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# Toward a Politics of American Transcultural Studies – Discourses of Diaspora and Cosmopolitanism

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## Transnational American Studies in a Time of Globalization

American Studies in the United States since the 1970s and the 1980s have been characterized by a sequence of redefinitions of "culture" *and* of "politics" in cultural studies. The Presidential Addresses read at the Conventions of the American Studies Association testify to the evolving logic of this critical engagement of the profession, from Alice Kessler-Harris, Mary Helen Washington, and Paul Lauter to Janice Radway, Amy Kaplan, Shelley Fisher-Fishkin, Stephen Sumida, Emory Elliott, and Philip J. Deloria. The theoretical and institutional work of the new *Americanists*, particularly of Donald E. Pease, Amy Kaplan, and John Carlos Rowe, and of scholars in minority, feminist, and border discourses has produced a wide-ranging, highly charged philosophical and political debate that has fundamentally revised and reconstituted the field of American Cultural Studies and placed it in an international political context.

Let me briefly indicate some important steps in this argument:

- Multiculturalism and the politics of recognition of the cultural identity of minorities and ethnic groups and the politics of location have implemented and often replaced the politics of redistribution in terms of class difference of the Left. American culture is no longer seen as a homogeneous national culture as claimed in the European tradition of nation-states, but as characterized by multiple cultural differences, institutionalized in numerous minority studies programs, often conceived monoculturally and set in direct opposition to (white) "American culture as a whole," cultural differences, however, of very different, contextually changing, and often conflicting and heteronomous kinds.

- The culture concept has been redefined beyond the pluralism of more or less closed, stable, territory-based cultures (racial or ethnic cultures, all kinds of group cultures and subcultures) in terms of *border discourses* of hybridity, creolization, *mestizaje*, diaspora and the study of intercultural contact zones, particularly with Mexico and Latin America, under conditions of unequal power. Intercultural imaginaries of border thinking are explored as new forms of subaltern knowledge that engages the "colonial difference" in local spaces where the coloniality of global power is adapted, rejected, and transculturated. (Gloria Anzáldua, José David Saldívar, Giles Gunn, Néstor García Canclini, Marwen M. Krady, Walter D. Mignolo, Deborah Madsen, Günter H. Lenz)

- The nation-state (U.S.) has been questioned as an adequate frame of cultural analysis and reassessed. Acknowledging the hopeless limitations and quandaries of analyzing American literature in terms of a tradition and body of a *national* literature, scholars such as Franco Moretti or Pascale Casanova have newly addressed the problems of *comparative literature* and the promises of a vision of *world literature.* Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in her book *Death of a Discipline* (2003), has radically reconceptualized the field and proposed a new *planetary consciousness*, a notion that, however, must not be introduced mainly to escape or displace the destructive, or deconstructive, associations concerning processes of "globalization."

- Postnational and postcolonial cultural studies and the critique of American (cultural) imperialism have been worked out. The different workings of American imperialism in a post-Fordist economy under conditions of globalization after the end of the Cold War reveal how American culture "at home," how cultural differences in U.S. culture were constituted through strategies and discourses of this new form of American imperialism abroad and reappropriated by the authorization and erection of a "state of emergency or exception" in the wake of the Homeland Security Act after 9/11. (Donald E. Pease, Amy Kaplan, John Carlos Rowe)

- Responding to the theoretical and political thrust of postcolonial cultural critique leftist American Studies scholars have addressed more forcefully the strategies of a radical political *practice* of the American Studies community in the contemporary world and explored the political dynamic of *institutionalizing* Cultural Studies. They have set out to clarify the options of *political activism*, the energizing strategies of different traditions of radical cultural critique, and the emancipatory potential of new social movements on a global scale. (Paul Lauter, George Lipsitz, Michael Denning, Timothy Brennan, Joel Pfister; cf. Warren and Vavrus) They have also redefined the structures and the strategies of *teaching* the New American Studies. (Henry A. Giroux, Paul Lauter, and especially John Carlos Rowe's "comparative U.S. cultures model")

- American Studies have been internationalized in an attempt to move beyond the borders of the U.S., see the U.S. from the outside, and cooperate with international American Studies scholars. They hope to gain a critical stance from outside from which to analyze American culture and politics and subvert the often totalizing, sometimes "imperializing" approach in American Cultural Studies even where they set out to offer a radical, self-critical analysis. (Günter H. Lenz, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Winfried Fluck, Alfred Hornung)

- The internationalization of American Studies has led European and other non-U.S.American scholars to address in innovative and critical ways the two-way or multiple-way of interactions and transculturations of the cultural and social processes frequently described as acts of American *cultural imperialism* as well as *Americanization* and assert their specific *local* perspectives and investments in American Studies and the specific demands and objectives of "American Studies abroad." There is, however, the danger of "reifying" something like, e.g., "the European viewpoint" that is separated as an "outside" perspective from the complex, multi-layered, and multidimensional force-field of global interconnections. (Rob Kroes, Marc Chénetier, Paul Giles, Heinz Ickstadt, Winfried Fluck, Berndt Ostendorf, Günter H. Lenz, Mita Banerjee)

- Transnational American Cultural Studies can, however, also be conceived as efforts to reconstitute their work with reference to the dialectical processes of globalization, as exploring the dialogics, the contestations, and the negotiations of intercultural relations and translations from a multiplicity of locations. (Homi K. Bhabha 1994 on the transnational and the translational, Abbas and Erni, *Internationalizing Cultural Studies*, 2005) These exploratory processes, however, are no longer seen as happening between, or among, stable, territory-based (national) cultures or subcultures, but as two-way, or multiple-way dynamic cultural processes and transculturations in force-fields of sharp political asymmetries and confrontations and of the different "spatial imaginary" in a

> globalizing world. (see Rüdiger Kunow's notion of "transgressive transnationalism" Kunow 2005)

That is, transnational American Cultural Studies ask us to *re*direct our critical perspective back to the specific, the concrete *workings of the politics of American Cultural Studies*. This can only be done if our critical discourse is empowered by the different self-reflexive extensions and revisions of the concept of culture as projected in the different discourses referred to and their critical potential *and* by a more cogent engagement with the political workings of "culture" in American democratic society in a world of globalization. We have too often spoken too loosely about the meanings of "globalization," identifying it with American imperialism or "Americanization." Or we have seen it as a totalizing, inexorable one-way process of the use of economic power proceeding without agents and annihilating any opposition and any alternative movements and discourses. I think the distinction between the state of "globality," the processes of "globalization," and the neo-liberal ideology of "globalism" elaborated by scholars such as Ulrich Beck and Manfred B. Steger is important in this context.

**The Politics of American Transcultural Studies**

I want to propose some tentative reflections on the politics of American Cultural Studies by analyzing the objectives, dimensions, and dynamics of what I call *American Transcultural Studies*. "Transcultural" is *not* the same as "transnational." Recent American Studies are *transnational* in a double sense. 1. They question the meaning of "America" (qua U.S.A.), (potentially) decentering the U.S. perspective, take views from outside as co-foundational, and emphasize inter/transnational dialogue (international initiative of the ASA). 2. They reflect on and deconstruct the focus on the nation-state without prematurely discarding its boundaries as obsolete in political analyses, and they address the intra/multicultural diversity and hybridity of U.S. culture(s) and transnational interactions in a time of globalization and relocalizations. *Transcultural also* engages the complex and highly contested status of the nation-state in a globalizing world but is a wider-ranging, self-reflexive, and self-different term that more specifically rearticulates the goals and strategies of American cultural studies. I take up and explore the critical potential of the term "transcultural" *not* in order to claim a new kind of synthesis that totalizes the remarkable achievements of work done in international American Studies. *Nor* do I think that the idea or vision of a unifying methodology of transcultural American Studies can *ever* be realized, but that we can only confront the challenges of the multiple questions we have come up against and explore them as cogently as possible from different positionalities, from the different constellations of problems, interdependencies, and analytical procedures we find most crucial to our work. I hope my use and redefinition of "transculturality" may help to conceptualize the dynamics and politics of American Cultural Studies in this sense.

