Abysmal Desires for Recognition: Nostalgic Disavowal in Anti-Immigrant Texts

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The author argues, through the use of psychoanalytical and Marxist concepts, that nostalgia, longing, paranoia, and abjection in anti-immigrant discourse function as powerful rhetorical devices that, re-articulated in new racist expressions, cast the immigrant as a threat to the national, racial, and cultural integrity attributed to U.S. society. The author also argues that anti-immigrant discourse, as a postmodern expression, seeks to territorialize both academic discourse and popular culture with the appropriation of ambivalent views toward immigration in U.S. scholarship. The article concludes with a brief discussion of affirmative textual practices currently articulated in cultural studies.

Introduction: nostalgia and the postmodern modes of affective dis-attachment in anti-immigrant discourse

In this article, I explore some of the expressive modes of affective dis-attachment from and rejection of Mexican immigrants in the past ten years of anti-immigrant discourse. Using tools developed from psychoanalysis and Hegelian Marxism, particularly the work of cultural critic Slavoj Žižek, I argue that such textual strategies of containment and racialized inclusion constitute the deployment of desire and nostalgia in anti-immigrant discourses that seek to close the gap between academic discourse and popular culture; these discourses attempt to resolve the dissonance between states' declining economic and social welfare and global capitalism. I attribute these new modes of writing to the reorganization of capitalism since the end of World War II, as they coincide with the 1965 Immigration Act and the pluralization of discourse in the social and human sciences. My analysis treats the use of nostalgia[1] in such works as a productive textual strategy that functions as a fixer for permanence and as a marker of difference. The effects of nostalgic rejection/disavowal of the immigrant include a racist nativism that invokes the experience of a glorious past of the American dream spoiled by the abjection of the transient Other. The task is then to track these intensified postmodern forms of pastiche circulated and produced by conservative U.S. academics, journalists, and immigration scholars, among others. The textual effects of such discourse express what Žižek (1999)[2] describes in psychoanalytical terms as the perverse act of overidentification with power in the form of attempts to enter the vibrant field of cultural studies and the inevitable flight of some anti-immigrant writers into popular culture. I see this as symptomatic aspect of our historical conjuncture, in which the proverbial "publish or perish" is being replaced by the democratizing injunction "popularize and publish." In debates in migration studies and popular media, the costs of migration for domestic workers (particularly among ethnic and racial minorities), the threats of terrorism, drug trafficking, and diseases and moral and social decline are often attributed to the influx of non-white immigrants. Such debates are beyond the scope of this paper and are considered instead as the textual effects of ambivalent writing and the figure of the scholar as the vanishing mediator.[3] My

concern is more specifically about the interface in which desire, Otherness, capitalism, nostalgia, and academic writing operate in the re-articulations of racism (Omi and Winant 2000; Chow 2000). In anti-immigrant discourses, the longing for recognition is expressed by an abysmal desire[4] to decompose the other, to cast a shade of abjection on the immigrant.

Postmodernity and the conditions for anti-immigrant discourse

Three interrelated events taking place after World War II, beginning during the late fifties, provoked a shift in the modes of writing about culture and alterity. Their effects have been articulated in emergent and intensified textual strategies. It could be argued that the spectrum of anti-immigrant writing ranges from emancipatory and redemptive views of the immigrant Other, to a neo-classical economic rendition of immigration as the effect of pull-and-push metaphysics in immigration studies, to the paranoiac denouncing of the threat that the immigrant Other represents to the nationalistic ideals of purity and order--The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly as nostalgic excess. The intensification of these textual strategies is effective in direct proportion to the universal expansion of capitalism and its effects in the local articulations of desire and nostalgia, which occurred precisely during the postindustrial stage of production in the United States.

The first of the three interrelated events that can be traced back to the period following World War II involves the formation of interdisciplinary approaches under the rubric of cultural studies, initiated by the Birmingham School of theorists. Social and intellectual movements in various parts of the world triggered the simultaneous pluralization of discourse and ultimately what was later designated as the crisis of representation. A relativization of discourse meant a desire for multiple subjectivities articulated in the various forms of activism that took place in the increasingly heterotopic[5] urban centers of the United States, Europe, and Latin America. These social and intellectual movements made it possible to conceive of accepted and transgressive strategies that would liberate the traditional modes of conceptualizing and writing culture. Thus the foundational writings of this new field (Hoggart 1957; Williams 1958; Thompson 1963) showed the connections between culture and politics and high art and the culture industry. But their more important contribution lies in their imagining of a more messy conception of *culture as a text* (see Agger 1992; Clifford 1988; Marcus and Fisher 1986), and so moving beyond the culture industry paradigm (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972).

