Immigrant America?

HOW FOREIGNNESS "SOLVES" DEMOCRACY'S PROBLEMS

Bonnie Honig

> Would it still make sense to speak of democracy when it would no longer be a question . . . of country, nation, even of state or citizen?
> —Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*

> What is a foreigner? A man who makes you think you are at home.
> —Edmond Jabès, *A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Book*

Against the background of California's Proposition 187 and new U.S. federal legislation limiting the rights and benefits of legal and illegal immigrants, Americans on both the Right and the Left have sought to recover the iconic immigrant who once helped build this nation and whose heirs might contribute to the national future. Both political theorists and activists have responded to renewed anti-immigrant sentiment by stressing the gifts that foreigners have to offer receiving regimes.[1] Their efforts have given new life to the myth of an immigrant America. Unfortunately, however, because their efforts are all fundamentally nationalist, their xenophilic embrace of foreigners tends also to feed and not only to combat the xenophobia they deplore.[2]

The myth of an immigrant America depicts the foreigner as a supplement to the nation, an agent of national reenchantment that might rescue the regime from corruption and return it to its first principles, whether capitalist, communal/familial, or consensual.[3] In the capitalist version of the myth, the immigrant functions to reassure workers of the possibility of upward mobility in an economy that rarely delivers on that promise, while also disciplining the native-born poor, domestic minorities, and unsuccessful foreign laborers into believing that the economy fairly rewards dedication and hard work.[4]

The communitarian immigrant responds to the dissolution of family and community ties or the prevention of community formation that results in large part from a capitalist economy's unresisted need for a mobile labor force. Periodic infusions of community by way of immigration are said to soften the alienating effects of capitalism's mobilities and of the American liberal individualism that ease their way.

Still others look hopefully to immigrants to restore traditional patriarchal family arrangements that have been variously attenuated by capitalist mobility and materialism, liberal individualism, and feminism. The patri-

Social Text 56, Vol. 16, No. 3, Fall 1998.

archal immigrant models proper gender roles and relations for a nation that has lost its sexual bearings.

Finally, many liberals depict immigrants as the sole bearers of a consent that is the phantom ground of American liberal democracy. The liberal consenting immigrant addresses the need of a disaffected citizenry to experience its regime as choice worthy, to see it through the eyes of still enchanted newcomers whose choice to come here also just happens to reenact liberalism's fictive foundation in an act of individual consent. Simultaneously, the immigrant's decision to come here is seen as living proof of the supposed universality of America's liberal democratic principles.

These reliances on a foreigner to return a regime to itself—to its origins (whether entrepreneurial, communal, familial, consensual, or universal)—are not unique to American political culture. From the Biblical heroine Ruth, the Moabite, to the lawgiver of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract*, aliens throughout Western culture have been depicted not only as the *causes* but also (though perhaps less famously) as the *cures* of political alienation and corruption.[5] The myth of an immigrant America replays this theme in a typically gargantuan way. It recuperates foreignness en masse for a national project.

The myth of an immigrant America draws on and shores up the popular exceptionalist belief that America is a distinctively consent-based regime, founded on choice rather than inheritance, on civic rather than ethnic ties. The exceptionalists' America is anchored by rational, voluntarist faith in a creed, not by ascriptive bloodlines; by individualism, not organicism; by mobility, not landedness.[6] The people who live here are people who once chose to come here, and, in this, America is supposedly unique. In short, the exceptionalist account normatively privileges one particular trajectory to citizenship: from immigrant to ethnic to citizen.

The exceptionalist account captures something about American democracy while also missing a great deal. American democracy is founded not only on immigration but also on conquest (Native Americans), slavery (the forced importation of African slave labor), and, in the postfounding era, on expansion (Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, and so on), annexation (French settlements in Illinois, St. Louis, and New Orleans as well as a significant Spanish-speaking population in the Southwest as a result of the war with Mexico), and more slavery. These other foundings are often obscured by the hegemonic myth of an immigrant America. In Charleston, South Carolina, for example, a tourist pamphlet announces that Sullivan Island, off the coast of the city, is "America's Ellis Island for Black people."[7]

In its favor, we might say that at least the myth generates an open and inclusive tolerance of diverse immigrants. But things are not so simple. In fact, the myth generates a sense of quite *anxious* dependence on the kind-

ness of strangers. The foreigners whose immigrations to the United States daily reinstall the regime's most beloved self-images are also looked on as threats to the regime. And this is no accident.

The play of xenophobia and xenophilia that marks American political culture is not caused simply by periodic power changes from nativists to inclusionists, as Michael Walzer and Rogers Smith both suggest.[8] Nor is it merely a sign of changing economic "realities," from expanding to shrinking labor needs. These may be part of the story, but there is a deeper logic at work here. In the various versions of the myth of an immigrant America, the immigrant's *foreignness* positions him or her to enhance or reinvigorate the national democracy: our faith in a just economy, our notions of community or family, our consent-based sense of legitimacy, and our voluntarist vigor are so moribund that only a foreigner could revive them. But the dream of a national home, helped along by the symbolic foreigner, in turn animates a suspicion of immigrant foreignness at the same time. "Their" admirable hard work and boundless acquisition put "us" out of jobs. "Their" good communities, admired by some, look like ethnic enclaves to others. "Their" voluntarist embrace of America reaffirms but also endangers "our" way of life. The foreigner who shores up and reinvigorates the regime also unsettles it at the same time. *Nationalist xenophilia tends to feed and (re)produce nationalist xenophobia as its partner.* Since the presumed test of both a good and a bad foreigner is the measure of his or her contribution to the restoration of the nation rather than, say, to the nation's transformation or attenuation, the myth of an immigrant America serves to secure the very identification of democracy with the nation-state that widespread immigration might otherwise usefully call into question.

In the hope of generating such a useful questioning, I analyze the capitalist, communitarian, familial, and liberal versions of the myth of an immigrant America with four questions in mind: (1) What forms of political and social life and which citizen-subjects are normatively privileged by this mythic narrative of American citizenship? (2) How is the normative character of democratic citizenship served, undermined, or exposed by legislation, such as Proposition 187, that (to put it mildly) heightens the incentives to citizenship? (3) Is democracy well- or ill-served by the myth of an immigrant America? (4) Are there any alternative, also normative but less nationalist and more cosmopolitan, uses to which the myth of an immigrant America might be put in a counterpolitics of foreignness?

This last question is particularly pressing because the success of the myth of an immigrant America in setting the thoroughly nationalist terms of the contemporary immigration debate in the United States suggests that those who look to the mere fact of heightened migration as a bellwether of a new, *post*national order are falsely confident.[9] If left unchal-

lenged, national imaginations (and the U.S. national imagination in particular) are creative enough and well-funded enough to recuperate symbolic immigrant energies for national projects, while also often mistreating actual immigrants. Mere facts—the mere fact of heightened migration—cannot be counted on to do the world-building work of politics.

