

## Contents

### Issues Published in 2014

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#### Amst 59.1 (2014)

KATJA SARKOWSKY

#### **The Spatial Politics of Urban Modernity: Henry James's *Washington Square***

**ABSTRACT:** *The American Scene* and other later texts have been at the center of attention in the critical discussion of Henry James's explorations of urban modernity. Against the background of these readings and the theoretical assumptions of the so-called spatial turn and urban studies, this contribution looks at *Washington Square* (1881) as an early example for James's ambivalent investigations of American urbanity and modernity. Understanding space not as a background for the plot but as constitutive for the agenda of the novel, I will focus on presentations of New York's gendered and racialized spatiality in *Washington Square*. While less complex and developed than the later texts usually discussed in this context, *Washington Square* presents New York as an increasingly diverse and dynamic environment, intertwined with both the nation and transnational processes, and thus a place of conflict over early urban modernity from the 1820s to the time of its publication in 1881.

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LAURA MICHIELS

#### **The Presence of Hart Crane in Samuel R. Delany's *Atlantis: Model 1924***

**ABSTRACT:** Approximately thirty-five years after he first read Hart Crane's work, African American science fiction writer Samuel R. Delany wrote a story in which he described a fictitious encounter between his father and the poet, entitled *Atlantis: Model 1924*. The following article offers a detailed study of Crane's presence in Delany's novella. I argue that Delany seeks to mimic Crane's intention to present "a synthesis of America" in his collection of poems titled *The Bridge* (1930), a sequence that attempted to bridge between a wide variety of cultures and historical periods (qtd. in Edelman 179). Delany adds to his predecessor's audacious venture: he supplements it with fragments of African American history and develops a chain of literary connections revolving around Hart Crane. The first part of my paper explores the bridges between African American and white American culture that are established in the narrative. In the second and final part, I explore how Delany incorporates his predecessor's source material and poems, as well

as other tributes to Crane, into his novella. As its title indicates, *Atlantis: Model 1924* evinces its creator's views on questions of (poetic) origins and originality.

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CHRISTIAN KNIRSCH

**Richard Powers' *The Echo Maker*: Reassessing the Neuronovel in American Literature**

**ABSTRACT:** According to Marco Roth, one of the most recent subgenres of the novel, the neuronovel, unquestioningly embraces the empirical neurological worldview. One of the best known novels he lists in this category is certainly Richard Powers' *The Echo Maker* (2003). Such an interpretation of the novel though is reductionist and a crude oversimplification of its epistemological framework: on a symbolical level, *The Echo Maker* rather discusses the supposed dichotomy between Freudian psychology and the more empirically and anatomically oriented approaches that are predominant in contemporary neurology. This theoretical debate is centred on two neurologists' competing approaches to the treatment of Capgras, the delusional syndrome the protagonist of the novel, Mark, suffers from. As it is, one approach considers Capgras a neuro-anatomical phenomenon while the other treats it as a psychological disorder. In the assessment of the intellectual development of the two neurologists engaging in this debate lies the key to the assessment of the novel's epistemological stance.

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ALESSANDRA DE MARCO

**War as a Form of "Apotheosis": The Militarization of the USA and Don DeLillo's *End Zone***

**ABSTRACT:** The present paper investigates Don DeLillo's 1972 *End Zone*, arguing that football is a metaphor for war and that DeLillo's analysis of football and its culture effectively constitutes a critique of the war mentality undergirding American society. In this novel DeLillo meditates on the historical process that historian Michael S. Sherry calls the "militarization" (xi) of the USA and that, since the 1930s, turned the country into a military and economic superpower allowing a war mentality to enter deep into the grain of American culture. The essay will read DeLillo's focus on language against Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok's psychoanalytical theories on demetaphorization as the linguistic counterpart of melancholia and against Herbert Marcuse's notion of functional language as a linguistic behavior that facilitates the annihilation of critical thinking. Both functional language and demetaphorization allow militarization to enforce its own discourse. Suffering from melancholia, the novel's protagonists fall prey to incorporation, a process whereby they disavow death as the product of war and, with it, pain, suffering, and destruction. As a result, the novel offers a cautionary tale about the consequences arising from an excessive

exaltation of war as a means through which a nation seeks to affirm its “apotheosis” (*End Zone* 162).

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CORNELIA KLECKER

### **Authentication Authority and Narrative Self-Erasure in *Fight Club***

**ABSTRACT:** This case study on the film adaptation *Fight Club* will serve as a representative of how some successful Hollywood productions delicately balance classic Hollywood narrative with the more self-conscious art-cinema narration. In order to illustrate how typical Hollywood conventions can be broken, a close reading of the film will focus on the narratological issues of “authentication authority” as well as the postmodern device of “narrative self-erasure.” By stressing the importance of the narrative self-erasure of a central character in the film and with it the removal of everything he stands for, this article furthermore attempts to undermine frequent criticism on *Fight Club* that accuses the film of promoting a misogynist culture.

