



American Studies Program Newsletter

Cynthia Gwynne Yaudes, editor



Thomas Cole. *Distant View of Niagara Falls*

THE VANISHING OTHER

Each spring for the last six years, the IU American Studies Program has hosted the Virginia LaFollette Gunderson essay competition. Named, and endowed, for the wife of one of the founders of the Program, the contest honors the graduate student who submits the “best academic essay on a topic relevant to the field of American Studies.”

Nancy Palm, doctoral candidate in Fine Arts and American Studies, is this year's winner, chosen not only because her essay is lucid and intriguing, but also because it speaks so eloquently to one of the core puzzles of American Studies: the

construction of an American national identity. Nation-building historically has involved the continuous layering of cultural and political norms, like paints upon a constantly shifting canvas. Identities previously thought indivisible can blur as they merge with coexisting cultures or can disappear completely as they are covered by more dominant ‘new’ ones. The exact identities of the Caribbean peoples encountered by Christopher Columbus, for example, are long forgotten, smothered by the ‘Indian’ label. Yet their new identity, as ‘Indian,’ also allowed them to be remembered, to take part in, the creation of a national heritage.

Palm's winning essay, *Unsettling Identities*, explores the appropriation of that Native American ‘other’ into the creation of an American identity. It has been, she argues, a process by which white Euro-Americans neces-

sarily mourn ‘Indians’ as a vanishing race, but simultaneously celebrate them as the cornerstone of a mythical national heritage. The treatment of Native Americans, therefore, becomes ambiguous and contradictory, with Euro-Americans both disavowing and identifying with their presence. Palm demonstrates the negotiation of this iconography as it was manifested in 19th-century landscape painting, the first ‘national’ art in America.

She refers to some of the work of Thomas Cole (1801-1848), widely considered the founder of an American landscape tradition, who depicted the area in and around the Catskill and Adirondack mountain ranges. Cole's 1827 painting, *The Clove, Catskills*, “comprises a palette of lush reds and greens, and a foreground, middle ground, [and] background composition,

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 which leads the viewer's eye through the painting into the vast horizon.... [The painting] also includes a characteristic 'Indian' figure in the foreground wilderness, standing on a rocky ledge at the center of the image...." Cole repeated the 'Indian' figure in several landscapes throughout the 1820s and 1830s. In *Distant View of Niagara Falls*, an 'Indian' "stands on a rocky ledge, overlooking the falls, while a second 'Indian' kneels beside him." For Palm's analysis, the Native Americans in both of these paintings perform co-functions. First, they are visibly identifiable as a common cultural motif that can contribute to the construction of Euro-American and Native American identity. Cole's 'Indian' "characteristically wears native dress and carries a staff or other fighting implement...bears native trappings and feathered headdress...and engages with his natural sur-

roundings." He is, she suggests, the stereotypical *noble savage*, "unencumbered by civilization, carrying a sense of calmness and dignity, and a certain innocence that came from natural existence." This perception, Palm argues, ultimately allows the characterization of Native Americans as passive figures, quietly accepting of their fate of dispossession as a result of U.S. expansion. The nobility and unassuming dignity of the 'Indian' remains visible, and, moreover, becomes the keystone of the U.S. narrative of manifest destiny. Through such visual representations, Palm explains, "viewers [of the painting] could ground national identity in a distant past by claiming Native American heritage as part of the U.S. national landscape." But at the same time, because Cole's 'Indian' figure is a disappearing one, literally blending into the painting, it also performs the cultural

function of a doomed race, vanishing peacefully from the historical landscape. In *Clove, Catskills*, for example, "the figure's presence is veiled within the dark foliage; he is noticeable mainly through the specks of red on his body and headdress." *Schroon Mountain, Adirondacks*, painted in 1838, is similar—a "fall landscape in a vibrant, warm palette. The headdresses and apparel of two tiny 'Indian' figures in the foreground wilderness echo the red and orange leaves, blending into their surroundings, almost to the point of imperceptibility." Because Cole uses a "concealing color palette and compositional marginalization," the 'Indian' visually vanishes from the landscape, even before his literal demise. "Spatially marginal, and therefore historically removed from the landscape, the destructive threat of Native Americans is minimized and white/'Indian' conflict is

effectively neutralized." Native Americans might have been central to visions of U.S. nationalism, Palm sums, but their existence in that vision required that they disappear, that their identity be reduced to a nationalistic symbol that fit with Euro-American hegemonies. In both art and politics, the Native American is both closeted and celebrated, marginalized to the point of invisibility but nonetheless an essential symbolic component in a national heritage. "Caught between a Native American past and a Euro-American nation, Thomas Cole's 'Indians' thus illustrate the ambiguous role of Native Americans in U.S. nationalism and unsettle the assumed binary distinctions between these seemingly distinct aspects of identity construction."



