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Shu, Yuan

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Teaching and Theorizing American Studies in Singapore and Southeast Asia in the Post-American Era

YUAN SHU
Texas Tech University

Before I started my teaching and research as a Fulbright scholar at the National University of Singapore (NUS) in fall 2017, I was surprised if not disappointed that the English Department had given me the option of teaching either a graduate module (seminar) on “Literature of the Asian Diaspora” or an undergraduate module on “Vietnam War Literature.” I was disappointed that I would not teach my preferred graduate course on American studies, “Introduction to American Studies,” or my favorite course, “Post 9/11 American Literature.” What surprised me was that the English Department curricula could not accommodate any American Studies courses, which I had initially presumed to be popular in Singapore and Southeast Asia. I wondered if this had been part of the result of neoliberal restructuring of the humanities in Singapore since the Cold War ended in Europe in 1991, which prompted critics to theorize “the transnational turn in literary studies,”¹ or if it had just reflected the changing status quo of American Studies in what Fareed Zakaria recently described as “the post-American world.”²

I decided to take the module on “Literature of the Asian Diaspora” and adapted my Asian American literature course into the NUS curricula. I carefully selected my primary texts, which varied from the more established authors of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Philippine descent to the emerging voices in Vietnamese, Indian, Pakistani, Afghan, and Singaporean American writing. To my delight, the course not only turned out to be successful in terms of enrollment and participation (with eighteen registered and two auditing students, this class is thrice the average graduate class size at NUS), but it also offered me a unique moment to reflect on American Studies in Singapore and other countries in Southeast Asia, particularly after I visited several universities in the region. Why and how have American Studies been taught in Southeast Asia? What

changing roles will American Studies play in the Asia Pacific in the post-American world?

Teaching American Studies and Theorizing Asian American Texts

Because eighty percent of my students were Singaporeans of Chinese descent, I started by teaching Maxine Hong Kingston's memoir, *China Men*, and employing Bill Moyers's documentary *Becoming American: The Chinese Experience* as supplemental material to provide the social, political, and historical background for Asian American literature. Situating Chinese American experience against the Euro-American westward movement, I gave students a lecture on what Frederick Jackson Turner hypothesized as "the frontier in American history."³ I invoked the critique of settler colonialism to underscore nation-building as empire building as theorized by historians and theorists such as Patricia Nelson Limerick and Amy Kaplan. Students engaged the American West with fascination, exploring its representation in globalized American popular culture and its development in relation to Chinese labor after the Civil War in 1865. In reading the chapter "The Grandfather of the Sierra Nevada Mountains," students were not only familiar with Chinese folk stories of "the Spinning Girl and the Cowboy" and "the Peach Garden," which Kingston weaved into the railroad workers' experience, but they also showed great interest in the strikes that the Chinese workers had staged and the track laying record they had set in competition with their Irish counterparts. The focus of our discussion was Kingston's reflection on the Drive Out, which forced the workers to leave the West, and her assessment of their contribution to the nation-building of the United States: "After the Civil War, China Men banded the nation North and South, East and West with crisscrossing steel. They were the binding and building ancestors of this place."⁴ As we worked together to map the Chinese eastward and southward movements, we deployed them as counter-narratives to the American national narratives of westward expansion and reconstruction. And we raised questions on why the Chinese eastward and southward movements had not been incorporated into the grand narrative of American history, and how such counter-narratives had complicated Turner's frontier hypothesis in terms of settler patterns and racial formation in American experiences. Moreover, we also investigated how the Chinese migration into the Mississippi delta area had triangulated the Black and white racial dynamic in the region. Finally, we situated the stories of the great grandfather and the grandfather in modern Chinese history, in which the agrarian feudal China encountered the technologically advanced capitalist Western powers as exemplified by Britain and the United States. In this process of historicization and close reading, we gained a broad picture of Chinese American involvement in American history and created a preliminary structure of the Transpacific Studies framework.