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JONATHAN BERLINER

### **Barack Obama’s Landscapes: The Unfolding Road as Metaphor of American Unity**

**ABSTRACT:** This essay examines Barack Obama’s rhetoric during the 2008 presidential campaign. I argue that the use of metaphoric roads and landscapes in his speeches helped Obama to create a diverse political coalition by depicting the citizenry traveling together on a shared American journey. Such language also enabled Obama to bring together a range of policy objectives as stations along this common path. Obama’s campaign logo enhanced this political imagery by presenting a dynamic scene with the stripes of the American flag suggesting movement over a hillside set against the backdrop of a rising sun. The essay analyzes Obama’s use of these verbal and visual tropes in the context of similar rhetoric employed throughout the history of American public discourse from John Winthrop to Martin Luther King, Jr.

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**Amst 59.2 (2014)**

**Religion and the Marketplace**

**JAN STIEVERMANN, ANTHONY SANTORO, and DANIEL SILLIMAN (Guest Editors)**

DANIEL SILLIMAN, JAN  
STIEVERMANN, and  
ANTHONY SANTORO

**Introduction: Religion and the Marketplace**

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UTA BALBIER

**‘Selling Soap and Salvation’: Billy Graham’s Consumer-Styled Revival Meetings and the Reshaping of German Evangelicalism in the 1950s**

**ABSTRACT:** In the 1950s and 1960, the American evangelist Billy Graham held his first large revival meetings in Germany. This article explores how the German evangelical organizers and German Christians more generally related to Graham’s particular campaign style that blended mission and marketing. It uses Graham’s revival meetings in Germany to explore the multi-layered interplay between religion and consumption in West Germany in the 1950s and 60s and shows how rapidly changing economic circumstances in post-War Germany and emerging new consumption patterns also had an impact on how Germans discussed, experienced, and practiced religion. This article argues that the impact that Billy Graham had on the German religious landscape cannot be assessed solely on the basis of church membership (which only showed marginal if any increase after the revival meetings), but argues that Graham brought a significant cultural change to the German religious landscape which slowly embraced the American concept of selling and consuming faith.

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HANS KRABBENDAM

**Opening a Market for Missions: American Evangelicals and the Re-Christianization of Europe, 1945-1985**

**ABSTRACT:** In the mid-1940s the newly revitalized evangelicals in the United States fostered great plans to evangelize the world. They felt that their efforts were thwarted by two monopolistic arrangements. The first monopoly was the result of the official position of the more liberal World Council of Churches. Because this global organization had strong backing from the established churches in the United States and presented itself as the official spokesperson for global Protestantism, evangelicals felt locked out of prospective missionary opportunities in Europe and its colonies. In order to open these religious markets, the

evangelical leadership launched an alternative organization, the World Evangelical Fellowship and simultaneously embarked on a re-Christianization campaign. The second monopoly became visible once American missionaries landed in Europe. They encountered restrictions caused by nation states and established churches. Their efforts to overcome both obstacles moved through five stages. In the late 1940s, they defined Europe as a mission field. In the next decade they launched a great number of mission programs. This resulted in the formation of an alternative evangelical subculture in Europe in the 1960s, which diversified in the 1970s, and fragmented in the 1980s, with the new media revolution in TV and satellite. Halfway through this process, in the 1960s, evangelicals had found viable ways to displace monopolistic exclusion by religious pluralism. This not only led to the incorporation of Europe in global evangelicalism, but also opened opportunities for new and surprising joint ventures with competitors.

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GEOFFREY PLANK

### **Quaker Reform and Evangelization in the Eighteenth Century**

**ABSTRACT:** When they first arrived in England's North American colonies, the Quakers enjoyed several competitive advantages over other Christian groups. Quaker Meetings were relatively inexpensive to run compared to more formal churches, and partly as a consequence Quakerism spread quickly. Things changed, however, in the mid-eighteenth century after Quaker reformers took control of the meetings' disciplinary structures. They condemned intermarriage between Quakers and non-Quakers, made greater demands on the Friends, and in general adopted a stance that in retrospect appear to have hurt Quakerism's ability to attract new adherents. Still the reformers continued to proselytize even as they expelled the wayward from their meetings. Violence on the Pennsylvania frontier after 1763 made it politically and practically difficult for the Quakers to evangelize through conventional means. In response the reformers redoubled their efforts to enforce severe disciplinary strictures against theatre-going, horse-racing, excessive drinking, participation in warfare and slaveholding, always believing that moral purity would make Quakerism more attractive. Examining several leaders of the Quaker reform effort including Abraham Farrington, John Woolman, Israel and John Pemberton, and Anthony Benezet, this essay argues that these men never intended to abandon evangelization in the mid-eighteenth century, nor did they want the Quakers to become an insular, minority sect.

