

Reprise Editor's Note

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Locating the philosophical origins of transnational theory in American Studies methodology, Rodica Mihăilă's "Cultural Translation and the Discourse of Transnationalism in American Studies" should be read by all students of American Studies. First published in 2000 in *Transatlantic Connections: Essays in Cultural Relocation* (Editura Integral), edited by Mihăilă and Irina Grigorescu Pana, the essay serves as an important introduction to the issues and theories that developed into the discourse of transnationalism in American Studies today, yet it is in no way a basic survey of the previous decade's theoretical articulations of the movement we now consider central to the work of a multitude—perhaps the majority—of scholars in our field. The essay, in nature a review of major contributions to the development of transnationalism, also offers criticism of studies that either fall into imperialist paradigms, do not recognize the post-communist Other, or fail to grasp the global systems and virtual operations that inform the new interpretative orientation of American Studies, internationally.

This issue's REPRISE also offers two erudite analyses of memorialization as applied to the complex task of representing not just "events" but transnational, transcultural realities. In her essay "Monuments of the Black Atlantic: Slavery Memorials in the United States and the Netherlands," Johanna C. Kardux traces the compelling history of the Netherlands' recent attempts—and its resistances—to encounter, represent, and reconcile itself to the narratives of its past participation in slavery, as well as to the truth of its multicultural present. Although Kardux draws on Pierre Nora's theory of historical memory, her critical analysis also exposes the conflict between Nora's nostalgic desire for a politically cohesive national identity and the reality of an increasingly interdependent, transnational, and postcolonial Europe. While Nora dismisses the recent culture of commemoration as artificial, Kardux sees slave memorial projects such as the US-based Homeward Bound Foundation's Middle Passage Monument and the Netherlands' national slavery monument as vital, if contested, attempts to negotiate multicultural and transnational identities and communities. The botched unveiling of the national slavery monument in Amsterdam in 2002, during which the largely Afro-Dutch

audience was fenced off from the unveiling for security reasons, was felt by many slave descendants as “a sign of continued exclusion,” but, according to Kardux, the controversy only testifies to the painful but necessary process of working through a shameful past. The conflicting messages of the event speak to the need for a more complex approach to understanding the attempts of culturally diverse societies to come to terms with a traumatic past, such as are offered by James Young and others, whose respect for difference and equality Kardux depicts as being essential to any inheritors of the American civil rights legacy.

Kardux’s essay is followed by a postscript written in 2011 especially for this publication, updating the scholarship and political consequences of the events she analyzed in the 2004 publication of her essay in *Blackening Europe: The African American Presence*, edited by Heike Raphael-Hernandez (Routledge).

Analyzing the spectral nature of the historical events of 9/11 and the dropping of the atomic bomb—and their manifestation in the form of memorials—Sunil Bald’s “Memories, Ghosts, and Scars: Architecture and Trauma in New York and Hiroshima” offers a critique of architectural responses to geopolitical events that regressively promote a static function for urban architecture, limiting its role to performative, often nationalist representation. Arguing for a complex approach to the potential for architecture to be socially transformational, Bald juxtaposes the work of Japanese American and Japanese architects Minoru Yamasaki (World Trade Center) and Kenzo Tange (Hiroshima’s Peace Memorial) to indicate that the twenty-first century’s architecture should take its cue from Tange, resisting the individuating memorialization of victims in favor of reimagining and readapting our structural (as well as architecturally aural and visual) representations as transformative sites for humanity. Recognizing the transforming, multicultural realities of our cities and nations, as opposed to the static mythologies of our monochromatic heritages, urban architecture today, Bald claims, should be capable of maintaining the intimate dialogue of object and context against the monologue of nationalist frameworks. Bald’s essay first appeared in a journal publication of Josai University in Japan, *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* (December 2001).

These reprised works—and attendant postscripts—are excellent examples of important transnational American Studies scholarship published around the world.