



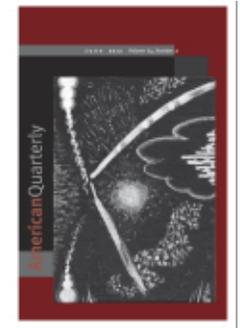
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David G. Gutiérrez
Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo

American Quarterly, Volume 60, Number 3, September 2008, pp. 503-521
(Article)

Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: 10.1353/aq.0.0025



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Introduction

Nation and Migration

David G. Gutiérrez and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo

It is not an exaggeration to argue that much of the terrain in American studies—and in the humanities and social sciences more generally—has been transformed in recent years by a fundamental reconsideration of the relationship between capitalism, the nation-state, and human migration spurred by the so-called transnational turn. Born of the historical conjuncture of the global economic crisis of the early 1970s, the worldwide decline of Fordism and the gradual ascendance of neoliberal economic philosophy, and the movement of ever increasing numbers of economically displaced populations from less developed regions of the world to established metropolises and developing regions, a growing number of scholars and social critics have shifted their vantage points away from analyses that were formerly rooted largely or exclusively in single nation-states to new perspectives that are much more attentive to transnational social fields created through the ongoing interactions between the world system of nations, the expansions and contractions of global capitalism, and the movement of human populations.

Although the linked notions of globalization and transnationalism have only recently come into wide usage as conceptual tools, a small number of perceptive social critics and scholars had begun to explore these phenomena much earlier. Indeed, as early as the first decades of the twentieth century, during the height of what might be termed the first era of intensive economic globalization, forward thinking social critics such as Randolph Bourne, as well as migration scholars such as William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, Paul Schuster Taylor, and a few others had begun to explore what they recognized to be systemic linkages between capitalist development, state policing of labor migration, and the emergence of an increasingly integrated global economic system. These important interpreters of the early twentieth century brought very different points of view to bear on the profound changes they saw unfolding around them. But together, Bourne's ruminations on the possible emergence of a cosmopolitan "trans-national" America (1916), Thomas and Znaniecki's innovative exploration of the complex social and economic

networks linking Polish peasants in Europe to new communities of settlement in the United States (1918–1920), and Taylor’s prescient analysis of the accelerating integration of the Mexican and American economies and labor markets (1928–32) can all be seen as early examples of an experimental transnational scholarship.¹

It was not until nearly a half-century later, however, that scholars and social critics began to explore more comprehensively some of the insights first suggested by these pathbreaking social analysts. Although forms of what are now recognizable as the notions of “transnationalism” and the “transnational” were articulated in a different context as early as the early 1970s,² it was not until the late 1980s and into the 1990s that these ideas began to gain currency and wider discussion. A special number of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* published in 1986, devoted to “transnational migration and the emergence of new minorities,” signaled a strong shift in this direction.³ In the 1990s, another quantum leap occurred with the publication of a number of important studies that explicated a multifarious transnational project.⁴ Again, while each of these important authors brought a unique emphasis to his or her research, together, the publication of these works signaled a sea change in the conceptualization of the nexus between economic restructuring, population movement, cultural production and reproduction, and the future of the nation-state. Attempting to move beyond the conceptual constraints imposed by the shaping force of “methodological nationalism”⁵—and the teleological assumptions about immigrant incorporation that stem from it—revisionist thinkers sought to explore what the anthropologist Roger Rouse has called the “alternative cartography of social space” of transnational migratory circuits.⁶ Defined by proponents as the interstitial social spaces traversed and occupied by migrants in their sojourns between places of origin and places of destination, transnational spaces are envisioned as multisited “imagined communities” whose boundaries stretch across the borders of two or more nation-states.

