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Housing the “Other” Half: American Studies’ Global Urban Turn

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Some twenty years into the “spatial turn,” and concomitant cultural turn, that together continue to shape research on social life,¹ the field of American Studies has embraced a “border” metaphor for the migratory movements of peoples, ideas, capital, and information flows within and between nations. Such is the paradigmatic status of this metaphor that it inspires any number and nature of complaints. One writer observes “the general overuse of abstract metaphors,” making much of “the hype of hybridity” and the limits of concepts like liminality.² Günter Lenz cautions that “border” discourses positioned “at the boundaries of cultures” must by necessity be “radically contextualized and historicized,” or else lose their serviceable purpose.³ Sheila Hones and Julia Leyda, furthermore, reflect on how “the spatialization of American Studies practice” has left the discipline prone to certain perils of place-ness.⁴ Chief among these perils is a “center/margin model” that not only retains its influence over the field’s methods and scholarly subject matters; it also apports institutional privileges among Americanists according to whether they reside inside the continental United States. Hones and Leyda situate what they call “the domestic ‘home’ of the discipline” along a “border” that excludes “outsiders,” recent internationalizing trends in American Studies notwithstanding. This is, they spatially say, a “geographical problem” (1019–20).

It strikes this writer as a *metaphorical* problem as well, but one resolved in part by the alternative spatial figure of the global city. A recent watershed shift has seen the world’s population pass from being predominantly rural to urban.⁵ Given its increasing international (self-)awareness,⁶ American Studies thus finds itself in the midst of a momentous “urban turn” that carries with it important implications for the field. On the one hand, the urban turn proposed here brings American Studies *full* turn, since the city has been a defining principle for the discipline throughout its history. Lewis Mumford could identify “the city” as early as 1938 as “the point of maximum concentration for the power and culture of a community,” the American

“community” included. Writing in Mumford’s wake has been a long line of American Studies scholars—Alfred Kazin on New York, Alan Trachtenberg on the Brooklyn Bridge, and Thomas Bender, on what he and a co-author call transnational “urban imaginaries”—for whom the modern metropolis qualifies as what Mumford earlier called an “emblem” of a “self-conscious society.”⁷ On the other hand, American Studies’ “incorporation,” as Trachtenberg might say, into urban ascendance represents something of a counter-turn, or, at least, a complicating turn, away from the work of a different set of pioneers. There is a rich rural suggestiveness in William Carlos Williams’s *In the American Grain* (1925), Perry Miller’s *Errand into the Wilderness* (1956), and Leo Marx’s *The Machine in the Garden* (1964) that still resonates in spatially informed specializations like environmental and technology studies. It is an irony of obsolescence that a “border” master trope should inform some of this cutting-edge work, much as it does so many disciplinary discussions today.⁸

It is doubly ironic that this same “border” metaphor should trace to US historian Frederick Jackson Turner’s famous “frontier thesis” of the late nineteenth century.⁹ For not only has America’s “frontier” been closed for some time, it meanwhile has urbanized, globalized, and, in the case of the academy, professionalized, with such sweeping effect as to leave both “border” and “frontier” metaphors in the dust, as it were. This is not to deny the cognitive value of spatiality. It is, rather, to recommend the benefits that a more current and inclusive spatial metaphor might bring to an increasingly far-flung American Studies community. This community is transnational in its mission, and ever-more institutionally (and geographically) de-centered by design.¹⁰ It is multidimensionally moving in directions that any uniform “border” simply must miss, because the “border” but refigures a once-compelling “frontier” reading of a bygone era in Western (and Eastern) civilization. The earth’s urban population stood in 2006 at 3.2 billion,¹¹ a number that surpasses the planet’s total population when John F. Kennedy became President of the United States in 1961. Communist “curtains” and “walls” served ideological purposes in Kennedy’s day, much as “borders” have served conceptual ones in ours. What American Studies needs in the twenty-first century is a metaphor suited to the tenor of the times. The perennial questions of “what” and “where” American Studies is find ready symbolic signification in a world always already urban.

Urban, but also itinerant: while greater than half of the world’s peoples are now urban by place and orientation, fully one in six of them also exists in a literal state of transition.¹² With much of the earth’s surface reserved for cities, it stands to reason that many, in fact most, of these people are heading in urban directions. It is not merely more metaphors that lie in wait for them. What they will find upon their arrival are the “highly differentiated spaces of cities,” in the words of two commentators (5). Indeed, for all the heterogeneous pleasures still associated with urban life, today’s city has become the most manifest site of global concentrations of capital that are both a cause and effect of disturbing socioeconomic inequalities. Hones and Leyda can complain with some justification of what they see as American

Studies' "two halves"—with native scholars on the "in," and nonnatives on the "out."¹³ Of far greater consequence for what Mike Davis calls our "new urban order" is this¹⁴: the ongoing, and intensifying, process of urbanization witnessed today has managed to convert the urban, more than ever before, into discrete districts of poverty and plenty, which together spell the return of the "spatial turn," but with a vengeance. "Megacities" exceeding eight million residents, like "hypercities" of over twenty million, now reflect the urban norm. Normative, too, is the demographic fact that cities of such staggering size and scale cannot hope to house all of their inhabitants. With the demand for world housing far outstripping its supply, an aggregate mass of urban dwellers has come to comprise as a result an "other half" unprecedented in human history. Deindustrialization, in tandem with state budgetary retrenchments, has done little to weaken the centripetal pull exerted by global metropolises on surrounding villages, towns, regions, countries, and continents. In joining, then, the ranks of migrants moving to or toward cities—with their feet, in their minds, and with their metaphors—urban dwellers today have not so much secured a permanent "home,"¹⁵ as they have found temporary shelter in zonal nodes placed (as with the "foreign"-situated American Studies scholar) on the "outside" looking "in."

For most metropolitans, the city-center has been eclipsed as a viable habitat by the burgeoning settlements that increasingly crowd the city's periphery, where substandard slums often characterize an area that sociologists (combining the "spatial" and "urban turns") call the "peri-urban."¹⁶ It is a misleading term, inasmuch as the periphery is the center by any strict census measurement. Since at least the 1970s, the majority of the world's poor has relocated from inner-cities to the urban outskirts of the Third World, where an affordably informal housing market in self-built shanties, improvised rentals, and unlicensed subdivisions has conspired to "house" an otherwise homeless population whom most know simply as "Other." At the same time, the so-called "developed" world likewise has moved to the margins. North America's suburban sprawl has been proverbial since at least the 1950s. Europe, too, now finds most of its people living on the urban edge. Of course, one city's upscale suburb is another's forsaken slum; today's urban fringe, moreover, well may be tomorrow's downtown. What matters most in this collective societal shift from the "inner" to the "outer"—and, with respect to the field of American Studies, from a "frontier"-era "border" mindset to the heuristic, and ironic, advantages afforded by conceiving of cultures as so many "slums" at the edge of urban evolution—is the conceptual space it affords the discipline. "Recentering the city,"¹⁷ as one scholar suggests, is but the first step in refocusing American Studies' collective attention on what arguably is the primary scene of contemporary cultural change, whether "in" or "outside" "America." Having "recentered" the city, the next (seemingly contradictory) step is to center its margins, so as to "decenter our preconceptions both of ourselves and others," as Benjamin Lee writes.¹⁸ Indeed, much as the periphery is the city, it has become the "Other" as well, even in the

ostensibly prosperous West: not only does the urban today contain the global at the level of the local, but it likewise compresses contrary cultures so closely that, as sociologists suggest, the “remotest of things appear just around the corner.” Or, to restate the claim, since “the exotic has become our neighbor,” the “shelter” of the metaphorical “slum” enables a “close encounter with the ‘Other’” that is perhaps not possible from alternate vantage points.¹⁹ That “encounter” is crucial, if the discipline’s “cultural turn” toward the particular, the nonholistic, is to retain its significance.²⁰

It is beyond the scope of this essay to seek to establish a grand replacement metaphor for the “border.” Instead, this article builds from three abbreviated case studies to consider how an urban “slum” metaphor might work in practice at pavement level for the American Studies scholar as urban observer. Among these micro-metaphoric inquiries of the street, the first examines the crowded ethnic tenements of Gilded Age Manhattan. The second visits the residential margins of modern-day Istanbul. Third in this world urban survey is the central European city of Berlin, where postwar policies inviting guest workers into Germany have left a legacy of household challenges for the country’s relocated capital. Each of these constituent studies materially contextualizes the relative meanings of urban, domestic, migrant, margin, and slum. Yet the imaginative, metaphorical meanings of cities are paramount here. It is the implicit argument of these pages that, as a figurative disciplinary construct, the transnational peripheral city has room enough to accommodate the full diversity of American Studies subjects and scholars. As the “home” of the “other half,” the urban edge well might mark the future locus of a field in which global growth beyond territorial “borders” seems the key to its continued relevance.