A second simultaneous formation is the organization or "disorganization" of capitalism into a more flexible mode of accumulation, characterized by deregulation in industrial production, social deconstruction, the apparent decline of modernist avant-gardes, and the flight of manufacturing jobs and capital (Harvey 1989). The effect of these changes, David Harvey notes, is an intensified configuration of time-space compression, as expressed in the new forms of production and consumption. The sociopolitical effects of these changes can be roughly summed up as a re-figuration of the logic of culture in terms of pastiche and fragmentation. In other words, anti-representation becomes the

political force in various modes of contestation against "grand narratives," to use Lyotard's (1988) concept of totalizing theoretical systems.

The third event that could be said to inaugurate the postmodern condition of immigration in the United States is the 1965 Immigration Act. In a significant yet ambiguous shift in immigration policy, the Act "removed 'national origins' as the basis for American immigration legislation… and provided for the reunification of families of U.S. citizens and permanent residents" (Chan 1991:145). It also specified other preferences, which included skilled and unskilled workers needed in occupations where labor was of short supply in the U.S. (ibid.:146). Such a shift allowed for a larger influx of "non-white, non-English-speaking, non-Europeans emigrating from developing countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia" (Suarez-Orozco 1998:9), constituting what many immigration scholars refer today as the "second wave of immigration." This problematic periodization of migration has some merit if we take seriously Saskia Sassen's view that "international migrations are produced, they are patterned, and they are embedded in specific historical phases" (1999:155). The transformation of immigration is more evident if we think of post-1965 migration as an intensified transnationalization of migrant flows and immigration policy that transcends federalized states' control. States like California, and now Arizona, struggle to make sense of a phenomenon that challenges its physical and legal sovereignty (Sassen 1996).

Anti-immigrant discourse that circulates as postmodern discontent and longing for the American dream of nativism has emerged in the context of the three shifts previously described here—the 1965 Immigration Act, the flexible mode of production (Harvey 1989), and the relativization of discourse.

Strategies of anti-Immigrant discourse: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly revisited

The cyclical waves of anti-immigrant sentiment seek to cast the immigrant as the *homo sacer*[6] in a disavowal of new and creative space-time formations of immigrant life. Žižek expands on Agamben's *homo sacer*, describing the concept as "the horizontal and vertical distinction between the ways *the same* people can be treated in the legal order" (Žižek 2002:32). In the context of migration this notion can be translated into the generalized position of a disavowed subjectivity**.** The gap produced by the rejection of the immigrant Other is simultaneously filled with the excess that recomposes the nostalgic figure of the patriotic, Euro-American, authentic, and transparent subject. This operation of rejection and filling is performed in the Hegelian dialectics of what I term *nostalgic disavowal* and *hysteric composition*.[7] The process of nostalgic disavowal is the performative drive of anti-immigrant discourse; it is the excess or supplement of hysteric composition produced in the ambivalent stance of migration policy studies and popularized in news and marketing strategies in which the very "natives" who claim to represent the interests of ethnic and racial groups cast immigrants as foreign, exotic, and loyal consumers (Davila 2001).

The efficiency of anti-immigrant discourse is achieved through the textual strategy of nostalgic disavowal in works such as Samuel Huntington's *Who Are We: The Challenges to American National Identity* (2004), in which the author compiles a bricolage of statistics, pro-immigrant scholarship, anti-immigrant scholarship, and delirium. Along with Huntington, authors like Victor Davis Hanson (*Mexifornia: A State of Becoming*, 2003) and Peter Brimelow (*Alien Nation: Common sense about America's Immigration Disaster*, 1995), among others, have designed the ultimate textual machine,[8] capable of combining autobiographical nostalgia, statistical maneuvering, and paranoiac performance to re-deploy the figure of the Mexican immigrant. At the same time, Mexican journalists and intellectuals, both in Mexico and the United States, assume the "native talks back" position, blurring the boundaries between academic and popular discourse with textual strategies that range from redemptive and salvational modes of representation, to nationalistic and pan-ethnic representations (Ramos 2004), to a decidedly post-mortem reflection of the post-national Mexican condition (Bartra 2000).

