

### *Opening Letter from Jane and Virginia*

Dear Colleagues:

It is a pleasure once again to communicate with all our Advisory Board Members, Fellows, Friends, and Affiliates. The year 2003 saw the eruption of the war with Iraq, and continued violence in the Middle East and elsewhere. We hope that 2004 will see more efforts expended on peace, and less on war. In view of the increasing isolation of the U.S. in terms of its foreign policy, we feel that the efforts of IFUSS and our network of scholars and affiliates around the world is all the more important. One purpose of this newsletter is to underline the connections we all have to each other, and to encourage continued communication among this virtual community.

The last year and a half has been a very exciting and productive one for us at IFUSS, and for many of you individually as well (see the updates on individual scholar activities in this newsletter). Our ongoing projects with scholars in South Africa were marked by research residencies by historian Greg Cuthbertson and literary scholar Loes Nas, while our project on Latin America brought Ricardo Salvatore (from Argentina) for a lecture, and Consuelo Leon and Teresa Poblete (both from Chile) for extended research residencies. Two research trips connected with the new "Images of America: Discourses and Anxieties about 'Americanization' and 'Anti-Americanism'" project (described later in these pages) involved advanced graduate students as researchers and resulted in visits to Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Pretoria in South Africa; and Bremen, Berlin, and Munich in Germany. A special pleasure was getting to see many IFUSS friends and Fellows in Leiden, the Netherlands for the first meeting of the International American Studies Association. Liam Kennedy, Kousar Azam, Sonia Torres, and Jan Radway were among those attending.

This year we conclude our four year Rockefeller Foundation funded project with Latin American colleagues with a working conference scheduled for June in Rio de Janeiro. Fellow Sonia Torres has graciously agreed to co-host, and this will mark the first time IFUSS has held a conference outside of the U.S. We are very excited about that, and also about announcing the first year of our brand new initiative on "Images of 'America,'" which will occupy much of our energy for the next few years.

As always, we welcome your news, your thoughts, and your ideas, and hope that you will check our website ([www.uiowa.edu/~ifuss/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~ifuss/)) for updates on projects and as a way to find and connect with other IFUSS scholars who share your and our interests.

With thanks for your continued passionate intellectual engagement, enthusiasm, and support.

*Jane Desmond and Virginia Domínguez*  
Co-Directors, IFUSS

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## IFUSS ACTIVITIES IN 2003

### IFUSS Inaugurates New Multi-national Research Project: 'America' in the World: Images of 'America,' and Discourses and Anxieties about 'Americanization' & 'Anti-Americanism.'

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*Jane Desmond*

In 2003 we launched the first stage of a very new and exciting multi-year research initiative: "America' in the World: Images of 'America' and Discourses of 'Americanization' and 'Anti-Americanism.'" The project will bring together scholars from several countries, working in trans-national collaborative teams to conduct on-site research. In addition to typical academic outcomes like articles, books, and conferences, we anticipate developing websites and other modes of communication and dissemination of ideas, findings, and intellectual products such as film, video or CDs.

Despite the enormous amount of academic energy currently expended discussing issues of "globalization," relatively little work has carefully analyzed the distinctions and overlaps between ideas and processes called "globalization" and those dubbed "Americanization." This project seeks to intervene in and contribute to those debates by engaging in ethnographic research, discourse analysis, and political and economic analyses that compares the situation in specific countries. In this way, a needed level of cultural and political specificity can be brought to bear in order to more accurately shape theoretical formulations of transnational flows.

In part we seek to build on the work of several scholars in Europe (including the work of Kroes, Wagnleitner, Ostendorf, and others). Talk of "Americanization," while nearly invisible in U.S. public discourse, is quite visible in public discourses in several European countries, and scholars of the U.S. in those countries have been investigating this topic with special concern for the flow of American commodities. Our project will engage these European debates while extending them beyond the European context, and thereby expanding the arenas for analysis.

We are interested in how the symbolic notion of "America" circulates within specific national and subnational contexts. (We use the word advisedly instead of "the U.S." not to indicate all of the Americas, but rather to try to capture the symbolic power of the word when it is used to indicate the imaginary of "America"). We are also interested in how ideas, people, modes of social organization, commodities, and cultural practices perceived as "American" circulate outside the U.S. national context. Here we specifically seek to expand on studies of "globalization" and "Americanization," which have concentrated on the circulation of commodities, by placing those discussions in relation to the circulation of ideas, social organizations, and cultural practices also perceived as "American." Finally, we are interested in analyzing how

these first two issues are related to a third: discourses and actions that are named, perceived, or promoted as "anti-Americanism."

Large scale investigations like these exceed the ability of individual scholars to carry them out, so we will be structuring this project around a concept of multi-national research teams, the members of which will work collaboratively. We are starting this project with participants from three countries: the U.S., Germany, and South Africa. In 2003, trips to South Africa and Germany provided the opportunity for preliminary research which will be crucial in later stages. Partners from Germany and South Africa (especially Sabine Broeck, Christopher Saunders, Leslie Marx, and Greg Cuthbertson) were incredibly collegial hosts. Below you will find some reflections from graduate student participants in these research forays. This spring several colleagues will gather at IFUSS to launch the next stage. In the future we envision expanding the collaborative research teams to a number of other countries with variable relations with the U.S. and active communities of scholars specializing on the U.S.

We are very excited about this new initiative, and we will keep you posted as each phase develops.