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INKEN PROHL

### **California 'Zen': Asian Spirituality Made in America**

**ABSTRACT:** Focusing on the United States as a contact zone for transcultural flows, this article examines how Zen Buddhism was

imported into the United States; remade and remarketed there; and then re-imported back into Japan. Beginning with the impact of D.T. Suzuki, the article presents important cultural brokers, institutions and popular discourses that spread the narratives and practices of both Zen Buddhism and 'Zen.' The examination illustrates the importance of the United States as a religious marketplace in itself and as a productive and creative refinery of and for ideas, lifestyles, and products—in this case, Zen Buddhism.

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BARRY HANKINS

**Evangelicals and Catholics Together: How it Should Have Been in the Roaring Twenties Marketplace of Ideas**

ABSTRACT: The presidential election of 1928 was merely the most glaring example of Protestant-Catholic tension in America's Roaring Twenties. Catholics understood that they could not fully embrace American freedom, and Protestants viewed them as un-American for holding such a view. In the late twentieth century, evangelical Protestants broke with their liberal brethren and joined Catholics in critiquing a culture that left virtually all moral questions to choice. The elements for this common ground between evangelicals and Catholics already existed in the twenties, but the marketplace of ideas made an alliance impossible. Only later did evangelicals begin to understand that the liberal conception of freedom is based on the autonomy of the individual. As a result, they joined Catholics and now live in tension with American freedom.

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HANS-JÜRGEN GRABBE

**Amerikastudien als "kooperatives Experiment": 60 Jahre Deutsche Gesellschaft für Amerikastudien**

UDO J. HEBEL, CARMEN  
BIRKLE, PHILIPP GASSERT,  
INTROD. AND COMP.

**Usable Pasts, Possible Futures: The German Association for American Studies at Sixty**

**Amst 59.3 (2014)**

CHRISTA HOLM VOGELIUS

**“To Bind in Admiration All Who Gaze”: Lydia Sigourney’s Sentimental Ekphrasis**

ABSTRACT: This paper examines some of Lydia Sigourney’s poetic descriptions of artworks to argue that her work is concerned with the changing place of the visual arts in Americans’ lives in the middle of the nineteenth century. Sigourney’s ekphrastic poems guide the reader through a process of emulating the visual forms that they describe, encouraging readers to embody the emotional experience of the works. Such experience trained Americans to approach the increasing number of reprinted art images in books and periodicals, as well as preparing the ground a growing gallery culture later in the century.

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PAULA MARTIN SALVAN

**“Of childhoods and other ferocious times”: Traumatic Reverberation in Don DeLillo’s *Underworld***

ABSTRACT: Don DeLillo’s *Underworld* is often read as a *fresco* of the Cold War era. These critical readings tend to minimize the attention paid to the psychological portrait of Nick Shay, the character whose existential path is the main narrative vehicle of the novel. The correspondence between the private and public levels of the story is usually taken for granted. In this essay, I contend that there is no direct narrative or causal connection between Nick’s personal history and America’s Cold War history. In fact, Nick is conspicuously absent from most of the key historical events portrayed in the novel. I propose a reading of *Underworld* that brings Nick Shay’s personal history to the forefront. My main aim is to analyze the narrative devices deployed by DeLillo to depict this character in order to determine how the interweaving of the individual and historical dimensions takes place in the text through a stylistic pattern of equivalence known in trauma studies as “traumatic reverberation.” The homologous reverberation at both levels—individual and historical—produces the textual illusion of a continuity between them, which, I contend, is not causal or thematic, but structural. This pattern articulates a parallelism between the two dimensions of the text, emphasizing the paradoxical nature of traumatic memory: an absent core around which the text gravitates, persistently signaling a point of origin that is never fully realized.