The strand of writing that combines paranoia and hysteric racism is reactivated as an opportunistic textual strategy of complicit pastiche. Such strategy is not recent, nor is its parasitic vitality obtained from intertextual simulacra and the rendition of the immigrant body as the abject Other in popular culture (Shimakawa 2002; Lee 1995; Marchetti 1993). What is new is the re-articulation and re-composition of previously compartmentalized discourses that seek to cast immigrants as a threat to the integrity of the nation-state and to civilization, and as natural competitors of American minorities (Abelmann and Lie 1995).

Some bad examples

Perhaps one of the most popularized expressions of anti-immigrant commentary is found in Peter Brimelow's book *Alien Nation* (1995). Borrowing from migration scholarship (George Borjas and Thomas Sowell), Brimelow argues that the cultural consequences of immigration include a "decline in education and family values," failings of ethnic groups known in conservative circles as "cultural traits" (Brimelow 1995:181). Brimelow concludes that "national origin is an excellent predictor of economic failure, as measured by the propensity to go on welfare, … ethnic-based crime, as well as the spread of immigrant-borne disease and environmental pollution" (ibid.).[9] Of more relevance for this article is to note the actual appropriation of immigration research and its ambivalent positions on immigration policy. The position of "objectivity" shared by many immigration scholars is exploited in Brimelow's pastiche and combined with the remnants of discredited theories on national character, racial typologies, and a functionalist sociology of deviance. This strategy of racist discourse naturalizes culture and ethnicity (Chow 2000).

In *Americans No More*, Georgie Anne Geyer (1996) laments the decline of patriotism and nationalistic fervor associated with the rise of gated suburban communities and the detachment of cosmopolitan elites from the nation-state project. In addition, she sees the decline of traditional rituals of incorporation such as citizenship by naturalization as the symptoms of a collapsing immigration system in the United States. Interestingly, Geyer traces the decline to a

period more or less consistent with David Harvey's view on the shift from rigid to flexible accumulation when she describes the "*deciticizing* of America… for two reasons":

> American corporations, and indeed the entire American economy, were being disconnected economically, politically, and morally from "America" as we had known it when what was good for General Motors was good for America, and not necessarily the world; and the new American elites…[became] disconnected from any real sense of deep patriotism for America. (1996:32)

Geyer correctly attributes the decline of the nation state to global capitalistic forces, but also mistakenly deplores the rise of multiculturalism (dismissing the black Civil Rights Movement as only the culmination of a tragic but triumphant oppressed minority) for creating a form of bartering that is "*taking the place of citizenship*" (1996:190). In order to contest the mission of multiculturalism, she asks,

> What really is Multiculturalism? Does it mean that every campesino who crosses the Rio Grande carries Gabriel Garcia Marquez's work in his head? Or that he perhaps has Octavio Paz's *Labyrinth of Solitude*…to read to his children at night in the barrios around San Diego? Or does the immigrant maid in Laredo dwell at night on the writings of the brilliant and doomed Mexican nun of three centuries ago, Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz? ... No, Multiculturalism is a root change in our birthright and is one of the major movements weakening citizenship. (1996:203)

The nostalgic supplement presented above allows the paranoid textual strategy that avoids a critique of global capitalism and its effects on small-town U.S.A. Geyer chooses instead to express the perverse joy of negating the Other's culture in condescending disavowal. This operation seeks to trigger the figure of the savage immigrant, the opposite of the Hegelian subject: a laboring body without a cultured Spirit. These *dejective* ruminations reinforce a longing for an enlightened national subject at the center of patriotic Euro-American polity in order to negate the relations of immigrant production.