*Serious discussions on the go: Professor Greg Cuthbertson makes a point during a tour of the UNISA Library.*

## ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

### IFUSS VISITS SOUTH AFRICA

In March of 2003, four of us traveled to South Africa for two weeks to begin preparatory research on the Discourses of “Americanization” and “Anti-Americanism” Project. With expert help and great enthusiasm from our South African colleagues, we engaged in discussions with students and faculty on these issues at the University of the Western Cape, the University of Cape Town, the University of South Africa in Pretoria, the University of Pretoria, and the University of Witswatersrand. Outside of the campus settings, we explored consumerism, tabulating the offerings of U.S.-produced, or referencing commodities, at both modest and upscale malls, checking the ubiquity of U.S. magazine offerings in newsstands, and exploring “American” themed restaurants. Protests outside the U.S. Embassy in Cape Town on the occasion of the commencement of the War in Iraq provided visible evidence of “anti-American” sentiment, and we spoke with protesters outside the embassy and U.S. government staff inside the embassy. A fruitful meeting with the head of U.S. trade relations with South Africa gave us further information about the imbrication of our two economies and the hyper visible (McDonalds) and nearly invisible (investment firms) presence of U.S. companies on the South African scene. From these preliminary investigations and with the help of our South African colleagues, we set up a plan for follow-up research, and began to formulate some of the key issues to then discuss with colleagues in Germany.

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#### IFUSS Visits South Africa

##### *Student Reflection* >>> Charlie Williams

In the Spring of 2003, I was invited by Professors Desmond and Domínguez to travel with them for sixteen days to the Republic of South Africa to assist in laying the groundwork for a new IFUSS project entitled “America’ in the World: Images of ‘America,’ and Discourses of ‘Americanization’ and ‘Anti-Americanism.’” I was drawn to this project because it was already apparent at the end of January that since the trip was scheduled for late March, we would probably be in South Africa for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. This, of course, was the case, and the timing of our trip provided us with a singularly productive time to be initiating dialogue with South Africans about “Americanization” and “Anti-Americanism.” Sentiments were running rather high those two weeks, as we arrived in Pretoria four days before the “war” began. Nearly every headline in the newspapers was taken up with huge, graphic photographs from the early days of the invasion, paired with headlines like “WAR ON ALL FRONTS”, and followed by articles that were nearly always highly critical of the United States and our “Coalition of the Willing.” In short, many South Africans were willing to discuss in often quite personal terms their own perspectives on “America.”

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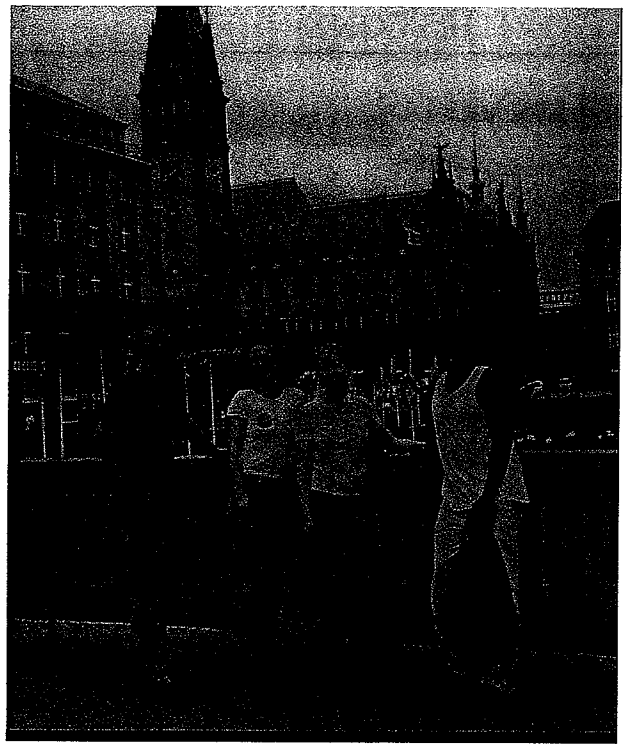
#### IFUSS Visits South Africa

##### *Student Reflection* >>> Brian Hallstoos

While traveling in South Africa, our discussions often complicated our quest to find signs of Americanization in South Africa. As I soon learned, it is important to realize that people perceive businesses and products from the U.S. differently according to their social, economic, and regional differences. We should not confuse company and product names with Americanization. We might recognize such-and-such as a U.S. company, but the general population may not. Even those businesses and products that clearly register to South Africans as “American” do not always fit neatly under the category of Americanization. For instance, many black South African youth may consider American rap music and hip-hop culture antithetical to “Americanization,” which they associate with oppressive foreign and domestic policies. Rap and hip-hop, therefore, may be viewed as an expression of anti-Americanization. The question of what constitutes Americanization – for whom and in what context – has become one of the most challenging aspects of this unique research endeavor.

## IFUSS Visits Germany

With the planning experience of South Africa under our belt, we were ready to take on a longer research trip, this time for three weeks to Germany in June of 2003. This time four graduate students - Kristin Solli, Amy Spellacy, Patrick Oray and Ulli Udelt - accompanied us, and contributed their energy and expertise to help formulate research issues. Heinz Ickstadt, International Advisory Board member, and Sabine Broeck, a former Fellow, were incredibly helpful in orienting us intellectually and helping us on the ground at the Kennedy Center in Berlin and at the University of Bremen, respectively. A week in Berlin was followed by several days at the University of Bremen, and the trip concluded with a visit to Munich and the German American Studies Association meetings. Library research at the Kennedy Center complemented mall research, once again with pencil and paper in hand. German colleagues and students shared their views with us, and responded to some of the initial issues raised in the South Africa research. By the end of this trip, we felt able to sketch a framework for analysis that would sustain the much more in-depth investigation by the multi-national teams envisioned next.



