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- 1 The notion of "American Studies" no more goes of itself than any decreed necessity for their "renovation." The distortions the locution endured over time threaten to head us for the situation derided by Kant¹ in which one man tries to milk a he-goat while another holds up a sieve to gather the expected product. Some semantic clean-up is in order, in the light of dominant European views. I aim less at giving a sense of American studies (capital A, lower case s)² in Europe than at suggesting why most Europeans see the American approach to "American Studies" (capital A, capital S) as not necessarily the only legitimate one.
- 2 In a nutshell : one can be reluctant to read under the expression "American Studies": 1) anything other than the body of studies conducted on the subject of the United States of America, 2) more than an attempt to hide under it an absence of method, and 3) the notion that studies of the United States should be exclusively considered on the basis of models now proposed in the American academic community. Simply put, 1) American Studies is a field and not a method, 2) the study of the United States is too serious a concern to be left exclusively to American Americanists, and 3) potentially seminal differences appear when an object is looked at from within or without, or, according to an old rural French proverb, "what is good for the horse may not be good for the donkey." Basing our reflexion on internal American debates could be an effect of belated hegemonic views: shouldn't we move on to a genuinely non-imperial view of American Studies in Europe and the rest of the world ?
1) American "American Studies" and its discontent.
- 3 A notion that bobbed back to the United States after its use as cultural Marshall Plan or ideological Cold-War machine, "American Studies" in the US has long been wondering where it was to sit. Its history has even been defined as "a history of crises." Few meetings of the ASA have avoided debates on what American Studies might or should be.³ One central question revolved around a problem that appears insoluble when translated in terms of another culture: what could "Norwegian Studies," say, be in

Norway ? Whereas few Europeans would find it difficult to define what "American studies" are, in spite of different disciplinary agendas, our American colleagues still seem unconvinced that an outsider's views can be as fruitful as an insider's; but, as a Frenchman, I know full well, for example, that without American historian Robert Paxton's work on World War II in France, our view of the Vichy régime could not possibly have been altered to the point it was.

- 4 The groping for identity that is legible under ASA's endemic angst over its tasks seems as open-ended as Gandhi's retort to the question of what he thought of Western civilization: "That, he answered, would be a good idea." It also reads as the expression of a desire that American Studies be more than a field of investigation: a discipline founded on exceptionalist or neo-exceptionalist views whereby the United States could be holistically studied, the results projected as a dominant, self-defined general view of the country, the stakes logically becoming those of the ideological nature of that projection. Where the ideological agenda was clear in post-War years, the changes since undergone by American society had as their apparently only possible mode of transcription not an area-by-area critique of the approach thus far favored, but a total revisiting of the ideological angles under which the same global approach could be used. Under the impact of societal changes and theoretical imports, what defines itself as "American Studies," and whose bane or ontological dilemma lay for the most part in its willful singular, operated a series of lateral moves that did not alter its problems, everything happening as if all disciplines feeding scholarship on the United States had to be changed simultaneously under the impulse of a single new paradigm. "American Studies," it seems, could not modify its various constitutive parts according to the legitimate demand of intellectual evolutions and discoveries but had to undergo a complete mutation according to new master narratives. What can be seen as an evasion of the nagging question of disciplinary identity happened on two successive planes, temporal and spatial, both coping with the fascination for "the new." Both departures from an unhappy situation were radical: as radical as in the universal blossoming of the prefix "post-,"⁴ as radical as in aiming for the "global."⁵ But the temptation remains to think that the debates concerning an apparent move from United States-centered American studies to vaguely defined "international" American Studies might be a last-ditch attempt at reconducting still another version of American views of the field. Could not, one wonders, increasingly polemical centrifugal concentration on margins and peripheries, within and without, appear as a gesture to avoid facing the problems posed by an apparently unassailable center, compensate an increasingly felt powerlessness in front of an unchallenged economic system and mode of social development?
- 5 One *can* be puzzled by the lack of coincidence between welcome discourses of openness and overture to the other – in particular to the views of Americanists across the world – and a set of principles and practices that remain, seen from the outside, astonishingly American-centered. The fact that academics from different countries should convene in Tokyo to discuss "New American Studies" signals we are following an agenda generated by the current concerns of the Americanist community in the United States.⁶
- 6 But we need not for all that think of different conceptions of our intellectual activity as obsolete for the rest of the world. I was recently reproached for being "retrograde" because I was trying, in the test issue of our new electronic *European Journal*, to present the variety of European approaches to United States Studies – a presentation very