"Transculturality" is a term defined by the German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch in his essay, "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today" (1999). For Welsch, the term responds to the experience that today the old understanding of culture as territory-based, stable, and an autonomous realm no longer holds, that in the era of globalization (worldwide migrations and material and immaterial communication systems as well as economic interdependencies and dependencies) *all* cultures are "*hybridized*," multi-meshed, and inclusive, not separatist and exclusive, undergoing continuous transition. He rejects "multiculturality" and "interculturality" by reductively defining them as still working with a pluralization of the closed, clearly delineated, homogeneous culture concept and defines "transculturality" as a strategy of "*passing through* classical cultural boundaries." (Welsch 196–99) This is not supposed to lead to a new synthesis, but to a new type of diversity, of different cultures and life-forms, each arising from transcultural permeations. Transculturality, therefore, "refers to a transition, a temporary diagnosis," a "new type of diversity," a present to a future state of cultures of transculturality, a process that always remains "self-different," never achieving a final synthesis. (Welsch 200–201, 208)

If Welsch's construction of the concept of "transculturality" as against "multi–" or "interculturality" is based on a reductive reading of those concepts, his own notion of transculturality has been somewhat misconstrued as supposedly sweepingly dismissing the intercultural by Helmbrecht Breinig and Klaus Lösch in their reflections on the more generalizing concept of "transdifference." They reject, also somewhat polemically, other competing concepts dealing with the complexities of cultural differences, such as creolization, hybridity, *mestizaje*, and border cultures as either striving for a new synthesis *or* completely "deconstructing," in the sense of dissolving, difference. In their definitive essay "Transdifference" (2006), they emphasize in their own use of the term "transdifference," not too far from Welsch's argument, its temporality, its being a "palimpsestic *process*," referring to "whatever runs 'through' the line of demarcation drawn by binary difference, caus[ing] it to *oscillate*." It interrogates "the validity of binary constructions of difference without completely deconstructing" them, denoting "fleeting moments of destabilization in the interstitial space." As it manifests itself in moments of transdifference that are often "quickly subdued by the discourses of identity and power." The experience of transdifference has "no intrinsically subversive effect on the practice of hierarchical boundary maintenance." (Breinig, Lösch 113–14)

In spite of some reductionism that fails to do justice to the more radical, reflexive versions of the border discourses and their discursive strategies of dealing with contemporary cultures of difference, Breinig and Lösch offer productive insights in their reflections on the workings of "transdifference" that could more fully be elaborated in their political implications and that complement and further develop

Welsch's arguments about "transculturality." (for a critical debate see the essays in Antor 2006)

## Transcultural Studies: The Transnational and the Inter- or Crosscultural Dynamics of Cultures of Difference; Diaspora

In my understanding, "transculturality" refers to and opens up *three* important and challenging perspectives and directions for (American) Cultural Studies:

*First*, the revised, dynamic, dialectical, and dialogical concepts of culture as I have briefly described them, beyond the stable, territory-based, unified notion of national cultures or ethnic, racial, or subcultures of various kinds make possible *a new processual and performative understanding of "culture."* It critically engages the boundaries of the nation-state without simply dismissing it, distinguishing between the political and juridical workings of the nation-state and the dynamics of the culture(s) of/in a nation-state *that always transcends its borders*. This *transnational* approach works through – in the double sense – and works with *cultural differences* in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, class, etc. without dissolving them or claiming a new synthesis.

*Second*, "transcultural" also addresses the *inter- and cross-cultural dynamics of cultures as cultures of difference, not* in the traditional sense of interrelating or comparing separate cultures or focusing on "influences" of separate cultures on one another, including respective perspectives of cultural imperialism, neocolonialism, "Americanization," etc. in their uni-directional versions. Instead, "transcultural" in this "comparative" or "cross-cultural" perspective registers the inherent hybridity, creolization, interculturality of *every* "culture," and explores the decentered networks and fields of power relations of cultures as being continuously and discontinuously in flux. "Transcultural" processes construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct cultural differences in a transnational, globalizing world and are theorized in a number of discourses often called "border discourses" (*not* in Welsch's one-sided, reified understanding of these discourses). Concepts like intercultural contact zones, transculturation, cultural translation offer *different* strategies of dealing with issues of transculturality in this sense.

I briefly want to refer you to one of these concepts which I think can be used in productive ways to analyze these transnational and transcultural problems and processes, the notion of *diaspora*. We have to reject the traditional version of diaspora discourses of violent dispersal from a homeland to other parts of the world and the determination after a long period of "exile" of literally "returning" to the "lost homeland," a notion which has been shown to be a highly questionable, illusory, and politically dangerous idea. (see the essays by D. and J. Boyarin and Clifford) However, if defined in a dialogical, self-reflexive way, diaspora discourses can illuminate the interplay of transnational migrations and movements of people and cultural practices that cannot be covered by the concepts of (usually one-way) emigration – immigration – acculturation processes. These diasporic discourses question the identification with a single "homeland" and situate the inter- and cross-cultural exchanges in a repoliticized dynamic framework of often enforced migrations characterized by *ruptures both in time and in space*.

As different as it is in many details and implications, I think the work on diaspora discourses and their theoretical implications and consequences by Stuart Hall, Kobena Mercer, Paul Gilroy, Khachig Tölölyan, James Clifford, R. Radhakrishnan, Lisa Lowe, Rey Chow, Brent Hayes Edwards, Avtar Brah, and Gayatri Spivak has opened up a rich and suggestive discursive field for transcultural studies in the inter- and cross-cultural perspective (see the excellent reader *Theorizing Diaspora*, Braziel and Mannur 2003). They recognize, as Stuart Hall writes, "a *necessary* heterogeneity and diversity [of] identity" which "lives with and through, not despite, difference, by *hybridity,*" by a "play of 'difference'… in translation." (Hall 1990, 235) Diasporas are characterized by "a new kind of transnational, even postnational, transcultural consciousness." (Hall 1999, 17) James Clifford adds the distinctive, historically specific meanings of the term of diaspora: "Diasporic subjects are distinct versions of modern, transnational experience. Thus historicized, diaspora cannot become a master trope or 'figure' for modern, complex, or positional identities, cross-cut and displaced by race, sex, gender, class, and culture." (Clifford 1997 [1994], 266) As a strategy of transcultural analysis, "diaspora" is a contentious, *dialogical* concept that situates critical discourses in a changing, contradictory, and heterotopic historical reality. There is *no* unifying (new) definition of *diaspora*. Instead, it is a working term that helps to understand historically and geographically *different* processes of the construction (and de- and reconstruction) of often multi-local migratory communities. For Kobena Mercer's "diaspora aesthetic," as Clifford puts it, "Diaspora consciousness is entirely a product of cultures and histories in collision and dialogue." (Clifford 267, referring to Mercer 63–64) The term is "a signifier not simply of transnationality and movement but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in the historical contexts of displacement." Clifford concludes that in the late 20$^{th}$ century "all or most communities have diasporic dimensions" in this sense, being expressions of a "discrepant cosmopolitanism," or, as Paul Gilroy puts it, of "discrepant, critical modernities." (Clifford 252, 257, 276, Gilroy quoted 263)

I think this notion of diasporic discourses does not settle for theoretical dispersal, but reflexively returns us to the specific historical workings of societies. Diaspora refers to "multi-locationality within and across territorial, cultural, and psychic boundaries" and to the "myriad processes of cultural fissure and fusion that underwrite contemporary forms of transcultural identities," as Avtar Brah argues. (Brah 197, 208) It also asks for comparative, transcultural analyses of "diasporic, exilic,… or transnational literature," as elaborated in Azade Seyhan's briliant book *Writing Outside the Nation* (2000).

**Transcultural Studies: Globalization and the "Realm" and Discourse of "Culture"**

I want to focus, however, on the *third dimension or potential* I see in the notion of "transculturality." It also points in the direction of "transcending" the realm and discourse of "culture," but again not in the sense of renouncing difference or of achieving an all-encompassing synthesis. Instead, I take this third dimension to indicate a way of critical thinking that suspends and subverts the fixation on "culture" (in its many meaning) by *self-reflexively resituating "culture" or cultural practices and cultural studies* in the dynamic power-field of social, political, and economic processes of a globalizing and relocalizing world. In this world the old separation of "spheres" and scholarly disciplines no longer holds and the organization and institutionalization of political, social, economic, and cultural capital is reconstituted. Concerning the problems of "globalization and culture" or "culture in globalization," we have to pursue more carefully the complex and fundamental changes in the *borders*, *dimensions* and social and political *functions* of what we have seen and defined as the "sphere of culture."

Arjun Appadurai's book *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996), especially his essay "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Economy" (1990), is still a most impressive effort to develop a comprehensive theory of global cultural interactions. "The new global economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order [of the five dimensions of global cultural flows he terms ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes] that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models (even those that might account for multiple centers and peripheries)." (Appadurai 1996, 32, cf. 33–37) He explores the power of the "imagination as a social practice" and the emancipatory potential of diasporic and translocal communities, networks, and visions. For Appadurai, culture has become a dialogic, contested "arena for conscious choice, justification, and representation, the latter often to multiple and spatially dislocated audiences." Crucial to his approach is a "theory of rupture" that studies the effects of electronic mediation and mass migrations in the "*work of the imagination* as a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity" in relation to mobilizing group differences, generating diverse conceptions of group identity. Multiple diasporic public spheres interact to produce the cultural politics of a postnational imaginary. (Appadurai 1996, 12–18, 21, 31, 44)

Appadurai is fully aware of the "split character" of the imagination as a "popular, social, collective fact in the era of globalization," i.e. as the way in and through which "modern citizens are disciplined and controlled" *as well as* the faculty through which "collective patterns of dissent and new designs for collective life emerge." He also traces the dynamic of the "darker side of globalization," violence, *as well as* of "grassroots globalization" or "globalization from below" in his book *Fear of Small Numbers* (2006). But, again, he points out that the "long-distance politics [of terrorist groups], organized in new cellular form," *also* is the organizational mode of the most important progressive movements that "seek to construct a third space of circulation, independent of the spaces of state and market, and which we may call movements of grassroots globalization." (Appadurai 2006, x–xi, 3, 35ff., 130–31)

Among the most pertinent work on rearticulating the changing concept and the social and political dynamics of "culture," of transcultural theorizing are:

John Tomlinson's careful and nuanced study of *Globalization and Culture* (1999) that reconstructs the multidimensionality and the essentially dialectical character of the hybridizing cultural dimensions of globalization, de- and reterritorializations, and the complex, always intrinsically ambivalent dynamics of culture as resource in an "emergent" dialogical cosmopolitan "disposition" and politics.