Thomas Cole. *The Clove, Catskills*



Thomas Cole. *Schroon Mountain, Adirondacks*

FUNDING OPTIONS

**School of Social Science
Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey
Proposal deadline 15 September 2007**

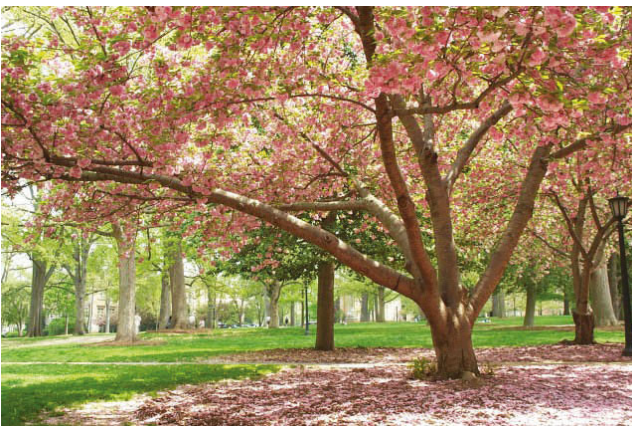
Each year, the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ, invites fifteen to twenty scholars to be in residence for the full academic year to pursue their own research. The School welcomes applications in economics, political science, law, psychology, sociology and anthropology. It encourages social scientific work with an historical and humanistic bent and also entertains applications in history, philosophy, literary criticism, literature and linguistics. Each year there is a general thematic focus that provides common ground for roughly half the scholars. Applications must be submitted through the Institute's online application system, which can be found, along with more information on this year's topic, at www.sss.ias.edu/applications.



**Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences
Residential Fellowships
Application deadline 30 June 2007**

The Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS) invites applications for its 2008-09 residential fellowships. This sabbatical fellowship provides an opportunity for faculty to pursue priority research and expand their horizons while engaging in a diverse, interdisciplinary intellectual community. The Center considers applications from scholars in a wide range of disciplines and interdisciplinary areas in the social and behavioral sciences, and humanities. The application form and guidelines are available at www.casbs.org.

CONFERENCE INVITATIONS



**The Society for American Music
Menger Hotel
San Antonio, Texas
27 February–2 March 2008
Proposal deadline 15 June 2007**

The Society for American Music invites proposals for papers, panels of 2 to 3 papers, concerts, lecture/performances or scholarly posters for its 34th annual conference. Proposals involving American music and all aspects of its cultures anywhere in the world are welcome.

For more information, and for submission details, visit www.american-music.org.



PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES



The Long Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1980 **Conflicts in American History series** **Complete chapters due 1 June 2007**

The work is under contract with Bruccoli Clark Layman/Manly, Inc, and contributors will receive \$250 for essay chapters that will consist of the following elements: **1/** 2000-3000 word background essay introducing the conflict, the people involved, the nature of the conflict and its resolution. **2/** A specific chronology of the conflict. **3/** 10 historical documents both in facsimile and in reprinted text form, each with an objective head note (150-300 words) that introduces the source. **4/** A list of recommended readings with a brief annotation. **5/** Two illustrations that correlate to the conflict. Persons who are interested in contributing one or more of the following entries should contact Brian Johnson (bjohnson@claflin.edu) and Zoe Trodd (trodd@fas.harvard.edu), with a brief bio, as soon as possible to sign up.

Critical Methodologies in Contemporary Black Film **Deadline for abstracts 30 June 2007** **Completed submissions due in February 2008**

Proposals are sought for an anthology on contemporary approaches to African American film. The collection will consist of two parts: The first half will include new theoretical approaches to African American film. Of special interest here will be essays that seek to broaden our understanding of African American filmmaking beyond questions of representation, stereotype, and caricature. Essays presenting new theories of aesthetics or working to formulate new film methodologies are of special interest. The second half of the anthology will include a selection of case studies exemplifying new approaches to African American film. These can be focused on one film and/or filmmaker or a selection of films and/or filmmakers. Essays that rethink African American film and genre are also invited for either section. Interested participants should e-mail abstracts (no more than 500 words) and short CVs (highlighting publications and presentations) to filmdoctor@verizon.net.