much needed in my eyes, as most of what is being done outside of the United States remains largely unknown to our American colleagues. I might as well have been told that the loud principle of openness to "the other" could perfectly do without the actual views held by the other in question. Everything looked as if, a softened version of the original Cultural Studies being the dominant model in the English-speaking world, anybody dealing with American Studies elsewhere had better conform to *that* version of openness to the celebrated but abstract "other." The trouble is, however, that the version of cultural studies and of the "internationalization of American Studies" currently prevailing in American-initiated endeavors is not necessarily that which the "international other" is spontaneously willing to adopt for all sorts of historical and intellectual reasons.

2) Against the sloganization of intellectual life.

- 7 In most of Europe, Americanists train in disciplinary specialties – literature, history, sociology, anthropology, ethnology, political science, photography, law, philosophy or film; one is known as an Americanist because one applies these aptitudes to the society and culture of the United States. The theoretical work accomplished in Europe, and particularly in France over the last fifty years, always had disciplinary bases; its conversion into a decontextualized package of so-called "French theory," or "theory" for short, has altered, and at times made impenetrable, its original intentions. Thus European scholars of the United States are often puzzled at the success of "cultural studies" for at least two reasons: one is that in countries that, for decades, read the work of Goldmann, Lukacs, Leenhardt or Macherey, Barthes, Althusser, Friedmann, Morin, Bourdieu or Metz, the ideological dimension of disciplines is so obvious that "cultural studies" as practiced with sometimes naïve gusto in the United States looks somewhat like the proud reinvention of the wheel; the other reason is that one of the founding tenets of the originally British "cultural studies," as elaborated or practiced by Raymond Williams, Thompson, Willis, David Chaney or even John Fiske, i.e. the notion of class, happens to be the one most often slipped under the carpet while the headings of gender, ethnicity and race are allowed to dominate without further reference to problems posed by class appurtenance and structure. "Cultural studies" can thus appear not only as a straight-jacket that leaves aside all sorts of other potentially interesting angles, but also as one that has been deprived of one of its important founding dimensions. Born in Marxism, Cultural Studies is now focusing on ethnicity and gender at the expense of class questions, and this in a country with no political base or organization to relay the suggested social change. Some will read in this blatant fact a trace of the divorce between academic status and activity and the realities of social power in the United States; others will see in it an approach that mimics social evolutions rather than analyzing them, removed from economic and political realities, accompanying the rise and praise of communitarian identity and difference while the holders of real economic power keep laughing all the way to the bank, comforted by the fact that whereas the principle of "divide and rule" used to be essential for power structures, the people themselves (or academics) now seem to make sure this comfortable situation prevails. In the words of Walter Benn Michaels:

What is surprising is that diversity should have become the hallmark of liberalism. For as long as we're committed to thinking of difference as something that should be respected, we don't have to worry about it as something that should be eliminated. [. . .] as long as the left continues to worry about diversity, the right won't have to worry about inequality.⁷