The last chapter of Kingston's work, "On Listening," resonated with students particularly because the narrator tells an open-ended story, in which she has learned from a Filipino scholar at a party that the nineteenth-century Chinese dream of "the

Gold Mountain” had extended to the Philippines and Southeast Asia. Digressing from the US-centric model of Transpacific Studies, students expanded their discussion to Chinese migration to Malaysia and shared their knowledge on the formation of what they called “the straits Chinese” or “Peranakan Chinese,” who settled in Malacca, Singapore, and Penang between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. When I assigned topics for the final paper, I encouraged students to chart a Chinese eastward movement across the Pacific Ocean from southern China to North America vis-à-vis the Euro-American westward movement from the East Coast to the West Coast, from the Far West of North America to the Far East of the Asia Pacific. One student wanted to focus on a Chinese southward movement across the South China Sea from southern China to Southeast Asia. In expanding what they had learned from their required readings, these students endeavored to develop a new version of “the Gold Mountain” dream and provided interesting moments to reconsider movements within the Asia Pacific, which would evolve to be models of Transpacific Studies beyond Transnational American Studies.

American Studies versus Asian Studies in Neoliberal Singapore

Such appropriation of American Studies in my class enabled me to rethink Transnational American Studies in Singapore and learn more about the interests of the faculty and students in their understanding of the field. I was surprised to find that NUS had built a strong American Studies program, which encompassed diverse aspects of American history, culture, and society and emphasized both interdisciplinary and comparative approaches. The NUS website for American Studies thus describes the program:

In an era of globalization, which is often seen as synonymous with Americanization, American Studies, with particular emphasis on the United States of America, equips students with the breadth of knowledge and critical frame of mind to understand both what constitutes America and American identity, and the extent of America’s influence on the world. The modules on offer emphasize interdisciplinary and comparative approaches to the study of American society and culture. Modules examine U.S. history, politics, law, business and economics, and various areas of cultural production, such as literature, film and drama.⁵

Indeed, offerings on American Studies modules cover a wide range of topics from introductory courses in American literature and history at the sophomore level, intermediate courses in American law, business, history, and literature at the junior level, to advanced topics in American intellectual history, literary representation, and

cultural production. What is unique and significant about the program is that it incorporates modules on “Asian American literature,” “Representations of Asians in the US,” and “The United States in the Asia-Pacific” at the junior level. The focus on the Asian dimensions not only enriches American experiences in racial and cultural terms, but it also offers glimpses of the American expansionist history from the Asia Pacific perspectives or looks at American history “the wrong way” as Roger Daniels puts it.⁶ To encourage students’ interests in pursuing the subject, the program offers the best essay award to a student paper each academic year.

What seems conspicuously missing in the robust program, however, is an academic degree such as a major or a minor rather than just designation of the modules as electives for undergraduate studies. In my interview with its academic convener, Dr. Ian Gordon, head of the History Department and a US-trained academic with an Australian background, I learned that the American Studies Program at NUS had been supported by the Fulbright Program before and many of the modules had been taught by American Fulbright scholars specializing in American history. Because the exchange program was discontinued by the US bureaucratic functionary, American Studies lost its momentum at NUS and was gradually reduced to a program featuring American popular culture. As a historian and author of several books on graphic novels and American popular culture, Dr. Gordon felt proud that his module on American popular culture had remained popular and typically generated an enrollment of over seventy students each semester.⁷

Then why didn’t the university step up its efforts and turn American Studies into a degree program at NUS? According to one recent article, there had been an American Studies center at NUS awarding degrees at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The author attributed the underlying reason for the dismantling of the center to Singapore’s deeply rooted British colonial legacy in higher education and its leaders’ unwillingness to embrace American-style freedom.⁸ If we revisit Paul Bové’s argument that American studies cannot be area studies in the context of post-Cold War America mostly because the US state does not need to purchase knowledge on the formation of American subjects, cultures, and institutions for its decision making, then what can we say about American Studies in Singapore?⁹ If there have been close economic and military ties between the US and Singapore, why doesn’t the Singaporean state show any interest in American studies knowledge in its own exchange with the US as the sole superpower around the globe? And what is Singapore’s national narrative in which the pedagogies of the modern citizen-subject are embedded, and which may have evolved in its own trajectory rather than followed the American Studies model in the US as Eva Cherniavsky argues in her examination of post-Soviet American Studies in the former Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe and Central Asia?¹⁰ In other words, does the American Studies Program in Singapore simply function as a showcase of the United States funded by the US government?