* * *

Like the “border” before it, the “slum” transcends both time and space as a framework for studying cultures.²¹ The fact that modern America has coexisted with actual slums from its beginning only underscores the point that the “slum” as metaphor applies interchangeably to the nation’s past and its anticipated “futures.”²² Witness the example of Progressive-era journalist Jacob Riis’s classic 1890 photo-documentary account of urban American slum life, *How the Other Half Lives*.²³ Riis’s work remains to this day a fruitful source of both metaphors and visual images by which “normal cities” may be judged against the “polarization,” “deprivation,” “poverty,” and “exclusion” that together so often provide the coordinates for what Guy Baeten describes as popular “hypochondriac geographies” of the “unknown” and “unequal” city.²⁴ Writing as a forward-thinking member of industrial America’s white urban middle class, Riis opens his book-length exposé of the unsavory conditions of tenement life on New York’s Lower East Side by retrieving an Old World maxim for New World purposes. “Long ago,” he begins, “it was said that ‘half the

world does not know how the other half lives.”²⁵ Apropos of his own day, he adds that “the boundary line of the Other Half lies through the tenements” (1), by which he means the largely immigrant-occupied communal housing stock where some three-quarters of New York’s total population had crowded together in what then may have been the most densely populated area on earth.²⁶



Figure 1.
An old rear tenement
on Roosevelt Street,
ca. 1880s.
Photo courtesy of the
Jacob A. Riis Collection,
Museum of the
City of New York.

Among Riis’s main concerns is that “the very name of home shall be as a bitter mockery” for denizens of the peripheral city-spaces known to him through his work as an investigative reporter.²⁷ His concerns were not unwarranted. Because they were already marginalized from “mainstream” America by virtue of race, ethnicity, language, religion, and income, New York’s turn-of-the-century slum-dwellers qualified for many contemporaries as “Other” in the extreme. Not only did this “queer conglomerate mass of heterogeneous elements” (19), as Riis called it, stretch the American melting-pot metaphor to its limits; it also had so overrun certain segments of the nation’s leading city as to threaten the very definition of what constituted an “American,” let alone a New Yorker.²⁸ Riis for his part shared these views, if in qualified form. After delivering a national catalogue of the back-alley residents of Manhattan’s “notorious” Fourth Ward, where he finds “an Italian, a German, a French, African, Spanish, Bohemian, Russian, Scandinavian, Jewish, and Chinese colony,” he observes, “The one thing you shall vainly ask for in the chief city

of America is a distinctly American community.” “There was not a native-born individual in the court,” he laments.²⁹

Riis nevertheless maintained his faith in the nation’s capacity to absorb its new citizens. He himself had immigrated to the United States from Denmark in 1870, at the age of twenty-one. Piecemeal work as an often-unemployed carpenter left him to shift for himself on the streets in his early years—sleeping on occasion in abandoned houses, or else staying overnight in police detention cells. Not even these inauspicious beginnings could prevent Riis from turning eventually to the newspaper reporter’s trade, and from there to celebrity journalism and subsequent suburban homeownership outside Manhattan. Such was the extent of his movement from the margins to “middle” America that Riis would title his autobiography of 1901 *The Making of an American*, some thirteen years before his friend (and former US President) Theodore Roosevelt would eulogize him as “the ideal American citizen.”³⁰ It was an early version of environmental determinism, however, as much as or more than his own personal success story, that provided Riis with a foundation for his belief that there was room enough for any and all at the “center” of American life.³¹ Reform the slums, he felt, and one restored to the land—and to the city—the reassuringly familiar features of moral order and Protestant watchfulness that many in his day (and in ours) associated with “Americanness.” Deny the “other half” a “home,” and one ran the risk of converting the urban periphery into a place of permanent internal exile.

Personifying for Riis this latter predicament was the so-called “Street Arab.” Prematurely independent, and precociously sidewalk savvy, the often-orphaned urban “urchin” was the byproduct of an inadequate civic infrastructure that could not cope with the dislocations wrought by the nation’s largest cities on traditional family networks during the decades just before and after the US Civil War. Whether he (there were few females among them) resorted to makeshift housing, resided at area charity asylums, or earned his room and board at a lodging house for youth through his efforts as a newsboy, ragpicker, or, it was commonly suspected, pickpocket, the “Street Arab” had so captured public attention in the period as to achieve nothing short of iconic status through popular depictions of his perceived “type” in contemporary prose, poetry, print illustrations, and paintings. Representations of barefoot boys enjoyed a special vogue,³² the hard metropolitan pavements beneath their feet reminding many of the Americans who received these images just how far the country had come since the rural days of their youth. What drew Riis almost instinctively to these “outcast waifs,” as he called them, was their seeming preference for the periphery.³³ The “vagabond” he describes is led “naturally” from the safe confines of domestic sanctuary to a migratory existence amidst the city at large. Or, rather, having been “crowded out of the tenements,” the “Street Arab” elected the dubious shelter of itinerancy for the relative security of the slum. “He meets there,” writes Riis, “the host of adventurous runaways from every State in the Union and from across the sea, whom New York attracts with a queer

fascination, as it attracts the older emigrants from all parts of the world” (153). Peripheral to the periphery, the “Street Arab” thus figures an object lesson in American marginalization.

Figure 2.
Street Arabs
in sleeping
quarters
(areaway
on Mulberry
Street),
ca. 1880s.
Photo courtesy
of the Jacob A.
Riis Collection,
Museum of
the City of
New York.



Considering that some 43 percent of New York’s 1.5 million residents in 1890 were foreign-born, and that first- and second-generation Americans combined accounted for 1.2 million of this same total population, it hardly surprises that the devoted reformer Riis trained his (exploitative, some would say) gaze on these, his city’s people. They truly were “foreign” in several respects of the word, at least from his “insider’s” perspective. Keith Gandal contends that Riis advances in his work “a new ethnography of the slum.”³⁴ That is to say, Riis’s Americanist methodology was receptive to the multi-cultures that it encountered not despite but *because* of their “otherness.” His writings emerge in this light as a metaphorical template for a new “New American Studies.”³⁵ They epitomize the author/scholar as “an experienced cicerone,” which is how a contemporary advertisement described Riis’s professional self-position.³⁶ The work itself, a kind of “urban travel literature,” accordingly affords the requisite “passport” to keep pace with migratory peoples not unlike Riis’s “Arab” nomads, to borrow Gandal’s phrase.³⁷ In turn, the city’s peripheries emerge as the space where cultures both competing and corollary contest the question of national identity. This last should be a metaphorical space familiar to students of American Studies, raised, as many of them have been, on or near a “border” that now seems subsumed by the figure of the “slum.”