Immigrant Futures: Class Mobility as American Citizenship

It is by now commonplace to hear the capitalist success of (a small minority of) immigrant and ethnic groups explained in terms of their immigrant drive (often said to be lacking in domestic minorities) and in terms of their large extended families and communities (which provide cheap labor and pool their resources). What is valued here are the resources available to be sacrificed for financial success, not the affective family or community relations themselves or their potential to serve as sites of associational political power.[10]

The capitalist immigrant helps keep the American Dream alive, upholding popular beliefs in a meritocratic economy in a time of downward mobility for most Americans of all races and origins. If the immigrant can do it, starting with nothing and not knowing the language, surely anyone can. At the same time, however, the use of foreignness to supplement the national economy and discipline the domestic poor engenders resentment of foreigners for competing with the native born for scarce resources. Because the capitalist foreigner is depicted as someone who is interested only in material things, he or she quickly turns from someone who has something to offer us into someone who only wants to take things from us.[11] The nationalist, xenophilic deployment of the foreigner to model the American Dream itself helps to generate these xenophobic reactions.

The effects on American democracy of the capitalist version of the myth of an immigrant America are particularly unwelcome. The myth undermines potential interethnic and transnational coalitions of labor and celebrates radical inequalities that are in deep tension with democratic citizenship. The new model minorities do not just "make it"; they become outlandishly wealthy. This version of the myth identifies citizenship with materialism, capitalist production, and consumption. The foreigners depicted here are not politically engaged. They are too busy living the American (capitalist) Dream.

Hence the tone of surprise governing a 1996 *New York Times* article on the politicization of Asian Americans: "Marty Shih is the kind of person who has earned Asian Americans the widespread characterization as

the model minority," writes Steven A. Holmes, perversely assigning to Mr. Shih the responsibility for the media's label. In just eighteen years, Mr. Shih, "through grit and hard work," turned the $500 with which he arrived in America into a $40 million business. "But Mr. Shih's rags-to-riches story *took an unusual path* last month when he established the Asian American Association to, among other things, campaign against legislation that would drastically reduce the levels of legal immigration, an issue that has galvanized Asian Americans like no other in recent times."[12]

The "usual" trajectory of Asian American incorporation is commercial, not political. Immigrants, especially America's model minorities, stay away from politics. But do they? Completely absent from this now conventional picture are noncitizen or new-citizen political actors as diverse as the Haymarket activists (imprisoned or deported), Nicola Sacco and Bartolemo Vanzetti (executed), Harry Bridges (leader of the 1934 San Francisco general strike who fought deportation efforts in Court and won),[13] Emma Goldman (expelled), Harry Wu, and a whole slew of others involved in contemporary labor, local, and school politics, from undocumented workers in southern California active in unionization efforts to Cambodians agitating for decent public schooling for their children in Lowell, Massachusetts, from Chinese locals involved in "educational struggles" in San Francisco to aliens stumping for local candidates in New York right now.[14]

Contemporary depictions of immigrants as concerned only with material acquisition and not with empowered democratic agency are not simply misleading. Worse yet, they are often *enforced* in response to immigrants who become politicized enough to trouble this dominant normative image of quiescence. California's Proposition 187 is a good example. Its goal is ostensibly to diminish the numbers of (il)legal immigrants in the state, but the structural incentives to migrate—both the pushes and the pulls—still far outweigh even the new costs. So no more than a small number, if that, will be deterred. Given the local economy's dependence on foreign labor, deterrence cannot, in any case, have been the intended effect. Instead, the effect of 187 is to recriminalize the alien population and to heighten the costs of alien visibility. If implemented—and even if not—187 will likely make many undocumented workers (for a time) more politically quiescent and compliant. In short, the effect and likely goal of Proposition 187 are not to prevent illegal immigration but to render aliens politically invisible, to quash their potential power as democratic actors, labor organizers, and community activists. Once that is accomplished, the tone of surprise with which immigrant political action is invariably met these days would finally be warranted.

The effect and likely goal of Proposition 187 are not to prevent illegal immigration but to render aliens politically invisible, to quash their potential power... Once that is accomplished, the tone of surprise with which immigrant political action is invariably met these days would finally be warranted.

Michael Walzer's communitarian version of the myth of an immigrant America is tailored to respond to the private-realm withdrawalism wrongly valorized by the capitalist version of the myth. Walzer argues that, given the success of the capitalist economy and America's liberal ideology in individuating, uprooting, and alienating most of the regime's members, only newcomers can be counted on to have and to foster the social, civic, and familial ties that social democracy presupposes. For Walzer, then, the model immigrant is not the capitalist overachiever but the family member who cares for his own and builds community institutions. The communitarian immigrant imports a form of citizenship that liberal capitalist America is always in danger of losing or consuming.

In *What It Means to Be an American*, Walzer observes that "citizens are not effective one by one but only when they are bound together in states or freely associated in parties, interest groups, or social movements. And culture is not sustained by private men and women but by families, nations, and communities of faith."[15] The health and vigor of social democratic pluralism depends on new waves of immigration because the newest hyphenates are the most zealous in their community-sustaining activities.[16] But activists get battle fatigue. Over time, community members get distracted by private concerns and withdraw their energies from each other and from public concerns. The black feminist activist Bernice Johnson Reagon responds to these inevitabilities with the instruction to keep our eyes on the oldest activists, whose commitments have somehow endured.[17] Walzer's counsel is to focus on the newest comers: "continued large-scale immigration . . . creat[es] new groups of hyphenate Americans and encourag[es] revivalism among activists and believers in the old groups."[18]

Walzer's immigrants import the family and community ties that life in capitalist America destroys. They tend to their own and—with federal government help in the way of funding and support for continued immigration—they are empowered to build and run much-needed institutions.[19] Walzer's America is dotted by Jewish hospitals, Catholic schools, and Muslim old-age homes. If ethnic communities are allowed to deteriorate, or if they are prevented from forming (by way of enforced assimilation, lack of funds, or the elimination of immigration), the basic institutions of American social democracy will vanish as well.

Walzer's image of the immigrant as, effectively, a refounder of American civil society is powerful; its worthy aim is to generate a tolerance and magnanimity toward newcomers that is all too often absent from the American political landscape. But the very same organic communities that Walzer sees as so contributive to the national democracy are seen by

others, such as Arthur Schlesinger Jr., as threatening enclaves that reject American values even while living in our midst. Positioned as the bearers of a "communitarian corrective" to American liberal capitalism, these immigrant communities attract not only gratitude but also, inevitably, suspicion.[20] The communitarian xenophilic deployment of foreignness *on behalf of a national project* itself plays into the hands of, and indeed helps to feed, this xenophobic response.