George Yúdice's theoretically and analytically rich study, *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era* (2003) discusses in a comparative U.S. and Latin American perspective the transformations of culture as expedient, as resource and performativity, as central to the episteme of global capitalism, absorbing and displacing earlier understandings of the role of culture in modernity (cf. Bhabha 1994). This "culturalization" of the new economy radically transforms civil society, consumerism, and (global) citizenship, producing cultural hybridity and transculturations, and also challenges the objectives of (U.S.) American Cultural Studies. Yúdice, however, does not simply reject the processes of the expediency of culture as resource as a "perversion of culture," but *also* points out their potential as a "foundation for resistance against the ravages of that very same economic system." (Yúdice 6, 17–19, 25, 334)

In other ways, Richard Florida's influential studies on the emergence of a socially wide-ranging new "Creative Class," the changing role and productivity of "culture-as-resource" in the comparative economic growth policies of urban regions, and the creation of a whole new way of life ask us to rethink our oppositional investment in the "cultural sector" as transcending the social real. Though, his use of the social class concept and of his reduction of the activities of creative "new class" members from the arts and the humanities to providing "lifestyle" or "cultural and nightlife amenities" for the creative economy is very controversial. (Florida 2002, 2005)

Imre Szeman's perceptive essays on the central role a revision of the traditional spatial and temporal concept of "culture" and of the radically changing functions and dynamics of the sphere of "culture" plays in understanding the social and political consequences of globalization processes ask us to respond to the "crisis of the humanities" with new forms and uses of the imagination that help to dismantle the all-encompassing ideology of neoliberal globalism. Scholars have to articulate alternative modes of understanding the transformations produced by globalization and reconceptualize "transnational cultural studies." The inherent instability of the concept of globalization in a world of transnational connections, communications, and consumerism opens up to literature, literary theory, and poetics (and other media) gaps for creative work of all kinds to intervene and generate alternatives. (Szeman 2003, 2006)

It is this awareness of the increasingly important impact of the new modes and forms of the production, circulation, and reception of culture as it manifests itself in the new electronic media and digital forms of communication with their wide-ranging, decentering repercussions on the constitution and negotiation of subjectivities, of cultural identities, and of their "cultural work" that demand redefinitions of the "sphere" and the social and political role of "culture." (see Rowe 2002, Isensee 2004, Oppermann 2010)

Therefore, I do *not* mean to "contextualize" or to "politicize" American cultural studies, which has been done in impressive and consequential ways over the last two decades. (see Pease 2003, 2009a, and Kaplan 2003) In his highly original, densely argued, and provocative study, *The New American Exceptionalism* (2009), Donald E. Pease, Jr. relates a critical view on the history and politics of American Studies to the changing dynamics and dialectics of American exceptionalism as the all-pervasive state fantasy that re-emerged after the end of the Cold War in a different form as and in a state of exception and of emergency after September 11th, 2001 that set President George W. Bush's imperatives of the National Security State and its curtailment of civil liberties against the fantasy of a multicultural nation. (Pease 2009) The important studies mentioned about the interrelations and the transcultural repercussions of culture and globalization have given us a wealth of critical perspectives for rearticulating "American Cultural Studies," but in this essay I want to engage in a critical discussion with a different kind of discourse that can help, I propose, to reformulate the dimensions, objectives, or directions for reconstituting the discourse on a *politics of American transcultural studies*. What I want to argue is that there has been a much more specific contentious and committed dialogue among *political philosophers* since the early 1990s that is informed by different concepts and strategies of dealing with cultural or social differences, cultures of difference, and transcultural studies and that rearticulates them in a new *theory of democracy* that confronts the challenges societies have to meet in a transnational, multi-centered, multicultural globalizing world of a new capitalism and post-9/11 politics. In this context, the objectives and strategies of radical cultural critique must be rearticulated in response to changing parameters and dynamics of transcultural practices, perspectives on transnational migrations, governance, justice, citizenship, and reconfigurations of "culture(s)." Of course, it is impossible to grasp these wide-ranging and evolving dialogues among political philosophers on a new theory of democracy by pointing to a single approach or concept. But I want to suggest that their reflections on a *transnational and transcultural theory of democracy*, in its many different dimensions and practical consequences, can be seen in our context of resituating and reconstituting transcultural American Studies most productively *in the frame of the debate on redefining cosmopolitanism*. The aim of my reflections is *not* to propose one – the *true* – version of cosmopolitanism as the solution of the problems of radical cultural studies, but to engage in a critical and enabling dialogue with various, competing projects of cosmopolitanism articulated from very different positions and for different philosophical-political goals.

**The Critique of Cosmopolitanism**

The debate on a new cosmopolitanism has been multi-faceted and controversial, but it has led to penetrating insights into the problems democracies face today and the workings of politics, society, and culture. Obviously, the notion of cosmopolitanism has a long and contradictory history, as Timothy Brennan has reminded us in his theoretically rich, but also often highly polemical book *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (1997). He explicitly "historicizes" the discourse of cosmopolitanism and reconstructs the ambiguous legacy that the contemporary "new cosmopolitanism," in celebrating "the death of the nation-state, transculturation…, cultural hybridity…, and postmodernity…" (Brennan 1997, 2), tends to suppress. Brennan acknowledges the appeal and the pertinence of cosmopolitan discourse in many respects, particularly in times of a conservative backlash, but in general rejects it as "an act of avoidance if not hostility and disarticulation toward states in formation," as the "explicit failure to see cosmopolitanism as less an expansive ethos than an expansionist policy: a move not toward complexity and variety but toward centralization and suffocating stagnation." (Brennan 1997, 55) It suppresses its American locality by "setting up an American universal." He argues that this new cosmopolitanism has been institutionalized in forms of *cultural studies*, with the "unforeseen uses of cultural theory in the worlds of business and public policy." (Brennan 1997, 119, 225, 308, cf. 310)

Answering to his question about a strategy to "build a cosmopolitanism worthy of the name," Brennan writes in conclusion that it is to preserve "the sense of a system of competing nation-states, both as a desired objective and as a more sober, less celebratory description of actual global arrangements." (Brennan 1997, 309) He finds "unexpectedly subtle continuities with big-power America" in the new cosmopolitanism and espouses and recovers an alternative tradition he finds usually ignored in the new cosmopolitan discourse, the tradition of a socialist, anti-colonialist, *and anti-cosmopolitan* discourse of *internationalism*. He elaborates the crucial role "indigenous" forms of culture, especially music, have played in Latin America and the Caribbean in the fight for national self-assertion and opposition to the imperial impact from the North. The resistance in "third world" countries to the American version of cosmopolitanism shows that there is "only one way to express internationalism: by defending the popular sovereignty of existing and emergent third-world polities. …the nation is a precious site for negotiating rights and for salvaging communal traditions." (Brennan 1997, 316–17)

In his later essays, Timothy Brennan has further explored the often hidden ambivalences and the critical potential of the discourses of cosmopolitanism and internationalism. But in his essay "Cosmopolitanism and Internationalism," he also constructs a clean-cut opposition between the two discourses that easily rejects cosmopolitanism and fully endorses internationalism. (Brennan 2001, 77) In his earlier book, he had explicitly pointed out that the term "internationalism" comprises *both* "imperial" or "capitalist" internationalism *and* "socialist" internationalism. (Brennan 1997, 149) If *cosmopolitanism* has *also* been used in a colonialist and imperialist vein and in some versions can be identified as contributing to the neoliberal ideology of globalism, this cannot mean to reject the concept as being once and for all tainted by some of its earlier uses and some contemporary contexts and to replace it by another term, such as *internationalism*, which, obviously, can as easily be questioned due to its historical (mis)use. As there *can be no pure terms or concepts* that define a new reality or a new political program which are not inherently hybrid, dialectical/dialogical, and historically charged, we should *not* pursue the version of an etymological or originary/first use fetishism, be it negative or utopian, but ask for the *concrete use and critical potential the respective discourses offer*.