*IFUSS correspondents in Hamburg: Left to Right, Ulrich Adelt, Kristin Solli, Amy Spellacy and Patrick Oray.*

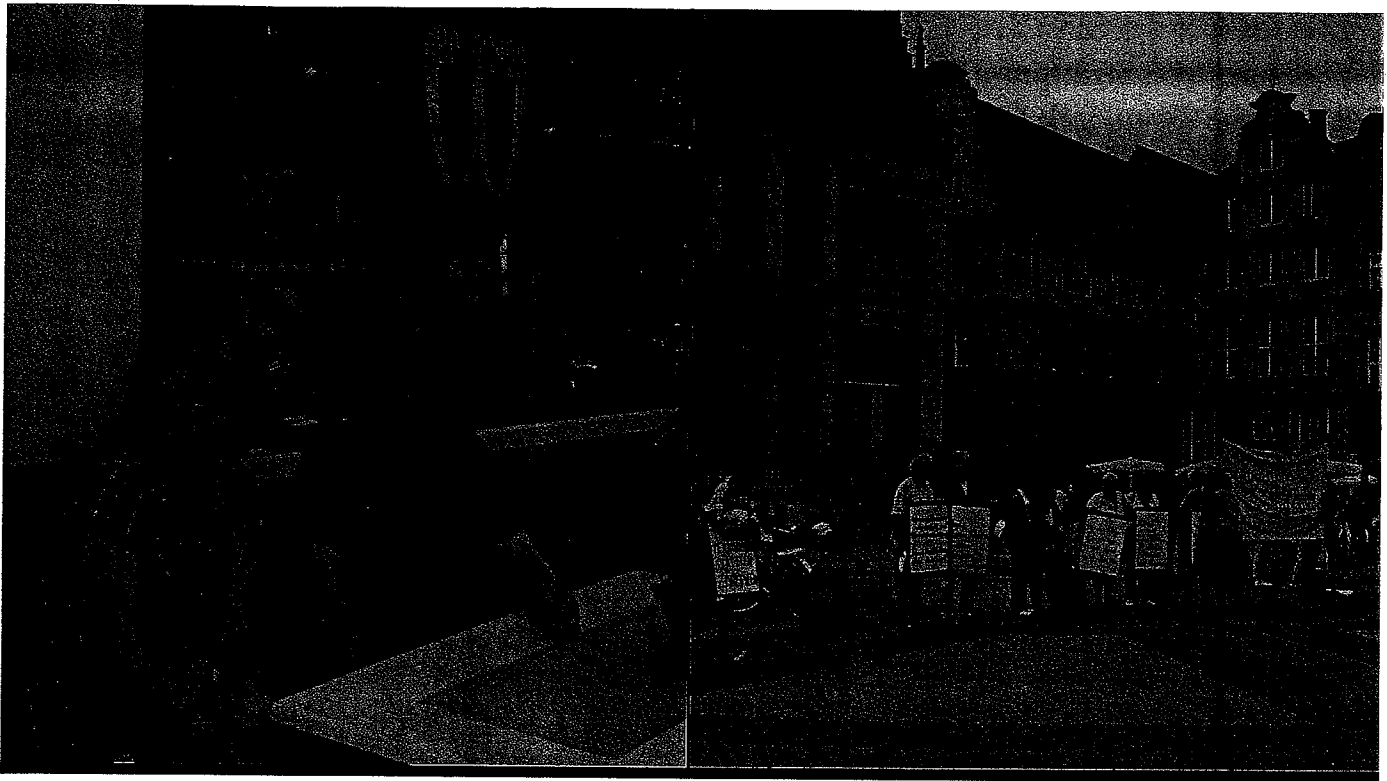
## Germany Student Reflection

>>> Amy Spellacy

During the time we spent researching discourses of Americanization and anti-Americanism in Germany, I was especially struck by the strong sense of solidarity that Germans have with the American peace movement. In Berlin, for example, we came across an anti-war demonstration where one of the signs said, in English, "Solidarity with the American Peace Movement." Additionally, the German colleagues with whom we met stressed that many Germans insist on differentiating between being anti-war and anti-American. To conflate the two views, some suggested, would be to buy into the rhetoric used by President George Bush, who claimed that individual nations were either "with us or against us" as he tried to recruit support for the U.S.-led war in Iraq. In spite of strong anti-war and anti-Bush sentiment, I got the impression that individual Germans have carefully avoided getting caught up in a polarized, simplistic view of U.S.-European relations.



*Graduate student and IFUSS delegate Amy Spellacy in Ka De We Department Store, "American Foods Section." Germany, June 2003.*



*Graduate students Kristin Solli and Ulli Adelt wait for lunch at the German Alternative to McDonalds in East Berlin (a natural food restaurant whose logo features inverted arches).*

*German Protesters of the War in Iraq.*

### Germany Student Reflection

>>> Ulli Adelt

Going back to Germany, my home country, provided me with an opportunity to experience in praxis how “Americanization” and localization are being shaped and reshaped there. This was quite fascinating because in Germany, “Americanization” has to be studied in the context of the post-World War II crisis of nationalism and the country’s reunification process, which takes place within the larger context of European integration. Following our IFUSS trip to Germany, I was able to rework an article I wrote on German music television, in which I (now) argue that the rediscovery of national identity can indeed serve as an effective strategy of countering global homogenization at the local level.

### Germany Student Reflection

>>> Kristin Solli

“America’ in the World” raises many of the questions that I am concerned with in my dissertation about the reception of U.S. culture in Norway. Our main task in Germany was to identify specific issues and questions that inform the next steps of “America’ in the World.” “Americanization” often refers to visible symbols of “America.” Malls are dense sites of consumption in which any “American” products, or products thought of as “American,” are offered. In addition, the mall itself might be thought of as a particularly “American” mode of organizing consumption space. It seemed appropriate that one of the concrete tasks on our trip was to do “mall research.” Our mall surveys and discussions of our findings were useful exercises, perhaps particularly to flesh out the complexities of identifying “American” products and practices. In sum, the identification of what, how, when, why, and by whom something is considered “American” proved to be a real challenge.