That xenophobic response may in fact be amplified by the other gift borne by Walzer's immigrants. For Walzer, the supplement of immigrant foreignness perpetually resecures the character of American liberal democracy as thinly rather than zealously patriotic. American national affect consists of little more than "the flag and the pledge" *because* it is a nation of immigrants, Walzer says. "However grateful they are for this new place, [immigrants] still remember the old places."[21] "This is not Europe; we are a society of immigrants, and the experience of leaving a homeland and coming to this new place is an *almost* universal 'American' experience. It should be celebrated."[22]

However, the celebration of America's "almost" universal immigrant experience does not simply limit American nationalism; it is also a vehicle of it. The myth of an immigrant America is a nationalist narrative of choiceworthiness and superiority. And as Walzer's self-conscious "almost" indicates, the universalization of America's immigrant "experience" has effects on those minorities whose membership in the regime does not map on to the immigrant trajectory to citizenship normatively privileged by Walzer.

In particular, when landed and racial minorities "still remember the old places," the political import of their memory is quite different from the nostalgic yearnings of Walzer's immigrants. Unlike America's traditional ethnic groups, some blacks, Native Americans, and Hispanics have legitimate land-based claims. Unlike America's traditional ethnics, these groups have sometimes sought more than mere recognition. Contra Walzer who says this never happens, these groups have at times sought secession, or even self-government.[23] Their demands might divide or fragment the nation-state rather than reanimate it from below. It is no accident that these forms of political activism are obscured by Walzer's redeployment of the myth of an immigrant America.[24] For Walzer, as for many on the Left, the nation-state must be protected from such divisive claims because it is the most likely organizing force of any social democratic politics.

Landed and racial minorities are not the only ones whose claims are marginalized by Walzer's account, however. Also obscured from view are the many nonethnic institutions for health, education, and welfare now available in the United States thanks to groups like Planned Parenthood,

ACT UP, and the Gay Men's Health Crisis, among many others. Why aren't the rather substantial democratic energies of these groups also granted a privileged place in Walzer's immigrant-invigorated civil society? If "citizens are not effective one by one but only when they are bound together in states or freely associated in parties, interest groups, or social movements," why not include as many groups as possible, as long as those groups contribute to the furtherance of social democratic projects?

Walzer's broad commitment to a vigorous civil society suggests he does support such groups. If he does not mention them explicitly, that may be because gay, lesbian, and feminist movements highlight the formation of secondary associations not just out of new migrations (Walzer's preferred source in the U.S. case) but also (as in feminisms or gay rights movements, for example) out of *injuries* wrought by established, traditional groups.[25] Feminists, gays, and lesbians establish alternative institutional resources because their needs are not met and their ways of life are often not tolerated by the ethnic and civic communities with which they might otherwise identify. In short, the autonomy of these extraethnic groups is itself a *symptom* of the sometime injustices of the various immigrant groups whose energies so animate Walzer's civil society.

Others, more socially conservative than Walzer, share his concern about the rootlessness and mobility of late modern life, but they associate these explicitly with the loss of the very traditional family and community structures against which feminist and gay and lesbian groups often define themselves. For many pro-immigration conservatives, immigrants import the roles and expectations that maintain traditional, patriarchal structures. Here, *new immigrants are mobilized symbolically to renormalize the native-born into traditional heterosexual gender roles, while "we" supposedly normalize "them" into a new national citizenship*. This dynamic is powerfully illustrated in a recent, popular fable of immigration and national renewal: the Australian film, *Strictly Ballroom*.

Foreign Brides, Family Ties, and New-World Masculinity

Strictly Ballroom (directed by Baz Luhrmann, 1992), a campy, comic Australian fable of immigration and national renewal, tells the story of an atrophied community of ballroom dancers saved from corruption, inauthenticity, and exhaustion by Fran, a Spanish immigrant, who brings new life and virtue to their practices and new energy to their flamenco. Initially, Fran seeks assimilation. She assiduously studies the forced steps that are the unquestioned ground on which the community's dancers are judged. But her quest for inclusion is bound to fail. She has no connections in this corrupt community in which connections are necessary for success and

she has little to recommend her. Dancing "their" steps, she is awkward. She is also unattractive, weighed down by the thick glasses that female heroines in film have invariably removed to reveal a stunning but somehow hitherto unsuspected beauty.

There is an opening for her, however. The powdery white, desiccated community is not only corrupt but also riven. One of its members, their star dancer, is a renegade who dares to depart from the community's fetishized steps. When Scott does his own thing Fran is thrilled and impressed, but the community is aghast. From their perspective, he is too undisciplined, too wild. His dance seems to have no structure. The choice seems to be between the structure and discipline of a corrupt and unjust but orderly and established community and a radical individualism that is irresponsible, chaotic, and nihilistic.[26] (In short, the film replays the most caricatured versions of contemporary political theory's liberal-communitarian debate.)

Scott's free dance style represents a self-seeking individualism that is symptomatic of the community's larger corruptions. Scott's mother, a disciplinary agent who consistently tries to renormalize him into the extant ballroom community, herself acts as a self-seeking individualist: she is cheating on Scott's father, having an affair with an oily man of superior standing in the dance community.

These corruptions are healed by the foreigner, Fran, and her family. Scott's individualism is tamed and structured by Fran's father, an old-world patriarch, a dark Spanish immigrant who gives the couple lessons in authentic flamenco dancing.[27] (Fran's father used to dance with her mother[land], but his partner has since passed away.) At the same time, Fran's father teaches the youths two other lessons: his daughter learns to affirm her roots rather than deny them and Scott learns that his dance (and life) choices are not exhausted by the options of the "strictly ballroom" community versus a renegade individualism. In the authentic flamenco of this immigrant community, Scott finds a Walzerian resource that provides his innovative dance (and his life) with the structure and energy he craves but not the chaotic individualism his home community fears.

At the final dance contest, Scott and Fran dance an energized and innovative flamenco that is not undisciplined and is capable, therefore, of finally felling the corrupt leaders of the strictly ballroom community, whose lies and deceits are exposed. Scott's (Australian) individualism, now moderated and anchored by Fran's emigrée authenticity and familial bonds, refounds the dance community, rescuing it from its pallid fetishisms and restoring to it its original energy and its founding principles of elegance, honesty, creativity, and fairness.[28]

Fran functions as the communitarian/ethnic corrective of Scott's love-

less individualism. But the film features a second supplementary relation as well: Fran's father, an empowered father figure and a representative of the old patriarchal order, takes the place of Scott's father, a hopelessly henpecked, feeble, and feminized father who is utterly powerless to help his troubled son. This foster-fathering does not only benefit Scott. It also frees Scott's father from his dominating, castrating wife. The energies unleashed by these foreigners and, in particular, the example of Fran's old-world father benefit Scott's father: they make a man out of him.