Space limitations preclude a full review of the contributions made by scholars and critics who employed transnational perspectives in their work, but several clear trends have emerged since the mid-1980s. On the most fundamental level, this kind of work forced gradual recognition of the extent to which the emergence of transnational social fields (of more or less historical durability depending on local circumstance) had long been a common corollary of the use of foreign labor by developed and developing countries—and that this phenomena appears to have intensified with the current spate of

global economic restructurings. Innovation and expansion in transportation and communication technology also facilitated the frequency of transnational contacts and connections.

These insights have led to a tremendous transformation of historical scholarship in recent years as historians, historical sociologists, and others set out to explore how both the permanent settlement and also the more or less permanent *circulation* of migrants and immigrants have been central dynamics of capitalist expansion since at least the late eighteenth century.⁷ Growing awareness of the permanence of both population settlement *and* population circulation stimulated by the expansion of capitalism led historians and other critical scholars to reconsider definitions of local “community”—and to point to the notion of the “translocal” as another way to conceive of human migration and demographic change. This is perhaps the most crucial single conceptual leap transnational scholars have contributed to debates over the trajectory of modernity. By shifting conception of human migration away from notions of a linear progression of people moving from one place to another to a model of an innovative social formation “that links transmigrants, the localities to which they migrate, and their locality of origin,” transnational scholarship has emphasized the historical ubiquity of transnational circuits characterized by reciprocal social relations at each terminus as central components in the evolution of global capitalism.⁸

Transnational life and translocal communities take multiple forms today, reflecting the diversity of class composition and national origins of contemporary migrants. During the late twentieth century, and into the first decade of the current one, we have witnessed an upsurge in the migration of elites. Unlike the classic narrative of labor migration that begins with entry at the bottom echelons of national social and economic hierarchies, elites begin by entering at the top. These processes are tightly bound to the development of global capitalism, as business and professional elites associated with sectors of finance, import-export, and post-Fordist hi-tech industry have now joined labor migrants in movements around the globe.⁹ Many of these elite migrants, particularly those from China and South Asia, begin their U.S. sojourns in American universities, clustering in the fields of science, engineering, and computers, leading Aihwa Ong to conclude that universities in the United States are increasingly becoming “an extension of world trade.”¹⁰ In the process, Ong argues, what were once national institutions of higher learning are transforming into transnational institutions, and perhaps tilting the educational focus from political liberalism, humanities, and multiculturalism toward producing neoliberal “borderless entrepreneurial subjects abroad.”¹¹

The upsurge in the transnational migration of elites, in tandem with other processes, has also prompted new citizenship arrangements. Not only the United States, but also Canada, Mexico, Asian nations, and the European Union are adopting neoliberal forms of citizenship based on market calculations, bringing about new forms of “flexible citizenship”¹² as well as new forms of exclusion.¹³ When people hold multiple passports allowing them to do business in multiple nations, and when nations offer millionaire investors fast tracks to legal status and citizenship while denying the same rights to those who have lived and worked for decades within the national territory, then our old familiar way of thinking about citizenship as the rights of those who “belong” to a particular nation-state seem anachronistic, almost quaint.

Yet the project of disarticulating citizenship rights from belonging to a particular national territory is far from complete. Not only is it uneven, but globalization and transnationalism are accompanied by new intensive expressions of nationalism, even as they promote what Sassen has called new “assemblages of territory, authority, and rights.”¹⁴ Partial inclusions and exclusions are now the norm.¹⁵

Acknowledgment of these social and political processes has provoked new conceptual trends. For example, by challenging state-centered hagiographic descriptive and prescriptive accounts of the existence of homogeneous national cultures and the inevitable “assimilation” of various émigré populations into those presumed dominant cultures, such insights also raised important questions about the notion of national citizenship and other institutional features of the nation-state. While the institution of national citizenship has long been broadly accepted as an emancipatory institutional feature of liberal democracies,¹⁶ recent scholarship has raised a number of serious questions about this premise. Some critics have pointed to the institution’s fundamentally exclusionary nature and dependence on the negative referent of noncitizens to give it meaning.¹⁷ Others have noted how easily the institution has been manipulated to effect internal discrimination, produce “illegality,” and maintain various types of hierarchies within the nation despite claims of the inherent and universal equality of citizens.¹⁸ Still others have noted the complex ways noncitizens themselves decided to engage—or chose *not* to engage—local politics of citizenship.¹⁹