### Germany Student Reflection

>>> Patrick Oray

The presence of U.S. popular music, culture, and products in Europe is nothing new; these elements have penetrated the global marketplace. I do, however, find it interesting the number of times during our trip I noticed how the U.S. is an object of desire at the same time as it is an object of critique. At first, I did not find anything remarkable about our shopping analyses in and of themselves. The underwhelming similarity of McDonald’s, U.S. hip-hop music and clothing for German enthusiasts, the taste for the outdoors as expressed by the presence of Eddie Bauer, even the presence of Starbucks just beyond the Brandenburg Gate leading to East Berlin, seem just another manifestation of America’s march beyond the borders of the U.S. that has been decried by scholars for years. But the question I found compelling was what effect U.S. businesses, products, and popular culture have on the way people understand America.

## IFUSS OFFERS A SPECIAL COURSE: 'Neighbors and Strangers: the U.S. and Cuba in the Twentieth Century'

Jane Desmond

This fall, as part of our Latin American initiative, IFUSS sponsored a course through the American Studies Department on U.S.-Cuban foreign relations titled "Neighbors and Strangers." Arranging teaching by foreign visitors always requires some adjustments because teaching styles, syllabi, and protocols vary widely across national boundaries. But this course posed a special difficulty, one that turned the seminar into a living laboratory of U.S. foreign relations.

Our guest faculty member was to be Professor Soraya Castro Mariño, from the Center for the Study of the U.S. (Centro de Estudios de los Estados Unidos). Arrangements were made months in advance, including the visa application. As I write this today, the visa still sits in a pile at the F.B.I. waiting to be processed, despite numerous queries as to its status from Senator Harkin's office. The course began the first week in September, and we kept hoping that each day there would be a call saying the visa had cleared and Soraya was on her way. But the odds were against us. With increased security measures since 9/11, Cuban scholars have had great difficulty obtaining visas from the U.S. for academic exchanges. As the hold up dragged on, our resolve became firmer. We decided to keep going with the course anyway, with Soraya teaching from Havana via email, and Virginia and myself meeting with the graduate students here in Iowa. Each session involved multiple tries to get Soraya on the speaker phone so we could all talk, but even there we succeeded twice, and only for a few tantalizing minutes, enough for ¡Hola! and Hello!, before the lines went dead again. Even real-time live email chats proved impossible due to limited access in Cuba. With each frustration the determination of those in the course grew...we WOULD make this happen we vowed. With a great syllabus prepared in advance by Professor Castro Mariño, long distance discussions and paper submissions via email, and several marvelously prepared powerpoint presentations she sent over the web, we managed to delve deeply into the complexities of the history of foreign relations between Cuba and the United States since what became known as the Spanish-Cuban-American War in 1898. Special attention was paid not only to the specifics of U.S. policy toward Cuba, but also to the impact of those policies on the people of Cuba and on state policy in Cuba.

With a very lively group of graduate students from American Studies, History, and Geography, our cross disciplinary discussions yielded many trenchant questions and thoughtful responses. But beyond its intellectual impact, one of the most lasting impressions of the course for many students will be the lived experience of struggling to sustain a scholarly dialogue across national boundaries fraught with political tension. The material effects of foreign policy were felt very strongly by each participant. Finally, out of frustration, we juggled budgets madly to make a ten-day trip to Cuba in March, 2004 possible for all the course participants. The resulting lectures and presentations at the University of Havana made all the headaches worthwhile as we were finally able to meet Cuban colleagues face-to-face.

This is not a course we will easily forget. *Our deepest thanks to Professor Castro Mariño for her enormous energy in sending materials, responding to queries, creating long distance dialogues with our students, and arranging for a wonderful series of lectures on-site in Havana.*

## Student Response >>> Erica Hannickel

Soraya Castro Mariño, although physically unable to visit Iowa and conduct "Neighbors and Stangers: The U.S. and Cuba in the 20th Century," was nonetheless virtually present for the cohort of History, American Studies and Geography students interested in exploring the connections between a century's worth of U.S.-Cuban foreign and domestic policies, culture and life, immigration, film, and history. Soraya's lively Powerpoint presentations and responses to questions and papers sent via email made us all hope her visitor's visa would finally be approved and removed from the desks of CIA (or was it FBI?) agents bent on "keeping us safe" from threats such as smart lawyer/professors ninety miles off Florida's coast. Jane and Virginia were graceful and thoughtful stand-ins for Soraya; we appreciated their insights and guidance, not to mention the granola bars, cookies, and Virginia's broken leg humor! We were able to connect with Soraya via phone, although fleetingly, and hoped she would be able to visit soon and finalize a handful of still-burning questions, such as, "What in the world is the Cuban 'Battle of Ideas'?" and "What happens in a post-Castro Cuba (and US)?"

This April we were able to catch up with Professor Castro and many other Cuban scholars on a ten-day trip to the Caribbean island. Short-circuiting the U.S.'s block on Soraya's visa, the group had fantastic experiences at the Bay of Pigs, Che's memorial, and museums and lectures all over Havana, not to mention forays into Cuba's "dollar economy." Perhaps the most memorable day for me was touring reconstruction sites of Old Havana. Professor Ricardo Nunez gave us an in-depth tour and explained the joint work happening between urban communities, non-governmental organizations and the government to repair the aged infrastructure and improve social services in the city.