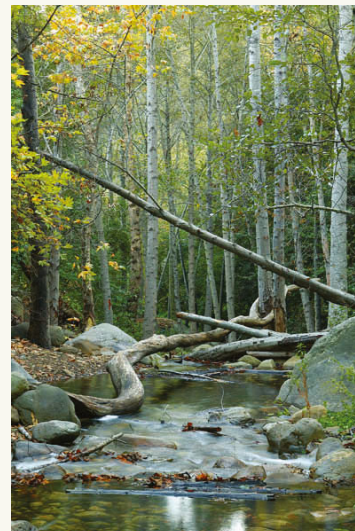
Journal for the Study of Radicalism **Deadline for completed articles 30 December 2007**

JSR invites articles for a special issue on historical memory in American or international radicalism. We are particularly interested in articles that deal with historical memory in protest literature and art (including film, photography, and music), but also welcome submissions on social protest movements. Submissions should be 20 to 30 pages, Chicago Style. Send queries, proposals, and articles to the guest editors, Timothy Patrick McCarthy (mccarth3@fas.harvard.edu) and Zoe Trodd (trodd@fas.harvard.edu). See www.msu.edu/jsr for more information on the journal.

Nineteenth Century **Periodical publication of the Victorian Society in America**

Nineteenth Century invites submissions for peer review and publication on the cultural and social history of the United States from 1800 to c. 1920. Papers are welcome on a variety of topics including architecture, fine arts, decorative arts, costume history, photography, landscape and garden design, historic preservation, and technology. Published articles are usually 3,000 to 5,000 words, with notes, and 6 to 8 illustrations; send one hard copy, include an email address. Manuscripts should be prepared following the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Papers may be sent to:
 William Ayres, Editor
 P.O. Box 403
 Stony Brook, NY 11790-0403



AMERICAN STUDIES NEWSMAKERS

Jim Berkey (English) was awarded a travel fellowship by the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan to undertake research for his dissertation, "Itineraries of Empire: The Everyday Lives and Narratives of U.S. Agents of Empire." He will be traveling to Ann Arbor this summer to examine letters, diaries, and scrapbooks of U.S. soldiers, teachers, and colonial administrator's spouses during the U.S. occupation of the Philippines at the beginning of the twentieth century. Jim also had a paper accepted for the upcoming Annual Meeting of the American Studies Association in Philadelphia in October. He will present "From Puerto Rico to the Philippines: Methodological Trajectories of Imperial Letters," which extrapolates transnational and intra-imperial methodological implications through a reading of a little-known epistolary novel of the Philippine-American War.

Professor **Mary Gray** (CMCL) is on leave this semester, finishing her current book project and starting another that examines how negotiations between institutional review boards and researchers shape sexuality research. This month, her article "Face Value: Mediating Social Distance and Safety Through Facebook" will appear in the sociology journal *Contexts*. Mary was also named a COPSL Faculty Fellow for the coming year. She will be developing opportunities for undergraduates to participate in her research on and community service with Bloomington's annual PRIDE Film Festival.

Professor **Darlene J. Sadlier** (Spanish and Portuguese) received a grant from the Rockefeller Archive Center in support of her new book project on Good Neighbor films about Latin America. She also received travel and research funding from the College of Arts and Sciences Institute and the Office of the Vice Provost for Research.

Trevor Blank (Folklore) recently had book proposal for a work titled Spring Grove State Hospital accepted with Arcadia Publishing. He will also be co-authoring (with David Helsel, M.D.) a work on the history of the second oldest standing psychiatric hospital in America (Spring Grove State Hospital), due out in February 2008.

Professor **John Bowles** (History of Art) has recently published "'Acting like a Man: Adrian Piper's Mythic Being and Black Feminism in the 1970s," in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (Spring 2007) and "Adrian Piper a African American Artist" in *American Art* (Fall 2006).

Professor **Wendy Gamber's** (History) The Boarding House in Nineteenth-Century America was recently published through Johns Hopkins University Press.

The Cambridge Companion to the Harlem Renaissance, edited by Professor **George Hutchinson** (English), and with a chapter by Professor **Margo Crawford** (English), will be published by Cambridge University Press in June. Professor Hutchinson's book, In Search of Nella Larsen (Belknap/Harvard, 2006), won an Honorable Mention from the Association of American Publishers for Biography and Autobiography from a scholarly press.

Professor **Michael Martin** (AAADS) has published (with Marilyn Yaquinto) "Diasporic Cinemas" in the Schirmer Encyclopedia of Film and Redress for Historical Injustices in the United States: On Reparations for Slavery, Jim Crow, and Their Legacies, due out in July from Duke University Press. Martin also attended the Pan African film festival-FESPACO—in Burkina Faso as an "invitee" in March (2007) where he directed in the capital city, Ouagadougou, a film shoot of the film training institute, *Imagine*, and its founder Gaston Kabore.