Indeed, in one of the most compelling recent trends in this kind of critical research, a growing number of scholars have begun to explore the ways in which national citizenship has often been deployed in contradictory ways by different subaltern players. At one end of the spectrum, some analysts have

demonstrated how contact between differentially racialized populations in certain contexts sometimes results in the emergence of panethnicity or other forms of coalition building that use citizenship as a jumping-off point for political organization and mobilization.²⁰ At the other end of the spectrum, however, scholars have explored the ways in which certain groups of “native minorities” and transmigrants often utilized their own claims to formal national membership as a tool to reproduce various types of social hierarchies and asymmetries of power. This has been particularly apparent in contexts in which recent immigrants and migrants are thrown into close contact with other racialized groups. Under such pressurized social situations, contact between racialized “domestic minorities” and émigré groups can stimulate intergroup competition and conflict even among populations that are otherwise nearly identical in their material circumstances and social positioning vis-à-vis the “host” society. In such cases, citizenship status was—and often is—used as a cudgel against groups perceived as threats, as in the recent case study by De Genova and Ramos-Zayas of the relationship between Puerto Rican and Mexican immigrant residents of Chicago.²¹

Nevertheless, neither casual observers nor scholars can afford to ignore the recent emergence of a full-blown immigrant rights movement in the United States, the demands around which it organized, and the challenges this poses to thinking about nation, migration, and citizenship. This movement developed in response to nationalist restrictionist measures, and it was strategically nurtured over time with support from various sectors, including organized labor and religion, and with organizers using new communications technologies such as nationally disseminated Spanish language radio, conference calls, and the Internet.²² The spring 2006 marches were the largest show of immigrant rights support ever witnessed in the United States, but here’s the rub: although globalization and transnationalism characterize the present moment, the resurgent immigrant rights movement in the United States has paradoxically focused squarely on claims to rights located at a national level, namely legalization and citizenship. The meanings of acquiring a particular national citizenship are certainly changing, as increasingly people seek U.S. citizenship for protection from deportation and for the pursuit of economic opportunity,²³ but it is nonetheless striking that at this particular historical moment, immigrant rights claims are still made on the nation, not on transnational, supranational, or global institutions. Moreover, “integration”—social, economic, and political—is emerging as the strategic operative framework in nearly all postindustrial societies of immigration.²⁴

Transnational scholarship has also brought into sharper relief the ubiquity of both historical and contemporary examples of the process of cultural hybridization and bricolage that mass population movements have inevitably caused. Heightened awareness of the process of cultural melding and cultural innovation has led, in turn, to a number of other important conceptual trends. For example, scholars of transnationalism and citizenship have turned increasing attention to indigenous migrants from Mexico, Central America, and the Andean region who grapple with the many ambiguities involved in the establishment of their own transnational circuits. Members of these populations, who often speak Spanish as a second language (if at all) and are racialized in specific ways within their own nations of origin, are compelled to negotiate entirely different systems of racial, cultural, national, and class hierarchies when they migrate. This process of negotiation often results in the formation of new subjectivities and panethnic senses of collective political identity that reflect their unique social positioning in a shifting borderlands matrix among competing national societies.²⁵

Scholars exploring gender and transnational networks and circuits among labor migrants have exposed similar contradictions, shedding light on both the micro and macro sociological levels. At the macro level, observers have noted a shift in gendered patterns of transnational labor recruitment. Migrant men were once recruited to do “men’s work” in building industrial infrastructure, with Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Irish, Italian, and Mexican men taking turns in systems of subordinated labor regimes in nineteenth and twentieth century America. The Bracero Program, which issued nearly 5 million temporary labor contracts to Mexican agricultural workers (and smaller numbers of workers originating in the Caribbean) in the United States between 1942 and 1964, and various guest worker programs in postwar Europe, which recruited Turkish, Algerian, and Italian men to rebuild cities and stoke factories in postwar Western Europe, are exemplars of these modern systems. These systems depended on state-enforced circular migration, and gave rise simultaneously to both transnational communities of men who were denied full membership and family life in the societies where they worked *and* to the development of permanent settlement and major demographic transitions.