Roy Beck, another commentator on immigration, sees the 1965 Immigration act as a "disaster" because of its unintended consequences. He notes,

> The trick was "family reunification." While the reformers had wanted a priority on picking immigrants by skills, the conservatives insisted that the priority be on immigrant's family connections to Americans. …[C]onservatives, of course were totally wrong.… [T]hey thought that since nearly 90 percent of Americans were of European descent, most of the relatives would come from small European families…. Congress didn't seem to realize that family reunification primarily would bring in relatives of the large groups of Asian and Caribbean refugees and Latin American workers who had been allowed into the country during the last decade. (1996:70)

Beck endorses the justification given in pro-immigration scholarship: in order to replenish the aging white population of the U.S., we need more immigrants "willing to take jobs Americans don't want." However, a new Malthusian racism emerges in Beck's lamentation over failed U.S. immigration policy. Only a mistake can explain an otherwise racial purism in policymaking; the imperatives of capital could not possibly override the racist agenda, but they have.

Beck concludes his comments by blaming immigrants for the decline of the "uniquely American lifestyle of a small town" such as Garden City, Kansas (1996:245). Again, the racist pastiche is composed by emphasizing the demographic trends and low wages, crime rates, and unemployment rates among blacks, which, in Beck's view, could be solved by reducing immigration rates to 5,000 per year in order to ensure what he calls "domestic tranquility" (ibid.) in the U.S. This strategy of juxtaposing immigrants and blacks so as to frame the source of social and economic problems leaves Beck in the position described before as the *vanishing mediator* with the disappearance of the commentator's body. Needless to say, at the time his book was published, outsourcing was a relatively new but increasing capitalistic trend, but now it provokes a domestic in-tranquility that continues to blame the immigrant for the "strong sucking sound" produced by capital and labor flights.

The same trend of interdisciplinary racist pastiche can be observed in *America Balkanized* (1994), by Brent A. Nelson. Nelson recalls Mario Barrera's "MexAmerica" thesis, which describes a cultural and linguistic superstructure encompassing the U.S. Southwest and Northern Mexico. Nelson regards Barrera's notion of "pluralistic accommodation as an outrageously improbable constitutional arrangement; for Nelson, accommodation is a symptom of a larger threat posed by immigrants that leads to "the overall drift …towards the extinction of European civilization in large areas of America. …Since immigrants will become citizens, and in turn, lobby and campaign (and demonstrate and threaten) for the admission of more of their kind,… the growing cultural dispossession of the European American population … will also become more evident" (Nelson 1994:114-115). For Nelson there is a ubiquitous immigrant threat devoid of substance, a sort of virtual fetishism of the Other that finds its *jouissance* in the textual strategy of disavowal. Or as Žižek would put it, the fetishistic split creates the conditions for sympathetic identification with the *us*, and an unidentified spectral threat is then projected onto the *them* (2002:39): immigrants.

Assimilationist disenchantment is present in most of the works of these commentators. But this apparent ideological discourse should not be confused with the notion of ideology as "smoke and mirrors" in that the labor of desire is not a superstructural concern. Rather, as Gilles Deleuze (1995) and others have argued, desire works on the infrastructure, invests it, belongs to it, and desire thereby organizes power: it organizes the system of repression (Deleuze 1995:264). For instance, Dirk Chase Eldredge (2001) notes that assimilation

> Must start with a desire by the immigrant to become a vital part of his new land, not merely a resident. As command of the common language improves, so does acceptance. Then come the physical manifestations of assimilation: successful employment, home ownership and the ultimate act of assimilation, naturalization. (108)

This seemingly naïve statement encodes the key requirements for the reformation of the body: docility, operations on the body, and subjectification. Not surprisingly, the immigrant body is expected to be reformed as a condition for assimilation, which simultaneously assumes deviance (lack of home ownership, unemployment, etcetera).

But how are assimilation and ethnicity to be understood in these discursive impositions on the recalcitrant immigrant body? Is not the ethnic always subordinated to a dominant center that is increasingly reorganized in the global network, an appendage whose fate is inscribed by the very voices that claim its redemption, only to be rendered as excremental residue of the savage and the barbaric? Is it not true that the other possible subjectivity is that of the noble savage stigmatized for its unrepentant *Malinchismo*?[10]

As Rey Chow argues, furthering Foucault's notion of sexuality and biopower, there is a connection between the "objectification-theorization mechanism that is constitutive of disciplinary knowledge" and what she calls "*the politics of cultural legitimation*" (2002:2). She argues that "terms of race and ethnicity in cultural studies and post-colonial studies accentuate the binarism of objectification … in the following manner: *some humans have been cast as subjects, while other humans have been given the privilege of becoming subjects*" (Chow 2002:2).