Meanwhile, I notice that Asian Studies programs have flourished on NUS campus. From Chinese Studies to Japanese Studies, from South Asian Studies to Southeast

Asian Studies, the Asian Studies Division of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences has not only developed majors and minors at the undergraduate level and master and doctoral degrees at the graduate level, but it has also garnered strong support in resources in terms of scholarships, lecture series, and other institutional initiatives. The Asia Research Institute, for example, attracts distinguished researchers both from the university and from research institutions around the globe, showcasing its world class scholarship and achievements. Its website thus boasts its mission and vision:

The Asia Research Institute (ARI) was established as a university-level institute in July 2001 as one of the strategic initiatives of the National University of Singapore (NUS). The mission of the Institute is to provide a world-class focus and resource for research on the Asian region located at one of its communication hubs. ARI engages the humanities and social sciences broadly defined and especially interdisciplinary frontiers between and beyond disciplines. Through frequent provision of short-term research appointments it seeks to be a place of encounters between the region and the world. Within NUS it works particularly with the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, Business, Law, and Design to support conferences lectures and graduate study at the highest level.¹¹

Well-structured and well-supported, the Asia Research Institute revolves around what it calls the research clusters, which encompass “Asian Migration,” “Asian Urbanism,” “Changing Family in Asia,” “Inter-Asia Engagements,” “Religion and Globalization,” “Science, Technology, and Society.” The institute sponsors seminars, workshops, and conferences revolving around the clusters and other themes of interest. Among these distinguished researchers I recognized the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction winner—Dr. Viet Thanh Nguyen, the Aerol Arnold Chair of English and Professor of English and American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California, who had done research at NUS for his recent scholarly work, *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War*.¹²

If I borrow the notion of what Gavin Walker and Naoki Sakai theorize as the “regime of separation,” which prevents Western Europe and North America from becoming areas studies and reinforces the discourse of the West and the Rest,¹³ then I argue that the contrasting statuses of American Studies and Asian Studies at NUS demonstrate a Singaporean gesture and effort to sketch new “cartographies of desire” for themselves and for the possibility of lives beyond the limits of area studies.¹⁴ What I mean by this is that Singapore plays a double role of embracing Western neoliberal values but emulating the West in implementation of the values on the one hand, and of developing and inserting its own success narrative in the form of representing the Asia Pacific to the West on the other hand. Such a double role is best illustrated by the vision statement of the Asia Research Institute to “be a world-leading hub for research on Asia” and also by its mission statement as “inspiring new knowledge and transforming insights into Asia.”¹⁵ The complexity of this double role can also be captured in Joel Hodson’s discussion of the Michael Fay affair in relation to American Studies and in the context of Singapore-US relations:¹⁶ “The closing of the

American Studies Centre reflected NUS's appreciation of its relative advantage on Asian Studies and the need for a general academic restructuring. However, the decision seemed to be short-sighted, both in terms of the resources expended—including human capital to set up the Centre in the first place—and in view of the importance of the Centre to Singapore-US relations."¹⁷ Of course, Hodson also speculates on the rumor circulating at NUS during the time: "A 'China' camp in the Ministry of Education had gained ascendancy over the 'America' camp, Singapore was shifting again with the political winds as trade and investment opportunities with 'greater China' increased."¹⁸

As the semester progressed, my only Singaporean American literary text, Kevin Kwon's novel, *Crazy Rich Asians*, did not fare well in my class but became a point of contention and heated discussion for my students. It began with students' discomfort about the prologue of the novel, which shows how the Young family deals with racism at an exclusively luxurious hotel in London in the 1980s by instantly purchasing the property and replacing the racist manager, who has insulted them and denied their reservation. Students argued that it would be an impossible fantasy for an average person of color to do that and it in essence substituted a racial problem with a class issue, which would be equally troubling. At this point, we explored how the author had sought to capitalize on the rise of China and insert the Singapore success story into the grand narrative of Asian values, which had been retooled by the founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew as Confucian values. I invoked a passage from Lee's memoir, which interprets Singapore's history pretty much as his story and animates the narrative of Singaporean exceptionalism: "Singapore depends on the strength and influence of the family to keep society orderly and maintain a culture of thrift, hard work, filial piety, and respect for elders and for scholarship and learning. These values make for a productive people and help economic growth."¹⁹ Not incidentally, Lee details his personal friendship with both the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the US President Ronald Reagan during the heyday of what David Harvey calls "the neoliberal state."²⁰ In contrast to Confucian values, Lee makes this comment on the "decadence" of American society and culture: "Parts of contemporary American society were totally unacceptable to Asians because they represented a breakdown of civil society with guns, drugs, violent crime, vagrancy, and vulgar public behavior. America should not hoist its system indiscriminately on other societies where it would not work."²¹