Today, with the decline of Fordist manufacturing and the expansion of service sectors in postindustrial societies, new state systems and informal mechanisms facilitate the recruitment and absorption of women into service and social reproductive jobs such as nursing, care work, and cleaning jobs of all sorts around the globe.²⁶ New regional and transnational circuits have

emerged, and different state apparatus accompany these changes. Many of the newly industrializing Asian nations, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, as well as oil-rich Middle Eastern nations rely on state projects to recruit and control migrant domestic workers.²⁷ These systems allow women into intimate domestic spaces, yet deny their full integration and belonging in society, keeping them “perpetual foreigners.”²⁸ Meanwhile, the nations from which they originate seek to capture remittances, and hence they collaborate on contract labor programs that mandate the submission of transnational workers. Consequently, nations such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand actively promote transnational migration of women. In the Philippines, both the state and the media encourage “hero” veneration of the women who work abroad and the notion of the Philippines as “home,” thereby ensuring the migrant women’s participation in nation-building economic projects and discouraging new claims on the societies in which they work.²⁹

This scholarship is a good reminder that gender is implicated in migration processes not only at the level of family and households, but also in the state and political economy. In fact, in hindsight we can see that earlier scholarship on migration and gender focused almost exclusively on gender renegotiations in families and households, with debates centering on the relative empowerment of women and relative disenfranchisement of men and patriarchy brought about through migration.³⁰ These debates continue,³¹ but feminist scholarship of migration now recognizes other institutions and sites—jobs, workplaces, citizenship, sexuality, public opinion, immigration law, and the media to name a few—as important locations of inquiry into the intersections of gender and transnationalism.³² This scholarship on gender and transnationalism calls attention to the ways in which gender constructions inform new transnational occupations, such as cross-border couriers;³³ the nature of transnational family forms, such as transnational motherhood, fatherhood, and childhood;³⁴ the disciplining of female sexuality through transnational imaginaries;³⁵ and the ways in which new transnational hometown migrant associations can serve as spaces for “masculine gendered projects,” allowing migrant men to recapture lost social status.³⁶ Clearly, transnationalism has helped propel inquiries of gender and migration beyond the confines of family and households.

Of course, a paradigm shift of the magnitude that has occurred with the emergence of transnational scholarship has inevitably stimulated a critical backlash among observers who have questioned some of the larger claims made at the height of the first wave of this kind of scholarship and social critique. One of the earliest critics of the transnational turn was the social historian

Peter Kivisto, who cast a critical eye on the utility of transnationalism as a novel conceptual tool.³⁷ One of his main criticisms—and one that has since been articulated by others³⁸—centered on what he argued is the ahistoricism of early proponents of the concept. While acknowledging that rapid technological advances in communication, transportation, and relations of production have greatly facilitated potential migrants' ability to move between nations, Kivisto and critics like him insist that regional and transnational circuits had been a common feature of capitalist restructuring from the dawn of the industrial age. He thus tends to dismiss most of the claims of novelty made by the first wave of transnational scholarship in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Beyond this, Kivisto advances the case that although its initial proponents intended the model of transnationalism as a replacement for what they considered to be outmoded models of assimilation and cultural pluralism, he finds that the older models not only remain applicable to earlier periods of immigration history, but that they remain serviceable in providing convincing explanatory frameworks for contemporary patterns of migration and immigrant incorporation.³⁹ Moreover, Kivisto questions whether the manifestations of transnationalism that *are* observable (remittances, hometown associations, émigré political activity) are not simply common first-generation activities that are destined to wane with subsequent generations.