In short, the supplement of foreignness works on at least two registers in *Strictly Ballroom*. Through the agency of foreignness, proper virtue is restored to the social world of the ballroom while proper order is restored to the patriarchal family at Scott's house. With the proper containment of the feminine (in the form of Scott's outrageously ambitious mother), Scott's father can be a father again, and the world is made safe for the (re)emergence of an Australian masculinity from within the confines of the feminized, suburban household. The agents of all this are the foreigners who import proper masculinity and femininity to a place that has lost its gender bearings. That is to say, *Strictly Ballroom* replays the classical republican identifications of corruption with female ambition and male emasculation and of refounding with a return to proper gender identities and roles.[29]

But the importation of a real masculinity from elsewhere does not only save Australian masculinity. It also stands as a perpetual reminder of the inadequacy of Australian masculinity. By comparison with Fran's father, who personifies an authentic, old-world masculinity, Australian masculinity will always be a mere copy. And yet, without Fran's father, Australian masculinity will continue to be consumed by the feminized household of suburbia. There is no way out of this quandary.

Perhaps the point is that Australian masculinity needs not just the supplement of Fran's father but also that of Fran herself, who is enough of an old-world woman to provide Scott in marriage and in dance with the sort of adoring feminine prop that proper masculinity requires. The young couple's marriage, the film implies, will be different from Scott's parents' because his immigrant wife comes from a family that values family more than the instrumental goods and status that led Scott's mother astray.

The desire for an old-world wife to prop up new-world masculinity and restore the patriarchal family is evident not only in film. These days the demand is met (and no doubt fed) by companies such as Scanna International Worldwide Introductions, which "introduces" American men to foreign women. As one of its clients, David Davidson of Fairlawn, Ohio, explains, "There's an exodus of men leaving this country to find wives. . . . They're looking for women with traditional values like we had

40 years ago. They're finding Russian women have those values. Family comes first for them—not work or the Mercedes or the bank account." Of his own Russian fiancée, Davidson says, "She is the most feminine young woman that I've been in the company of. She knows how to be a lady."[30]

Davidson's confident opposition between family values and rank materialism is called into question by another American man interviewed for the same article: "In one form or another [American men] are sick and tired of the princess attitude of American women. . . . Russian women are old-fashioned. . . . Their husband and family come first." But he added that "Russian women see marriage to U.S. men as a way to improve their impoverished lives."

The existence of a foreign bride *trade* already suggests that—the protests of American men notwithstanding—these marriages are not simply romantic. Indeed, the trade highlights the nature of marriage in general as not only an institutionalized form of heterosexual intimacy but also a conventional site at which all sorts of goods and services are exchanged, including citizenship, legal residence status, money, and sex.[31] Moreover, the fact that American, Japanese, Taiwanese, and Arabic men locate a real femininity in places as diverse as Russia, Thailand, and the Philippines suggests that none of these places is a wellspring of true femininity. Rather, the foreignness of the imported brides eroticizes inequality and functions to produce a set of relations that are available to be (mis)read as femininity.[32] This accounts for the fact that, somehow, the purchase of a foreign bride—for $7,500 and a residency permit—is expected to put the romance back into an institution that is losing its charm.

A foreign bride's perceived family priorities may be less a matter of feminine affect than of necessity. As a foreigner, the foreign bride is isolated from others and dependent on her husband. Ignorant of local customs and languages, she is uncertain. Her subject position mimes that of the traditional, feminine wife, but foreignness abets or trumps femininity as the real and reliable cause of her dependence and acceptance, her so-called family values. What is labeled *feminine* is the foreign bride's would-be powerlessness, her confined agency, and her limited alternatives. That perceived powerlessness is why the husbands, who believe that their foreign wives are feminine and unmaterialistic, are undisturbed by the knowledge that these women—who are seeking to escape poverty, after all—are actually quite interested in the very thing to which they are supposed to be indifferent: the size of their husbands' proverbial "bank account." What is most important is not finally whether the woman is interested in money but whether she has the power to pursue that interest by way of employment for herself or ambition on her husband's behalf.

The xenophilic embrace of foreignness to reenchant traditional family

structures generates two xenophobic responses. Increasingly, the popular press has been publishing stories of foreign brides who turn out to have been using the husbands who sponsored their entry into the United States. Instead of self-sacrificing caregivers, these women are said to be untrustworthy takers. They cheat their husbands, rob them, and leave them. More fundamentally, they not only wrong their husbands, they cheapen the institution of marriage by treating it instrumentally. Congress is investigating. So is the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

For the INS, a loveless marriage is doubly dangerous because it disenchants two of the nation's most beloved institutions: marriage, which foreign brides are supposed to help prop up, and citizenship, which is supposedly damaged when immigrants acquire it improperly.[33] The affective health of both institutions depends on immigrants being attracted to them for the sake of love and devotion, not money or other worldly goods.

The second xenophobic response generated by this particular xenophilia is audible in my own text. Here patriarchal immigrants are seen as threats to the rough (very rough) gender equalities that are American liberal democracy's ambiguous achievement.[34] The xenophilic deployment of foreignness on behalf of traditional family structures is particularly troublesome for social democrats because the foreign bride trade promises to resecure and revalorize female powerlessness and male power. The xenophilic deployment of foreignness to solve the problems of gender politics generates these xenophobic responses. This is what happens when foreigners are pressed into service on behalf of institutions—capitalism, community, family—that seem incapable of sustaining themselves. The deployment of foreignness as a restorative supplement itself positions foreigners also as the original cause of the very institutional illness they are supposed to be curing. Where foreign women are figured as exemplary wives who can save the institution of romantic marriage, they are also set up as betrayers of that and other ideals, the self-interested corrupters of increasingly devalued institutions whose downfall can now be safely attributed to the institutions' abuse at the hands of precisely those outsiders to whom we looked for salvation.

Dramatizing Consent: The Universal Charms of American Democracy

The demand that foreign women bring feminine romance to American marriages is paralleled by the demand that immigrants romance America and help to reenchant another institution that many feel is in danger of losing its affective charms: citizenship. The fourth and final redeployment of the myth of an immigrant America, the liberal version, looks to

immigrants to reperform the social contract by naturalizing to citizenship. In the case of the United States, this means (re)enacting for established citizens the otherwise too abstract universalism of America's democratic constitutionalism.[35]

Immigrants do not only testify to the universality of American constitutional principles. They are also the only Americans who actually *consent* explicitly to the regime. Since liberal democracies draw their legitimacy from their consent base, the failure of the native-born to consent explicitly seems to pose a deep problem for liberal democracies. John Locke tried to solve the problem with the device of tacit consent, which was rightly attacked by David Hume. More recently, others, such as Peter Schuck and Rogers Smith, have sought instead to provide heightened opportunities for the native-born to consent explicitly.

Immigrants do not only testify to the universality of American constitutional principles. They are also the only Americans who actually *consent* explicitly to the regime.

