



American Studies in a Moment of Danger (Critical American Studies)

George Lipsitz

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What becomes of "national knowledge" in our age of globalization? If dramatic changes in technology, commerce, and social relations are undermining familiar connections between culture and place, what happens to legacies of learning that put the nation at the center of the study of history, culture, language, politics, and geography? In short, what remains of American Studies? At a critical moment, this book offers a richly textured historical perspective on where our notions of national knowledge-and our sense of American Studies-have come from and where they may lead in a future of new ideas about culture and community. The America that seems to be disappearing before our very eyes is, George Lipsitz argues, actually the cumulative creation of yesterday's struggles over identity, culture, and power. With examples from statistics and history, poster designs and music lyrics, Lipsitz shows how American Studies has been shaped by the social movements of the 1930s, 1960s, and 1980s. His analysis reveals the sedimented history of social movement contestation contained in contemporary popular music, visual art, and cinema.

Finally, Lipsitz identifies the ways in which the globalization of commerce and culture are producing radically new understandings of politics, performance, consumption, knowledge, and nostalgia; the changing realities present not so much a danger as a clear challenge to a still-evolving American Studies-a challenge that this book helps us to confront wisely, flexibly, and effectively.

George Lipsitz is professor of ethnic studies at the University of California, San Diego, where he serves as director of the Thurgood Marshall Institute. He is the author of many books, including *Time Passages* (see right), *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (1998), and *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism, and the Poetics of Place* (1997).

Critical American Studies Series, volume 1

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