Other observers have been even more scathing in their criticism. Of this group, the most strident is probably UCLA sociologist Roger Waldinger. In a series of single- and coauthored articles,⁴⁰ Waldinger and his colleagues have gone so far as to dismiss the transnational turn in the social sciences as little more than an “intellectual fashion.”⁴¹ As with many critics of transnational frames of reference, Waldinger and his colleagues level particularly harsh criticism at those who either implicitly or explicitly see transnational phenomena as evidence of a weakening of the state, its institutions, and its functions in the modern world. To the contrary, they insist, virtually any action occurring transnationally *a priori* and necessarily “involves the *interaction* of migrants with states and civil society actors in both ending and receiving countries.”⁴² More recently, Waldinger has amplified his earlier critique. Noting the inconsistencies and vagueness among transnational scholars in defining both transnationalism as a social process and “transmigrants” as social actors, he reviews recent polling data among immigrants of different duration of residence to assess the empirical basis for such claims. Based on this review, Waldinger argues that over time, the coercive forces of state regulation of movement, combined with the forces of integration experienced by long-term immigrants,

makes transnationalism an ephemeral phenomenon actively practiced by only a small minority. In a ringing indictment of the assumptions he sees as undergirding transnational scholarship, he concludes: “given these myriad, contradictory pressures, many international migrants may engage in trans-state social action of one form or another, but ‘transnationalism’ is a relatively rare condition of being. . . . Likewise, ‘transmigrants,’ understood as a ‘class of persons’ generally do not exist.”⁴³

The fourteen essays in this special number of *American Quarterly* make important interventions in a number of the ongoing debates discussed above. We begin with a section on the state and citizenship. State power is seen most clearly in the restriction and disciplining of migrant subjects, so it is no accident that the essays gathered in this first section, *Citizenship and State Power*, examine the contemporary mechanisms through which immigrants’ exclusions and partial inclusions are regulated by agents and institutions of the state. In the first essay, Rachel Ida Buff analyzes the recent wave of deportation raids in the United States as part of a long legacy of racialized social control, one with strong echoes of deportation practices used against Mexicans and others during the height of the McCarthy era in the mid-twentieth century. Buff argues that while ostensibly designed in the post-9/11 era to regulate the threat of terrorist “others,” these new mechanisms employed by the aptly Orwellian named Homeland Security and ICE (the Bureau of Immigrant and Customs Enforcement) depend on the mobilization of terror through the threat and practice of deportation and forcible removal. Here, Buff encourages us to see deportation not as an exception, but rather “a social process constitutive of the nation across different periods.”

In the current period, we have also witnessed discontinuities in forms of restrictionism and exclusions. Here, Philip Kretsedemas provides an important examination of a relatively recent phenomenon in the United States, the rise of state and municipal efforts to control, restrict, and regulate migration. U.S. immigration law has always emphasized selective and racialized restrictionism, starting with the Page Law of 1875 and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (although it should be noted that regulation of immigration remained largely adjudicated by state and local officials up until this time). But these laws, and subsequent legislation, held immigration to be a federal matter handled at the national level. Now, something new is happening: local municipalities and states are trying to retake immigration control into their own hands. One of the earliest and perhaps the most infamous instances of this is California’s Proposition 187, an initiative passed by California voters in 1994 to deny

undocumented immigrants and their children access to education and health services. In 2007, at least 180 immigration control measures were passed by local government entities. Kretsedemas argues that these measures signal a new neoliberal governing strategy, one based on a type of nationalism that paradoxically ruptures the nation-state and traditional ways of thinking about national citizenship and sovereignty.