In his essay, "Cosmo-theory" (2002), which became chapter 7 in his book *War of Positions* (2006), Brennan places the new cultural studies cosmopolitanism as a "fundamentally ambivalent phenomenon" in the context of his wider theory of "cosmo-theory." He characterizes "cosmo-theory" as representing an "imperial liberalism," "failing to link the market with imagination, and then failing to link that nexus itself to the non-Western world, which any cosmopolitanism should properly foreground." In discussing the economic function of the "culturalist intellectual," he criticizes the "spilling over of the cultural into the political [as] endemic to cosmopolitanism's functionality." (Brennan 2002, 659, 674–76) In spite of occasional polemical generalizations, his analyses challenge the critical discourses of cosmopolitanism to rearticulate more cogently the meaning of "the cultural" and "the political" and of the transnational decentering ("cross-border theorizing") of the traditionally predominantly Euro-U.S.centric cosmopolitan project.

The question of the economic, social, geographical "grounding" of the new locally differently situated versions of the new cosmopolitanism and of their understanding of the political and the cultural are also at the center of other important critiques of cosmopolitan discourse. In his book, *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom* (2009), David Harvey dismisses much of the new cosmopolitanism as "being about nothing other than an ethical and humanitarian mask for hegemonic neoliberal practices of class domination and financial and militaristic imperialism." But he takes up the reflections of some scholars such as Iris Marion Young or De Sousa Santos as pointing in the right direction of a "subaltern cosmopolitanism." But as a geographer he demands a "far deeper understanding of how geographical principles of space and place construction relate to the actual unfolding of any cosmopolitan project," i.e. to clarify "what kind of geographical, anthropological, and ecological knowledge is appropriate for a cosmopolitan project." (Harvey 79–81, 97) However, the most radical engagement with the role of the political in cosmopolitanism is Chantal Mouffe's book *On the Political* (2005) that offers a penetrating critique of "the cosmopolitasn project" or "vision" in contemporary political philosophy and public discourse as the prime example of the "anti-political" stance, of the denial of the political in her sense, i.e. "the dimension of antagonism which I take to be constitutive of human societies." (Mouffe 2, 9). She rejects the "post-political" vision, particularly among the Left, of a "consensual form of democracy," of a "[rational] consensus… obtained through dialogue." Instead, she proposes the "creation of a vibrant 'agonistic' public sphere of contestation where different hegemonic political projects can be confronted." "There is no society beyond hegemony," and the task of democratic politics is not to overcome antagonisms through consensus but "to construct them in a way that energizes the democratic confrontation," acknowledging the "affective dimension," "passions" in politics. This means that the current unipolar order has to be replaced by a "multipolar world, with an equilibrium among several regional poles allowing for a plurality of hegemonic powers." (1–3, 6–7, 14, cf. 115) Her "agonistic" approach transforms antagonism into agonism as a we/they relation "where conflicting parties, although acknowledging that there is no rational solution to their conflict, nevertheless recognize the legitimacy of their opponents. They are 'adversaries' not enemies. This means that, while in conflict, they see themselves as belonging to the same political association, as sharing a common symbolic space within which the conflict takes place." (20)

Now, when Mouffe writes of "sharing a common symbolic space within which the conflict takes place," she implies the need for a "consensus": "Consensus is needed on the institutions of democracy and on the 'ethico-political' values informing the political association – liberty and equality for all – but there will be always be disagreement concerning their meaning and the way they should be implemented. In a pluralist democracy such disagreements are not only legitimate but necessary," in order to create "new discourses and institutions." (31, 33) She finds that all the proposals by the "cosmopolitan" political philosophers she analyzes are "not… properly political": "They all postulate, albeit in different guise, the availability of a form of consensual governance transcending the political, conflict and negativity… The cosmopolitan project is therefore bound to deny the hegemonic dimension of politics." (104, 106)

Chantal Mouffe's *On the Political* is a powerful critique of contemporary political theory that illuminates central problems of the new cosmopolitan projects and the crucial role of the political. However, if she finds the cosmopolitan project in all its versions hopelessly based on "flawed theoretical premises" that condemn it to failure, I wonder how her own analytical strategies work. She quite rightly argues that her approach "requires us to accept that there are other forms of modernity than the one which the West is trying to impose worldwide irrespective of the respect of other histories and cultures" and that we need to ask the question "whether other cultures do not give different answers to the same questions [concerning human rights]; in other words, we should look for functional equivalents of human rights." (118, 124, 126) In analyzing the work of other political philosophers, she often de(con)structs their theoretical reflections into reductive versions of what she rejects as the "anti-political," "dialogical" approach. But in her own reasoning on the "limits of pluralism" she asks how an agonistic democracy can work and introduces the notion of a "conflictual consensus," i.e. "consensus on the ethico-political values of liberty and equality for all, dissent about their interpretation." But how to discriminate "between demands which are to be accepted as part of the agonistic debate and those which are to be excluded"? The answer, "exclusions are envisaged in political and not in moral terms," seems weak to me. "The existence of a shared symbolic space is necessary." How can this shared symbolic space be established without contentious dialogues in a transnational world? If "the drawing of the frontier between the legitimate and the illegitimate is always a political decision, and… it should therefore always remain open to contestation," a *dialogical approach* and a new critical engagement with competing "partial," "discrepant" versions of a new cosmopolitanism, articulated from different parts of the world, seems pertinent. (52, 120–21)

This perspective on the political permeates the influential collection of essays, *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (1998), edited by Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins. The editors take up the various competing, but also complementary visions of radical, alternative as well as "actually existing" "postcolonial," "discrepant," "vernacular" forms of cosmopolitanism. They delineate the contours of a self-reflexive *transnational* cosmopolitanism *from the Left* in the age of globalization beyond the confines of the Euro-U.S.centric tradition. They analyze the political potential of transgressive theories and practices of situated and committed "cosmopolitics" that confront the heterogeneous interrelations between cosmopolitanisms and the state. Cheng and Robbins expose instances of cosmopolitanism from around the world "in their full multivoiced complexity, thereby making it clear at least what *justice* on a global scale would have to resolve." (8, 10, 12 my emphasis) Situating their book in the theoretical debates of its time, Chen writes at the end of his introduction that the essays in *Cosmopolitics* "bear witness to the fact that nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and the cosmopolitical are formed from the complicated intertwinings of culture, politics, and economics, and that we can conceptualize these phenomena adequately only by working in the volatile zone where ethical philosophy, political theory, cultural anthropology, social theory, critical theory, and cultural studies interact." (38)

In sum, my critical discussion of some important critiques of the new cosmopolitanism(s) has shown, I think, that they usually proceed by way of polemical and reductive readings of these very different theories, but that they also raise crucial questions concerning the *cultural* and *political* meanings and implications of their situatedness, their analytical strategies, and their notions of "the (trans)cultural" and "the (transnational) political." It has also shown that there cannot be *one single* "true" version of cosmopolitanism today, but that the challenge of the "cosmopolitan project" is exactly to (re)articulate and negotiate the different transnational and transcultural objectives and discourses. And it is to explore the questions of justice, governance, citizenship, human rights, or cultural differences in an open and "agonistic" public discourse in a multi-centered world. My own position as a German American Studies scholar defines the starting-point of my reflections, but also, hopefully, enables me to enter into dialogues with scholars from other positionalities and locations and their approaches to new forms of cosmopolitanism that could contribute to devising a politics of radical American transcultural American Studies.

## The New Cosmopolitanism in Europe: Cosmopolitan Visions (Ulrich Beck) and Postcolonial Cosmopolitanism (Paul Gilroy)

In 1998, the German sociologist *Ulrich Beck* published in the British *New Statesman* his "Cosmopolitan Manifesto," that, modeled on the Communist Manifesto, asks for the creation of an "effective world politics," concluding with "Citizens of the world, unite!" In a globalizing world, he envisions "a cosmopolitan democracy [as] a realistic, if utopian project," "a post-national cosmopolitan world-order" and "expanding 'world citizenship'" that must be fully aware of its *danger* of becoming another "imperial misuse of the cosmopolitan mission" of a "global capitalism." Beck's somewhat idealistic dream asks for a "consciousness of cosmopolitan solidarity," a "global dialogue about the goals, values and structures of a cosmopolitan society," "cosmopolitan movements and parties" that "feel an obligation toward the planet as a whole." (Beck 1998, 28–30).