Through this Foucauldian reading, the charged longing for an absolute state can be tracked in Victor Davis Hanson's book *Mexifornia: A State of Becoming* (2003). *Mexifornia* is another post-historical rendering of bionationalism, mixed with a lamentation for a sector of the agrarian Right, left behind by the "end of history" and the triumph of liberal democracy, which, according to Francis Fukuyama, constitutes the best possible solution to the human problem (as quoted in Sim 1999:21). But how can the agrarian Left be late to the end of history as marked by the arrival of the untimely: the immigrant?

In *Mexifornia*, Hanson reminisces about his past immigrant students and their encounters with the Greek classics that will presumably ensure their enculturation into "productive professional lives while defining [them] as individuals and as Americans, rather than as part of a collective and dependent Mexican underclass" (Hanson 2003:4). Hanson takes a perspective on Mexican national character similar to the functionalist view of Samuel Ramos,[11] another Mexican intellectual. There is a paternalistic and redemptive thrust in Hanson's delirium, as expressed in his "detached analysis" and "advocacy pedagogy"; this redemptive thrust can still ensure assimilation "if we forget group causes and the rhetoric of the multicultural industry" (Hanson 2003:3). His major concern is the heterotopic condition of small-town America, ravaged by hordes of immigrants and the rise of multiculturalism. He neglects to seriously discuss the ascendance of transnational capitalism and its effects in the Central Valley of California. Instead, he focuses on the racial relations in rural California, "as always, accompanied by an enlightened kindness" toward the Mexican (Hanson 2003:xii).

He also claims to be surrounded by Mexican Americans in his family and friendships, and he longs for a feudal system where the capitalists "worked

alongside their laborers" against the "corporate mogul" (Hanson 2003:24). But small-town America today is a city under siege. He writes:

> On our streets I have no idea whether the mostly young, male illegal aliens I meet are economic refugees or fugitives from crime in Mexico, perhaps serious felons. [I]n the 1950s Mexicans flocked to do agricultural labor in manageable numbers and under legal auspices … but how does the government count those who do not wish to be counted? (Hanson 2003:16)

This paranoiac rendering of the immigrant is charged with the masochistic desire to improve the systems of control and domination. Hanson notes a paradoxical situation for young Mexican immigrants: the frustrated attempts of ethnic scholars to retribalize them are opposed to Hanson's partially successful attempts to emancipate the Other through the classical canon. Mexifornia is, after all, an autobiographical reverie on longing and regret about the tumultuous sixties, migration, late capitalism, and what several authors see as the implosion of the Third World in the First World.

We can also see this textual strategy, like others, contributing to the culture of complaint in the collapse of *symbolic efficiency*, in which the Other is guilty of the fact that he does not exist. In this strategy, instead of undermining the position of the Big Other (e.g., state, market), the complaining subject addresses himself to it, translating demands into linguistic complaint (Žižek 1999:361). The compositional subject is the effect of a legalistic complaint against the immigrant's trespass of the territorialized social space, a violation that defines a realm of transgression where the immigrant is always already guilty (ibid.:365).

The currency of writers such as those discussed above to the popular domain of public culture is a symptom of symbolic inefficiency demanding recognition by establishing alliances with different publics, including academia. It is the supplemental Viagra of a discourse in decline before the rise of Empire. As Nadia Seremetakis argues, nostalgia in the "American" sense "freezes the past in such a manner as to preclude it from any capacity for social transformation in the present, preventing the present from establishing a dynamic perceptual relationship to its history" (1994:4). The same can be said about anti-immigrant discourse and its performative impetus to recreate a recent past of now subverted Euro-American purity, a reaction to a non-identity that extends anonymously beyond political entities, global capitalism. Invested and articulated in the very statements that deny the existence of the Other, this form of nostalgic negation operates at the positive level by rendering immigrants as cheap and uncivilized labor.