In *Citizenship without Consent: Illegal Aliens in the American Polity*, Schuck and Smith argue that native-born citizens should be offered the opportunity to self-expatriate at the age of majority.[36] Although a right of expatriation now exists, it is neither widely known nor easy to exercise. Schuck and Smith favor routinizing the choice (by way of automatic mailings to native-born citizens at the age of majority) and lowering the costs (citizens might choose permanent resident status, not necessarily emigration).[37] Why make these changes? The authors argue that "in a polity in which actual consent is expressed symbolically only through periodic elections, these proposals can impart a new social meaning and integrity to the tacit consent that must suffice during the intervening periods."[38]

It is possible that these changes may heighten consent for the native-born and help relegitimate the liberal state, as Schuck and Smith suggest.[39] But consenting by mail (an action, typically liberal, taken in private) is not likely ever to have the same affective symbolic-cultural effect as the public scene it is intended to mime: that of new citizens taking the oath of citizenship. As Sanford Levinson suggests, immigrant naturalization ceremonies function as a kind of "national liturgy."[40] With a hope, a prayer, and an oath, the gap of consent is filled. Immigrant naturalization ceremonies—frequently publicized on the front pages of the nation's newspapers—testify to the fundamental consent-worthiness of the regime by symbolically representing the consent that is effectively unattainable for native-born citizens of a liberal regime. And new citizen oath-takers act as consenters by proxy, giving voice to the (supposed) silent, tacit consent of the native-born.

And yet there is something odd about thinking that immigrants can fill the gap of consent when they are so often infantilized (they can't speak English, they need help) and seen as desperate.[41] How could such (symbolic) persons be positioned to enact the mature, balanced, and reasonable reflection of rational consent? If the immigrant is desperate, infantile,

or "too foreign," his speech act is likely to misfire (and look like parody to the native-born).

Liberals who want immigrants to help solve liberal democracy's legitimation problem are pressed by their own demands to distinguish (impossibly) between sincere and fraudulent speech acts, admirable immigrant idealism, and rough practicality.[42] Perhaps it is the inaccessibility of immigrant intentions that drives the recent obsession with the quite literal performance of the speech act of citizenship: as of 1 April 1997, elderly or mentally ill immigrants who cannot utter the words of the citizenship oath can no longer become citizens.

The intractability of these problems (are the naturalizing immigrants sincere or are they just using us?) suggests that if immigrants and their swearing-in ceremonies are doing some symbolic-cultural-political work, that work is not, after all, the simple provision of consent by proxy. What else might it be?

At a deeper level, the rite of naturalization does something more important than just reenact consent: it reperforms the origin of the regime *as* an act of consent. The often disseminated spectacle of new citizens taking the oath of citizenship—a scene in which the new citizen and the state embrace each other in an act of speech—recenters the regime on its fictive foundation of voluntarist consent. It reenacts the regime's ideologically approved origins and obscures the nonconsensual and ascriptive bases and present-day practices of American democracy. The broadcasting (on television, in the nation's newspapers) of this verbal, visible path to citizenship remarginalizes the varied, often violent sources of the republic (slavery, conquests, appropriations, and constitutional conventions), and it recenters the regime on a voluntarism that most citizens and residents never experience directly. The scene may even excite in some citizens a sympathetic denaturalization (just as many married couples effectively renew their vows when they go to other people's weddings).

But this (symbolic) "solution" to the problem of consent places the legitimacy of the regime (and its claimed universality as a republic or a democracy) in the hands of foreigners who may or may not close the gap of consent for "us." This is a problem because many newcomers do not satisfy the national need to be chosen—many do not seek citizenship. And those who do naturalize do not simply solve the legitimacy problem; they also inadvertently highlight it by simultaneously calling attention to the fact that most American citizens never consent to the regime. (The dynamic is the same as the one in *Strictly Ballroom*, where Australian masculinity was both refurbished and perpetually undone by the importation of masculinity from the Old World.)

In any case, even (or especially) when immigrants do prop up the national fantasy of consent-worthiness, the regime's fundamental (unac-

knowledged) dependence on foreigners produces a certain anxiety, which finds expression in a displaced anxiety about foreigners' dependence on us (an anxiety that, of course, erases the regime's dependence on foreignness). Thus, it comes as no surprise that in Schuck and Smith's book (and in American political culture more generally) the good, consenting immigrant, the model of proper, consensual American citizenship, is shadowed by the bad immigrant, the illegal alien who undermines consent in two ways: he or she never consents to American laws, and "we" never consent to his or her presence on "our" territory. Schuck and Smith's illegal alien takes things from us and has nothing to offer in return. He or she takes up residence without permission; he or she is interested in social welfare state membership (the proverbial bank account), not citizenship (except for instrumental purposes having to do with securing access to social welfare goods); he or she takes services without payment (the example repeatedly invoked is that of illegal aliens' unpaid maternity bills at L.A. hospitals). In short, the "illegal" in Schuck and Smith's text slides from being a person defined by a juridical status that positions him or her as always already in violation of the (immigration) law to being a daily lawbreaker.

In *Citizenship without Consent* (a book widely touted at the 1996 Republican convention), the illegal alien's threat to consent is crystallized most vividly by their American-born children (hence, perhaps, the authors' [displaced] obsession with unpaid maternity bills). Schuck and Smith argue, against a century of Supreme Court decisions, that American-born children of illegals have no constitutional right to citizenship. The Fourteenth Amendment applies to people born in the "jurisdiction" of the United States. In the United States without the approval of the state or the consent of its citizens, illegal aliens are on the territory of the United States but not in its jurisdiction.[43] This does not mean that their children should not receive birthright citizenship. It simply means that that right is not constitutionally entrenched and that the decision about whether or not to grant birthright citizenship to the children of illegal aliens is available for democratic (popular and legislative) debate and consent.[44]

The rhetorical weight of the rest of the book, however, is on the side of excluding children of the undocumented from birthright citizenship.[45] For Schuck and Smith, the goal is to revalue American citizenship to (re)gain control over its distribution.[46] However, it is misleading to frame the issue in terms of consent and to depict the state as the nonconsenting victim of wayward migrants. Contra Schuck and Smith, it is not at all clear that the state does *not* consent to the presence on its territory of large numbers of illegal immigrants. Illegal migration is not only combated by the state; it is also simultaneously enabled, covertly courted, often man-

aged, and certainly tolerated by it.[47] Established citizens profit from the subsidies that cheap migrant labor provides to their childcare costs and food prices.[48]

More to the point, the liberal xenophilic deployment of the foreigner as the truest citizen (because the only truly consenting one) actually feeds the xenophobic backlash against the nonconsenting immigrant—the illegal alien—to whom we supposedly do not consent and who does not consent to us.[49] *If this analysis is correct, then the iconic good immigrant who upholds American liberal democracy is not accidentally or coincidentally partnered with the iconic bad immigrant who threatens to tear it down.* Popular ambivalences about foreignness are not—as Rogers Smith has argued elsewhere—the product of distinct, nativist ideologies that are unconnected in any deep or significant way to American liberal democracy.[50] The copresence in American political culture of xenophilia and xenophobia comes right out of America's fundamental liberal commitments, which map a normatively and (still) materially privileged national citizenship onto an idealized immigrant trajectory to membership. This means that the undecidability of foreignness—the depiction of foreigners as good and bad for the nation—is part of the logic of liberal, national consent which both produces and denies a fundamental dependence on foreigners who are positioned symbolically so that they must and yet finally cannot fill the gaps of consent and legitimacy for us.[51]

The liberal xenophilic deployment of the foreigner as the truest citizen (because the only truly consenting one) actually feeds the xenophobic backlash against the nonconsenting immigrant—the illegal alien—to whom we supposedly do not consent and who does not consent to us.