A decade later, Beck writes in the Introduction to *The Cosmopolitan Vision* (2006), "cosmopolitanism… has become the defining feature of a new era, the era of reflexive modernity." (Beck 2006, 2) In his earlier essay, "The Cosmopolitan Society and Its Enemies" (2002), he had defined cosmopolitanism as an alternative to the neoliberal ideology of *globalism*, as a way of "thinking in terms of *inclusive oppositions*," a "rooted cosmopolitanism" of a "*dialogic* imagination." The "clash of cultures and rationalities within one's own life, the *'internalized'* other" drives a kind of "cosmopolitan world politics" of different forms of a cosmopolitan society. He strongly argues his distinction between the condition of "globality," the multiple processes of "globalization," and the neoliberal ideology of "globalism" and addresses the workings of a "*methodological* cosmopolitanism" or rather "[reflexive] methodological cosmopolitanization" of the sociological imagination. (Beck 2002, 18–22, 30, 32, 36, 41, cf. Beck 2000, 80–81) Cosmopolitanism is not a single unifying concept, but is a disputed notion of "divergent entangled cosmopolitan modernities": "My central defining characteristic – dialogic imagination – explores and exploits the creative contradictions of cultures within and between the imagined communities of nations…" Cosmopolitan society, for Beck, aims to describe a "historically new quality and form of societal differentiation" characterized by "concepts like *transnational, transcultural, hybrid, diaspora*, etc." It produces a "new kind of identity and politics as well as a new kind of everyday space–time experience and of human sociability" that is emerging. (Beck 2002, 30, 35–37) Cosmopolitanization means "fundamental *ambivalence* and a *dialectic* whose outcome is open." The cosmopolitan vision opens up a space in everyday practice and in the relevant sciences and forces us to "develop the art of translation and bridge-building." (Beck 2006, 73, 89) But it has to be defended against its "enemies" such as "nationalism," the ideology of "globalism," and "democratic authoritarianism" (identity politics, fundamentalism). (Beck 2002, 29, 37–42)

Beck sums up his own vision of cosmopolitanism in the essay by emphasizing the central role of the "dialogic imagination" and identifying *globality*, *plurality* and *civility* as defining features of a 'de-territorialized' concept of cosmopolitanism. (Beck 2002, 35–36) Beck's approach to cosmopolitanism preeminently focuses on *a vision from Europe*, and he particularly engages with the work of British social scientists. His theory may raise some theoretical and political questions, but in his more recent work, particularly in the rich and thoughtful study, *Das kosmopolitische Europa: Gesellschaft und Politik in der Zweiten Moderne* (2004, with Edgar Grande), he has analyzed the problems as well as prospects of a "cosmopolitan Europe" that transcends old and new nationalisms and draws the (institutional) consequences of its "growing transnational interconnections and obligations." (Beck 2006, 166, 163–77; Beck, Grande 2004)

Before the very different background of British colonialist history and contemporary neocolonialist, neoracist politics, the black British cultural and social critic Paul Gilroy, in his book *Postcolonial Melancholia* (2005), directly confronts the question "what cosmopolitan democracy will be" and which critical perspectives might "nurture the ability and the desire to live with difference on an increasingly divided but also convergent planet." (Gilroy 4, 17) He points out that the concept of "cosmopolitanism" has been "hijacked and diminished" in recent years, but also is aware of the ambivalent history of cosmopolitanism concerning race and charges that the recent versions of cosmopolitanism have refused to "consider the politics of race that colors all of them." Gilroy identifies the "enemies" of a new "vernacular," "demotic" cosmopolitanism and agonistic "planetary humanism" in a way similar to Beck as state-sponsored patriotism, ethnic absolutism, and a resurgent nationalism caused by "cultural globalization." (Gilroy 4–5, 25, 59, 67) He characterizes his own *postcolonial* notion of a "vernacular," "demotic" cosmopolitanism from below which acknowledges colonialism as the other side of modernity and replaces the exhausted or negatively charged terms of a "ready-mixed" multiculturalism and the imperializing "globalization" (or "globalism"), by the ideas of *conviviality* and *planetarity. Conviviality* is "radically open" and "makes nonsense of closed, fixed, and reified identity and turns attention toward the always unpredictable mechanisms of identification." (71, xv) *Planetarity*, or *planetary consciousness*, is crucial for a cosmopolitan democracy in a time of postmodernity, postcolonialism, and globalization (globalism), of "diaspora dispersal, mass migration, military travel, tourism, and the revolution in global communication," a "novel sense of interdependence, simultaneity, and mutuality" on our planet. It is characterized by a "degree of estrangement from one's own culture and history," by "contingency and movement," supporting anti-racist solidarity which is a particularly important dimension in Gilroy's argument ("using race to rethink power and politics," Gilroy xv, 6, 67, 75, 79). He writes in his Preface: "The unabashed humanism that informs my arguments is transgressively licensed by a critique of racial hierarchy and the infrahuman life forms it creates." (Gilroy xv) In spite of objections one could level against his investment in supposedly new, untainted terms like "planetarity," his program of cosmopolitanism, of an "agonistic planetary humanism," as well as a *newly defined postracist postcolonial Europe,* and of a "practical transfiguration of democracy which is incompatible with racism and ethnic absolutism" is *transcultural* in all three meanings of the concept I indicated above. It is energized by his commitment to explore the democratic potential of "the work involved in translation, principled internationalism, and cosmopolitan conviviality," of a vision of a truly "multicultural democracy." (Gilroy 4, 8, 79, 151)

## New Cosmopolitanisms and Democratic Theory in U.S. American Political Philosophy: Seyla Benhabib, Nancy Fraser, and Iris Marion Young

In the *United States*, during the 1980s, political theory was characterized by a paradigm change from *redistribution*, a politics of structural difference, to *recognition*, a politics of cultural difference that focused on multiculturalist and feminist claims and notions of cultural group identities. Since the 1990s, political philosophers have more radically confronted the repercussions of a multi-centered, globalizing world increasingly beyond the nation-state system that challenges the parameters of democratic theory. They have criticized essentialist notions of culture(s) and identities, analyzed the potential and the limits of "civil society," acknowledged the radical hybridity, polyvocality, and "transculturality" of all cultures and societies, and pursued visions of "deliberative" or "communicative" models of democracy. They have explored the transformations of the meanings and roles of "flexible," "non-territorial," and "world" *citizenship*, versions of a "rooted," "partial," or "federalist" *cosmopolitanism*, the complex and contested new practices of *governance* and *sovereignty*, and cogently addressed the crucial questions of global *justice*, of social and human rights, and the institutional consequences of a politics of difference. To this exploratory and contentious public debate, Seyla Benhabib, Nancy Fraser, Iris Marion Young, and Kwame Anthony Appiah have made particularly challenging contributions. They have not only engaged in a continuous open dialogue with each other's work, but they have also committed themselves to a *transatlantic* philosophical debate with Critical Theory (esp. Jürgen Habermas, Axel Honneth) and French poststructuralist philosophy (esp. Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva). All of them have been part of the ongoing project of feminist critique and gender discourse. Their philosophical work confront and deconstructs fundamental Western philosophical and disciplinary distinctions and oppositions, *negotiating* their *tensions* and *interdependencies* without discarding one side or pressing for a "new" "synthesis." Their books and essays testify to their ongoing dialogical philosophical commitment to a theory of democracy in a "globalized world of uncertainty, hybridity, fluidity, and contestation" (Seyla Benhabib) that can contribute to *grounding* and *resituating* transcultural American Studies.

Seyla Benhabib's philosophical work explores the problems and the potential of the transfigurations of democratic citizenship and sovereignty in a time of crisis of the nation-state, of the deep political, economic, social, and cultural transformations happening in our post- and transnational, globalizing era. Her early book, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (1992), reconceptualises, also from a feminist point of view, Jürgen Habermas' project of critical theory and revisits the postmodern and poststructuralist critiques of "identity politics" that "attempt to replace the vision of an autonomous and engendered subject with that of a fractured, opaque self" without agency. (Benhabib 1992, 15–16) In her study, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (2002), she analyzes the dimensions and practical repercussions of a "deliberative model of democracy" that permits "maximum cultural contestation within the public sphere, in and through the institutions and associations of civil society." In more general terms she addresses the challenges the "demands for the recognition of identities based on gender, race, language, ethnic background, and sexual orientation have posed to the legitimacy of established constitutional democracies." (Benhabib 2002, 2, viii–ix) Benhabib proposes a different model of democracy and redefines the concept and the practices of "culture." She emphasizes the "radical hybridity and polyvocality of all cultures" and opts for a "dialogic and narrative model of identity constitution." She writes: "Cultures are formed through complex dialogues with other cultures. In most cultures that have attained some degree of internal differentiation, the dialogue with the other(s) is internal rather than extrinsic to the culture itself." (Benhabib 2002, ix, 11, 16, 25)

If the crucial questions of *The Claims of Culture* were "How can liberal democracy best be realized in a world fraught with conflicting new forms of identity politics and intensifying conflicts over culture?" and how can constitutional and legal universalism at the level of polity resolve multicultural conflicts, her next book, *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents and Citizens* (2004) examines "the boundaries of political community by focusing on political membership." This means "the principles and practices for incorporating aliens and strangers, immigrants and newcomers, refugees and asylum seekers into existing polities." (Benhabib 2004, 1) If the modern nation-state system had regulated membership in terms of *one* principal category, national citizenship, the effects of globalization, of worldwide migrations, of the decline of the nation-state, and the formation of transnational political systems such as the European Community have produced a crisis of fundamental notions of territory-based community, of national culture, and have led to a "disaggregation" of the unitary modern model of citizenship. For Benhabib, the questions is: "What then should be guiding normative principles of membership in a world of increasingly deterritorialized politics?" (Benhabib 2004, 2, 12)