* * *

Europe affords a likely venue to test the viability of the figure of the urban periphery outside the United States, since the discipline of American Studies historically has enjoyed there a strong postwar tradition.³⁸ This is so, notwithstanding concerns that a powerful American “Other” possesses what Amy Kaplan calls “domesticating,” or imperializing, designs on the world beyond its “borders.”³⁹ To begin, American Studies has become something of a “cottage” industry for European practitioners, even though many of the actual programs in the field are “housed” within better-budgeted English language and literature departments.⁴⁰ Pertinent to this discussion is whether this trend will impact the discipline’s alleged “center”-“periphery” status quo for US and non-US professionals. At the same time, as the “New Europe” evolves into what one observer calls the “multicultural supracountry” of the European Union, or EU,⁴¹ Europe, too, must confront the question of how to “house” the millions of “Others” who increasingly count themselves among its members. Much as Jacob Riis’s Gilded Age America mobilized to accommodate its latest wave of immigrants, much as twentieth-century Europe met an invigorated American mass culture at its “borders,” much as Americanists en masse migrate to and fro across the globe, and in the process claim as “outsiders” their legitimate right of inclusion in the American Studies community, Europe today finds itself in what once might have seemed a uniquely “American” position: coming to grips with the multiple cultures at its doors, debating the conditions of admittance, while sustaining the causal conditions of a figurative “housing” crisis through expansionist policies that ensure no shortage of “Others” seeking shelter or asylum.

This cumulative “crisis” has been especially acute at the European periphery. Geographically speaking, the EU continues to extend its sphere of influence into the southern and eastern corners of the continent. Official Europe’s slow but steady march into the former Soviet bloc, in particular, has brought its membership total to twenty-seven participating states. Considered anthropologically, however, “Europeanization” must make less modest claims of what some would call “progress.” For the acculturation of newly Europeanized peoples has been fraught with difficulties from the beginning, at least insofar as a self-appointed “core” is concerned. This is not simply a question of integrating newly admitted countries into the fold. It is, rather, the result of policies dating from the late 1940s to the mid-1970s—precisely that time when a rebuilding, war-weary region implemented and encouraged a guest-worker immigration program that ultimately saw millions of “outsiders” residing permanently, if unexpectedly, “inside” Europe. Despite in part having made possible postwar Europe’s economic “miracle,” and despite, too, having achieved actual citizenship in some cases, newcomers from the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia provisionally occupy a “separate sphere” with respect to their host nations. As Levent Soysal writes, commentators in- and outside the academy have tended to measure these sometime “guest” workers’ supposed “cultural otherness” in an “inverse” relation to the “normalization of their status.”⁴² The longer immigrants remain, in other words, the more likely they are to become the

“symbolic foreigners” of a variety of different discourses (as well as discourses of “difference”).

Arguably the *Ur* among Europe’s figurative “Others” is the Turk. Turks, like Muslims, generally have emerged as a “critical other” within a political climate characterized by what Tariq Modood calls “Islamophobia.”⁴³ Notwithstanding the modern Turkish Republic’s being a secular state, Islam remains integral there to the nation’s identity.⁴⁴ This remains the case, perhaps even more so, for the sizeable body of its citizens who have made the twentieth-century trek across the Strait of Bosphorus—geographically transiting through the Eurasian “border,” symbolically crossing from East to West—into their preferred destination of Europe. Today’s Turk who happens to live abroad in turn has suffered the indignity of being converted into a negative, all-purpose image against which many Europeans might define themselves nationally, racially, ethnically, and metaphorically. As Soysal again explains, a popular, if implicit, “transnational geography” that is now operative in Europe has yielded there an “imaginary of migrancy” in which the Turk figures foremost; his supposed “otherness” unquestioned, because often unexamined, the more mobile of the Turks in fact has become the very “signifier of migrancy” but without the sentimental associations of Riis’s urban “Street Arabs.”⁴⁵ The Turk in transit accordingly carries with him a symbolic topography not unlike that accorded by Nobel Laureate Turkish author Orhan Pamuk to his native city of Istanbul: “Caught as the city is between traditional and western culture, inhabited as it is by an ultra-rich minority and an impoverished majority, overrun as it is by wave after wave of immigrants, divided as it has always been along the lines of its many ethnic groups, Istanbul is a place where, for the past 150 years, no one has been able to feel completely *at home*.”⁴⁶ “Home” here, as it applies to Pamuk’s personal, poetic impressions of an urban Turkey burgeoned by its reception of hundreds of thousands of internal rural migrants, recalls the “divided” cultural conditions experienced by his country’s dispersed peoples writ large. Native resident Turks for their part remain “outside” Europe. The 1999 signing of the Helsinki Agreement established Turkey’s candidacy for admission into the EU. As recently as 2005, the Union even initiated a formal accession process that included both Turkey and Croatia. From the perspective of officials in the EU capital of Brussels, however, European-mandated reforms have not been forthcoming in Turkey. Thus, its membership in Europe must remain as elusive as vibrant Istanbul deceptively seems a Bosphorus composite of essentialist, “unequal” cultural categories that Edward Said labeled “Occidental” and “Oriental” “Other.”⁴⁷ Meanwhile, immigration for Europe’s migrant Turks has involved a two-step process that often leaves them doubly displaced. Most of the Turks who moved to Europe during the peak years of the guest-worker programs were former agricultural workers from the countryside, who were drawn into low-wage factory labor in one of the country’s three largest cities of Istanbul, Ankara, or Izmir before taking a further socioeconomic next step into urban industrial Europe.⁴⁸

With their native cultures behind them, and their hosts insistent on their “otherness,” Turks in Europe have lost in consequence not one “home,” but two.

Theirs is a comparative “domestic” disadvantage that “outsider” Americanists within the academy must appreciate. Both groups—one national, one professional—are literally and figuratively a displaced people. Indeed, for many, if not all, migratory Turks,⁴⁹ movement from the margins of Turkish society to the cities that formerly served as staging grounds for immigration has been, until recently, a circular journey from one culturally disadvantaged position to another. Europe first began to terminate its foreign-worker recruitment programs during the economic recessions of the 1970s. Reduced employer demand, combined with the demographic fact that resident immigrant families proved self-sustaining, obviated the need for additional labor imports, Turkish or otherwise. Thus, there would be no urban interim prior to European resettlement for many migrant Turks back “home”; the Turkish city-experience for some would remain a blind alley of sorts, a metropolitan entrance without exit. Second, and more important, the peculiar dynamics of Turkish urbanization have redefined the domestic for many who have gravitated in recent decades to one or more of Turkey’s major metropolises. Initially overwhelmed by the size and scale of rural-to-urban migration, urban Turkey by the 1990s saw much of its aggregate population increase occur in expanding squatter settlements at the city-periphery.⁵⁰ These *gecekondu* (literally “built overnight”) communities signified residents’ tenuous lease on life, assuming that squatters were fortunate enough to hold an actual lease. Often built on unoccupied public lands, from secondhand materials including bricks, straw, recycled plastic, cement blocks, and scrap wood, Turkey’s *gecekondu*s came to constitute what Turkish novelist Latife Tekin calls her country’s “Wood-and-Plastic Neighborhoods.”⁵¹ Governmental officials today, intent on infrastructural improvement, have discouraged further *gecekondu* settlement by offering residents readily affordable (sometimes free) access to high-rise apartment buildings. These replacement shelters boast all of the modern conveniences missing from postmodern slums.⁵² They are also a tacit appeal, if not a promise, for Turkish membership in Europe, and a potential exit from a peripheral place not unlike Riis’s Manhattan.

The *gecekondu* of only ten years ago was nearer to America and its American Studies “home” than one might think. This proximity traces to the two countries’ close postwar association. Having remained neutral for much of the Second World War, Turkey threw its support behind the Allies in 1945 before the end of hostilities. US Marshall Aid, although never superfluous, was the tangible reward of that alliance, and Turkey in turn allocated those funds it received in the 1950s toward importing the foreign capital and technology that would underwrite its industrial ambitions, as well as allow for the introduction of farm equipment, fertilizers, irrigation, and new agricultural products into the countryside. Hence the subsequent start of rural Turks’ mass migration, their conventional labor practices having become

redundant. The nation's rapid urbanization and eventual housing shortage followed.⁵³



Figure 3.
Gecekonu
exterior,
Istanbul,
1980.
Photo by
Mustafa
Pehlivanoglu.
Copyright:
Aga Khan
Award for
Architecture.
Source: Aga
Khan Trust for
Culture.