But xenophobia is not the only problem here. The iconic bad immigrant is also problematic because he or she distracts attention from democracy's real problems.[52] Schuck and Smith's deployment of the figure of the illegal exceeds their apparent intent and highlights a different, more tenacious corruption than that of "illegal aliens in the polity"—that of the withdrawal of most American citizens and residents from political life.[53] The illegal imagined by Schuck and Smith turns out to stand for the much rehearsed corruption of American citizenship from an active liberal voluntarism to a nonconsenting, passive, social welfare consumerism in which good citizens (givers) have been replaced by self-interested maximizers and free riders (takers). No more than a minority of American citizens vote in American elections; fewer still involve themselves directly in politics. Schuck and Smith externalize these corruptions of American democratic citizenship onto a foreigner who can be made to leave, implying that American liberal democracy can be saved by small policy changes, periodic mailings, constitutional reinterpretations and better border policing. Schuck and Smith's iconic foreigners, both good and bad, mislead them into believing that the solution to liberal democracy's problems and the right response to heightened migrations are a politics of national retrenchment.

> To change a story signals a dissent from social norms as well as narrative forms.
>
> —Rachel Duplessis, *Writing beyond the Ending*

Tracking the varied workings of the hegemonic myth of an immigrant America helps identify sites at which it may be possible to evaluate, interrupt, and reinhabit dominant ideologies. The next step is to ask: How might the myth of an immigrant America be redeployed as part of a counterpolitics of foreignness?

Fundamentally, the various deployments of the myth of an immigrant America all seek to renationalize the state and to reposition it at the center of any future democratic politics. By pressing the foreigner into service on behalf of the nation and its iconic economy, community, family, and liberal individual citizen, the myth positions the immigrant as either a *giver* to or a *taker* from the nation. Indeed, the xenophilic insistence that immigrants are givers to the nation itself feeds the xenophobic anxiety that they might really be takers from it. Perhaps we can break out of this dynamic by thinking about immigrants in relation to democracy, rather than the nation, and by thinking of taking as the very thing that immigrants have to give us. The ostensibly pejorative symbolic depiction of immigrants as takers has a positive dimension that democratic theory might well take advantage of. The inspiration for such a move is none other than James Madison.

In 1792, Madison said, "In Europe charters of liberty have been granted by power [while in] America . . . charters of power are granted by liberty."[54] Madison's insight is that democracy is a form of politics in which power is taken, redistributed, reenacted, and recirculated by way of popular political action. The negative depiction of immigrants as those who take things from the nation (possibly a projection of a returning, repressed guilt for the original takings on which the regime is founded) may well be available for recuperation on the part of those who, like Madison, think democracy always involves some sort of taking.

A positive appropriation of the immigrant as democratic taker anchors a fifth way of looking at the myth of an immigrant America, this one on behalf of a democratic cosmopolitanism. Here the myth is a narrative of democratic activism whose heroes are not nationals of the regime but insist, nonetheless, on exercising the rights of democratic citizens while they are here. Historically, such immigrants have banded together to take or redistribute power. Their demands were resisted, denied, some-

times grudgingly granted or yielded, often greeted with violence, once in a while ceded without fanfare. The people who made the demands were sometimes deported, imprisoned, or executed. Others sometimes stayed, sometimes left to go elsewhere, sometimes returned to their points of origin, sometimes died. But the nation was not their telos.

The democratic aspect of the myth lies not in its aspiration to tell a story of ever broadening *national* inclusion but in its character as a history and a continuing present of empowerment, a story of illegitimate demands being made by people with no standing to make them. Because the myth of an immigrant America is a narrative of demands made by outsiders, it is not just a nationalist story; it is also, potentially, a myth of denationalization. Reinhabited as a democratic rather than a nationalist narrative, the recovered myth of an immigrant America might help us to pursue two conflicting aims simultaneously: (1) to insist on the inclusion of (im)migrants in democracy's national future, while also (2) pressing for the (symbolic and institutional) denationalization of democracy at the same time.

One way to include immigrants in democracy's national future without, however, recuperating immigrant energies for the renationalization of the state is to expand alien suffrage. Contrary to popular belief, the history of suffrage is not the history of its ceaseless expansion. The United States has a long history of alien suffrage in which democratic participation is linked not to the juridical status of citizenship but to the fact of residence.[55] That history needs to be recovered and mobilized. At present, several cities allow noncitizen residents to vote in local, school board (Chicago and New York), or municipal (several Maryland localities, such as Takoma Park) elections.[56] But there is still a great deal left to do.

Promoting social and worker movements might help win for currently unrepresented populations a voice in institutional self-governance as well as greater autonomy in daily life. One excellent example of such efforts is the Workplace Project, an organization that provides legal representation and advice to the undocumented while also training them to advocate and organize on their own behalves, representing themselves to bosses, landlords, school administrators, and state officials. Here is an education in democratic citizenship far worthier of the name than the citizenship classes offered by the state in preparation for naturalization. The Workplace Project extends citizenship practices to noncitizens. It includes aliens in democracy's national future while transforming citizenship from a state-granted juridical status to a civic practice.[57]

At the same time, the denationalization of democracy must be furthered by enacting transnational ties to empower local minorities. Groups like Women Living Under Islamic Law, Amnesty International, and Greenpeace press states for the fair and equal treatment of all residents,

while providing state residents with alternative sites of support and power independent of the state.