- 8 Removing the class dimension from the hallowed tetralogy of "gender, race, ethnicity, and class" generates doubt among European cultures marked by a political history in which the last term has always been an ideological watershed, whether one adhered to or disapproved of the Marxist vulgate. European politics have consistently dealt with inequalities and inequities among gender, race and ethnic origin as linked with, or side effects of, the class structure of society, in cultures that, contrary to a certain American tradition of consensus, never took it for granted that the predominant economic and political systems were the only possible ones. Rid of their class-dimension in American academe, "cultural studies" look to most Europeans as somewhat cosmetic and naïve, not to say, at times, wrong-headed or self-indulgent. As my colleague Pap N'Diaye puts it, "cultural studies frequently—and surprisingly juxtapose a great deconstructionist attention to narratives and very weak contextualization"; he proposes that we substitute to the cultural-studies steamroller humbler, more pragmatic but more efficient modes of intelligibility of American cultures, methods that avoid both the excesses of the "linguistic turn" and the dangers of mythological reification. Furthermore, as Pierre Guerlain remarks, "after fifty years and one transatlantic crossing, cultural studies have radicalized their vocabulary but become acculturated to the dominant ideological system that they think they are able to avoid and transgress."⁸ Which reminds him, and us, that transgression, like carnivals, does not question the bases of established systems but makes them tolerable. And he adds that "the disciplinary fragmentation that accompanies the communitarization of knowledge espouses the language of diversity in a society where inequality and injustice abound," thus masking central issues.
- 9 The question, in American Studies, also revolves around the lack of specific methods; the catch-all term of "cultural studies" often leads to a somewhat psittacic and deleterious sloganization of intellectual life rather than to the elaboration of adapted tools for the exploration of specific questions. The word "Studies" conveniently occultates the problem. Whereas most European specialists of the United States bank on their disciplinary specialization and call upon others for interdisciplinary collaboration, everything happens as if American Studies took the question of personal interdisciplinary competence for granted, while interdisciplinarity, which indeed has its necessity and merits, can only exist if its practitioners have equal training in the various disciplines they call upon. What threatens to result, otherwise, of a self-decreed interdisciplinary approach is, too often, "I-liked-the-film" literary studies, "this-reminds-me-of-the-situation-at-home" poetics, pop sociology, impressionist history, anthropology-and-milk, "light" semiology, political science-and-water, or the sentimental wishful thinking of "popular culture." Real interdisciplinarity, as opposed to vague syncretism, requires the possibility of disciplinary transcendence based on the acquisition of an improbable gamut of personal competence. Also, the cultural studies approach to American Studies often looks to Europeans as being detrimental to academic exchange. Not only does the internal multidisciplinary competence of the historian, the literary critic or the semiotician not seem required but the specialization in communitarian areas makes academic dialogue between specialties perilous, knowledge being condemned to localism and often losing its scientific bases in favor of militant positions. As Pierre Nora recently remarked,⁹ peremptory notions of collective memory threaten the difficult and ever problematic task of history. And the reason "radical American Studies" attempting to concentrate on the links between literature,

culture and society in a massively referential fashion are often looked at suspiciously in Europe, is less one of distinct ideological choices than a theoretical opposition, on the part of literary scholars, to the questionable measuring stick of "relevance": they know well enough that literary scholarship itself requires a whole array of competence (from linguistics and semiotics to rhetoric, stylistics and social sciences) and cannot be content with the referential aspect of literary works. Most European literary scholars and historians both deplore the fact that, in the United States, the baby of reading skills should have been thrown out with the bathwater of New Criticism and Agrarian ideology. European academe may not have massively adopted Cultural Studies because it intellectually cannot welcome such statements as, for example, that of Barry Shank:

10

[Cultural Studies] has developed and benefited from an increasing sensitivity to issues of race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality. It resists the codification of its methods and its theories, it desires to remain resolutely anti-disciplinary; and it remains conscious of the fact that there is always 'something at stake' in its work. To this extent, cultural studies sounds like nothing so much as the very best American Studies.