Students did not reject Lee's argument totally but argued that the novel eventually shows the triumph of the American value of individual happiness over the Confucian value of family and collective well-being. Some students brought up the Singaporean government's rationale that the United States was like an aircraft carrier which would endure the damage caused by explosives such as a grenade on deck, whereas Singapore was a small boat which would sink if anybody tried to rock it. Other students questioned if the family and the collective would be happy if individuals were not happy. The conversation finally shifted to the definition of happiness, particularly

in relation to what Thomas Jefferson articulates as inalienable rights of human beings—“the pursuit of happiness.” The class ended with more questions than answers: Is there a universal definition of happiness? What is the essence or the difference of happiness that has been envisioned in North America and the Asia Pacific? Is happiness embedded in ownership? Does ownership necessarily entail and guarantee democracy? Why and how have democracy and human rights evolved to be the neoliberal rhetoric of the United States in the age of globalization and beyond?

In my conversation with Dr. Ian Chong, a US-trained political scientist and academic convener of the Global Studies Program at NUS, he shared with me his critical insight on state power and the organization of knowledge production in Singapore. He specifically mentioned that the critical methods advanced by leading New Americanist scholars such as Donald E. Pease and John Carlos Rowe would be critically relevant to Singaporean students not only in their understanding of American Studies but also in their reflections on Singaporean culture and society.

When I requested an interview with the new president of NUS on American Studies, he referred me to Dr. Robbie Goh, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and professor of English with a PhD from the University of Chicago. Dr. Goh, a little defensive, explained that American Studies at NUS should be understood more broadly in terms of studies of diverse aspects of American language, literature, culture, history, and society even though the English Department has only one faculty member specializing in American literature at this moment. As the majority of faculty members at NUS received their PhDs from US institutions of higher education (estimated at sixty to seventy percent), their American training and experiences would continue to inform and reshape their teaching and research beyond American studies. In a certain way, Dr. Goh was cautious that academic issues would not become political or diplomatic problems for the university and the nation-state.²²

American Studies and Uneven Geographical Development in the Other Southeast Asia

My investigation of American Studies at NUS convinced me that scholars in Singapore had approached and appropriated American Studies in their own terms, which often emphasized theory, issues, and history with direct bearings on their own identities and locations. What would the situation be like in the institutions of higher education in other Southeast Asian countries? How should we understand the similarity or the difference between Singapore and the other countries in the region? Why would the difference or the similarity matter to Transnational American Studies in the twenty-first century? In my lecture tour of other Southeast Asian countries, I not only paid attention to the role of Singapore in the Asia Pacific but also sought to cater to the different needs of those underdeveloped countries. When I had a chance to visit the American Studies Program at the University of Indonesia-Salemba, I agreed to lecture on their topic of interest, “the opportunities and challenges for American Studies in

the twenty-first century,” which I interpreted as their request for an updated introduction to American Studies in the US in terms of new theory, new methodology, new popular genres and forms, and new technologies. Indeed, faculty members and graduate students were particularly interested in digital humanities and the graphic narrative. One MA student, who had a strong background in computer programming, asked me if his interest in gaming theory and computer science would help his application to a graduate program in US institutions of higher education. In the same vein, one faculty member also started a conversation on the meaning and implication of big data, data mining, and machine learning on the humanities. When I toured their program library, I found that most books were donated by the American Fulbright Program back in the 1990s and could not reflect the current scholarship in the field. As a result, their hope was to bring in American Fulbright scholars for lectures and teaching and to update their library collections, particularly in the format of e-books and electronic data bases.

One of the most senior scholars at the talk, an 82-year-old professor emeritus, presented me with a beautifully framed silver colored gift of their university logo on behalf of the program. She expressed her hope that the Fulbright Commission would send more scholars to lecture on American Studies and interact with faculty and students at their university. Before I left Jakarta for Singapore, the former chair of the program, Dr. Irid Agoes, hosted a lunch for me at her house and shared with me her experience as a Fulbright scholar studying American literature in the US and her successful career in teaching American Studies in Indonesia. A week after my return to Singapore, I received an invitation from the university’s Global Studies Program to serve as a speaker at their upcoming international conference.