These plans, also available in book form (*Desafio de una Utopia/ Challenge of a Utopia: A Comprehensive Strategy to Manage the Safeguarding of the Old Havana*) will surely aid urban planners around the world. I was amazed at the project's ability to balance the needs of the local and larger community with capital investments and returns. As much as a term like "utopia" is badmouthed in our times, somehow the ideal goals for urban space in Havana have in large part been reached. Ricardo's enthusiasm for the development was infectious; I left Cuba thinking that my own definitions of "urban renewal" had gone through their own renovation. Gentrification and urban renewal in the U.S. has always been linked with the further dispossession of the urban poor. It rips apart the most fragile of communities, makes no other space for their homes or needs, and proceeds to garner extra millions for millionaires. Urban renewal in Old Havana has proceeded to enliven the city's fabric, yet also its people, the old tenants and new. The planners are very conscious of the displacement their plans affect: people are placed in temporary housing a few blocks from home, then given the option to return to their renovated homes or move to newly constructed housing a few miles away. Shops and services are also well-planned; high-end hotels and clothing stores which turn nice profits from tourists, yet real services for real people, including everything from barber shops to medical facilities, are also an essential part of the plan, and the hotels are made to "donate" certain funds to support these essential community services. Thanks to IFUSS and our Cuban hosts for a thrilling trip!

# RECAPPING IFUSS ACTIVITIES IN 2002-2003

## IFUSS Lecturers and Scholars-in-Residence

**Maria Eugenia Morales** is a professor of political science and chair of the North American Studies Program at the University of Chile. She is the current president of the Chilean Association for Canadian Studies and a past president of the Chilean Association for North American Studies. Her publications include: *Handbook of Political Science* with Dr. Ricardo Isreal (1995), *Políticas de Innovación: Tiempo de Innovar* (2000), and a number of journal articles covering topics from Bill Clinton to Latino voting patterns in the USA, from Chilean presidential elections to democracy in the USA, and from NAFTA to Planned Parenthood. In addition, Professor Morales produces a radio program on politics and society for University of Chile radio entitled, "Talking about the End of the Century."

**Greg Cuthbertson** is a professor from the University of South Africa, where he is chair of the department of history. He is currently the coordinating editor of the *South African Historical Journal* and an international contributing editor to the *Journal of American History*. While conducting research at the University of Iowa he refined a paper draft entitled, "Hemispheric Perspectives and Transnational Forms: Making American in South America," and completed an article review on "The Power of Archives: Postcolonial Discourses about the Colonial Archive in South Africa," for the *South African Historical Journal*.

**Loes Nas** was the head of the English department at the University of the Western Cape, in Bellville, South Africa until she went on study leave, dividing her time between research in the U.S. at the University of Iowa and the University of Missouri. Her

research and teaching interests are in literary theory, particularly postmodernism, narratology and deconstruction, and contemporary American literature and film, media studies, and journalism. She has published research articles in the *Journal of Literary Studies (RSA)*, *Literator (RSA)*, *Semiotica (USA)*, *The English Academy Review (RSA)* and *Imprimatur (UK)*. Currently she is working on the development of a narrative and media ethics course in the fledgling postgraduate program in journalism at UWC, articles on narrativist mimesis in the latest fiction of John Barth and the impact of American cultural imperialism in South Africa, a collaborative project with Jane Desmond and Virginia Domínguez.

**Richardo D. Salvatore** visited the University of Iowa in the Spring of 2003 to give a lecture entitled "Practical Pan-Americanism: Business and Official Rhetoric in the making of an Informal Empire." He is currently a professor of modern history at Universidad Torcuato Di Tella (Buenos Aires, Argentina). He is the author of *Wandering Paysanos: State Order and Subaltern Experience in Buenos Aires During the Rosas Era* (Duke University Press, 2003), a book that presents a "subalternist perspective" of the history of popular consciousness and state-formation in nineteenth-century Argentina. His current research project relates to the formation of knowledge about Latin America in the United States during the era of pan-Americanism.

**Consuelo Leon** is a professor at the Universidad de Playa Ancha in Valparaíso, Chile. Her research and teaching interests include international relations, journalism, and contemporary history. She is the current president of the Chilean Association of American Studies (ACHEN) and has published

extensively on U.S. political history and inter-American relationships.

**Teresa Poblete Martín** is a professor at the Universidad de la Frontera in Temuco, Chile. Her research and teaching interests include ethnic literature, intercultural studies, Chilean terror tales and Mapuche oral tradition and mythology. While at the University of Iowa, Professor Martín researched the horror literature of Poe and Lovecraft.

