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A forthright look at the future of the discipline in the wake of immense social changes.

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.

Sometimes we ask, with perhaps a tinge of despair, 'nothing we do seems to make much difference, so why study America?' This is a book of answers. Connecting culture and politics with the social movements in which they arise, Lipsitz gives reasons why studying the United States is not merely cool, but vital to the building of a humane future.

_ Paul Lauter, author of From Walden Pond to Jurassic Park