What makes her work so powerful is that she never takes any dogmatic position or accepts a forced choice between clear oppositions or alternatives, but tries to respond in her thinking to what she calls "the contradictory nature of the present." She always points out the "ambivalences," the "inevitable and necessary tensions" between *ethnos* and *demos,* the "irresoluble and internal contradictions" she has to pursue in her philosophical analysis of the principles and politics of contemporary democracies. (Benhabib 2004, 15, 19, 129, 143, 171) Revising its linguistic use by Derrida, she introduces the concept of "democratic iterations," which she defines as "complex processes of public argument, deliberation, and learning through which universalist rights claims are contested and contextualized, invoked and revoked, throughout legal and political institutions as well as in the public sphere of liberal democracies." Her "cosmopolitan theory of justice" engages critically the "paradox of democratic legitimacy" that "every act of self-legislation is also an act of self-constitution" that excludes other subjects from its jurisdiction and the assertion of their rights, a paradox that *cannot ever* be "resolved," but she suggests ways by which it might be "mitigated" in "contentious dialogue, a series of contested iterations." (Benhabib 2004, 3, 19, 47, 142, 176, 206–9, 214–21)

Benhabib's incisive philosophical reflections are complemented by careful *comparative* institutional and empirical case studies, such as the new developments concerning the meanings and boundaries of citizenship and the rights of "others" in the European Community or the so-called Muslim "scarf affairs" in France and Germany. These case studies test the viability of her theoretical distinctions and, at the same time, pose new challenges to philosophical notions such as "cosmopolitan federalism," "jurisgenerative politics," or "transnational or cosmopolitan flexible citizenship" elaborated in her theory. (Benhabib 2004, 12, 23, 143ff., 169, 176, 192, 217ff.) Her rigorously *comparative, transcultural* approach analyzes the problems from various international perspectives, particularly the United States and a diverse and divisive Europe.

Benhabib's Tanner Lectures of 2004, published as *Another Cosmopolitanism* (2006), elaborate the crucial theoretical concepts and analytical strategies by focusing on the critical potential of a new version of *cosmopolitanism*. (Benhabib 2006, 175, cf. 17–18) In her efforts of "reclaiming dialogic universalism," cosmopolitanism is "a philosophical project of mediations, not of reductions or of totalizations," of "the emergence of norms that ought to govern relations among individuals in a global civil society." (Benhabib 2006, 18–20, 183, cf. 158–59) As processes of (collective) "resignification," imbued with "new and different meaning," democratic iterations attest to a "dialectic of rights and identities," opening "novel spaces for signification, meaning, and rearticulation in human relations," and produce *new forms of agency*, *subjectivity,* and modalities of citizenship.. (Benhabib 2006, 47–48, 67, cf. Benhabib 2004, 51–67) If for her the "disaggregation of citizenship, which unbundled entitlement to civil, social, and some political rights from national belonging, [is] one of the clearest indicators of the evolution of cosmopolitan norms," she also realizes that the recent (neoliberal) "transcendence of the nation-state" hardly has moved in the direction of cosmopolitanism. However, she does not accept the dystopian vision of the end of politics, of the loss of agency in social and political life, but works out the paradoxes, the impasses, but also the emancipatory and enabling potential of post-Westphalian cosmopolitan notions and practices. of another cosmopolitanism – a cosmopolitanism to come." (Benhabib 2006, 177, cf. Benhabib's in Appiah et al. 2007)

It is this complex interrelationship between struggles for redistribution and recognition, for justice in a post-Westphalian, transnational, globalizing world, of the dynamics and dialectics of the economic, the cultural, and the political dimensions of democracies today that has been at the center of Nancy Fraser's work in political philosophy. Since her collection of essays, *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (1989), she has worked on developing a "critical-democratic approach" to a theory of a communicative democracy with a heterogeneous, dispersed network of many publics and of *postnational democratic justice*, critically drawing on European and American feminist theory, critical social theory, poststructuralism, and pragmatism. In her book, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Philosophical Exchange* (with Axel Honneth) (1998, 2002), she offers a dual perspective approach to a theory of justice that addresses the conflicted interrelations of maldistribution (class, economy) and misrecognition (status, culture), a "bifocal" approach that is particularly energized by her reflective engagement with the conception of gender. In her more recent work, Fraser extends these notions of "participation" and "democratization" in proposing a *politics of representation* (citizenship) as a *third* dimension of justice. Politics of representation is understood as *both* "symbolic framing" ("(in)justices of boundaries and frames") *and* "political voice" ("democratic accountability") in which the *framing* of questions of justice becomes a matter of *democratic deliberation*. She writes that the "theory of social justice" now appears as the "theory of democratic justice," which has to be explored in moral philosophy, social theory, political theory, and practical politics in their *different* forms. (Fraser 2008, 28, 146–47, cf. Fraser in Olson 2008, 290) In her study, *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World* (2008), she explains the two meanings of the title phrase:

> In the case of the balance, the challenge stems from the competing views of the "what" of justice: redistribution or recognition or representation? In the case of the map, the trouble arises from conflicting framings of the "who": territorialized citizenship or global humanity or transnational communities of risk? (Fraser 2008, 5)

*Scales of Justice* pursues these questions, also the "meta-political injustices," the kinds of misrepresentation she calls "*misframings*": "I develop a 'critical-democratic' alternative which treats disputes about framing as *political* matters, to be settled by democratic debate and institutional decision-making on a transnational scale." (Fraser 2008, 7, cf. 98–99) The plea for *transnational* "meta-democracy" discloses a third parameter of justice, beyond the "what" and the "who," i.e. the dimension of the "how." Fraser's political theory of "reflexive justice" in abnormal times reveals and articulates the democratic dimensions of the new global movements and politics, prefiguring new democratizing transnational institutions (current "third-phase" feminist theory).(Fraser 2008, 26, 73, 102, 112–15)

Fraser does *not* look for a single, "synthetic" theory, but offers a complex "dialogical" model that can accommodate "differentiation, divergence, and interaction at every level." She seeks to establish a "post-territorial mode of political differentiation," "reflexive," "performative," and "dialogical at every level" (Fraser 2008, 24–25, 27–28, 40, 42–48, 68–70, 73, 150, 167) But she acknowledges that "by itself, however, dialogue is not a solution," that it has to be embedded in, informed by, a "formal institutional track," i.e. the (difficult) "invention of new global democratic institutions where disputes about framing can be aired and resolved." In multiple ways, questions of distribution and recognition are today inextricably imbricated with questions of representation. (Fraser 2008, 69–70, 150, 165, Fraser in Olson 2008, 282, 289, 342–43)

In *Scales of Justice*, Fraser discusses the changes necessary within meta-disputes over justice and a "cosmopolitan democracy" in a globalizing, post-national world. The question is how public opinion facing "a radical heterogeneity of justice discourses" can be "*normatively legitimate* and *politically efficacious*" in "transnational public spheres." Conceiving of a configuration of multiple "transnational public spheres," of "diasporic public spheres," or of a "global public sphere," sets the task of "reimagin[ing] political space for a postwestphalian world" and rethinking and repoliticizing public sphere theory (Habermas) and "counterpublic spheres" in a transnational frame. (Fraser 2008, 8–9, 71, 76–78, 86, 92–93, 143, 155, 157)

The public and cultural implications of a theory of justice in "abnormal times" are also the key issues in the late political philosopher Iris Marion Young's work. She addresses the question of the current crisis of Western democracies, the dimensions and political role of cultural and structural differences, and explores the problems and the political potential of a theory of a "dialogic," "communicative," "participatory" model of democracy in the contemporary transnational, globalizing world. In her book, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990), she develops a conception of *justice* critically indebted to the more recent work of the Frankfurt School and French poststructuralist philosophy and feminist theory and practice. She argues for a politics that "recognizes rather than represses differences," a vision of a "heterogeneous public that acknowledges and affirms group differences." This revision of the *notion of community*, which is crucial to her political theory, she finds expressed in the ideal of *city life* (as against the celebration of a homogeneous "community") as the "being together of strangers," as the "openness to unassimilated otherness." (Young 1990, 10, 12–13, 227, 237, 241, 256) For her, "an emancipatory politics that affirms group difference involves a reconception of the meaning of equality" and of "affirmative action." Group differences have to be understood as relational, not substantive, which means that the justice of group-conscious social politics rejects exclusion and embraces a democratic cultural pluralism and the ideal of a heterogeneous public. (Young 1990, 157–58, 161, 163, 169, 171, 173–74, 179)