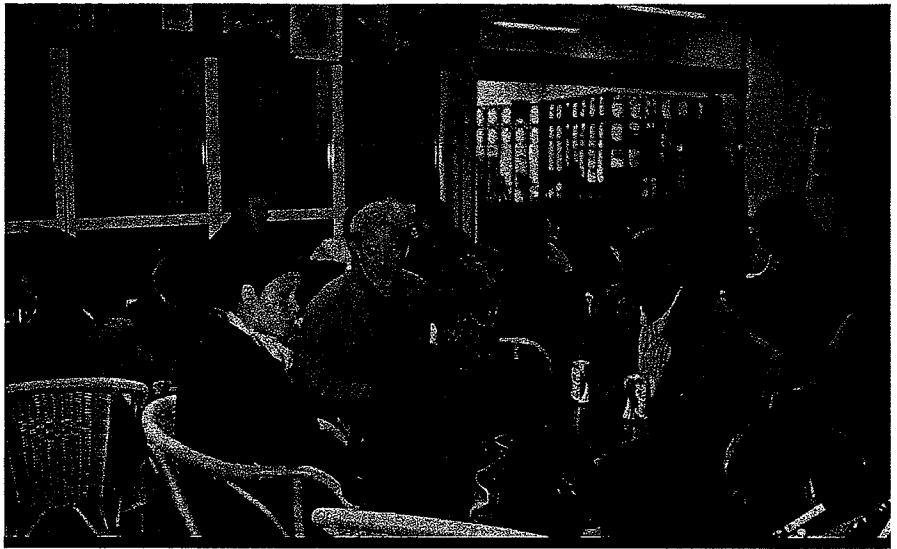
# RECAPPING IFUSS ACTIVITIES IN 2002-2003

## IFUSS Visits the IASA Conference

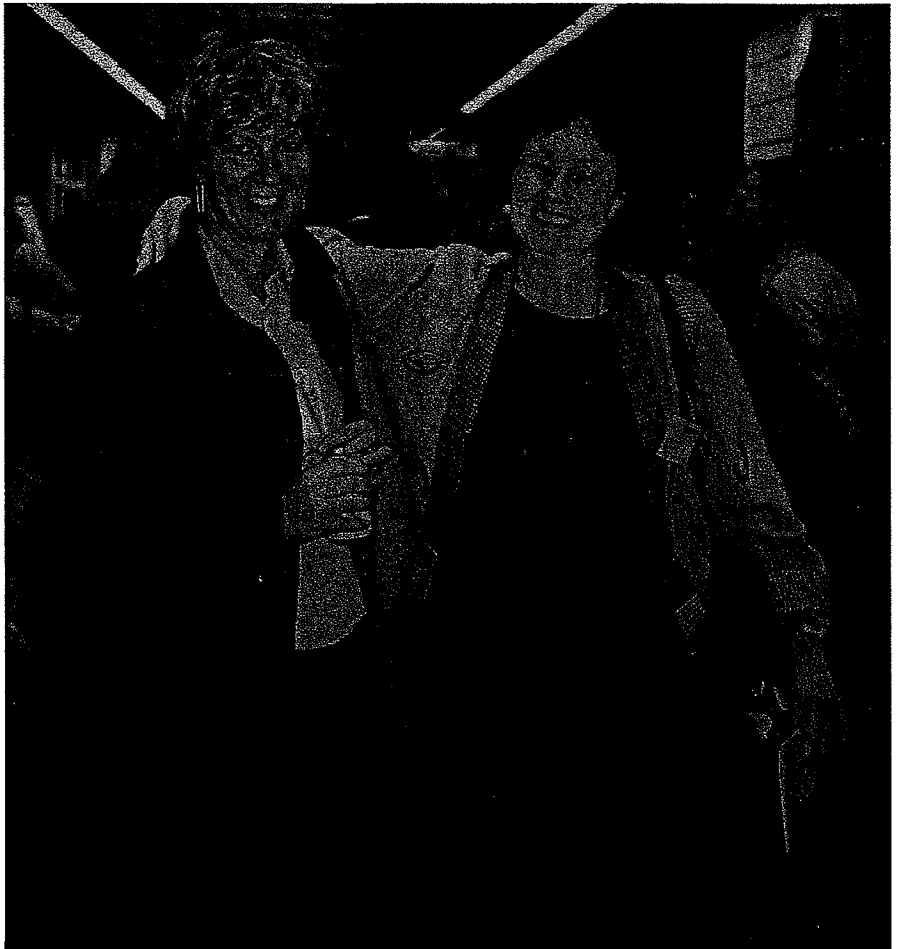
*Loes Nas,*

*IFUSS Fellow reports on IASA*

The first International American Studies Association conference took place from May 22-24, 2003 at Leiden University in the Netherlands. Its theme was "How Far is America from Here?" The opening address by Werner Sollors set the tone for the conference, touching on the paradoxical distance of America, simultaneously comprising alienation and closeness. He argued that American Studies programs had become institutionalized centers of dissent, and for me it was very interesting to compare this conference to the fifth Caucasus American Studies conference two weeks before in Tbilisi, Georgia. There the attitude toward anything American had been full of admiration, which does not come as a surprise as Georgia, after the break-up of the Soviet Republic, had turned its gaze westward. Apart from the three international speakers, critical dissenting voices from Georgian speakers were absent at the Caucasus conference. At IASA, the conference closing address was delivered by Eduard Glissant, who focused on the concept of America as an archipelago, a composite of cultures. He distinguished three Americas: import Euro-America, native Meso-America and creolized Neo-America arguing that although the USA, like Argentina and Chile, was a multi-cultural society, it was not yet creolized like Mexico, Brazil and the Caribbean. In his definition creolization was the moment when all different cultures in a society came together, and "America" had become an imaginary way of thinking about the world.



*Graduate Student Patrick Oray chatting with international*



*IFUSS Fellow Loes Nas and IFUSS Co-Director Jane Desmond at IASA Conference Leiden.*



# IFUSS VISITS THE IASA CONFERENCE, *continued*

## *Some Impressions about the first World Congress of International American Studies Association – IASA – May 22-24, 2003.*

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*Professor Kousar J. Azam, Hyderabad, India, IFUSS Advisory Board Member*

I had the privilege of participating in the 1st World Congress of IASA and was fortunate to share the honor of being one of the plenary speakers, along with Edward Glissant and Werner Sollors. When I was first informed about the establishment of this new organization as different from the U.S. American Studies Association (ASA), of which I have been a member and also represented India on its international committee for three years, it was not very clear to me as to how this organization was going to be different in form and content from the existing organizations and academic bodies devoted to the understanding, pursuit and expansion of American Studies. However, it did become clear at a later stage that one of the major goals of IASA was to open American Studies for a critique and assessment from the non-American-global scholarly community from across the world. The very theme, “How far is America from Here,” suggests that “here” represents the complex matrix of the trends, policies, intellectual movements, critique, defense, and exposition of all that is happening in contemporary America.