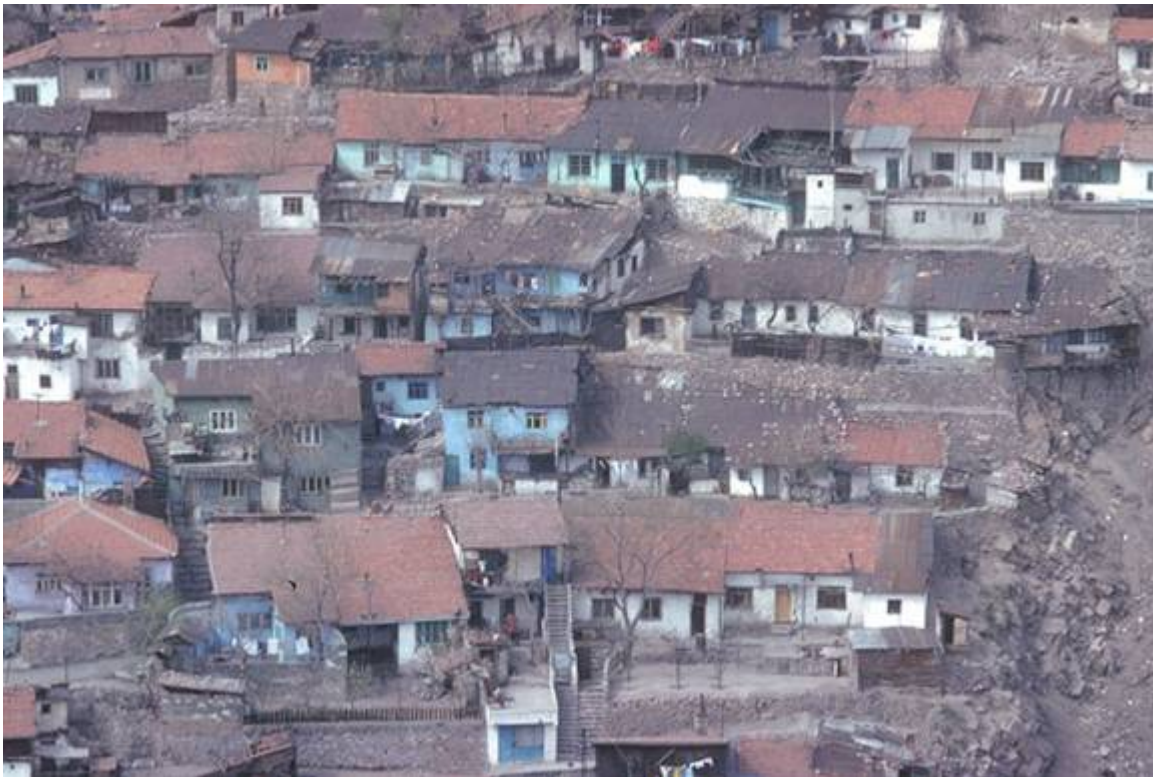


Figure 4. Aerial view, informal housing on a hillside, Istanbul, 1980. Photographer: Mustafa Pehlivanoglu. Copyright: Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Source: Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

Less tangible, but no less real, is the *gecekondu*'s connection to the discipline of American Studies. Even as US Marshall Aid was prompting Turkey's dramatic "urban turn," comparable developments around the academy ensured that a postwar version of American exceptionalism would be broadcast around the globe. A surge in public and private funding for American Studies programs both at "home" and "abroad" meant that "American culture, past and present, as a whole," in Henry Nash Smith's famous formulation, could and would be the special subject of study in a world that many in the United States hoped would rebuild in the "American" grain.⁵⁴ Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Fulbright funds in consequence circulated freely in the Ivy League and at major state universities, much as they were made available to European countries such as Germany that were considered "central" to the cause of democratic liberalism.⁵⁵ Turkey did not, and does not, belong to this privileged camp, its ties to the United States notwithstanding.

American Studies has subsisted there until recent decades in a kind of "slum"-like state on the margins of academia. Not until 1982 did Turkey's Council of Higher Education permit its public universities to establish American culture and literature departments. Ankara's Hacettepe University was the first to respond that same year with such a program. Yet straitened finances have inhibited the work of faculty and students laboring in the field, and so made external sources of support (from Europe as much as the United States) the *sine qua non* for Turkish Americanists, particularly those who would conduct research abroad. Only in 1988 did "domestic" American Studies assume institutional form with the creation of the American Studies Association of Turkey (ASAT). A renewable grant from the US Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs nonetheless continues to underwrite the Association's annual conference. Its affiliation, since 1996, with the European Association for American Studies (EAAS) likewise has lent ASAT a higher profile than it otherwise might enjoy. With active members as of 2006 counting no more than one hundred,⁵⁶ ASAT therefore must ensure that the relatively small scale of its operations does not constitute an excuse for umbrella organizations in the West to assign it subordinate status. ASAT's predicament in this respect recalls that of Turkey's *gecekondu* peoples. The country's urge to modernize, which is to say urbanize, arguably has been for them less a blessing than a burden, not least because it has engendered much class condescension among their more socially secure peers.⁵⁷ As Tahire Erman writes, inhabitants of Turkey's *gecekondus* consistently have been stigmatized by (predominantly urban middle-class) social scientists and members of the Turkish media as "inferior Others" over their apparent backwardness. If not a few among these *gecekondu* people are keen to exchange the "squatter spirit," comparative *lebensraum*, and electoral influence that are theirs on the urban periphery, and make the metropolitan move into uniform commercial apartment blocks that the national government promotes as an ordered image of tomorrow's Turkey,⁵⁸ then their kindred colleagues in American Studies well might sympathize. Seen from the

“slums” “outside,” the discipline’s “inner” sanctum would appear to afford benefits beside its store of metaphors.

Figure 5.
Turkish urban “Other,”
December 2, 2006,
at the *gecekondu*
she occupies in
Ankara’s Ege
neighborhood,
inside the city’s
eastern Mamak district.
A member of the Alevi
Islamic minority group,
the woman shown here
resides along not one
but two peripheries.
Collection of the
author.



Figure 6.
Blue sky, Islamic mosque,
rising apartment block,
and city power lines—
all vying for vertical space
in one of Ankara’s transitional
gecekondu settlements.
December 2, 2006.
Collection of the author.



Figure 7. High hilltop view of urban domestic Ankara, Turkey, from one of the city's *gecekondus*. The barbed-wire "border" in the foreground makes a fitting emblem for an "Other" half. December 2, 2006. Collection of the author.

Perhaps it is only at the new century's urban periphery, however, at the metaphorical edge of global change, that American Studies can retain its articulated commitment to cultures in all their myriad contexts, at all their respective points of contact. Turkey's peripheral cities are but a nonliteral reminder of "where" the contemporary rhetoric of American Studies reflexively, no less than spatially, locates it on the disciplinary map. Positioned, geopolitically, at once between Europe, "America," and Asia, Turkey figures the realigned concept of statehood that makes transnational thinking possible. Affiliated, institutionally, with a broad composite network of sources for funding, interdisciplinary direction, and inspiration, Turkish American Studies issues an implicit challenge to the "center"- "margin" model for all variety of area studies' policies and programs. Caught, finally, between the realities of urban adaptation and an official national ideal of what Riis, transplanted to Anatolia today, would recognize as a socially engineered formula for "progress," the fast-fading *gecekondus* of recent Turkish memory provides a striking image of how the global urban imaginary might help define a "field" whose "grass roots" paradigmatically have shifted to the interstices of world cities.