The point of this democratic cosmopolitanism is not to replace the state with an international government. The state remains an important potential and actual organizer of social welfare and justice as well as a potentially powerful ally for citizens and groups struggling to hold accountable certain distant and powerful international institutions. But the state also remains the institutional source of a great deal of injustice, inequity, and violence in the lives of its citizens and residents. Thus, it is important for social democrats to find ways to offset the still too singular power of the state by multiplying the memberships and affiliations of state residents. The goal is to empower people who are among the weakest and most vulnerable residents of the regime. For example, given the U.S. government's role in creating, administering, and obscuring the situation of undocumented workers and their availability as exploitable labor, the problem can only be effectively addressed by mobilizing social and political energies to counteract the effects of the state's criminalization (and denationalization) of this class of persons. Of migrant laborers, Labor Secretary Ray Marshall said in 1978, "These people work scared and hard." A recent study suggests that farmworkers are now working for about 20 percent less than they were twenty years ago.[58] Michael Walzer is right to say that political effectiveness depends on people joining together in goups to act.[59] People who are scared, denationalized, and criminalized are less likely to take the risk of visibility that joining together entails.[60]

The goal of a democratic cosmopolitanism is to offset the risks and vouchsafe the benefits of state (non)membership by widening the resources and energies of an emerging international civil society to contest or support state actions in matters of transnational and local interest, such as environmental, economic, military, cultural, and immigration policies. This is a *democratic* cosmopolitanism because democracy—in the sense of a commitment to local and popular empowerment, effective representation, and the generation of actions in concert across lines of difference—is its goal.

Movements need myths. Activists can make up new myths or they can take those already in existence and recycle them. The latter strategy is preferable because it takes advantage of existing cultural resources and simultaneously deprives opposing forces of the powerful narratives that would otherwise continue (uncontested) to support them in their nationalist objectives. The myth of an immigrant America can be turned from its nationalist functions to serve a democratic cosmopolitanism in which citizenship is not just a juridical status distributed (or not) by states, but a *practice* in which residents press political and economic institutions to act responsibly in the world.

Notes

Early drafts of this essay were presented at the American Bar Foundation, the Harvard Seminar on Ethics and International Relations, and the Center for Critical Analysis of Contemporary Culture at Rutgers University. I am grateful to all the participants for their questions and comments and I thank Christopher Tomlins, Nancy Kokaz, and Bruce Robbins, respectively, for organizing those events. Thanks are also due to the graduate students in my pluralism and citizenship seminars at Harvard and Northwestern Universities. Most important, I dedicate this essay to Linda Zerilli, whose contemporaneous work on the Statue of Liberty was a constant inspiration to me as I wrote this essay.

1. Michael Walzer, *What It Means to Be an American* (New York: Marsilio, 1996); Sanford Ungar, *Fresh Blood: The New American Immigrants* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995); and Alejandro Portes and Ruben G. Rumbaut, *Immigrant America: A Portrait* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) are all exemplary in this regard. In the United Kingdom, Bhikhu Parekh pursues a similar strategy. ("The Rushdie Affair: An Agenda for Political Philosophy," Political Studies 38 [December 1990]: 695–710).

2. On the nationalist terms of the immigration debate in the United States see Linda Bosniak, "Opposing Prop. 187: Undocumented Immigrants and the National Imagination," *Connecticut Law Review* 28 (spring 1996): 555–619.

3. Thomas Sowell, *Migration and Cultures: A World View* (New York: Basic, 1996); Walzer, *What It Means*; and Peter Schuck and Rogers Smith, *Citizenship without Consent: Illegal Aliens in the American Polity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985). In one of the responses published here, James Der Derian mentions a criticism of this essay's "evidence" as in "part gleaned from the *New York Times* and a retelling of *Strictly Ballroom*," "strictly anecdotal," and based on "generalizations . . . drawn from some flimsy particulars." Although Der Derian quickly dismisses these very criticisms as "irrelevant," I think it is important to note that the newspaper accounts and films deployed here are neither per se the evidence for the essay's argument nor its objects of critique. They are *illustrations*. They illustrate certain patterns of thought and preconceptions that are symptomatic of the exceptionalist literature that is the real object of scholarly interest here, from Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* to Michael Walzer's *What It Means to Be an American* to Peter Schuck and Rogers Smith's *Citizenship without Consent*.

4. The American Dream performs similar functions, as Jennifer Hochschild points out (*Facing up to the American Dream: Race, Class, and the Soul of the Nation* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995]). My argument here is analogous in some ways to Hochschild's. Both she and I are trying to find progressive possibilities in apparently conservative myths, rather than rejecting those myths outright.

5. On the representation of (re)founders as foreigners see my *No Place Like Home: Democracy and the Politics of Foreignness* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, forthcoming). For my treatment of Ruth as a foreign founder see "Ruth, the Model Emigrée: Mourning and the Symbolic Politics of Immigration," *Political Theory* 25 (February 1997): 112–36.

6. Sacvan Bercovitch redeploys the exceptionalist interpretation of American identity even while subjecting it to greater critical scrutiny than is customary

among exceptionalists: "Of all symbols of identity, only America has united nationality and universality, civic and spiritual selfhood, secular and redemptive history, the country's past and paradise to be, in a single synthetic ideal" (*The American Jeremiad* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978], 176). My aim in this article is to attend to some of the political and cultural costs of this nationalist project, not to assay its historical success.

7. Robert M. Weir, *Colonial South Carolina: A History* (Millwood, N.Y.: KTO, 1983). Thanks to Paul Pierson for calling the South Carolina quote to my attention and to Michaele Ferguson for tracking it down.

8. See Walzer, *What It Means*, 17, 31–33, and Rogers M. Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America," *American Political Science Review* 87 (September 1993): 549–66.

9. On the hope that immigration will bring about postnationalism and transnationalism see, for example, Cristina Blanc-Szanton, Nina Glick Schiller, and Linda Basch, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Langshorne, Pa.: Gordon and Breach, 1994).

10. See, for example, Louis Winnick, "America's 'Model Minority,'" *Commentary* 90 (August 1990): 22–29. In *The Disuniting of America* (New York: Norton, 1992), Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., too, makes stereotypical note of the strong family relations of Jews and Asians, remarking on the power of those relations as a resource for individuals. A recent, less stereotypical and more sustainedly empirical effort in this direction is Thomas Sowell, *Migrations and Cultures* (New York: Basic, 1996). Celebrants of model minorities highlight the ways in which extended families (and their cheap labor) are necessary for capitalist success, but they say nothing about how capitalist economies also attenuate such ties. Symptomatic was a front-page *New York Times* story on the increasing reluctance of middle-income workers to relocate for employment, given their desire to remain close to aging parents. In the second paragraph, the language of the story switches. The phenomenon is now called a "problem," and the perspective adopted for the rest of the report is that of the companies that have to deal with this resistance. The same story could, of course, have been written (also problematically) in a celebratory way with a headline like "The Return of Family Ties." Judith Dobrzynski, "For More and More Job Seekers, an Aging Parent Is a Big Factor," *New York Times*, 1 January 1996, A1.

11. For a psychoanalytic account of the foreigner as someone who only wants to take "our thing" see Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), 201ff.