While the dominant mood in the U.S. reflects the two main currents of either supporting American action or opposing American action, a third voice pleading for introspection, reflection and analysis finds itself difficult to be heard. I decided to tread carefully amidst this triple trajectory. Coming from India, a so-called “Third World super power” (a country whose experiences of terrorism not just precede those of the western world, but have also been extremely violent, wasteful, painful and damaging), I made a conscious decision to retain a positive stance. The two predominant moves - one a justification of U.S. policies as a response to terror, and the other critiquing these policies as a violation of the founding principles of American democracy - had remained one of the major trends that dominated the November 2002 meeting of the ASA in Hartford, CT.

The IASA, on the other hand, appeared to be embarking upon a self-appointed task of reminding Americanists across the globe of present deviations of America from a trajectory that has lent legitimacy to its role in international politics, to a path that continuously alienates the “other” - both peoples and states - from the global ideals of America.

Europe, and hemispheric America, multi-culturalism, globalization, popular culture, foreign policy, and aspects of American literature were the topics that pervaded the several sessions. As a Professor of International Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy, I saw American Studies slipping into the discussion of U.S. Foreign Policy in several sessions.

***“‘How far is America from Here,’ suggests that ‘here’ represents the complex matrix of the trends, policies, intellectual movements, critique, defense, and exposition of all that is happening in contemporary America.”***

Concerns voiced from Europe and hemispheric America were, at best, regional concerns, and neither addressed nor reflected the global reach of America and the responses to this reach from the different corners of globe. One particular session in question, “Dialogue Across Borders and Disciplines and Theoretical Frameworks,” was revealing and disappointing at the same time.

It was not really a dialogue across geographic borders, for all the panelists were American academics from American Universities. It was also not a dialogue across disciplines, for the only disciplines that were discussed were cultural studies, English literature, and American Studies, and the concern was how to carve out a new space from within the existing spaces of existing disciplines. The cross-disciplinary approach, and the cross-border implications of such approaches, was brought to the notice of the listeners only by Jane Desmond, who along with Virginia Domínguez, remains the pioneer of internationalizing American Studies and for providing a space and an audience for the intellectual voices from outside America.

In my own plenary address I tried to draw the attention of the Americanists to the hitherto neglected components of American Studies, such as the experiences and writings of the Arab Diaspora. I also pointed out that the political concerns within America of resisting terror is analogous to the existing concerns of the non-Americans of resisting the American empire. While the U.S. is concerned with resisting terror, we are concerned with resisting both terror and empire. The American empire has once again set on a path of expansionism. If terror has metamorphosed civil societies all over the world into a state of authoritarianism, the expansion of the American Empire percolates the sensibilities of political elites all over the world. I pleaded for an intellectual resistance from the site of American Studies that now continues to provide a space big enough to accommodate voices across cultures, geography, religion and politics.

# IFUSS NEWS AND INTEREST

## News from IFUSS Board Members, Fellows and Affiliates

Board member **Kousar Azam** was a plenary speaker at the First World Congress of the International American Studies Association in May 2003, and also presented a paper entitled "Resisting Terror, Resisting Empire: The Evolving Ethos in American Studies." She delivered "American Studies in a Hostile World-U.S. Imperial and Cultural Policy after 9/11," at the American Studies Association conference in Houston (November 2002), and "Political Islam and Terrorism in Contemporary Times" at "Terrorism and International Security," a conference organized by the Regional Center for Strategic Studies, in Colombo, and the Southern Regional Center of Indian Council of Social Science Research, in Hyderabad, India (March of 2002).

Board member **Enikő Bollobás** of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest has received a Fulbright Research Fellowship for 2004-2005.

In December 2002, IFUSS Fellow **Maya Nila Das** coordinated an International Seminar on "Postmodernism: Reading, Writing, Interrogating" at the University of Kalyani, India. "Apart from a number of senior academics," she reports, "some eminent creative writers, including the Asian American poet Meena Alexander, participated in the program." Professor Das presented "On Crossing Borders: Indian Value Systems and Some Recent Indian American Literature" at the Forty-Seventh All-India English Teachers Conference at the University of Lucknow, India (December, 2002). At the conference, she was re-elected to a three-year term as an executive member of the Indian Association for English Studies.

Board member **Emory Elliott** directed a Salzburg Seminar on "Contemporary American Literature" for fifty-seven fellows in early April. Other faculty members included Shirley Lim, Mae Henderson, Helena Viramontes, and Marc Chenetier.

IFUSS Affiliate **Eva Federmayer** was elected co-president of the Hungarian Association for American Studies. She is currently organizing a conference on multiculturalism and American Studies to take place in Hungary in the fall of 2004. See <http://dragon.klte.hu/~hass/> for further information. Professor Federmayer writes that her conference papers in 2003 were largely made possible by her research in Iowa as an IFUSS scholar with a Kellner Grant. These papers included: "The Passing Plot and Contemporary Post-Passing Narratives: *Caucasia* (1998) and *Suture* (1993)," "Hungarian Society for the Study of English Conference Six," (Debrecen, Hungary) and "The Race Movie and the Iconography of the New Negro Woman: Oscar Micheaux's *Within Our Gates*" at The Iconography of Gender Conference (Szeged, Hungary).