* * *

As the capital city of Europe's largest member state, and thus an unofficial "center" for Germany's thriving American Studies community,⁵⁹ a reunified Berlin affords another serviceable setting in which to test from "outside" the United States the pressing necessity of the discipline's adopting a "marginal" urban identity, metaphorically speaking. The sharp, angular lines of its glass-and-steel façades rank Berlin among the architectural vanguard of the Continent. A city of contrasts, Berlin simultaneously rivals Riis's Lower East Side and contemporary urban Turkey with the size and extent of its slums. The Teutonic metropolis's domestic contradictions accordingly provide a concluding, if not conclusive, focal point for considering the form and function of American Studies' urban imagination, in addition to prompting further thought on its residual "insider"/"outsider" controversy. Insofar as metaphorically minded Americanists are concerned, the final section of this article—in effect, a brief figurative foray into the immigrant German ghetto—will not settle the question of spatiality. It will, however, help elaborate a resonant figurative pattern (and pattern of figuration) that applies to the current condition of the field: taken in its entirety, this essay's hastened migration from Manhattan to Istanbul to Berlin, and back again, performs in miniature the very same global urban turn that members of a larger international American Studies community already are making in the number and nature of their transnational preferences and practices. To conclude with Berlin, then, is to situate the discipline well beyond the theoretical limitations of a "border" that it but recently inhabited, and now would seem to be abandoning.

"Otherness" has been an implicit theme of American Studies in Germany since its inception there in the early–middle decades of the twentieth century; so, too, has "otherness" been an explicit topic of conversation in domestic discussions of metropolitan Germany's racially and ethnically inscribed "ghetto." With the termination of the Second World War, *Amerikanistik* invited German intellectuals to interrogate their country's recent national socialist allegiance to high "Kultur," capital "K," and militant conceptions of "Nation," capital "D" for "Deutschland," by means of an area studies import that provided an instructive study in contrasts. On the one hand, American Studies' alliance with interdisciplinarity proved to have liberating appeal for many Germans, whose investigations to date of "America" had been restricted to what Hans Galinsky has called "the manor house of English" language and literature.⁶⁰ On the other hand, "America" itself in the postwar German view originally qualified as "Other" because of the supposed inferiority of its less venerable "low" culture when measured against several millennia of socio-aesthetic achievement in Europe. Humbly committing oneself to the study of a "lesser" American "culture," lowercase "c," became for some a ritual by which Germans might acknowledge the horrors of the Third Reich.⁶¹ With the discipline's 1970s shift to the "periphery," meanwhile—that is, toward an enhanced recognition of minority

peoples, places, and cultures, and away from its previous investment in cultural holism—“America” assumed another meaning of “Other,” but one that still afforded the timeliest of tools with which Germans could renovate their own sense of national identity.⁶² Germany’s *Gastarbeiter*,⁶³ or “guest worker,” by this stage had become a permanent fixture in the country. This was especially true of its cities, where the consolidation of chain-migrating families and rising birth rates among non-Germans were begging the questions of when, how, and on whose terms a diverse mix of immigrant *Ausländer*, or “outsiders,” might be counted among a German people who long had cherished a narrowly homogeneous understanding of “Germanness” based on blood and family lineage, above and beyond one’s place of birth.⁶⁴ American-style pluralism offered a way to clarify those questions, if not answer them. That clarifying process has been underway during the last three decades. Today, a reunified German metropole such as Berlin contains enough immigrant enclaves to warrant a Riis-like scrutiny of its slums, even as the city’s resident media, academics, artists, and politicians continue to utilize an American Studies–inspired “ghetto” metaphor amidst ongoing public debate over issues of municipal, national, and continental belonging.⁶⁵ The “ghetto” has featured centrally in those debates as both prevailing subtext and image, the tacit assumption among participants being that Germany’s move toward multiculturalism is at last problematic.

If the German “ghetto” is a “problem,” it is one that German Turks understand differently as the most prominent of the country’s perceived “Others.” More than two and a half million Turks now live in Germany, making these survivors, descendants, and reunited family members of Europe’s postwar “guest workers” the largest of the Federal Republic’s “foreign” groups.⁶⁶ A revised German citizenship law of 2000 has made it possible that a portion of them may become full citizens—simply to be born in Germany is not enough to qualify—and yet the perennially postponed integration into German society of hundreds of thousands of second- and third-generation Turks continues to create the sustaining conditions that have made Turkish “ghettoization” a reality. The German Turkish ghetto is more than an abstraction; it occupies ontological ground apart from theories of hybrid and hyphenated identity.⁶⁷ Turks in major German cities, including Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, Cologne, and Frankfurt, to name but several, have endured a real-world ghetto experience.⁶⁸ Economic imperatives, such as rising rents, have led many to settle in the unfashionably poor sections of an otherwise prosperous urban Germany. Practical imperatives, including the creation of social support networks, have resulted in concentrated residence in delimited neighborhood areas. Cultural imperatives, not least domestic habits that permit certain Turks to regard as “normal” housing as many as seven people in a two-room flat,⁶⁹ have intensified the German Turkish tendency to “spatialize” inward, not outward.

Perhaps most instructive for a worldwide diaspora of Americanists are the metaphors that Berliners, in particular, use to describe the simultaneous “spatial,” “cultural,” and “urban” turns in their midst. How residents of this city figure the

“foreign,” the “Other,” the “Oriental,” the “Turk” indicates a range of willing and unwitting ways in which those who have a “home” of their own might interpret the terms of belonging to various versions of society—whether urban, human, ethnic, national, professional, migratory, or stationary. To that end, Berlin’s Kreuzberg district must feature in any assessment of metropolitan Germany’s figurative production of an “other half.” Between 1975 and 1990, city housing officials enforced here zoning laws that prohibited further residential settlement by immigrants, precisely to prevent more Turks from relocating to an area that already was 20 percent Turkish, and that before 1989 was surrounded on three sides by the Berlin Wall. New arrivals circumvented such laws, and Kreuzberg today enjoys unabashed “ghetto” status throughout the city, despite signs of gentrification in this “*Kleine Istanbul*” (147–51). Displaced Prussian industrial laborers at the dawn of the previous century crowded into the neighborhood’s workshops, factories, and rear-building housing, or *Hinterhaus*, fostering an environment with which Riis, in his New York research, would have been all too familiar. Mostly wage-laboring Turks have replaced them, save for the elderly German pensioners, alcoholics, indigents, and artists with whom they share social space. Subway riders who disembark here pointedly have taken to calling Berlin’s public transit system the “Orient Express,” while others seemingly celebrate their “slum” by flying the Turkish flag outside bedroom windows, or else organizing spring street fairs that pay homage to the US ghetto: the 1994 festival, billed as “STREET ‘94,” staged outdoor screenings of the African American films *Boyz N the Hood* and *New Jack City*, in addition to lending performance space to hip-hop musicians, visual artists, and dancers. One almost could conclude that “Kreuzbergians” were the leading consumers of their own “otherness.”

Conversely, one might remember instead what it was that made turn-of-the-century reformers like Jacob Riis “progressive” in the first place—their sense that cities could and, if properly managed, would be the ideal cultural space for creating an inhabitable community, for transacting on the scale of the residentially local a global world without “borders.” Berlin, for its part, suggests just such a “progressive” city-spirit. So widely has its Turkish “ghetto” spread “outside” Kreuzberg that the local, the global, the domestically distinguished, and the “slum” have begun to merge there in ways perhaps not anticipated by US President John F. Kennedy when he declared in 1963, “*Ich bin ein Berliner.*” Examples of this merger are many. For instance, during the daily hour of Turkish language broadcasting on the German capital’s *Radio Multi Kulti*, a regular announcement reminds listeners, “I am a Berliner. I am multicultural. I listen to *Radio Multi Kulti* every day.”⁷⁰ The publishers of the locally produced journal *Kauderzanca* concur, alerting their mostly Turkish readers by way of masthead, “We are all Berliners.” It is important to emphasize that not only Turkishness and Germanness are being conflated here. What these and like instances of transculturation posit is a decidedly *urban* frame of reference,⁷¹ literal and imagined, that positions both self and society in a “border”-less world of city-belonging.