Excursus: Toward the invention of the common place

The liaisons between immigrant scholarship and anti-immigrant commentary have important implications in cultural studies given the increased proliferation of xenophobic discourse in various popular media by commentators and pundits from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds after September 11 (syndicated columnist Michelle Malkin and CNN anchor Lou Dobbs come to mind) whose

attacks on immigrants are supported by the complicity of intellectuals, activists, government officials, and immigrant advocates. The ambivalent position that immigration policy scholars assume in their claims for objectivity is laid bare in the appropriation and manipulation of "findings" through the nostalgic excess of anti-immigrant discourse.

In critical cultural studies today, the figure of the immigrant Other in oedipalized representations is not the rule, but it is an intensified transformation of former periods of anti-immigrant reactions. The expressions of anti-immigrant sensibilities analyzed in this article are found not only in popular pamphlets, newspapers and magazines, but also listed in public and college library collections, facilitating their circulation across the traditional boundaries that differentiate specialized audiences from popular ones. In such heterotopic and schizophrenic spaces, other works of cultural criticism track the affinities and connections that result from the transcultural dimension of migration and global capitalism. These works' focus on "affective attachments," to use Žižek's (1999) term, employ affirmative textual tactics to explore the generative forces of new space-time formations produced by immigrant and non-immigrant life. Žižek (1999) poses the term "passionate (dis-)attachment" against Judith Butler's focus on the Unconscious as the site of resistance that undermines and displaces the socio-symbolic network (Žižek 1999:260). Žižek argues that "the existing order of power is also supported by unconscious 'passionate attachments'—attachments that must remain publicly non-acknowledged if they are to fulfill they role" (ibid.:260-261). Here I coin the term "affective attachment," which designates a direction different from Žižek's dis-attachment and gestures toward a positive and productive notion of affect. This includes as key features empathy and compassion in a "space of becoming," as captured in Rosi Braidotti's (2001) view on enduring intensity. Braidotti states, "The space of becoming is a space of affinity and correlation of elements, between compatible and mutually attractive forces: a space of sympathy between the constitutive elements of the process" (Braidotti 2001:189-190).

The recent work of Jose Limón in *American Encounters* (1998) explores the erotic in popular cultural forms such as John Sayles' film *Lone Star* (1996). Limón locates the "overcoming" produced by the characters Pilar and Sam, whose relationship is "no longer tied to questions of the reproduction (literally or symbolically) of the ethnic 'nation-state'"(Limón 1998:212). "For these subjects" Limón affirms, "sexual and personal equality must also overcome their histories of race and nation" (ibid.). In theater, Karen Shimakawa (2002:99) argues, "representations of oppression … do not have the power to negate the process, nor do they entirely dissipate its effects onstage or offstage." Shimakawa notes that "[p]lays employing this strategy juxtapose those representations positioning Asian Americanness-as-abject (racially, culturally, sexually, and nationally aberrant) against representations of 'real' Asian Americans who personify the diametrically opposing antistereotype" (ibid.:100). She warns that "in concretizing and endorsing a 'real' Asian Americanness in opposition to Orientalist stereotypes, a new, perhaps equally fake stereotype of Asian Americanness is

erected" (ibid.). Rather than assuming an outside or opposite position in regards to abject representations of the Other, Shimakawa uses a feminist approach to mimesis that produces the effect of mimetic excess, an intensification or hyper-representation of the Asian American body on stage in a type of critical mimicry. Shimakawa analyzes intersections between sex, race, gender, ethnicity, and abjection in *M. Butterfly*, David Henry Hwang's 1988 deconstructivist version of *Madame Butterfly*. Hwang's play depicts the story of a French spy who ignores the fact that the Chinese opera singer who is object of his affections in a twenty-year romantic relationship is actually a man with whom he had shared state secrets. For Shimakawa, this is a naïve mimesis that turns into a critical subversion of stereotype (2002:120-127).

Today in cultural studies, the questions of origin and identity have shifted to a more relevant inquiry: where are we going today? To write about new forms of sociality, requires a commitment to explore the deformations and new forms of sociality that intercultural processes afford. Tracking new forms of affirmative practices, connections, assemblages, and multiple lines of creative resistance is a process, a textual strategy consistent with Stephen Tyler's view on postmodern ethnography as a "cooperatively evolved text consisting of fragments of discourse intended to evoke in the minds of the reader and writer an emergent fantasy of a possible world of common sense reality, and thus to provoke an aesthetic integration that will have a therapeutic effect…a self conscious return to an earlier and more powerful notion of the ethical character of all discourse, as captured in the ancient significance of the family of terms 'ethos,' 'ethnos,' 'ethics'" (Tyler 1987:202-203). Thus, we could say that the intended effects of affirmative textual strategies are ethical acts of writing culture, joint expressions of *ethos*, the Us produced as the therapeutic effect of transnational encounters.