Her next book, *Inclusion and Democracy* (2000), explores "additional and deeper conditions of political inclusion and exclusion, such as those involving modes of communication, attending to social difference, representation, civic organizing, and the borders of political jurisdiction." (Young 2000, 6) She carefully revises the theory of deliberative democracy as "communicative democracy" and addresses the "norms and conditions of inclusive democratic communication under circumstances of structural and cultural difference. Aligning herself, often with critical revisions, with cosmopolitan approaches, she points out the limits of civil society and the changing meaning of the public sphere and the need to expand the idea of communicative democracy from "formal sites of deliberation" to "the streets, squares, church basements, and theatres of civil society." As a consequence, Young proposes a model of "differentiated solidarity" that she also extends in her more recent work to a global level, the world-wide interaction and interdependence among people. (Young 2000, 6, 168, 197, 221, 260)

Iris Marion Young's essay, "Structural Injustice and the Politics of Difference" (2007), elaborates a complex understanding of a politics of difference which emphasizes the often ignored distinction between positional and cultural difference. Young finds both discourses legitimate, but strongly criticizes the theoretical and political limits of the more recent politics of cultural difference. She therefore asks her colleagues "to re-focus [academic and popular] attention to group differences generated from structural power, the division of labor, and constructions of the normal and the deviant, as they continue also to reflect on conflicts over national, ethnic, or religious difference." (Young in Appiah et al. 2007, 80, 112)

Young's reflections on positional and cultural differences, on civil society, a democratic cultural pluralism, a heterogeneous public as well as the "normative implications of spatialized social relations" reconceptualize a version of communicative, participatory democracy in the present post- and transnational age. They lead her to questioning the Euro-Americacentrist presuppositions of political theory and reframe her work by addressing the repercussions of "global democracy." In the last chapter of *Inclusion and Democracy*, "Self-Determination and Global Democracy," she argues, with cosmopolitans, that "under contemporary conditions of global interdependence, obligations of justice extend globally." Political theory should understand peoples as relationally constituted, as the political recognition of the distinctness of peoples should accommodate "the millions of people who think of their identities as hybrids of national membership, or who construct a cosmopolitan identity." Young discusses the difficult problems of "trans-border justice" and the need for "stronger institutions of global governance." (Young 2000, 188, 236–37, 246, 252–53) A normative principle of institutions of global governance, based on a global understanding of differentiated solidarity, should not be defined as exclusive control over territory, but, on the contrary, "jurisdictions can be spatially overlapping or shared, or even lack spatial reference entirely." However, as governance cannot be "divorced from land, its resources, and a sense of place" entirely, there cannot be a clear abstract formula laid down in advance. In practice, "depending on the degree of hybridity and multiculturalism among the contestant [groups]," self-determination as non-dominance should "allow many multicultural or cosmopolitan jurisdictions" and hybrid, inter-regional identities. (Young 2000, 261–62, 264, 266, 269, 271–75)

Young further elaborates this vision of a global democratic discussion that transcends the Euro-American frame in her more recent work on "global democracy, governance, justice, and a global public sphere" in a critical re-assessment of economic globalization, current international conflicts, such as the war in Iraq and Bosnia, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or the working conditions in international sweat shops. All her political theorizing working toward a "dialogical theory of democracy," of a model of "global and regional democracy" was energized by her indefatigable belief in the revolutionary potential of democratic agency, contested dialogical public debate, and the power of transnational "grassroots" movements. (Young 2007)

## Decentering Euro-U.S. American Cosmopolitanisms: Kwame A. Appiah, the New Social Anthropology, and Walter Mignolo's Dialogical Cosmopolitanism of Colonial Difference

The political theories of Seyla Benhabib, Nancy Fraser, and Iris Marion Young have, with somewhat different emphases, critical concepts, and analytical strategies, elaborated in cogent ways the philosophical, political-practical, and (trans)cultural objectives and challenges of democracies under transnational, global conditions in the new century. They have been led in their reflection to addressing the crucial question of *transcending the Western frame of reference* and have begun to enter into *dialogues with non-Western discourses on the futures of democracies,* helping us to revise and reconceptualize our notions of cosmopolitanism for the 21st century.

The African American philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, who grew up in Ghana, studied in England, and teaches at Princeton, argues in favor of what he calls a "rooted" or "partial cosmopolitanism." Taking W.E.B. Du Bois as his example, he shows that cosmopolitanism cannot be divorced from being rooted in a specific, also *national* frame but rather is dependent on concrete cultural affiliations. For Appiah, therefore, a "citizen of the world" should neither "abjure all local allegiances and partialities in the name of a vast abstraction, humanity" nor should s/he take the nationalist position of rejecting all foreigners. Distinguishing between state and nation and between ethics and morality, Appiah concludes, "[t]he position worth defending might be called (in both senses) a partial cosmopolitanism." "The challenge of the twenty-first century is, I believe, the cosmopolitan challenge." (Appiah in Appiah et al. 2007, 31–32, 39)

It is this revisionary notion of a "*partial* cosmopolitanism – in both senses" or a "*rooted* cosmopolitanism" in a postcolonial world, *not* of a nostalgia for "cultural purity," but of the "*ideal* of contamination," hybridity, and intermingling of cultures, of "relations between strangers," of a contentious, crosscultural "dialogue" and a "negotiation between disparate tasks" of a "cosmopolitan patriotism" of difference within societies and across nations that Appiah explores more systematically in his book *The Ethics of Identity* (2005) and in his more popularizing volume *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006). "We often don't need a robust theoretical agreement [on principles and values] in order to secure shared practices" that can and should be worked out in open "cosmopolitan conversations." A country like the United States does not have, and does *not need*, a normative, "*centered*" "national common culture," and it should not try to enforce one. "What I think we need is not citizens centered on a common culture but citizens committed to common institutions, to the conditions necessary for a common life." (Appiah 1997, 628–29) "What we learn from efforts at actual intercultural dialogue – what we learn from travel, but also from poems or novels or films from other places – is that we can identify points of agreement that are much more local and contingent than [an agreement at the level of principle]."(Appiah 2005, 253, 256) Human rights, the respect for human dignity and personal autonomy are fundamental to every society and can be honored without a "metaphysical" consensus. It is the "narrative imagination," our shared human capacity to grasp a narrative logic of even strange stories that "links us, powerfully, to others, even strange others," and that "allows us to construct the world to which our imaginations respond." "[T]he cosmopolitan impulse is central to this view, … because it sees a world of cultural and social variety as a precondition for the self-creation that is at the heart of a meaningful human life." Cosmopolitanism can work because the narrative imagination works in cultural encounters with other people across gaps of space, time, and experience, across all the dimensions of difference, conjuring a world with words and images, understood differently in each context. (Appiah 2005, 241-42, 257–58)

Appiah's "rooted," "partial" cosmopolitanism is committed to acknowledging and pursuing difference, cultural hybridization, social and cultural practices over the purity of philosophical, rational principles, an inter- and transcultural multiperspectival contested dialogue. His version of cosmopolitanism, grounded in individual freedom, critically reengages with the European tradition of liberal thought. (Appiah 1997, 621, 634–35) Very importantly, however, Appiah *also* insists that his version of cosmopolitanism is *not only* based on Western Enlightenment liberal philosophy ("speak *with* the Enlightenment: to think of dialogue… as a shared search for truth and justice"), *but also* on the Asante philosophy and political experience of his politically influential father from Ghana, on his personal experience of colonialism and postcolonial tyranny, and on the fight for liberation and independence (Appiah 2005, 250, 269–72, cf. 1997, 636–37, and 2006, passim). Both Kwame Anthony Appiah and his father, in different ways, combined the legacy of the *project* of the Enlightenment with the richness of Asante conceptions of individual human dignity, respect, and self-respect, potentially, a version of the conflicted notion of a "subaltern cosmopolitanism."

Appiah's philosophical efforts to elaborate a vision of a "vernacular," "situated," and "partial" cosmopolitanism that is informed by a contentious dialogue of Western as well as non-Western, African values, traditions, and debates about human rights, translocal citizenship, multiple cultural identities, solidarities, and public engagements, find their extension and qualifications in the important collection of essays based on the 2006 conference of the British Association of Social Anthropology on "Cosmopolitanism and Anthropology," published as *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism: Rooted, Feminist and Vernacular Perspectives*, ed. by Pnina Werbner in 2008. Appiah is the scholar most often discussed in the essays that set out, from various, often "native" or "indigenous" perspectives, to "reposition social anthropology in relation to an evolving new cosmopolitanism, theorised in political philosophy, sociology of globalisation and postcolonial cultural studies." (Werbner 1) The authors strongly reject the common objections to cosmopolitanism that it is elitist, that anthropology is merely another expression of Western hegemony and that one is incapable of understanding other cultures. Against the tendency in anthropology of studying "closed" cultures, they point to the strong traditional "transinterest" in anthropology, including creolization, hybridity, and syncretism (Werbner 12–13, 23–24).

