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"American Cultural Studies" is a conversation among scholars about the sometimes contentious issue of what a specifically American cultural studies might look like. Assembling some of the field's most eloquent commentators, this volume stresses the importance of a historically informed cultural studies and delves into the discipline's roots in pragmatism, social activism, and radical politics. It also considers the moral and social responsibilities of citizen-intellectuals in the United States.

Throughout these spirited discussions, the emphasis is on moving from theory to practice: from text-based to experience-based research, from spectator - to conversation-based models of narrative production, from a historical to historically informed analysis, and from political detachment to political engagement. Speaking from a variety of perspectives, contributors advocate ways to integrate private scholarship with public participation: by incorporating the lessons of feminist methodologies grounded in dialogue and ethnographic fieldwork, by recentring cultural studies on issues of economic opportunity and job equity, or by physically returning as a participant to one's home community.

Offering fresh perspectives from within and outside the field, "American Cultural Studies" calls for intellectuals to engage in the cultures they study. By doing so, practitioners of cultural studies may succeed in affecting, rather than merely describing, the tensions and forces at work in the United States - its policies, its media structures, and its disintegrating democracy.