- 10 Resistance to such a point of view shines through historian Marie-Jeanne Rossignol's note that "'cultural studies' close at least as many doors as they claim to open."¹¹ As Sabine Sielke has noted,¹² "interdisciplinarity does not follow from a [chancy and risky] synthesis of methods," adding that

to do interdisciplinary work primarily means to approach a scientific or scholarly problem or question with a number of methods or theoretical perspectives and through the practice of more than one discipline. This, of course, requires us either to be familiar with the methods of several fields of inquiry or to allow other scholars to provide that expertise.

- 11 Europeans, on the whole, seem convinced that, in spite of Max Weber's remark that "we owe many of our best hypotheses and knowledge to dilettantes,"¹³ disciplinary rigor must remain the order of the day if any kind of academic exchange is to be maintained over and against unstantiated, impressionistic or militant views. The "something at stake" Barry Shank talks about, cannot, in the eyes of European scholarship, be anything other than knowledge arrived at as objectively as possible.
- 12 The endless recycling of current buzzwords and ill-digested references under collegial pressure, the indiscriminate and often ill-informed use of "French Theory" as a decontextualized tool makes for a weak methodological backbone that cannot be replaced by a conformist or complacent consensus of political correctness. Predictable conclusions derived from partisan premises generate dubious intellectual gain. Few advances can be made through the repetition of *a priori* convictions. European Americanists massively remain attached to the archive, method, logical hierarchies of notions and phenomena, to context and historicization, semiotic and aesthetic complexities or contradictions; inserting potentially different points of view in arguments, according to the scientific method, is rare in Cultural Studies, the soundness of preferred ideological positions remaining by and large taken for granted. As careful an adequation of tool and object as possible also appears as a key element of judgment. More often than not, "cultural studies" are seen as recycling sloganized thought, crossing methods of analysis used by other disciplines with little care for their compatibility.¹⁴ American "cultural studies" often occupy an academic and intellectual field that is that of other disciplines (sociology, semiology or psychoanalysis, for

example) in other countries. As Guerlain notes, where a number of works would be classified as literature, sociology or history in Europe, they fall under "African-American interest," "Women's studies," "gender studies" or "Latino-Latina Studies" in the United States. Favoring "interpreting communities" rather than disciplinary foundations, they are seen as placating pre-established doctrines on all objects, often appear to pursue other goals than the original version of British cultural studies, and seem to create a false impression of coherence where their only common character may be the indiscriminate and often pedantic use of a composite lingo. Finally, the quick rotation of intellectual fashions in the United States explains why the most flamboyant aspects of cultural studies feel ephemeral.

- 13 Fluck and Claviez's realistic, both humble and ambitious definition of "American Studies" as "a joint, interdisciplinary academic endeavor to gain systematic knowledge about American society and culture in order to understand the historical and present-day meaning and significance of the United States"¹⁵ probably has the suffrage of most Europeans but very few supporters among such as hunger for something "new" or, at least, the latest "hot thing".

3) For a post-imperial view of American Studies abroad.

- 14 Last but not least in this set of ironies is in effect that American colleagues who proclaim most loudly the necessity to internationalize American Studies in order to make them "new" do not seem sensitive to a built-in potential contradiction. Just as "American Studies" favors a holistic view of the United States, "internationalizing American Studies" could be construed as a desire to generalize to the rest of the world the modalities of study that mainly exist in an American context. The impressive ignorance of —or disregard for the production of non-American Americanists among American Americanists points to an easier, readily available means of "internationalizing" American studies, i.e.: reading what is being produced elsewhere than in the United States or in languages other than English.
- 15 As the proposal of "New American Studies" emerges, little militates for the need for non-American Americanists to revolutionize the nature of their work, however illuminating the debate may be. The suggestion that traditional modes of European curiosity about American subjects is no longer relevant may ironically betray yet another imperial attempt at exporting a United States-born new paradigm. But being Americanists does not make non-Americans American, and European Americanists may be skeptical, since the idea can be construed as harboring an unchanged agenda of influence under a vocal anti-hegemonic discourse. As the celebrated "other" sometimes appears as the individual or collective alibi of whoever endeavors to strengthen the reasons they have to remain the same, Europeans have the bad taste of remaining different, and working from different angles with different measuring sticks. That American Americanists should be tempted to encourage a widening of perspectives because the original object of their research and reflexion is no longer something they think they can grasp or account for in comfortable ideological terms does not necessarily mean that European Americanists should trade their specific modes of approach of what to them naturally remains a discernible object of study for the one suggested by their dissatisfied American colleagues. Rob Kroes's recent claim that European Americanists are "redirecting their gaze" towards Europe and that the EAAS, for example, through the public space opened by its publications and the moderating efforts of its board members, does indeed contribute to creating a "meaningful