Similarly, when I was invited to give a talk at Chulalongkorn University at Bangkok, Thailand, a few weeks later, Dr. Siriporn Sriwarakan, chair of the Comparative Literature Department, asked me to present on the topic of ecocriticism in the US. On such a request, I had to do more research on the subject and share more of my own reflection on the field. Drawing from the theories and practices of US-based American Studies scholars such as Lawrence Buell, Ursula Heise, Scott Slovic, and Elizabeth DeLoughrey among others, I presented a general picture of ecocriticism in the United States, with particular attention to the changing meanings of the American West in relation to settler colonialism, demilitarization and denuclearization of the South Pacific, and the emerging concept of archipelagic American Studies. I also introduced some prominent theorists outside American Studies, whose critical insights have significantly impacted the field, such as David Harvey’s evolving theory on “uneven geographical development,” Walter D. Mignolo’s decolonial thinking on “indigenous epistemology,” and Kuan-Hsing Chen’s critical methodology on “Asia as method.”²³ Both faculty and students responded to my talk enthusiastically and we had an engaging conversation after the talk. When I was introduced to Dr. Kingkarn Thapkajana, dean of the Faculty of Arts, she expressed her gratitude to me and

encouraged me to apply for their university fellowship so that I would be able to teach American Studies at their institution for a semester.

In my visit to the University of the Philippines at Diliman (Manila), I decided to present on “Empire, Ecology, and Transpacific American Studies,” which had been part of my recent scholarly interest. Dr. Lily Tope, chair of the English Department, shared with me her own sense of the history of the Philippines under the Spanish, American, and Japanese colonial and imperial rules, as well as her speculation on the continuing influences of the United States on her country. She said that young Filipino/as really love American popular culture and some local music radio stations in Manila play the exact same hip-hop music as those in southern California. On the second day of my visit, Dr. Tope took me to the University of the Philippines Press and showcased some novels and critical works authored by prominent Filipino/a authors. When she treated me at a well-known local restaurant for lunch later, she casually asked if I would be interested in studying Philippine literature and learning about her culture and society as an American Studies scholar. Informative and challenging, Dr. Tope’s question also led the conversation to the new organization they had recently founded—the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASLE-ASEAN), in which she had been serving as its vice president. She shared her own interest in examining environmental issues in both American literature and Philippine literature comparatively. Dr. Tope also indicated that her association would love the opportunity to have exchanges with US-based American Studies scholars. As a friendly gesture, she invited me to serve as a speaker at her association’s biennial convention to be held in Hanoi in January, 2018.

After I returned to NUS, I had a chance to meet with Dr. Chitra Sankaran, founding president of ASLE-ASEAN and associate chair of the English Department. It is true that there have been sustained interests in American Studies in Singapore and other Southeast Asian countries. While other Southeast Asian countries are still wrestling with basic training in the English language, American literature and culture, and critical theories, Singapore has assumed dominant leadership in articulating the regional interests and highlighting their own emphases and directions, which encompass new areas such as ecocriticism, Transpacific American Studies, digital humanities, and graphic narratives. What underlies these new interests is an effort to incorporate their own historical and cultural experiences into the knowledge production of American Studies. In other words, with the leadership of Singapore, American Studies scholars in Southeast Asia are no longer satisfied being passive recipients of information on American studies offered by US-based scholars. Rather, they have sought to become active participants and producers of American studies knowledge. As a postcolonial studies scholar, Dr. Sankaran expressed interest in collaborating with US-based American Studies scholars and sharing their regionally based research with US scholars at venues such as the annual conventions of the Modern Language Association of America, American Studies Association, and Association for the Study of Literature and Environment in the US.

Organizing an Asian/American Studies Conference at NUS

Before I came back to the US in January, 2018, I met with Dr. Kenneth Dean, head of the Chinese Department and leader of the cluster on “Religion and Globalization” at the Asia Research Institute of NUS, to discuss the possibility of coorganizing a conference on the intersection between American Studies and Asian Studies, tentatively titled “America’s Asia, Asia’s America.” With cosponsorship from the US Embassy in Singapore, the Asia Research Institute, and the Wan Boo Sow Chinese Culture Research Centre of the National University of Singapore, we aimed to initiate a critical conversation among scholars in American Studies, Asian Studies, and Asian American Studies based in North America, Oceania, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. We coauthored this call for papers:

With the recent historical Trump-Kim Summit in Singapore and an ongoing trade war between the United States and China, the Asia Pacific has remained a hot spot in global geopolitics. What do these new developments mean to North America and the Asia Pacific? How would the US continue to promote its political ideals of democracy and human rights in the Asia Pacific region? Why would the US presence matter to the stability and prosperity of the region? These questions not only require us to reconsider historically the relationship between the United States and the Asia Pacific in the fields of American studies, Asian studies, and Asian American studies, but they also compel us to develop new critical models to investigate religion, literature, and culture in transnational spaces and temporalities.²⁴

By bringing together scholars from North America, Oceania, and the Asia Pacific, we hoped to share unique critical and historical perspectives on geopolitics and histories on the one hand, and to explore the US encounter with the Asia Pacific in different religious, literary, and cultural forms on the other. As a hub between East and West, between East and Southeast Asia, Singapore has been positioned uniquely as a site to engage critical exchanges and initiate intellectual conversations.

Indeed, my experience in teaching and theorizing American Studies in Singapore and other Southeast Asian countries convinced me that the post-American era does not mean the irrelevance of the US or American Studies. What it means is a new demand on American Studies as theory, method, and diversity of genres and forms. We have arrived at a new critical moment, which the leading scholar in Transnational American Studies Shelley Fisher Fishkin calls “a crossroads of cultures.”²⁵ This moment requires us to redefine the changing meanings of American Studies in the Asia Pacific, whether we call it “the transnational turn in American Studies,” “Transpacific American Studies” or “Archipelagic American Studies.”

Notes

- ¹ Paul Jay, *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 1.
- ² Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World: Release 2.0* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company), 5.
- ³ See Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1950), 1–38.
- ⁴ Maxine Hong Kingston, *China Men* (New York: Vintage International Edition, 1989), 146.
- ⁵ “American Studies,” National University of Singapore, <https://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/whatwedo/prog/subjects/multidisciplinary/mul-as.html>
- ⁶ Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1859* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 3.
- ⁷ Ian Gordon, interview by Yuan Shu, Main Office of the History Department. National University of Singapore, September 11, 2017.
- ⁸ Justin Clark, “American Studies in Singapore,” *The Journal of American Studies* 52, no. 3 (2018): 619. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021875818000890>
- ⁹ Paul Bové, “Can American Studies Be Area Studies?,” in *Learning Places: the Afterlives of Area Studies*, ed. Masao Miyoshi and Harry Harootunian (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 209.
- ¹⁰ See Eva Cherniavsky, “Post-Soviet American Studies,” in *American Studies as Transnational Practice: Turning toward the Transpacific*, ed. Yuan Shu and Donald E. Pease (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2015), 64–83. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/43328>
- ¹¹ “Asia Research Institute,” National University of Singapore, <https://ari.nus.edu.sg/about-ari/vision-and-mission/>.
- ¹² See Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).
- ¹³ Gavin Walker and Naoki Sakai, “The End of Area,” *Positions: Asia Critique* 27, no. 1 (2019): 4. <https://doi.org/10.1215/10679847-7251793>
- ¹⁴ Walker and Sakai, “The End of Area,” 27.
- ¹⁵ “Asia Research Institute,” National University of Singapore, <https://ari.nus.edu.sg/about-ari/vision-and-mission/>.

- ¹⁶ Philip Shenon, “Singapore Journal: A Flogging Sentence Brings a Cry of Pain in U.S.,” *New York Times*, March 16, 1994, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/03/16/world/singapore-journal-a-flogging-sentence-brings-a-cry-of-pain-in-us.html>.
- ¹⁷ Joel Hodson, “A Case for American Studies: The Michael Fay Affair, Singapore-US Relations, and American Studies in Singapore,” *American Studies International* 41, no. 3 (October 2003): 26. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41279985>
- ¹⁸ Hodson, “A Case,” 25.
- ¹⁹ Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First: the Singapore Story: 1965-2000* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2000), 491.
- ²⁰ See David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 64–86.
- ²¹ Lee, *From Third World to First*, 491.
- ²² Robbie Goh, interview by Yuan Shu, Dean’s Office of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore, December 21, 2017.
- ²³ See David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: A Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (London: Verso, 2019); Walter D. Mignolo, *On Decoloniality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021); Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).
- ²⁴ “America’s Asia, Asia’s America,” National University of Singapore, https://ari.nus.edu.sg/wpcontent/uploads/2018/11/Program_America-Asia12.pdf.
- ²⁵ Shelley Fisher Fishkin, “Crossroads of Culture: The Transnational Turn in American Studies—Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, November 12, 2004,” *American Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (2005): 43. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40068248>

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