



ABSTRACTS AND NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

ZILÁ BERND

Unpredictable Americas: Resignifying Americanness Under a Relational Perspective

This article is a reflexion originating in the representation of the Americas in its first iconographies (Marten de Vos, Jan van der Straet) from which a cultural hierarchical principle installed itself in detriment of the American culture. For the last five hundred years we have been invested in deconstructing this feeling of supposed cultural dependence. The most successful strategy has been revealing itself in the search for a long memory, not in Europe any longer, but in the native cultures. This conscious awakening to recenter points to transcultural practices initiated in the first centuries after the conquest when the Guarani reproduce models from the European baroque with altered skin color, eye shape and with indigenous ornaments in sculptures which should simply reproduce European models. Brazilian modernism, as launched in Oswald de Andrade's *The Cannibal Manifesto* (1929), is pointing at the necessity of finding our cultural ancestry among the Tupinambá's anthropophagic practices. Édouard Glissant, as he acknowledged the "archipelago" supremacy of thinking (*pensée archipélique* or native) over the system thinking (*pensée de système* or European rationality) and proposed the creolization of cultures, is walking in the same direction of the search for our long duration memory in the heart of America itself. The notion of Americanness, far from proposing the existence of a large homogenous narrative in the Americas, tries to analyze cultural mobilities, resemantization of myths throughout the three Americas and the process of reappropriation characteristic of American cultures beyond narrow notions of nationality. Today, to think Americanness as a heterogeneous construct, implies leaving aside binaries as civilization/barbarism; center/periphery, which characterized a large part of American Studies until practically the end of the 20th, in favor of including the diversity and the excluded third. In the path

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of recent works, as Patrick Imbert's, we bet on the implosion of polarized thinking, on the transnational exchanges and in the natural disposition to the relational and transcultural encounters which will favor processes of reconstellation of the Americas.

Keywords: Americanness; memory; transcultural practices; re-semantization; reconstellation.

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KRYŠTOF KOZÁK

Joyful Tanks Meet Gay Poet. Commemorating Liberation by 'America' in the Age of Global War on Terror

This paper explores cultural memory in US-Czech relations as one of the critical factors influencing the bilateral relationship. It argues that it is possible and indeed desirable to move beyond the dominant post-1989 memory discourse of "America" in the Czech context. After an introduction that links cultural memory to international relations, it explores two different commemorative events relevant for the US-Czech ties. The first one is the official Liberation Festival celebrating 70 years since the US Army entered West Bohemia at the end of WWII. The event is heavy on military symbolism, celebrating the US military strength as well as America's role as a savior of weaker European countries. The second event is the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Allen Ginsberg being crowned the King of May during the Majales of 1965, a major student celebration in Prague at that time. This commemorative event highlighted the aspects of the US-Czech cultural memory that are based on shared values of personal freedom as well as on the shared critical stance towards the governing regime. By comparing and analyzing the two case studies, the conclusion offers new perspectives on potential commemorative activities related to the US-Czech ties.

Keywords: cultural memory; US-Czech relations; commemoration; Pilsen liberation; Allen Ginsberg; King of May

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SHIRLEY GEOK-LIN LIM

Money, Power, and Immigrant Sons in Chang-Rae Lee's *Native Speaker*: Looking for the American Father

The article explores the convergence of four major American novelistic traditions (the mating-marriage tale, the immigrant story of assimilation and acculturation, detective fiction, and socio-political/socio-economist fiction) in Chang-rae Lee's acclaimed first novel, *Native Speaker* (1995), which dramatizes the tragic dynamics between ambition, money, power and moral loss and which offers the reader an insight into a late 20th century narrative of the formation of the new immigrants in the US, where earlier Euro-and, particularly, Anglo-norms are contested by multicultural, multilingual forces driven by globalized hyper-capitalist superstructures. In this unsettled setting, the common 20th century master plots of white-as-native tensions with non-white-immigrant-as-the-Other are interrogated, fragmented and re-assembled in a kinetic metropolis of multiple Otherness, in which money and power, two intrinsically intertwined forces, rule. In the novel's increasingly melodramatic narration of disillusionment, violence and murder, its more primal emotional trajectory arguably is not heterosexual romance, with which the novel begins and ends, but with the quest for a male identity congruent with that generally adopted as a model in the United States. In the novel, male identity is problematized by its embedded contextualization in multiple-tongued, duplicitous and abject ethnic identities, still subordinate or subaltern to white-Anglophone-centric norms. The elder Korean male figures (the father, the political mentor), present in the novel, fail to, or cannot, serve as American fathers. Without fathers able to nurture the immigrant son to a psychologically successful manhood (dramatized as a subject possessing authentic agency with the capacity to sustain intimate and social relationships), the novel's late 20th century re-inscription of the quintessentially American theme of quest for individual self takes the English language (also allegorized in the figure of the upper-class white wife, Leila) as the sentimental trope by which a national manhood is to be achieved—a post-immigrant salvation that is figuratively and literally articulated.

Keywords: Korean American identity; migrant narratives; acculturation; white Anglocentrism; ethnic agency; Chang-rae Lee; *Native Speaker*; money; command of English; manhood; abjection

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CHIEN-TING LIN

Re-signifying “Asia” in the Transnational Turn of Asian/American Studies

Bringing inter-Asia cultural studies into conversation with Asian American critique, this paper aims to reframe the critical analysis of the scattered hegemonies of US imperialism in articulating the transpacific historical interconnections. Rather than privileging the US as a primary site of investigation and critique, I draw careful attention to the Cold War conditions of inter-Asian migration as an entry point for discussing how the geopolitics of Taiwanese modernity, from the Cold War up to neoliberal globalization, are inextricably linked to Japanese colonialism, US militarism and modernization, and Chinese globalization. To develop my theoretical and historical (re)conceptualization of “Asia” in Asian/American studies, I look at how migrant narrative of migrant workers in the nonfiction novel *Our Stories* speak to the power dynamics of the US Cold War involvement in Asia, neoliberal globalization, and Taiwan subimperialist relations with its neighboring countries. Whereas Asian American cultural critique offers a new analytics to enable a reconceptualization of Asian America without confining it to an identitarian category, inter-Asia studies redirect critical attention to the historical undercurrents of inter-Asia geopolitics that are largely obscured by the dominant knowledge paradigm of the US Cold War politics in the regions of Asia Pacific.

Keywords: Asian American Studies; reconceptualization of Asia; migrant narratives; post cold-war power dynamics; American-Taiwanese relations; Asian American cultural criticism; inter-Asia geopolitics; paradigm of the US Cold War politics

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