The current era of globalization and the consolidation of the European Union have allowed nations such as Ireland, Italy, and Spain to transform in a few decades from being nations of labor emigration to sites of labor immigration. These rapid transformations have prompted realignments in citizenship policies, and in their essay, authors JoAnne Mancini and Graham Finlay examine the Irish 2004 referendum to deny territorial birthright citizenship to newcomers. This revocation of *jus soli*, the authors argue, represents an unambiguously nondemocratic approach to citizenship, a model that should be consciously resisted in the United States and elsewhere. In fact, it replicates the old story of ambivalent migrant welcome—the recruitment and welcome of workers, but not members of the nation.

If, on one level, access to citizenship is about empowering oneself and one's community in a particular environment, then it is important to examine the agency and meanings with which migrant subjects approach the processes of naturalization. In his contribution, Adrián Félix conducts a political ethnography of a Southern California citizenship class. While Mexicans historically have had the lowest rates of naturalization in the United States, in recent years, rising rates of naturalization have prompted debates about what this trend signifies. Does it suggest assimilation and the adoption of American patriotism or, conversely, a certain defensiveness and strategy of self-protection in a hostile climate? While there are many motives for naturalization, Felix argues that a “reactive naturalization,” one that is rooted in both a hostile context of reception *and*, importantly, in a positive, proactive stance toward political enfranchisement, best characterizes contemporary processes. While naturalization is often thought of in individualistic fashion, the empirical work here draws attention to the collective effervescence, solidarity, and emotional work that is involved in this political project. Felix predicts that the acquisition of U.S. citizenship will foster immigrant political engagement on both sides of the border.

The next section brings different views to bear on the increasingly controversial and debated phenomenon of transnationalism. Indeed, the section's first article by Laura Briggs, Gladys McCormick, and J. T. Way grapples with

some of the central areas of debate we have touched upon earlier in this introduction. On one level a rumination on the uses and abuses of the concept of transnationalism, this piece is also an effort to take stock of the extremely unsettled historical moment scholars of transnational phenomena currently face. Seeking to develop what they unabashedly call a “politically left intellectual tradition,” the authors survey a variety of critical historiographical and theoretical interventions in this direction. In developing this alternative cartography, Briggs, McCormick, and Way juxtapose and link a number of recent intellectual trends that are often not explicitly compared. This is particularly true of their insightful discussion of “Third World” feminisms. They illustrate the many ways that critical interventions by feminist scholars of color have served as a tonic against some of the totalizing and often imperial tendencies of “white feminism,” while at the same time pointing to similar tendencies among certain contemporary transnational scholars. Turning finally to the sites of their own specific areas of research, the individual authors begin to map new ways to critique nationalism and the constantly morphing nation-state, while simultaneously helping to point to some potentially fruitful ways that thoughtful and disciplined transnational approaches might improve social, cultural, and political analysis.

Cultural critic Fatima El-Tayeb turns a similarly keen eye on the phenomenon of transnationalism, in this case by exploring the contradictions exposed by the consolidation of the European Union (EU). A meditation on what she sees as the intentional elisions involved in the emergence of this particular form of supranational political reorganization, El-Tayeb’s contribution shines a bright light on the EU’s consistent refusal to deal honestly with the permanent presence and significance of its racialized immigrant and “domestic minority” populations. She notes that just as the borders and passport controls between member states were relaxed within the boundaries of the EU, another comprehensive system of informal controls and limitations to social membership were erected, most visibly against Europe’s African and Muslim residents—and crucially, against their European-born children as well. Indeed, drawing obvious comparisons to the ways that many Asian and Latin American populations in the United States are inscribed with a kind of perpetual foreignness—regardless of the length of their actual residence in the country—El-Tayeb demonstrates the ways that the status of “migrant” has been an inherited label applied to the children born and raised in Europe and the grandchildren of people who had migrated to the continent many years before. In El-Tayeb’s analysis, this has led to the current impasse in the

European Union: while touted as a model of postnational cosmopolitan political organization, the EU is actually a site in which powerful and increasingly sophisticated new technologies of differentiation, ascription, and what she calls “externalization” are being applied to proscribed minorities. Thus, in her view, many of the mechanisms of social sorting and social control that had previously been perfected and imposed at the level of the nation-state are now being reproduced in powerful new forms on a supranational level.

