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Reprise Editor's Note

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# Reprise Editor's Note

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Although a conceptualization of the transnational in transnational American Studies is difficult terrain to cross, the three essays selected for this issue's Reprise—all of which address the formative impact of transnational experience on cultural production and intellectual work in American Studies—demonstrate that any notion of the transnational must recognize a process of negotiation or, better yet, navigation along liminal identities, historical forces, and political change. Whether in terms of physical travel, diasporic consciousness, or organizational affiliation, the interrelationships formed (international, intercultural, interdisciplinary) establish significantly decentered approaches to the American context.

The three essays here, Günter H. Lenz's "Radical Cosmopolitanism: W. E. B. Du Bois, Germany, and African American Pragmatist Visions for Twenty-First Century Europe," Mohamed El Amine Moumine's "Moroccan American Studies: Assets and Challenges," and Marc Priewe's "Making a Home away from Home: Traveling Diasporas in María Escandón's *Esperanza's Box of Saints*," all demonstrate that moving beyond the fixed borders of narrative lines and nation-states produces open, different, and more democratic ways of being in the world.

The complexities of the transnational as it transforms what we know of American Studies is beautifully captured in Günter H. Lenz's important essay on W. E. B. Du Bois's education and experiences in Germany. Tracing Du Bois's time in Germany, from his university years there (1892–1894) to his visits in the 1920s and 1930s, and finally to his last stay in 1958 when he received an honorary doctorate in (east) Berlin, Professor Lenz's analysis of Du Bois's work indicates how political factors and social change in Germany influenced and transformed Du Bois's interpretation of the US but also shifted the ground of Du Bois's critique to the larger forces of global imperialism and colonialism. Moving from a study of *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) through an analysis of the less popular fictional work *Dark Princess* (1928) and on to essays and books such as *Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace* (1945), Lenz develops an argument for reading Du Bois's "radical cosmopolitanism" as "an open, trans (and post-)national, diasporic discourse that acknowledges and negotiates intercultural multiplicity, heterogeneous interests and positions, and

hybrid publics.” Reprise republishes this particularly fascinating essay both because it offers readers valuable insight into Du Bois’s work while making extensive reference to other Du Bois scholars’ studies as well, and also as a tribute to a lost colleague whose commitment to international understanding is not forgotten. This essay originally appeared in *Representation and Decoration in a Postmodern Age* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009), edited by Alfred Hornung and Rüdiger Kunow.

Mohamed El Amine Moumine’s essay, published originally in *Moroccan American Studies* (edited by Mohamed Benzidan, 2010) as an account of the development of American Studies in Morocco, is here republished on the heels of a significant international conference held in Marrakesh, Morocco, in December 2012 on the timely topic of the Arab Spring’s impact on the teaching of American Studies in Arab universities. The conference, organized by Professor Moumine and the Moroccan American Studies faculty at Université Hassan II Mohammedia – Casablanca, was a continuation of the inaugural Cairo conference in 2004, which Moumine describes as the event that opened discussions among Americanists from the US and Arab countries on the topic of American Studies. Observing that “Morocco was the first nation to recognize the newly sovereign United States in 1777,” Moumine speaks from the perspective of a long-held diplomatic bond between these two nations. Detailing the role of “comparative cultural pedagogy” in Université Hassan II Mohammedia – Casablanca’s Moroccan American Studies programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, Moumine’s essay offers an exciting example of transnational American Studies at work.

Marc Prieue’s essay argues convincingly for a way of applying the term “diaspora” to Chicana/o cultural formations and consciousness by focusing on the transnational relations within the US that pervade Chicana/o life and are manifest in allegiances and nostalgias that transform ideas of ethnicity and place. Prieue’s analysis of Escandón’s text depicts how life in the “transnation” might be imagined. Echoing the language of Du Bois, as well as the language in Lenz’s discussion, Prieue examines the “zone of doubleness” and the “transnational gestalt” that characterize the experience of a living in or making a “home away from home.” Originally published in *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 51, no. 4 (2006), Prieue’s work is another example of the strength of American Studies scholarship in Germany.