” *Small Axe* 17, no. 2 41 (July 2013): 172-185. By contrast, the New World Series published by the University of Virginia Press offers a suitably expansive hemispheric cultural map of the Americas.

<sup>7</sup> See Arthur P. Whitaker, “The Origin of the Western Hemispheric Idea,” *The Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 98, no. 5 (October 15, 1954): 323-326; also, Virginia Dominguez and Jane Desmond, “Resituating American Studies in a Critical Internationalism,” *American Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (September 1996): 475-490. Our advocacy shares some fundamental positions with Dominguez’ and Desmond’s call for a “critical internationalism.” In particular, it accords with their support for analyses of the US as a post-colony itself.

<sup>8</sup> See Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1889), 1: 334-335; and Lothrop Stoddard, *The French Revolution in San Domingo* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1914); *The Rising Tide of Color against White World Supremacy* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1921); and *America: The Story of Our Nationhood* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1927).

<sup>9</sup> For contemporary accounts of the evolving views of early twentieth century US scholars towards Haiti and the Caribbean see Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Haiti and the United States* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992); Peter James Hudson, “Germaine, Evangeline, and Other “Negro Girls”: Rudy Burckhardt’s Caribbean,” *Small Axe* 16, no. 1 37 (March 2012): 1-19.

<sup>10</sup> For a sustained analysis of racism in US scholarship on the Americas, particularly in regards to Haiti and the Caribbean, see Millery Polyné, *From Douglass to Duvalier: U.S. African Americans, Haiti and Pan Americanism, 1870-1964* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> See Lothrop Stoddard, *The French Revolution in Santo Domingo* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1914), viii.

<sup>12</sup> See Herbert E. Bolton, "The Epic of Greater America," *American Historical Review* 38, no. 3 (April 1933): 448-474; also Arthur P. Whitaker, "The Origin of the Western Hemispheric Idea," 323-326. For an overview on the rise of American Studies as a field see Gene Wise, "'Paradigm Dramas' in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement," *American Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (1979): 293-337.

<sup>13</sup> See Eugene Staley, "The Myth of the Continents," *Foreign Affairs* 19, no. 3 (April 1941): 481-494.

<sup>14</sup> Although the term "Atlantic World" was introduced by Walter Lippmann in 1917, it was Carlton Hayes who pioneered its academic ascendancy. See Lippmann, "The Defense of the Atlantic World," *New Republic* 17 (1917): 60-61; and Carlton Hayes, "The American Frontier: Frontier of What?," *American Historical Review* 51, no. 2 (January 1946): 199-216. For more on Hayes, see Emmet Kenney, "Ambassador Carlton J. H. Hayes' Wartime Diplomacy: Making Spain a Haven from Hitler," *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 2 (April 2012): 237-260.

<sup>15</sup> Bernard Bailyn, "The Idea of Atlantic History," *Itinerario* 20, no. 1 (March 1996): 19-44.

<sup>16</sup> See Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton University Press, 2011); "Power and visibility: Development and the invention and management of the Third World," *Cultural Anthropology* 3, no. 4 (1988): 428-443.

<sup>17</sup> For example, see Charles Wagley, "Plantation America: A Culture Sphere," in *Caribbean Studies: A Symposium*, ed. Vera Rubin (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1960), 3-13; Edgar T. Thompson, "The Plantation Cycle and Problems of Typology" in *Caribbean Studies: A Symposium*, ed. Vera Rubin (Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 1957), 29-33; Denis M. Benn, "The Theory of Plantation Economy and Society: A Methodological Critique," *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 12, no. 3 (1974): 249-260; and Michel-Rolphe Trouillot, "Culture on the Edges: Creolization in the Plantation Context," *Plantation Society in the Americas* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 9.

<sup>18</sup> Foundational Americanist scholarship on slavery and racism that uses the "plantation America" frame includes Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Classic Comparative Study of Race Relations in the Americas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946); Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon, 1976); David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Carl N. Degler, *Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1971); and Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

<sup>19</sup> See Whitaker, “The Origin of the Western Hemispheric Idea.”

<sup>20</sup> “You promised me poems,” Interview with Derek Walcott, by James Campbell, *The Guardian*, October 3, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/oct/04/poetry.derekwalcott>, retrieved June 20, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> For a more elaborated discussion on Caribbean interest in African Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Belinda Edmondson, *Caribbean Middlebrow: Leisure Culture and the Middle Class* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009), chapter one.

<sup>22</sup> See William Wells Brown, *The Rising Son: The Antecedents and Advancements of the Colored Race* (Boston: A. G. Brown & Co., 1874), 548-9.

<sup>23</sup> See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Brent Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); and Michelle Stephens, *Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States 1914-1962* (Durham: Duke University Press 2005).

<sup>24</sup> See Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*, 10.

<sup>25</sup> See Penny Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997) and Nikhil Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). See also Harvey Neptune, “At Sea: The Caribbean in *Black Empire*,” *Small Axe* 10, no. 2 (June 2006): 269-275.

<sup>26</sup> Bryce Traister, “The Object of Study: Or, Are We Being Transnational Yet?,” *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 2, no. 1 (2010): 8.