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PETER FREESE

**A Medieval Crusader in Twentieth-Century New Orleans: John Kennedy Toole’s *A Confederacy of Dunces***

ABSTRACT: After a survey of the unusual publication history and the polarizing critical reception of *A Confederacy of Dunces*, it is shown that the novel’s picaresque surface hides an artfully designed structure that

tells about the hilarious encounters of programmatically named characters who represent New Orleans' ethnic diversity. This article investigates the character of Ignatius J. Reilly and the opposition between his medieval world view and that of his twentieth-century antagonists and its reflection in the subversive contrast between Ignatius's reliance on Boethius and his rejection of Mark Twain. It shows how Ignatius's rude behavior contradicts his pious beliefs and makes him a satirist satirized, discusses his fascination with the movies as intertextual play with Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and Percy's *The Movie-Goer*, explains Toole's strategies for creating both situational and verbal comedy, and shows that Ignatius's linguistic flights of fancy go back to his creator's academic work on Lyly's *Euphues* (whereas the other characters' ways of speaking represent New Orleans' linguistic variety). This article outlines the unsavory, partly Swiftian traits of Ignatius's repellent corporeality and reveals the easily overlooked reasons for his distasteful behavior. It reads the novel's open ending as the double-pronged result of the medieval notion of the arbitrary workings of the *rota Fortunae* and the twentieth-century ethics of reward and punishment. It also points out the weaknesses of Toole's overambitious novel and concludes that, despite these shortcomings, it is an accomplished example of narrative art.

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BORIS VORMANN

### **Who needs American Studies? Globalization, Nationalism, and the Future of Area Studies**

**ABSTRACT:** Since the mid-1970s the United States and other North Atlantic nation-states have been undergoing complex processes of state restructuring. In this context, many authors have predicted the 'end of the nation,' the 'end of territory,' even the 'end of history.' What is the future of area studies such as American Studies—which have traditionally been premised on the assumption of national societies—in an emerging, allegedly postnational world? This article contends that both nations and nation-states have by no means been overcome, despite pervasive arguments to the contrary. While nations and nation-states might have changed in form, they have gained importance in facilitating seemingly detached flows of globalization, providing a rich and largely understudied field of research. Area studies can serve as a research strategy to challenge existing, methodologically nationalistic perspectives without falling into the extreme of ignoring the category of the national altogether—as American Studies after the transnational turn has tended to do. I argue that American Studies will remain relevant in the future, not only because the nation and the nation-state continue to be important categories worthy of more intense study, but also because critical area studies, if they take a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective, can serve as a remedy against one often neglected form of methodological nationalism that has consequences beyond the immediate concerns of American Studies and area studies, namely academic specialization.



DANUTA FJELLESTAD

### **The Specter of the Center or ‘Post-Americanization’ America**

**ABSTRACT:** This article revisits the perennial question of American influences on national cultures through a reading of a Swedish military recruitment commercial that pitches stock images associated with American popular culture against images meant to express ‘Swedishness.’ Structured by an array of enticing visual, logical, and ideological loops, the commercial constructs ‘America’ as a (benign) specter and turns it into a glocal phenomenon. At first sight a banal—if witty—specimen of Americanization, the commercial, I argue, ingeniously builds on the target audience’s familiarity with and shrewd recognition of American influences and, troubling the emotional charge conventionally ascribed to the processes of Americanization, posits a ‘post-Americanization’ America.

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#### **Forum**

SEBASTIAN WEIER

#### **Consider Afro-Pessimism**

Responses by Christopher M. Tinson, Rinaldo Walcott and Elizabeth J. West

**Amst 59.4 (2014)**

#### **South Africa and the United States in Transnational American Studies**

*(Birgit M. Bauridl and Udo J. Hebel (Guest Editors))*

BIRGIT M. BAURIDL and UDO  
J. HEBEL

#### **Introduction: South Africa and the United States in Transnational American Studies: From Comparative Approaches toward Transangulation**

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GREG CUTHBERTSON and  
CHRIS SAUNDERS

#### **The United States—South Africa—Germany: Reflections on a Triangular Transnational Relationship**

**ABSTRACT:** This paper draws on ideas advanced by Jane Desmond and Virginia Dominguez to explore the triangular relationship between the United States, South Africa, and Germany, focusing in particular on race and racial problems and how the countries have dealt with their pasts. While there has been much comparative work on the United States and South Africa, the inclusion of Germany adds value to the comparative exercise and engages the question of exceptionalism. The paper reflects the wide intersections in the respective national historiographies to note some areas for future research.