IFUSS Board member **Richard Horwitz**, on leave from the University of Iowa, is living on the East Coast and serving in a variety of positions, including working as a Senior Fellow at the Coastal Institute in Narragansett, Rhode Island, a consultant to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and as a visiting scholar of American Civilization at Brown and Harvard. Rich writes, "The substance of what I'm doing is a much more applied version of American Studies—research, writing, and consulting to help organizations better engage the American cultures that they encompass and serve." He is "still, though, very much involved in international scholarly activities," and maintains a globally oriented website for international Americanists (<http://twist.lib.uiowa.edu/rhorwitz/>). Professor Horwitz delivered the keynote address for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary American Studies Colloquium, "Shaping the Future Direction of American Studies in Africa," in Gorée, Senegal (May, 2003). Recent publications include "Hog Ties: What Pigs Tell Us About America," (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), and an article based on an interview with Albert E. Stone: "American Studies As a Way of Life," *American Studies* 43:3 (Fall 2002). Prof. Horwitz

received the Elizabeth Kolmer Award from MAASA for Outstanding Mentoring in American Studies in 2002.

IFUSS Fellow **Manju Jaidka**, founder, former president, and current secretary of the India Chapter of the Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States (MELUS-India), has hosted several conferences over the last five years, most recently an April 2003 two-day national conference in Chandigarh on "South-Asians in the U.S.: The Diasporic Experience." Professor Jaidka's recent publications include: *Politics of Location in the Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the Americas*, co-edited with Anil Raina (Chandigarh: Arun Publishing House, 2003), and *An Annotated Anthology of English and American Poetry* (Chandigarh: Panjab University Publication Bureau, 2002). In March 2003, she became Chair of the Department of English, Panjab University, in Chandigarh, India.

Board member **Linda Kerber** is a member of the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, an independent federal agency that provides support for training and information to help prepare Americans to meet the challenges and opportunities in the U.S.-Japan relationship. It emphasizes cultural cooperation and exchange, and offers grants to sustain the vitality of Japanese studies in the United States and to strengthen understandings of Japan and U.S.-Japan affairs throughout American intellectual and cultural life. The Commission's grants support Japanese language training, library infrastructure, the arts (visual, dance, and film), and cooperative scholarly programs. The Commission meets with its Japanese counterpart every two years in a single body known as CULCON; alternately in the U.S. and in Japan.

IFUSS Fellow **Loes Nas** attended an American Studies conference in Tbilisi that she reports was "quite extraordinary."

IFUSS Fellow **Hazel Rowley** is in Paris, where she is researching a book on Sartre and Beauvoir and their "legendary and strange relationship."

IFUSS Fellow **Moshe Shokeid's** recent publications include a new augmented

edition of *A Gay Synagogue in New York* with University of Pennsylvania Press (2002), "Sexual Addicts Together: Observing the Culture of SCA Gay Groups in New York" (*Social Anthropology* 10:2 2002), and "Closeted Cosmopolitans: Israeli Gays Between Center and Periphery" (*Global Networks* 3:3 2003).

**Tania Venediktova**, a 1999 IFUSS Fellow, reports that her VI Fulbright Summer School in the Humanities course, "Reading Everyday Life in American and in Russian: American Studies for Intercultural Communication" (June, 2003), was attended by twenty-four selected participants (graduate students and faculty members) from fifteen universities around Russia. Her book *Conversation in American: Discourse of Bargaining in the American Literary Tradition* (New Literary Review: Moscow, 2003) was just published.

This past July, Board member **Geoffrey White** conducted a five week NEH Summer Institute on "Re-Imagining Indigenous Cultures: The Pacific Islands." The program was aimed at expanding the presence of Pacific Islands work in college curricula and interrogating received notions of "the indigenous" in a variety of discursive fields. (See the institute Web site at: <http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/neh/>. In September 2002, at University of Hawai'i / East-West Center program in International Cultural Studies hosted a one-day conference, "De-Americanizing the Global: Cultural Studies Interventions from Asia-Pacific." Plans are proceeding for publication of a journal special issue under the joint editorship of Mingbao Yue (Hawai'i) and Jon Goss (Hawai'i).

## News from the Directors

**Jane Desmond** recently gave the keynote address at the performance studies conference, "Translations and Transferals: When Popular Dance Moves to the Concert Stage" at the University of Minnesota. She continues to work on her book, *Displaying Death/Animating Life: Fictions of Liveness from Taxidermy to Animatronics*, and recently addressed the International Association

of Pet Cemeterians, discussing her work on grieving for animals. A revised version of her article, "Transnational American Studies: Limits to Collaboration," recently appeared in *American Studies International*, after an earlier version was published in *The Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* (HJEAS).

**Virginia Domínguez** continues to enjoy the all-encompassing challenges of editing one of the major journals in her field, *The American Ethnologist*. A visual overhaul of the journal's design has been accompanied by a shift in intellectual orientation; a time-consuming but very gratifying process. She was recently named as one of four "Collegiate Fellows" at the University of Iowa; a special honor for selected senior faculty who hold these positions for three years.

## IFUSS Staff

**Chrys Poff** was an IFUSS program assistant during the 2002-2003 academic year. A graduate student in the American Studies department at the University of Iowa, she recently completed her dissertation on "The Western Ghost Town in American Culture, 1869-1950," and just graduated with her PhD.

**Danielle Rich** began working as an IFUSS program assistant in the fall of 2003. A graduate student in the American Studies department at the University of Iowa, she will begin her third year of coursework in the fall of 2004.

**Brandy Case Haub** began working as an IFUSS program assistant in the spring of 2004. She is Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Iowa. Her dissertation research is concerned with the Puerto Rican independence movement, and cultural and political nationalisms in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Brandy will be moving to San Juan, Puerto Rico in July to begin her year of fieldwork research.

## Visit the IFUSS Website

Recent additions include the papers that were presented at the Crossing Borders convocation, March 2002, information on the IFUSS Americanization project, and on *Comparative American Studies-An International Journal*.

See:  
[www.uiowa.edu/~ifuss/index.html](http://www.uiowa.edu/~ifuss/index.html)

# IFUSS WEBSITE



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