community" of European scholars probably comes much closer to defining the "novelty" of European American studies, one that strives for greater independence from American models. Europeans have tended to decide that, overall, good scholarship was more important than contingent politics, and that the devising of new perspectives, the intensification of intra- and extra-European exchanges, the identification of new objects and the elaboration of new intellectual tools seem more productive than joining in the second-hand recycling of buzzwords and the borrowed paradigms of distorted Derrida or tired, late-phase Baudrillard. Solid disciplinary bases that allow for interdisciplinary dialogue and sharing,¹⁶ methodological and discursive innovation and instantiated appreciation¹⁷ are all the novelty European Americanists may need to envisage. They, after all, should constitute an "interpreting community" holding the same rights as others.

- 16 On the whole, I doubt whether European Americanists more than rarely see eye to eye with the type of "internationalization" of American Studies recently promoted, often seen as what has already been called a "new" "version of American transnational exceptionalism."¹⁸
- 17 In his first address to the newly established IASA,¹⁹ comparatist Djelal Kadir, expressing a desire to "Defend America against Its Devotees," adopted a somewhat prophetic, near apocalyptic tone that, besides not being indispensable to the work of the humble researcher, banked on notions Europeans have long interiorized. Referring to "the field of American Studies" even as he invoked a "titanic paradigm shift," what he then defined as "the challenge of being an Americanist" was not one a non-American Americanist ever needed fear. For a European, "American Studies" obviously cannot be the "national(ist) project" he denounced and none of the reasons for his disquiet hold for Europeans who do not systematically walk in the footsteps of their American colleagues. When Professor Kadir says that "From a national project, America is shifting to an international object with historical density and global signification," he is making plain what Europeans have known at least since the end of World War II. When he discovers that "From an object of devotion, America is becoming a subject of investigation, scientific scrutiny, and secular criticism," one wonders whether he has spoken to any European Americanists over the last five decades. While he proposes that "From a generator of epistemic paradigms for its own assessment, America is emerging as a case for study through criteria and scholarly principles that do not originate in America itself," this has always been seen by non-American Americanists as their task. Stating that "From a sponsor of American Studies, America is becoming a beneficiary of human resources and intellectual capital aimed at examining America and its place in the world," he merely restates the hope and conviction of Europeans. In other words, Professor Kadir's misgivings and proposals, for all their invitation to novelty, hardly come as novel to European minds. And when he suggests that "From a discipline in self-denial, American Studies is being revisioned as a powerfully determinative discipline and formative discourse," I, for one, cannot see how Europeans could ever have thought their activity a "discipline in self-denial" or that they have ever considered their activity as mere "discourse." I see clear benefits in his desire to integrate a hemispheric dimension to American studies, but I do not suppose any European studying the United States ever had the naivety not to integrate the United States' various involvements in Latin America to his or her "cognitive map" of the country. I do not suppose European Americanists ever saw the "ideological imaginary encoded variously as 'the American dream' or as 'the American Way,'" as