MEGHAN HEALY-CLANCY

**The Daughters of Africa and Transatlantic Racial Kinship: Cecilia Lilian Tshabalala and the Women's Club Movement, 1912-1943**

**ABSTRACT:** This article explores how South African women drew upon African American models of public engagement to articulate a locally meaningful racial identity. Its focus is on the work of Cecilia Lillian Tshabalala, who was born in Natal and moved to the United States in 1912. After attending the Hampton Institute, New Britain State Normal School, and the Moody Bible Institute in the U.S., she taught at an African Methodist Episcopal Church girls' school in Gold Coast (Ghana) and at black Congregationalist churches in Hartford and Brooklyn, before returning to South Africa in 1930. In 1932 Tshabalala launched a women's club movement, the Daughters of Africa (DOA), which was modeled on the African American women's club movement. Members of the DOA organized social welfare activities including small enterprise, public health, and educational initiatives, and wrote about these activities in African newspapers, articulating a model of women's public activism premised on their domestic authority. Focusing on Tshabalala's writing in the Johannesburg-based *Bantu World* as the DOA expanded its operations through Natal and into the Witwatersrand in the latter half of the 1930s and the early 1940s, this article highlights the gendered possibilities of transatlantic racial kinship during a foundational period in African nationalism.

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SUE KRIGE

**Transnational Race Relations: Muriel Horrell's Journey toward Understanding Reserves and Reservations in South Africa, Africa, and the United States**

**ABSTRACT:** In 1964, Muriel Horrell, compiler of the annual *Surveys of Race Relations* of the South African Institute of Race Relations, was awarded a Carnegie Corporation travel grant to study 'under-developed communities' in Africa and the United States. While travelling at this momentous time in history, she kept three detailed journals, two of which form the backbone of this article. The journals provide insight into her interactions with both the Carnegie and the Ford Foundations and into the agendas of these Foundations. While visiting three newly-independent African states, she documented the problems and possibilities afforded by independence. Though intrigued with the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S., she remained true to her original goal to study "under-developed communities" but narrowed it to a comparison between Native American Reservations and African Reserves/Homelands, which she used to develop a devastating critique of apartheid policies.

WESSEL LEROUX

### **The Bader Ginsburg Controversy and the Americanization of Post-Apartheid Legal Culture**

**ABSTRACT:** In early 2012, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg of the United States Supreme Court suggested in a television interview that Egypt look towards the South African Constitution, rather than the United States Constitution, as it starts its constitution making process. The comment caused a public outcry in the United States and resulted in calls for the impeachment of Justice Ginsburg. This essay revisits the Ginsburg controversy in order to explore the relationship between South African and American constitutional scholars and judges and their constitutional views and principles. Justice Bader Ginsburg's comment about the South African Constitution is not an isolated occurrence, but rather forms part of a longstanding and ongoing scholarly engagement between two influential constitutional traditions, judicial supremacy and parliamentary supremacy. This essay discusses central aspects of this engagement, most particularly the collaborative development of transformative constitutionalism as a result of the Americanization of post-apartheid legal culture. It concludes with a brief reflection on the uncertain future of this post-national scholarly engagement in light of the recent rise of populist constitutionalism in both the United States and South Africa.

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ANDREW OFFENBURGER

### **Cultural Imperialism and the Romanticized Frontier: From South Africa and Great Britain to New Mexico's Mesilla Valley**

**ABSTRACT:** With the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 and the Gadsden Purchase of 1853, the United States acquired its last lands to comprise the lower forty-eight states. By the early twentieth century, immigrants to the region performed the everyday labor of cultural imperialism. This article examines the lives, memoirs, and novels of two prolific but unknown immigrants who moved to New Mexico's Mesilla Valley: Benjamin J. Viljoen and Edith M. Nicholl. Viljoen, a general from the Boer Republics, emigrated in 1903 after suffering defeat by the British Empire in the South African War. He wrote memoirs, articles, and novels relating to the war and his exile in the borderlands. Nicholl, a farmer and writer from an elite British family, first moved to Virginia and then to New Mexico in 1896. Her imperial pedigree gave her a unique perspective of the Mesilla Valley. When placed together, the lives and writings of Viljoen and Nicholl not only reveal the everyday imperial cultures in the Southwest; they testify to the subjectivity of frontier life, its gendered spaces, and its transmutability on both sides of the Atlantic.

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STEPHAN BIERLING

### **Spotlights: Nelson Mandela's Ambivalent View of the United States**

**ABSTRACT:** Nelson Mandela held an ambivalent view of the United States. While he admired its democracy and freedoms, as a revolutionary

heavily influenced by Marxist ideology, he harshly criticized Washington's 'imperialism' and support for colonial powers. During the 1980s, but especially after his release from prison in 1990 and his ascent to the presidency of South Africa, Mandela became a celebrity in the United States. This did not, however, prevent him from attacking Washington's foreign policy positions on several occasions or from maintaining close relations with America's political foes such as Fidel Castro and Muammar Gadhafi. This article shows how Mandela views the United States—and international relations in general—mainly through the prism of his lifelong fight against apartheid.

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