Figure 8.
Pastel-painted facades
in Berlin's Kreuzberg
not infrequently conceal
the crowded interior courtyards
and unsanitary conditions
amid which many of the city's
Turkish residents live.
April 2007.
Collection of the author.

Figure 9.
“Glocal” pride, spatial distress:
flying the Turkish flag
in Berlin's Kreuzberg district.
April 2007.
Collection of the author.





Figure 10.
Conservative Sunni Turk,
most likely from the country's
northern Black Sea Region,
on promenade
in urban Germany.
April 2007.
Collection of the author.

It is precisely this urban *habitus* of mind that promises to make of American Studies a *habitat* not unlike the world metropolis. Both the global city and our own interdisciplinary have been built as reliable “shelters” for the sanctioned reception of plural cultures. Fittingly, it was not an American who heralded this new urban worldview some seventy years ago, during the wartime crisis years of industrial modernity. It was, rather, an urban “outsider” with an abiding interest in the cultural conditions of the West. Celebrated for his writings on nineteenth-century Paris, the German cultural critic Walter Benjamin spent the years before the Second World War articulating his vision of the boulevardier’s connoisseurship of public urban spaces. Benjamin’s inspiration was the contemporary *flâneur* of France’s capital, famed for his (as with Riis’s “Street Arabs,” female instances are rare) rapt conceptual mastery of the modern metropolis. Although popularly associated with Paris,⁷² *flânerie* became for Benjamin a model *cum* metaphor for how anyone among the masses might inhabit any modern metropole, not least his native city of Berlin. “The cult of the ‘dwelling’ in the old sense, with the idea of security at its core, has now received its death knell,” Benjamin wrote in 1929. In its stead he saw a “dwelling place” comprised of city-streets. “For it is they,” he explained, that are home “to the eternally restless being who is eternally on the move, the being that experiences, learns, knows, and imagines as much between the houses as the individual his four walls.” “Home” was a “transitional space” for Benjamin, tacitly transnational and emphatically urban.⁷³

Increasingly, such is the “home” recognized by migrating Americanists as well. Those on the “wrong” side of the discipline’s “other half” might find in the shifting figure of Benjamin’s city an accommodating metaphorical construct with “room” enough for all matter of American Studies subjects, and all manner of practitioners. The city that Benjamin delineates is as capacious as it is conditional, and thus a site where the discipline might “dwell” on potentially more democratic terms

than it has at the “border.” Such a city “houses” its inhabitants irrespective their area of specialization, irregardless their place of native origins, notwithstanding their geographic/professional quarters. Even those occupants of American Studies’ alleged “central” corridors inside the United States might locate in the discipline’s urban imaginary a necessary corrective of perspective to their comparative position of privilege. As a conceptual site, the metropolitan periphery implied by Benjamin’s description of an urban people who are “eternally on the move” is no mere retreat for the “slumming” scholar; it is a figurative spatial correlative to cultural studies’ well-documented turn toward traditionally subaltern peoples. If the linear figure of the “border” lacks depth, then the “three-dimensional” setting suggested by the city’s “slums” at once brings social hierarchies into conspicuous relief, while encouraging in visitors the very sensitiveness to transnational cultural complexity that characterizes the work of American Studies students and scholars today.

German Turks, and Turkish Germans, embody this decidedly metropolitan—and broadly cosmopolitan—approach to American Studies, much as do Riis himself, Riis’s ghetto-dwellers, and the denizens of urban Turkey’s *gecekondu*. Ulf Hannerz defines cosmopolitanism as “an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other.”⁷⁴ He elaborates, “It [cosmopolitanism] entails an intellectual and aesthetic openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity” (102). Kreuzberg’s “ghetto” by this standard may fall short of “cosmopolitan” on account of its somewhat “uniform” trappings of Turkishness. Berlin itself suffers from no such uniformity, however. “Otherness” appears so unpredictably there in even nonimmigrant neighborhoods that projecting a city of “halves” (“insider”/“outsider”, “us”/“other,” etc.) is not an option. The Turkish-owned and operated 1001 Café-Bar of west Berlin’s former “downtown” provides a case in point. “Urbanity” is the watchword at this establishment, but it is not achieved at the expense of any overt indebtedness to “Turkishness.” Turkish pop music plays in the background; customers themselves are for the most part Turkish; and the Turkish tongue is the *lingua franca* among staff and paying customers. Yet, spatially speaking, the Café-Bar is oriented toward urban space, not the cultural space that is Turkey. Patrons, for example, might choose from eight different kinds of *pide*, or Turkish pizza, all of them bearing the names of distinct districts in Istanbul: Pide Sariyer, Pide Ortakoy, Pide Bebek, and the like. The three kinds of hamburgers for sale reinforce such associations, named as they are after the Turkish metropolis’s elite football clubs, Besiktas, Fenerbahçe, and Galatasaray.

It would be easy to dismiss Café-Bar’s menu as a consumer’s equivalent of the “city”-minded academic’s own position of privilege. Both the global gastronomic gesture and the leisured cosmopolitanism of the scholar-observer with “urban” attitude might strike some as so many “purchases” made through the labor of anonymous “Others.” At the same time, Café-Bar’s overt Turkish motifs might seem a mere outward sign of simple nostalgia for the “homeland.” The words of one customer nevertheless make clear what Benjamin must have meant when he wrote

of “The Return of the Flâneur.” They also reveal the larger ramifications of employing the figure of the city to “house” American Studies after the passing of the “border” metaphor: “You know, here we turn toward Istanbul and Izmir, but in fact we are catching up with New York via Istanbul. Here we are part of all these places. At 1001, I feel like I am in Istanbul, Berlin, Europe, and New York at one and the same time.”⁷⁵ Belongingness inheres here in a cosmopolitan consciousness built in, on, by, and through the world metropolis. The cities that permit such a respatialization are not the “same,” necessarily. Nor is “otherness” precluded by the connections between individual locales. What the “urban turn” provides, rather, is a metaphorical means to inhabit “all these places”—“slum,” suburb, city-center, and planetary metropolis—at once, despite the literal spatial separations that pertain between them. Here, under the roof of the discipline’s figurative city, are the many peoples, peripheries, and global cultures whose migrations have made “America.” Here in the urban imaginary is where American Studies must be.

Notes

¹ For the phrase “spatial turn,” see Kevin Fox Gotham, “Toward an Understanding of the Spatiality of Urban Poverty: The Urban Poor as Spatial Actors,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27, no. 3 (2003): 723. On the “cultural” turn, see Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., “Clio and the Culture Concept: Some Impressions of a Changing Relationship in American Historiography,” *Social Science Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (1972): 297–320; Günter H. Lenz, “American Studies—Beyond the Crisis? Recent Redefinitions and the Meaning of Theory, History, and Practical Criticism,” *Prospects* 7 (1982): 53–113; and Richard Biernacki, “Method and Metaphor after the New Cultural History,” in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, ed. Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 62–92.

² Katharyne Mitchell, “Different Diasporas and the Hype of Hybridity,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15, no. 5 (1997): 533.

³ Günter H. Lenz, “Toward a Dialogics of International American Culture Studies: Transnationality, Border Discourses, and Public Culture(s),” *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 44, no. 1 (1999): 12–13.

⁴ Sheila Hones and Julia Leyda, “Geographies of American Studies,” *American Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2005): 1020.

⁵ Figures reported by Mike Davis underscore the sheer size and scale of urbanization over the last half-century, and suggest future trends. As of 1950, there were 86 world cities with populations greater than one million. There were 400 such cities as of 2006; there will be an estimated 550 by 2015. By contrast, what Davis labels the “global countryside” has reached its peak population and should begin to shrink hereafter, beginning in 2020. See Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006), 1–2.

⁶ On American Studies' "stock-taking consciousness," see Gene Wise, "'Paradigm Dramas' in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement," *American Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (1979): 325, emphasis original.