Kornel Chang takes another critical tack on the history of transnationalism by examining the joint efforts by the governments of Canada and the United States to develop new regimes of immigration control in the Pacific Northwest in an era that previously had been characterized by more or less free-flowing labor migration. His careful case study of the steady hardening of the U.S.-Canadian border in the aftermath of passage of the first Chinese exclusion laws illustrates the ways in which competing interests—including labor recruiters, self-described “native” American and Canadian workers, South and East Asian migrants, and agents of both states—collided in the early years of the twentieth century. Based on close analysis of a wide range of primary sources, Chang’s study explicates the manner in which binational immigration policy, when combined with mutually increased border surveillance and enforcement efforts, transformed patterns of regional labor migration informally regulated by human agency and local markets into an early version of modern strategies for comprehensive state management, rationalization, and control of these processes.

How do migrant subjects and communities experience their liminal positions and the multiple forms of exclusion and partial inclusions? This next section, *Migrant Experiences*, addresses precisely this question. In the opening essay in the section, Sunaina Maira focuses on a group of South Asian Muslims that does not usually receive much public or scholarly attention: youth. Based on qualitative research conducted with South Asian Muslim teens in New England, Maira examines their experiences of displacement and belonging. In the post-9/11 climate of intensified hostility and scrutiny, these teens sought solace and strength by crafting deliberately transnational identities. Cultural citizenship, as expressed particularly through popular culture found in Bollywood films, South Asian television programs, and Hindi Web sites was important to them, as was a kind of “aspirational citizenship” as expressed through the desire for higher education and economic mobility.

In her contribution, Elaine A. Peña examines the aesthetic and political dimensions of transnational religiosity. Here, the focus is on the creation of a

transnational sacred space, where devotional performances of prayer, pilgrimage, dance, and hymns allow Mexican labor migrants from central Mexico to create a sense of “home” in Chicago, and yet simultaneously incorporate other Latino immigrants in their alternative religious spaces. Guadalupanos (worshippers of the Virgin of Guadalupe) create a Second Tepayac in Chicago, and in the process they construct new spaces that are at once transnational, multiethnic, spiritually powerful, and politically empowering.

Racial exclusions of migrants are widely acknowledged as a major promoter of transnationalism, but in the next essay in this section, historian Julie Weise examines Mexicans in the South during the early twentieth century and offers some surprising findings and analysis. Weise skillfully traces the ways Mexico’s racial politics—particularly the postrevolutionary ideology of *mestizaje* and cultural whitening—melded with New Orleans’ own complex racial traditions in the era of Jim Crow. She shows that in New Orleans and the Mississippi Delta, the black-white binary created incentives and opportunities for Mexicans to embrace a European-like white ethnic identity. Bolstered by class resources, Mexican migrants imported their own racial categorization and rhetoric of national homogeneity from Mexico, laying claim to white privilege, yet in the process, they appear to have dampened transnational ties and connections.

The final essay in this section focuses on the creation, maintenance, and legacies of illegal immigrant status. Here, Claudia Sadowski-Smith brings a much needed historical perspective to the phenomenon of unauthorized migration associated with economic globalization. She points out that although unsanctioned entry into the United States has long been coded as “Mexican,” the issue of illegality has antecedents that lie much earlier in the history of the Industrial Revolution and the worldwide economic restructuring that accompanied it. Like other recent historians of migration,⁴⁴ Sadowski-Smith perceptively notes that the passage of nearly any kind of law almost inevitably produces outlaws—and that this is particularly true in the case of immigration law and national border enforcement. She traces the process of the ever-widening net of criminalization to the first years of the nineteenth century, noting how successive groups of transmigrants were sanctioned or outlawed in turn. Sadowski-Smith’s historical analysis of what she calls “the spiral of illegality” provides an important contextual backdrop that adds to our understanding of what increasingly appears to be the capricious and arbitrary policing of national borders in an era of intensifying globalization.