"unquestionable" or ever treated it as not susceptible of being "subject to sustainable inquiry and demystification." In fact, I always thought most of the activities and duties of European Americanists basically consisted in trying to replace an uninformed fascination or repulsion with solid scientific analyses and data. So that when point 8 of Professor Kadir's agenda proposes that "From a gross epistemic purveyor of pedagogy in realpolitik and geopolitical assessments, America is about to become a net recipient of knowledge production about America," I am sure the double reaction of European Americanists can only be 1) "It may be time it should," and 2) "Why haven't we been read before when we've always been here?" All the more so as the recipes advocated (realignment in the hierarchy of disciplinary fields; or a return to the archive) more or less follow the reality of evolutions in American studies at the hands of European Americanists who may not need imported lessons on the manner in which they should think about the United States, the doubts and questions raised here having been theirs for years. To them, the United States is, as a matter of course, a defined object of study: a country, distinct from its neighbors, with its society, institutions, people, cultures, history, artistic life, media, academic life, economy, foreign policy. That the effects of all this, and particularly the latter two, on the outside world should be taken into consideration has always gone of itself, as has international collaboration; but that is no reason to distinguish in principle the study of that particular country from that of others, unless one desires to recycle exceptionalist views in new clothes.

- 18 The only useful contribution of outsiders is what they can bring precisely *because* they are outsiders. And non-American American studies do not necessarily need to get involved with vocal "international" issues possibly born not so much from a genuine concern for the views of non-Americans on America but from internal divergences that use American Studies as a political and institutional bone of contention, as one geometrical locus of ideological tensions. Surprisingly enough, European Americanists feel perfectly able to define what American studies should be without outside help.
- 19 Marie-Jeanne Rossignol, considering the ongoing debates in the United States, writes that "it seems more reasonable to count on Europeans to renew American studies by throwing off the yoke of problematics traditionally imported from the United States and renewing approaches to the subject."²⁰ A recent newsletter of the Greek association encouraged "notes and impressions on the ways in which our study of the U.S. should/can/must/might be, or objectively is, different from the efforts deployed by our colleagues in the U.S." Europeans do not have to care about what is "usable" for national self-conceptions, nor to limit their investigations to "what will go down well" with the various components of American academic audiences. As Heinz Ickstadt once put it, "American Studies should accept its name as its limitation and its boundary."²¹
- 20 Freedom of thought requires no Panurgian agenda, new or old. Method can never be a matter of acclaim, applause or referenda. Exceptionalism redux?: in more ways than one, to pick up Sabine Sielke's humorous aside, "doing American Studies [requires] a large dose of negative capability"²² indeed.
- 21 American studies in Europe will be new as long as there are scholars who do not feel compelled to follow the most-travelled roads. No new models can be decreed; they evolve out of the logics and necessities of intellectual research and only impose themselves in time if operationally efficient. Real "internationalization" of American studies can only be achieved through multidirectional pooling of ongoing work on the United States. And the young will take care of the new.

- 22 That our American colleagues listen to us and read us more than they do: that would be a really good beginning for a true internationalization of American studies that, for Europeans, is, shall, and should remain the aggregate sum of the various disciplinary contributions to the study of the United States. European scholars may not and possibly *should not* follow American views of American Studies if they want to remain useful to American studies.
- 23 Anthropologist Leroi-Gourhan once wrote somewhere that "facts tended to go all in the same direction when they were lit from one side only." It may just be, after all, that the solution to the apparently agonizing issues in American Studies will not consist in anybody's talking louder but in our American friends' listening more closely to what goes on elsewhere.