⁷ Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.: 1938), 3. See also Alfred Kazin, *A Walker in the City* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951); Alan Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965); and Alev Çınar and Thomas Bender, eds., *Urban Imaginaries: Locating the Modern City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xi–xxvi.

⁸ Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); William Carlos Williams, *In the American Grain* (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1925); Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956); and Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964). On technology studies, see Carolyn de la Peña, "'Slow and Low Progress,' or Why American Studies Should Do Technology," in "Rewiring the 'Nation': The Place of Technology in American Studies," ed. Carolyn de la Peña and Siva Vaidhyanathan, special issue, *American Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (2006): 915–41.

⁹ For the Turnerian thesis, see Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Frontier in American History" (1893), ed. Michael W. Kidd, *American Studies at the University of Virginia Hypertexts Archive*, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/TURNER/>.

¹⁰ The rising profiles of the European Association of American Studies (EAAS) and the International American Studies Association (IASA) provide but two examples of the discipline's strength outside the United States. An additional measure of American Studies' global reach inheres in the Fulbright Scholar Program. Available data suggests both steady demand for US-based American Studies scholars to lecture outside the United States, and for non-US "imports" from the field to do likewise at American institutions. For the academic year 2006–2007, twenty-six US American Studies scholars taught abroad, with the majority of awards concentrated in Eastern Europe, North Africa, and Asia, with additional appointments in Germany and the Mediterranean region completing the list. Twenty-eight awards in American history, combined with thirty-four in American literature, extend the study of things "American," if not American Studies as a unique discipline, further still. The numbers for non-US scholars are much smaller but nonetheless significant. Fulbright awarded nine lectureships to non-US American Studies scholars for the same period, with recipients originating mainly from Europe. Six awards were given for American history, and sixteen for American literature. Recipients of these last ranged from further afield, including Eastern Europe, Japan, and India. See Council for International Exchange of Scholars, "U.S. Scholar List," CIES, http://www.cies.org/us_scholars/us_dir.htm; and Council for International Exchange of Scholars, "Visiting (Non-U.S.) Scholar List," CIES, http://www.cies.org/vs_scholars/vs_dir.htm.

¹¹ Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 2.

- ¹² Erik Swyngedouw and Maria Kaïka, "The Making of 'Glocal' Urban Modernities: Exploring the Cracks in the Mirror," *City* 7, no. 1 (2003): 12.
- ¹³ Hones and Leyda, "Geographies of American Studies," 1019.
- ¹⁴ Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 7.
- ¹⁵ For a brief overview of contemporary migration theory, with specific emphasis on the many "border crossings" that it entails, refer to Levent Soysal, "Labor to Culture: Writing Turkish Migration to Europe," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2/3 (2003): 491–92.
- ¹⁶ See Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 10–11.
- ¹⁷ Robert W. Lake, "Recentring the City," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30, no. 1 (2006): 194–97.
- ¹⁸ Benjamin Lee, "Critical Internationalism," *Public Culture* 7, no. 3 (1993): 591, emphasis mine.
- ¹⁹ Swyngedouw and Kaïka, "Making of 'Glocal' Urban Modernities," 11.
- ²⁰ See George Lipsitz, "Listening to Learn and Learning to Listen: Popular Culture, Cultural Theory, and American Studies," *American Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (1990): 615–36; and Michael Denning, "The Academic Left and the Rise of Cultural Studies," *Radical History Review* 54 (1992): 21–47.
- ²¹ Lenz, "Toward a Dialogics," 13.
- ²² Donald E. Pease and Robyn Wiegman, eds. *The Futures of American Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).
- ²³ Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890; repr., New York: Dover, 1971).
- ²⁴ Guy Baeten, "Hypochondriac Geographies of the City and the New Urban Dystopia: Coming to Terms with the 'Other' City," *City* 6, no. 1 (2002): 103–4.
- ²⁵ Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, 1.
- ²⁶ Riis estimates thirty-seven thousand tenement houses in New York as of 1890, sheltering over one million inhabitants. He further estimates the Lower East Side's population density at 290,000 per square mile (6). Postbellum New York was not as neatly divided between the home-owning "have's" and "have not's" as the title of Riis's best-known work suggests. An estimate from 1899 indicates that at most 23 percent of Americans who lived in cities with populations greater than one hundred thousand actually owned their own homes. The number drops to just 6 percent for New York alone. As Alan Trachtenberg explains, "The discrepancy between an overwhelming majority of tenants and a tiny number of homeowners indicated the dimensions of the social rift at the center of urban society" (Trachtenberg, *Incorporation of America*, 128).
- ²⁷ Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, 17.

²⁸ See Priscilla Wald, *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995).

²⁹ Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, 19.

³⁰ Jacob A. Riis, *The Making of an American* (New York: Macmillan, 1901); and Theodore Roosevelt, "Jacob Riis," *Outlook* 57 (1914): 284. In 1914, the year of Riis's death, fellow Progressive housing reformer Jane E. Robbins spoke of Riis as "the finest immigrant that we have ever known," suggesting that, for some at least, Riis's progress toward full membership in "America" was not quite complete. Robbins's comments come from *Survey* XXXII, June 6, 1914, 286, as cited in Ferenc M. Szasz and Ralph F. Bogardus, "The Camera and the American Social Conscience: The Documentary Photography of Jacob A. Riis," *New York History* 55, no. 4 (1974): 411.

³¹ As James B. Lane explains, Riis's conception of the urban environment included not just "home," meaning New York's slums; it also encompassed a whole range of the city's institutions—church, family, neighborhood, municipal government, and school. See James B. Lane, "For Good Government: Jacob A. Riis' Urban Reform Activities in New York City, 1895–1897," *Societas* 3, no. 2 (1973): 143–57.

³² Sarah Burns, "Barefoot Boys and Other Country Children: Sentiment and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century American Art," *American Art Journal* 20, no. 1 (1988): 24.

³³ Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, 152.

³⁴ Keith Gandal, *The Virtues of the Vicious: Jacob Riis, Stephen Crane, and the Spectacle of the Slum* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 34.

³⁵ John Carlos Rowe, *The New American Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

³⁶ The phrase "experienced cicerone" comes from a back-page advertisement in Jacob A. Riis, *The Children of the Poor* (1892; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1971).

³⁷ Gandal, *Virtues of the Vicious*, 14, see also 30–34.

³⁸ For a state-by-state discussion of the post–Second World War development of American Studies in Europe, consult the *European Journal of American Studies* (2006), <http://ejas.revues.org/sommaire193.html>.

³⁹ See Amy Kaplan's pioneering essay, "Manifest Domesticity," *American Literature* 70, no. 3 (1998): 581–606. Günter Lenz notes a tendency among western Europeans to conflate the socioeconomic consequences of global modernization with "Americanization" (Lenz, "Toward a Dialogics," 20). Lenz resists this reflexive "othering" of America, arguing that many of the modern industrial capitalist developments that some (wrongly, he feels) associate with the United States were in fact well underway before the Second World War. Thus, "American culture is not the homogenized powerful, imperializing, or globalizing 'Other,'" he writes (21–22). Lenz rehearsed an earlier version of this argument in Günter H. Lenz, "Transnational American Studies: Negotiating Cultures of Difference—Multicultural

Identities, Communities, and Border Discourses,” in *Multiculturalism in Transit: A German-American Exchange*, ed. Klaus J. Milich and Jeffrey M. Peck (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998), 136. Rob Kroes provides a more general discussion of Euro-American cultural exchange in Rob Kroes, *If You’ve Seen One, You’ve Seen the Mall: Europeans and American Mass Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), ix–42.

⁴⁰ See *European Journal of American Studies* (2006).

⁴¹ Tariq Modood, “Introduction: The Politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe,” in *The Politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe: Racism, Identity and Community*, ed. Tariq Modood and Pnina Werbner (New York: Zed, 1997), 1.

⁴² Soysal, “Labor to Culture,” 500.