Professor **Ted Striphas**, (CMCL), recently received the Student Choice Award from the IU Student Alumni Association. The award, which recognizes excellence in teaching, was nominated and voted on by graduate and undergraduate students from across the university.

Professor **Phaedra C. Pezzullo** (CMCL) has published two books: Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Travel, Pollution, and Environmental Justice (2007, University of Alabama Press) and Environmental Justice and Environmentalism: The Social Justice Challenge to the Environmental Movement (2007, MIT Press).

Professor **David Hertz** (Comparative Literature) presented "Three Indiana Songwriters and the Modernist Experience" at Modernity and the American Experience in the Arts, a conference held recently on the IU campus. His paper covered the works of Paul Dresser (brother of Theodore Dreiser), Cole Porter, and Hoagy Carmichael (of Bloomington) and echoes many of the themes he covers in his undergraduate CMCL class, "Lyrics and the Popular Song."

Professor **DeWitt Douglas Kilgore** (English) has been appointed a consulting editor to *Science Fiction Studies*, the premier journal in the field.

Ed Chamberlain (Comparative Literature) received a 2007-2008 Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship for Portuguese studies through the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. In March, he presented "Queering the Caretaker Politic: Reinscriptions of Genre and Identity" at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference in Chicago.

Professor **Beverly Stoeltje** (Anthropology) presented "From Custom to Popular Culture in Asante," a paper on popular culture in Africa, at the University of Texas.

Danille Christensen Lindquist (Folklore) published "'Locating' the Nation: Football Game Day and American Dreams in Central Ohio" in the Fall 2006 issue of the *Journal of American Folklore*. Attending to the evolution of football's form, the social practices and talk of OSU spectators, and the generic characteristics of game-day performances, she examines how national ideologies become grounded in local contexts.



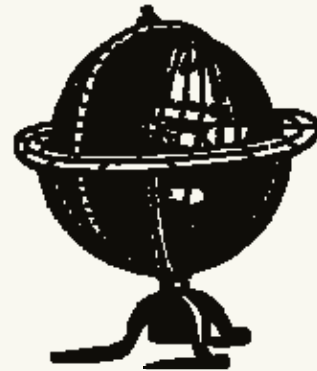
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GLOBALIZING AMERICAN STUDIES?

A few weekends ago, the IU American Studies Program hosted *Globalizing American Studies*, a 2-day conference that drew scholars from across campus and across the country to take stock and make plans. More specifically, they interrogated the vocabulary, methods and objects of American Studies, and began sketching what a more “globalized” version of it might look like and how it might operate.

Some papers asked broad questions about the pedagogy of a global American Studies, such as: What would happen to more traditional, nation-based disciplines if “borders” are reconfigured as overlapping rather than as outlines of distinct empires?

Other presentations tested the ways in which the “standard” vocabularies of American Studies might be extended or even replaced within the context of a more global view. Realizations included

the fictitious nature of “continents,” the artificiality of “race” and “gender,” and the multiply articulated meanings of what is “citizen” and what is “alien.” The methods of a “globalized” American Studies were also explored by several authors, who asserted the basic need to pay attention to American culture in “international circulation” (“placed” in areas like Tehran, Moscow or Rio de Janeiro), the necessity for understanding how the creation/assertion of “whiteness” can work in a broad range of local and diasporic contexts, and the potential re-applications of Critical Race Theory.

Another set of papers re-thought the objects of American Studies in a global milieu: the evolution of Chinese American identities through the progression of a teenager’s photo album; negotiating patterns of marriage, race, and nation through historical fiction and ro-

mance; and the commodification of South American culture undertaken at the hands of Walt Disney.

Certainly the presentations raised more questions than they answered, and rightly so, especially in the constantly changeable world that is American Studies. But, unlike most conferences, this one ended with an opportunity for all participants and attendees to address this changeability and to openly think about where they might go from that point. While no definitive conclusions were reached—indeed, the debate became rather heated about whether the term “globalizing” used for the title of the conference might actually be imperialist—there was consensus that everyone’s approach to teaching and research in American Studies would be profoundly affected (whether toward conviction or anomie) by the issues raised over the previous two days.

As the American Studies Program continues to grow, we need your support. Your charitable contributions will help us develop resources necessary for a vibrant intellectual community and environment by adding books to our American Studies resource library, developing programs to encourage and support student research, creating a student travel grant, and supporting program activities and events.

Please support American Studies by donating to the AMST Foundation account. Remember your gift will go to a tax-exempt educational institution; 50% of your contribution can be deducted from the amount of your total state income tax. Note that this is a credit against taxes, not merely a deduction! Your contributions, no matter how small, are appreciated.

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