NOTES

1. In *The Critique of Pure Reason*, through the Hellenistic anecdote first relayed by Lucianus.
2. Precise information on these matters is now available in the trial issue of the *European Journal of American Studies* <<http://ejas.revues.org>>.
3. For decades, caught between disciplinary regroupings, (the MLA or the ALA for literature, OAH for history), members of the ASA, barring famous disciplinary figures willing to put their shoulder to the collective wheel and endeavor to define what ASA might be left to deal with, were liable to be interested in areas little studied in disciplinary organizations, so called "popular culture," loosely defined, being one of the attractive rallying centers in the 1970s and the early 1980s, soon replaced by identity-centered concerns (over 90% of the papers presented at the ASA convention in Atlanta were related to identity in one way or another). But even then, such a renowned scholar as Leo Marx, as dedicated to the cause as he was, called American Studies in the 1960s an "unscientific method," and now calls it a "non-discipline."
4. If there *were* reasons to talk about "post-modernism" – post-modernity being an infinitely more complex matter, too often reduced to simplistic formulas – if one could indeed talk of the "post-industrial" because of objective changes in techniques and human activity, and if "post-colonial," given a precise content, can be historically significant, it may be somewhat more difficult to follow the drift that led, no tongue in no cheek, to such self-defeating expressions as "post-human" and, even more disconcertingly, to the "post-woman" I recently read about and makes me long for the soon-to-come period of the post-ridiculous.
5. The recent accent on internationalization may also read as an insistence on the "post-American," since the fashion now seems to consist in speaking against any United States-centered American studies, all the more freely as that initiative was mostly taken by academics from the United States.
6. This paper was read at the International Symposium ('New American Studies in Europe Today') organized at the Tokyo Green Palace Hotel by Professor Jun Furuya in on March 11, 2006.

7. *New York Times Magazine*, 11 avril 2004.
8. <http://etudes.americaines.free.fr/guerlain.html#11>
9. "Pierre Nora et le métier d'historien," *Le Monde* 2 n°105, Feb. 18, 2006, pp. 20-27
10. "American Studies: From Culture Concept to Cultural Studies," 1997. Quoted in Kaenel, <http://epsilon3.georgetown.edu/~coventrm/asa2000/panel2/kaenel.html>, note 5.
11. <http://etudes.americaines.free.fr/rossignol.html>)
12. *European Journal of American Studies*, op.cit.
13. *Le Savant et le politique*, p.64. This is the French edition of two lectures (*Wissenschaft als Beruf* and *Politik als Beruf*) delivered at the University of Munich in 1917. Julien Freund edited them as one volume in 1959, and they were then prefaced by Raymond Aron. This quote is excerpted from the new translation by Catherine Colliot-Thélène (Paris : La Découverte, 2003).
14. The confusion of agendas may generate rather surprising results for European eyes. Thus a specialist of Chicano culture like Lomeli feels unembarrassed to quote Toynbee's but not Marx's views on the repetition of history however useful the latter would be to assess the return of "political correctness" as "farce" after its tragic use in the Maoist "cultural revolution" in China; one wonders also at hearing numerous specialists of ethnic cultures put a premium on magical and mythical thought which one would have thought 1) had to be examined with particular attention in the light of, for example, the rise of the religious Right in the United States, and 2) had been placed at critical distance by their potential political use as well as by the various elements of an otherwise praised and repetitious use of "French theory" that hardly favors these views, rather inviting defiance vis-à-vis them...
15. Proposed in 2003 by Winfried Fluck and Thomas Claviez in the "Introduction" to their edition of *Theories of American Culture, Theories of American Studies*, Tübingen: Narr, 2003, ix.
16. The European issue of the *Revue Française d'Etudes Américaines*, « Stemming the Mississippi », for example, or the current development of collaborations in the visual arts.
17. One example would be Jean-Paul Rocchi's attempts at moving gender, sexuality and racial studies beyond the usual binary oppositions. See his introduction ("The Other Bites the Dust; La mort de l'Autre : vers une épistémologie de l'identité ») to *Cahiers Charles V* - n° 40 (The Object Identity : Epistemology and Cross Perspectives).
18. Kaenel (Id).
19. « Defending America against Its Devotees », Leyden, 2003.
20. <http://etudes.americaines.free.fr/rossignol.html>) :
21. Ickstadt, "American Studies in an age of globalization, *American Quarterly* 54.4 (2002) : 554.
22. Op.cit.

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