The new anthropological and postcolonial cosmopolitanism addresses the problems of the "complexity of analyzing situated cosmopolitanisms in the postcolonial world" in a wide range of international case studies. (Werbner 12, 14, 88–89) The case studies elaborate the potential and the problems of seemingly paradoxical versions of a "demotic," "rooted," "vernacular," "working-class," "discrepant" cosmopolitanism, of "cosmopolitan ethnicity," and of "cosmopolitan patriotism," as the terms proposed in order to conceptualize and perform the strategies *and* challenges of a genuine "dialogical anthropology." (on vernacular cosmopolitanism and cultural translation cf. Bhabha 1996) The theoretical and ethnographic essays discuss the "demotic worlds of transethnic and transnational interaction and communication, a world populated by non-elite, working-class cosmopolitans." Their subject matters are "interethnic interactions across permeable, blurred or situationally marked cultural and social boundaries," across borders or "the emergence of cosmopolitan spaces beyond the West." (Werbner 55) The volume also addresses what they see as the virtual absence of gender issues in the contemporary debate on cosmopolitanism. Feminist, gender-based movements around the globe have been energized by the notion of "transversal politics" that argues, as Nira Yuval-Davis puts it, that "the making of nation, culture/s, ethnicities, classes and new religions can only be understood fully when they are seen as gendered phenomena, constituted within gendered relations." (quoted Werbner 89, cf. 90) Their versions of a "grounded" cosmopolitanism focus on the "intersectionality, the mutually constitutive nature of gender, race and class." Transversal politics is based on *dialogue* and *debate* that take into account the different positioning of women and on a *process* in which "all the participants are mutually reconstructing themselves and the others engaged with them in it." (Yuval-Davis, quoted Werbner 90)

*Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism* is an enlightening volume that engages the reader in a controversial debate about versions of a new, dialogic, open, and contentious cosmopolitanism beyond Euro-Americacentrism. It refuses to specify a particular "definitive and positive" *definition* of cosmopolitanism, as this would itself be "an uncosmopolitan thing to do," as the editors of a special issue on Cosmopolitanisms of the journal *Public Culture* put it. (Pollock et al. 2000, 577) It offers instead powerful reflections and analyses on a cosmopolitan vision for the future of the globe.

The most radical and challenging program of a "decentering" cosmopolitanism that explores the relationship between globalization, capitalism, modernity, and colonialism has been worked out by Walter D. Mignolo, an Argentinian scholar living and teaching in the U.S. (see Mignolo 2000, 2000a, 2002) In his essay "The Many Faces of Cosmo-polis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism" (2000), Mignolo reconstructs the cosmopolitan projects of modernity as "emancipatory" responses to the sequence of "managerial" global designs of the European enlightenment that emerged in the "modern/colonial world," "coloniality" being "the hidden face of modernity and its very condition of possibility." (Mignolo 2000a, 722–23) He reconceives *critical cosmopolitanism* from the perspective of *coloniality* within the frame of the modern/colonial world and distinguishes between cosmopolitanism and global designs *and* between critical cosmopolitan projects (dissenting with regard to global designs, but being implicated in the ideological frame of the global design in which they arose) and his program of a "critical and dialogical cosmopolitanism" of "planetary conviviality." He defines his location as "from the exteriority of modernity (that is, coloniality)," "issuing forth from the colonial difference." (Mignolo 2000a, 723–24)

The concept of *colonial difference* is crucial for Mignolo's rearticulation of the three geopolitical "moments" of the constitution of the modern/colonial world from the 16th century to the end of the Cold War (religion, nation, ideology) and permeates the dynamics of the current fourth moment which is characterized by "a new form of colonization in a postnational world" and the "transnational ideology of the market." However, the present situation also makes critical cosmopolitanism thinkable. Today, it "faces at least two central issues: human rights and global citizenship to be defined across the colonial difference." With the notion of "transmodernity" (Enrique Dussel) he disconnects the relation of cosmopolitanism and Euro-U.S Americacentrism and pursues his transformative project of "border thinking or border epistemology" "from the perspective of people in subaltern positions." (Mignolo 2000a, 723–25, 736–37) In the current stage of the modern/colonial world system, a critical cosmopolitanism can no longer be articulated "from one point of view within a single logic, a mono-logical (if benevolent) discourse from the political right or left." "Cultural differences" have to be replaced by the "colonial difference" in its recent articulations. (Mignolo 2002a, 741) Mignolo's alternative cosmopolitanism is "critical and dialogic, emerging from the various spatial and historical locations of the colonial difference" and leads toward epistemic "diversality." It is a "regulative principle" that demands a "different conceptualization of human rights and democracy, and, of course, of citizenship." (Mignolo 2002a, 741–44) He concludes that at this point in history, "a critical and dialogic cosmopolitanism leading to diversity as a universal project can only be devised and enacted from the colonial difference." He argues from a "subaltern perspective," for "globalization from below," and "for the geopolitically diversal – that is, one that conceives diversity as a (cosmopolitan) universal project." If this is the case, his critical and dialogical cosmopolitanism can, however, *not only* be conceived and enacted from the "exterior" perspective of *subalternity* of the colonial difference (which always is implicated in the dynamics of modernity's "insides"). It has to be pursued *dialogically in critical negotiations* with the revisionary and transgressive critical philosophical and practical new projects of other, differently located political philosophers and social movements. Jointly, they have to explore the dynamics and directions of new theories of democracy, justice, human rights, citizenship, governance, and cultural differences in a pluricentric world.

**The Dialogics of American Transcultural Studies: Some Directions**

My critical engagement with the work of political philosophers on a new theory of democracy and of cosmopolitanism does not mean to suggest that we should extend our discursive universe in American Studies by appropriating one more "promising" field of discourse. Instead, I suggest that we give up the dream of the "all-encompassing" or "right" theory of American Studies, which has always been just around the corner ahead of us, but that we take their work as challenge and frame for engaging in a mutually enriching, correcting, and politically consequential dialogue about the futures of democratically committed transcultural American Studies in a contradictory globalizing world. As I indicated at the beginning of my essay, this theoretical move of engaging and resituating transcultural American Studies in the current debate on versions of a radical cosmopolitanism among Western and non-Western political philosophers and social and cultural critics has to be further elaborated and extended by an awareness of the repercussions of the fundamentally changing role and dynamics of "culture" in the era of the globalization of the economy and of communication.

What is needed is a genuinely *dialogic* and *transcultural* notion of cultural critique and of inter-, post-, or transnational American Culture Studies in order to bring into view the - always two- (or multi-)directional - processes of transculturation and rearticulation of the political role of, e.g., American media and of the products of popular/mass culture in various parts of the world and of the cultural repercussions *and* preconditions of the different processes of what is summarily called globalization. "American" in this project refers to the United States as a force-field of heterogeneous and hybrid cultures, set in their multiple and contested hemispheric contexts and explored in their multivoiced and multidirectional transnational and transcultural dynamics. *Dialogic* in this context is to be understood in the vein of the Bakhtinian notions of dialogism, heteroglossia, and hybridization, of the intertextual relations between discourses, or of the internal dialogization and differentiation of discourses in their specific historical, social, national or transnational contexts. But it equally refers to the encounter, confrontation, or clash of different – though interrelated – cultures enacted in the critical debates between representatives of these different perspectives and discursive positions. (see Lenz 2002 [1999]) *Dialogic* should not be understood as a magic term that promises to solve all problems. The critical engagement with the reflections of political philosophers and critics, arguing from different and contentious positions and locations on new *transcultural* versions of cosmopolitan democracies, has revealed the crucial importance of dialogical cultural and philosophical critique, its promises, but also its difficulties and limitations. But it has also highlighted revisions of our notions of inter- or crosscultural debates and the foundations of the workings of "cultures," "politics," and "societies" and of the strategies of critical discourses. It has shown the potential of "pragmatic" collective practices, of the exploratory power of the social imagination that make intercultural communication and understanding among *different* societies and cultures possible and that may contribute to envisioning and realizing transcultural American Studies in a globalizing world without turning them into "world studies" or reasserting the temptations of a renewed American exceptionalism.

Cultures are always hybridized, multicultural, and intercultural, and they work and function less through a consensus on shared values and a "common core culture," but through debate, controversies, and negotiations. Transcultural American Studies *cannot* be realized as an individual endeavor, they are inherently a *collective* project. The discussion of the implications of a *transcultural* approach to cultural critique and of the potential and challenges of decentering versions of new cosmopolitanisms resituates the problems and promises of critical dialogue in the contemporary world. It also indicates the directions a *dialogics* of Cultural Studies could pursue that combines an engagement with the attractions and difficulties of transnational dialogue and a commitment to the implementation of critical discourses for communicative practices and democratic institutional arrangements.

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