⁴³ Modood and Werbner, *Politics of Multiculturalism*, 2, 4.

⁴⁴ See Sabrina Tavernise, “Presidential Pick in Turkey Is Sign of a Rising Islamic Middle Class,” *New York Times*, April 25, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/25/world/europe/25turkey.html>; and Sabrina Tavernise, “In Turkey, Fear About Religious Lifestyle,” *New York Times*, April 30, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/30/world/europe/30turkey.html>.

⁴⁵ Soysal, “Labor to Culture,” 493, 500.

⁴⁶ Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, trans. Maureen Freely (2003; repr., New York: Vintage International, 2006), 115, emphasis mine. Pamuk rejects the simplified truism of Istanbul’s standing at the cultural crossroads of East and West. Rather than conceive of the city’s divisions spatially, he understands them temporally—that is to say, as occupying an unstable moment between the country’s Ottoman past and its modern present and future.

⁴⁷ Thomas Faist, “The Border-Crossing Expansion of Social Space: Concepts, Questions and Topics,” in *Transnational Social Spaces: Agents, Networks and Institutions*, ed. Thomas Faist and Eyüp Özveren (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 14; and Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978; repr., New York: Vintage, 1979), 7–8, 12.

⁴⁸ Philip L. Martin, *The Unfinished Story: Turkish Labour Migration to Western Europe; With Special Reference to the Federal Republic of Germany* (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 1991), 5–6.

⁴⁹ It is important to note that a sizeable segment of Turkish immigrants in Europe have thrived there. Some have earned incomes high enough to be able to afford second homes in Turkey. Others have returned to Turkey on a permanent footing, and now reside among the country’s growing middle class. See Tavernise, “Presidential Pick.”

⁵⁰ Rural migrants came to account for the majority of metropolitan Turkey’s residents by the late 1990s. By the year 2000, meanwhile, some two-thirds of Turkey’s total population was expected to be (and now has become) urban. See Tahire Erman, “Squatter (gecekondu) Housing versus Apartment Housing: Turkish Rural-to-Urban Migrant Residents’ Perspectives,” *Habitat International* 21, no. 1 (1997): 92; and Tahire Erman, “Becoming ‘Urban’

or Remaining 'Rural': The Views of Turkish Rural-to-Urban Migrants on the 'Integration' Question," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30, no.4 (1998): 542.

⁵¹ Latife Tekin, *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*, trans. Ruth Christie and Saliha Paker (1984; repr., London: Marion Boyars, 2004), 18.

⁵² Tahire Erman, "Urbanization in a Southern Context: The Transformation of the Urban Periphery in the Case of a Gecekondu (Squatter) Neighborhood in Ankara, Turkey" (paper presented at the annual meeting for the European Sociological Association, Murcia, Spain, September 23–26, 2003).

⁵³ Further facilitating Turkey's rural-to-urban migration were the improvements in Turkey's roadways that occurred between 1965 and 1975. See Martin, *Unfinished Story*, 41.

⁵⁴ Wise, "'Paradigm Dramas,'" 308–9; and Henry Nash Smith, "Can 'American Studies' Develop a Method?" *American Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1957): 197.

⁵⁵ See Sabine Sielke, "Theorizing American Studies: German Interventions into an Ongoing Debate," *European Journal of American Studies* (2006), <http://ejas.revues.org/document470.html>.

⁵⁶ American Studies Association of Turkey (ASAT)'s official Web site, <http://www.bilkent.edu.tr/~asat/index.htm> (accessed February 10, 2010); and Gülriz Buken, "American Studies in Turkey," *European Journal of American Studies* (2006), <http://ejas.revues.org/document1044.html>.

⁵⁷ Erman writes that Turks generally have regarded the city as "culturally superior to the country," beginning in Ottoman times and continuing until today. Many Turks, furthermore, continue to associate *gecekondu* dwellers with their rural roots. Tahire Erman, "The Politics of Squatter (*Gecekondu*) Studies in Turkey: The Changing Representations of Rural Migrants in the Academic Discourse," *Urban Studies* 38, no. 7 (2001): 991. This inclination toward the urban would seem to betray a regional, if not a universal, bias. As Kemal H. Karpat explains, the very term for "civilization" in Muslim culture, *madaniyyat*, derives from *madina*, or "city." Kemal H. Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization in Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 244.

⁵⁸ Erman, "Politics of Squatter (*Gecekondu*) Studies," 983; Erman, "Squatter (*gecekondu*) Housing versus Apartment Housing," 97; and Erman, "Urbanization in a Southern Context." See, too, Farha Ghannam, *Remaking the Modern: Space, Relocation, and the Politics of Identity in a Global Cairo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 49–51; and Michael N. Danielson and Ruşen Keleş, *The Politics of Rapid Urbanization: Government and Growth in Modern Turkey* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), 99–100.

⁵⁹ Founded in 1953, the German Association of American Studies (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Amerikastudien [DGfA]) gives institutional form to the field in Germany. With some 850 active members, the DGfA preceded the American Studies Association of Turkey by thirty-five years, and so, predictably, holds a higher enrollment. Deutsche Gesellschaft für

Amerikastudien (DGfA)'s official Web site, <http://www.dgfa.de/dgfa/dgfa.html> (accessed February 10, 2010).

⁶⁰ Hans Galinsky, "American Studies in Germany," in *American Studies in Transition*, ed. Marshall W. Fishwick (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), 239.

⁶¹ Sielke, "Theorizing American Studies."

⁶² Günter H. Lenz and Klaus J. Milich, introduction to *American Studies in Germany: European Contexts and Intercultural Relations*, ed. Günter H. Lenz and Klaus J. Milich (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1995), 11.

⁶³ A legal term, *Gastarbeiter* was discontinued in official use during the 1980s. Unofficially, its use continues, often in a pejorative context.

⁶⁴ Bianca Kaiser reports that there are now some sixty thousand Germans living in Turkey, and the number is climbing. It is a further reminder of the reciprocal complexity of both migration and national identity. Bianca Kaiser, "German Migrants in Turkey: The 'Other Side' of the Turkish-German Transnational Space," in Faist and Özveren, *Transnational Social Spaces*, 91.

⁶⁵ Ayse S. Çağlar, "Constraining Metaphors and the Transnationalisation of Spaces in Berlin," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27, no. 4 (2001): 606–7.

⁶⁶ Under current German law, Turkish immigration is limited for the most part to the primary relations of those Turks already living in the country. Recent earthquakes in Turkey, combined with the country's ongoing political and economic instability, have constituted "push" factors for emigration in the last decade. "Pull" factors include Germany's superior educational and social security systems, as well as the country's new rules for citizenship.

⁶⁷ Ayse S. Çağlar, "Hyphenated Identities and the Limits of 'Culture,'" in Modood and Werbner, *Politics of Multiculturalism*, 171–72.

⁶⁸ However they may feel about their urban German experiences, and notwithstanding their often rural roots, Turkish return migrants overwhelmingly choose to resettle in urban Turkey (Martin, *Unfinished Story*, 53). Thus, even out-migration has fueled internal Turkish urbanization.

⁶⁹ Ruth Mandel, "A Place of Their Own: Contesting Spaces and Defining Places in Berlin's Migrant Community," in *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe*, ed. Barbara Daly Metcalf (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 148.

⁷⁰ Kira Kosnick, "Good Guys and Bad Guys: Turkish Migrant Broadcasting in Berlin," in Faist and Özveren, *Transnational Social Spaces*, 189–90.

⁷¹ Çağlar, "Constraining Metaphors," 608.

⁷² In Dana Brand, *The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Brand argues that the *flâneur* originated in

the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literary traditions of England, not in nineteenth-century Paris.

⁷³ Walter Benjamin, "The Return of the Flâneur," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings; Volume II, 1927–1934*, ed. Michael W. Jennings (1929; repr., Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 264.

⁷⁴ Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 102, my emphasis.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Çağlar, "Constraining Metaphors," 608–9.