NOTES

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1 Nadia Seremetakis defines nostalgia as "the desire or longing with burning pain to journey. It also evokes the sensory dimension of memory in exile and estrangement… [and t]he involuntary circuit of the senses reveals that embodied performance is in part constructed out of the cross-communication of senses and things" (1994:4-7). In this particular context, nostalgia is taken as a desire to journey toward the identification with power, or the big Other, to use Žižek's (1999) term.

2 For Slavoj Žižek, "overidentification" and "self-instrumentalization" refer to the pervert's "staging the fiction of the big Other in order to conceal the jouissance he derives from the destructive orgy of his acts" (1999:380). In other words, the rhetorical efficiency that previous anti-immigrant discourses have lost is reactivated through postmodern forms of pastiche that include, among other elements, quantitative studies on migration designed to address policy making. Their ambivalence (the "hysteric" in psychoanalytical terms) resides in the only two possible positions regarding immigration policy: re-

strictionism and pro-immigration or exclusive inclusion. Thus identification with power, in its perverse form, consists mainly in casting immigrants as dejects: the subjects of disavowal.

3 Žižek (1999), drawing from Lacanian psychoanalysis, refers to the "vanishing mediator" as the position of identification with power, and I would add that this position is often invoked to command objectivity and detachment in quantitative research.

4 Abysmal desire is used to express in psychoanalytical terms what Žižek (2002) regards as "the sense of the anxiety-provoking abyss of the Other's desire" (116). The Other or big Other is the territorializing force that interpellates and stimulates identification.

5 Michel Foucault defines heterotopia as an "impossible space of a large number of fragmentary possible worlds" (as quoted in Harvey 1989:48).

6 Giorgio Agamben (1998) coins the term homo sacer to refer to the effects of the distinction between those included in and those excluded from the legal order in specific sociopolitical contexts (e.g., the sans papiers in France). Agamben uses the term to designate traditionally excluded groups (women, ethnic groups, and so on).

7 Borrowing from psychoanalytical theory, I have coined these two terms in order to highlight the excessive and supplementary features of anti-immigrant discourse. The function of these features is to resolve the ambivalent positions of immigration scholarship that asserts objectivity claims regarding the impact of immigration on native workers (see, for example, Hammermesh and Bean's telling title Help or Hindrance?: The economic implications of immigration for African Americans (1998); see also Borjas 1990). Thus, from a psychoanalytical perspective, immigration writing is in most cases divisible into two general strands: objectivistic (ambivalent or hysteric) and restrictionist (excessive, perverse transgression and inclusion as abjection, as in the illegal alien).

8 See George Marcus' (1999) appropriation of Deleuze's notion of *machine*.

9 Brimelow singles out "Chinese families buying choice Victorian houses in wooded residential areas and—cutting down all the trees" (1995:190). The blatant manipulation of views on culture, race, ethnicity, and nationality are not surprising. In fact, Nayan Shah (2001) has demonstrated how the strategies for reformation of space and subjects enacted upon Chinese immigrants since the late nineteenth century involved not only racist ideologies but also institutional practices of sanitary regulations and containment, producing the spatial demarcation of China Town in San Francisco.

10 The notion of Malinchismo connotes certain terms of Chicano gender and racial stratification: in Mexican historiography, the Malinche is the native woman whose offspring is the Mestizo son of Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conqueror of Mexico (Paz 1959). The Chicano feminist critique argues that this rendition of women as conquered is just part of a colonial legacy founded on patriarchy. This term is used in popular discourse in Mexico to label those who desire exogamous relations with other persons and objects (imports).

11 Samuel Ramos' positivist view on the Mexican working class overtly expresses his racist contempt by casting a "Mexican type" as the excess unaccounted for in functionalist views of his time. For a discussion on national character in Mexican scholarship see Limón 1994 and Bartra 2000.

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