In the final section of this special issue of the journal, *Writing Migration*, Sarika Chandra and Asha Nadkarni delve into different dimensions of liter-

ary representations of the entwined processes of imperialism, globalization, and transnational migration. In her contribution, Chandra sets out to wrestle with the complex positioning of “American literature” (or more accurately, “U.S. literature”) within a global frame. Chandra draws on some of the critical insights generated both by scholarship on transnationalism and the history of citizenship to cast a skeptical eye on the shifting intellectual and ideological contexts of the production of “American” literatures. Beyond this, she is centrally focused on the different ways discourses on “American ethnic identity” and “multiculturalism” have covertly helped to reproduce traditional U.S. “nationalist paradigms.” To do this, she revisits Julia Alvarez’s widely read *How the García Girls Lost Their Accent*. Chandra, while noting that Alvarez’s novel—and similar semi-autobiographical examples of this kind of ethnic literature—has often been portrayed as speaking against the grain of the presumed canon of American literature by allowing alternative voices to be heard, carefully demonstrates how this work, and the larger genre of which it is a part, often helps to reproduce the same kind of positivist/nationalist narrative it supposedly critiques. Adding her own critical reading to other thematic treatments of the novel, Chandra calls for a new level of criticism that takes into account the ways a long and continuing history of American imperialism and cultural domination of far distant lands colonize regional consciousness and often help to shape and subvert, if not completely predetermine, expressions of cultural difference and dissent both at “home” and “abroad.”

In her subtle and insightful essay, Asha Nadkarni provides a close critical reading of Katherine Mayo’s inflammatory polemic *Mother India* to analyze what the book and its author reveal about the relationship between Anglo-American imperialism, immigration, and projected anxieties about women’s sexuality in the first decades of the last century. Nadkarni carefully maps an extremely complex historical juncture in which growing opposition to British imperial rule in India among certain Progressive-era Americans uneasily coexisted with an even more powerful movement to exclude Indians—and all other potential Asian immigrants—both from entry into the United States and access to U.S. citizenship. Against this contradictory historical backdrop, Nadkarni explores the ingenious manner in which Mayo combined Progressive-era ideas about science, hygiene, and public health—as well as reactionary notions about the role of women and mothers in the reproduction of the nation—to build an argument that simultaneously advocated the continuation of stern imperial (remote) control over the Indian subcontinent as part of a larger policy of cultural containment that included shoring up U.S. borders

against Indian (and pan-Asian) contagion. Reminiscent of contemporary American imperial discourses that seek to influence political, economic, moral, and environmental issues abroad to the advantage of vested U.S. interests, Nadkarni concludes that Mayo was well ahead of her time in redefining empire as a strategy to “extend a strong arm overseas as a [nother] means of policing the boundaries of the nation at home.”

In the final contribution, Sasha Costanza-Chock calls our attention to the use of new technologies in the contemporary immigrant rights mobilizations. Reflecting on the backlash and the violence incurred at Los Angeles’ MacArthur Park during the one-year anniversary of the immigrant rights marches, where police brutality extended to journalists and was captured on popular videos and Internet sites, Costanza-Chock forces us to think about how the democratization of new technologies can serve as tools against repression. Although MySpace, YouTube, and text messaging were all widely envisioned as potential democratic communication breakthroughs, Costanza-Chock’s essay cautions community and scholar-activists to be aware not only of how such media are being “monetized,” but also how they can be used as tools of surveillance and political control. The trick, he suggests, is to utilize new communications technologies while remaining vigilant about the different uses to which they can be put. As the essays gathered in this volume suggest, there are many borders to cross in the new scholarship on migration and nation, and sometimes unexpected sites, like these new technologies, hold the promise of progressive transformation.

Notes

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