12. Steven A. Holmes, "Anti-immigrant Mood Moves Asians to Organize," *New York Times*, 3 January 1996, A1; emphasis added. An example of the more usual story about immigrants is Edwin McDowell, "Hospitality Is Their Business" (*New York Times*, 21 March 1996, D1, D9), an account of Indian American involvement in the hotel industry (popularized in the 1991 Mira Nair film *Mississippi Masala*). The role of these immigrants as supplements to the American Dream is made quite clear by Joel Kotkin, quoted in the *New York Times* story as follows: "'These Indians are modern Horatio Algers. They're willing to start in marginal and sometimes risky areas that native-born Americans are not interested in going into, and working [*sic*] incredibly hard hours.'" Success here is measured by the move in one to two generations from hands-on labor to office

management and outlandish wealth. The story does not note a small irony: these immigrants are in the *hospitality* business at a time when the country is particularly inhospitable toward immigrants. Nor does it make much of one complication of the Horatio Alger comparison: some of these immigrants seem to have arrived with rather substantial reserves of capital. Mr. Patel, who "attributes the Indians' success to 'the way we were brought up'"—whole families putting their shoulder to the wheel and community members lending each other money without interest or collateral—immigrated after "a 20-year career with Barclays Bank in Kenya."

13. The U.S. Supreme Court opinion claimed to have seldom seen "such a concentrated and relentless campaign to deport an individual." See Harry Bernstein, "Harry Bridges: Marxist Founder of West's Longshoremen Union," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 March 1990, A28.

14. On undocumented worker involvement in unionization activities see the cases of construction workers in Richard Rothstein, "Immigration Dilemmas," in *Arguing Immigration: The Debate over the Changing Face of America*, ed. Nicolaus Mills (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), and of mattress manufacturing workers in Hector L. Delgado, *New Immigrants, Old Unions: Organizing Undocumented Workers in Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993). On school politics in Lowell, Massachusetts, see Camilo Pérez-Bustillo, "What Happens When English-Only Comes to Town? A Case Study of Lowell, Massachusetts," in *Language Loyalties*, ed. James Crawford (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). On Chinese political involvements see Victor Low, *The Unimpressable Race: A Century of Educational Struggle by the Chinese in San Francisco* (San Francisco: East/West, 1982). On alien stumping see Barry Newman, "Foreign Legions: Lots of Noncitizens Feel Right at Home in U.S. Political Races," *Wall Street Journal*, 31 October 1997, A1. This section of the article is indebted to Michael J. Bosia's research assistance on alien political activity.

15. Walzer, *What It Means*, 11.

16. Walzer provides no empirical evidence for this. But the claim fits well with Irving Howe's account of Jewish immigrants of an earlier generation in New York, as well as with Ron Takaki's account of Chinese and Japanese immigrants on the American West Coast. See Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976); and Ron Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1993).

17. Bernice Johnson Reagon, "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century," in *Home Girls*, ed. Barbara Smith (New York: A Kitchen Table–Women of Color Press, 1983).

18. Walzer, *What It Means*, 48. See Holmes, "Anti-immigrant Mood," A11: "They want relatives to join them from overseas. They want their culture replenished with new arrivals."

19. Walzer, *What It Means*, 66.

20. Walzer develops the idea of a "communitarian corrective" in "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," *Political Theory* 18 (February 1992): 6–23.

21. Walzer, *What It Means*, 24.

22. Ibid., 17; emphasis added. On the supposed contrast to Europe see Gerard Noiriel on France's true character as an immigrant nation ("Immigration: Amnesia and Memory," *French Historical Studies* 19 [fall 1995]: 367–438). In a later book, Walzer acknowledges that France is "Europe's leading immigrant society," but, he points out, it is not friendly to immigrants as such and demands their rapid assimilation. See Michael Walzer, *On Toleration* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), 37ff.

23. On the black independence movement in Oklahoma see Daniel F. Littlefield Jr., *The Chickasaw Freedmen: A People without a Country* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1980).

24. Walzer does invite these other groups to become part of his immigrant America. One need not have entered the United States as an immigrant in order to imagine one's citizenship along an immigrant trajectory. Walzer asks whether his citizenship model "can successfully be extended to the racial minorities now asserting their own group claims." Noting recent adaptive moves by (some) black Americans to be called "African Americans," Walzer approves of the move. But he is not sure they will succeed. He worries that racism may get in the way and drive some groups to seek out the "anti-pluralist alternatives of corporate division and state-sponsored unification." See Walzer, *What It Means*, 76. Walzer never asks whether his normative privileging of the immigrant-ethnic-citizen trajectory to membership, and the invitation to adapt to it, may obscure particular claims, injustices, and bases of organization for specific groups.

25. For an analysis of new group formations out of injuries wrought by the old see William Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

26. Interestingly, Scott, the individualistic renegade, is also a bearer of the community's standards. When he takes Fran as his partner, he begins by teaching her the basic steps on which the community insists. Later, for the sake of a dance competition that Fran, a "nobody," obviously cannot win, he allows himself to be partnered with a pale blond insider who knows how to dance properly. In the end, however, he returns to Fran.

27. Fran and her father are subtly depicted as good immigrants by contrast with the stereotypical Spaniard pictured in the background taking perpetual siestas with a bottle of alcohol nearby.

28. In effect, the film illustrates Louis Hartz's thesis about fragmented societies in the New World. The Australian dance community is like a Hartzian fragment. Separated from its organic origins and frozen in time, it is incapable of either innovation or restoration. The Old World, by contrast, is capable of innovation because it has dynamism, conflict, and multiplicity within it. See Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955).

29. Although, given Machiavelli's account of (male) *virtu* as the ability to be like (the female) *fortuna*, there is always some essential gender confusion at the base of republican politics. See my discussion of the virago in Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), chap. 1.

30. Qtd. in "More U.S. Men Look for Love Overseas," *Columbus Dispatch*, 30 December 1996, 2C. On the American fantasy of the traditional family see Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic, 1992).

31. It is no accident that the term *foreign bride* has already floated over to the financial pages, where it operates as a metaphor for international merger: "A merger flurry in the Swedish banking sector continued on Tuesday and analysts forecast more reshuffling at home before banks cast their eyes oversees for foreign brides" ("Swedish Bank Merger Flurry Seen Continuing," *Reuter European Business Report*, 18 February 1997).

32. The restoration of proper masculinity by way of the importation of truly feminine foreign brides is not exclusively practiced by American men. In Japan,

Thai brides are a "sought after commodity" for reasons that echo those given by the America men quoted here. See Sonni Efron, "Here Come the Brides: In Japan, They're the Newest Import—and They're Forcing a Re-examination of Attitudes," part 2, *Newsday*, 3 March 1997, Queens ed., B04. And the same trend has been noted in Taiwan, where the government has recently set quotas "designed to slow the influx of foreign brides and boost the marriage prospects of Taiwanese women." See Lee Chuan-hsien, "Crackdown on Importing Foreign Brides," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 February 1997, 2. Business is flourishing as well in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere.

33. The intersection of the institutions of marriage and citizenship is significant. Concerns about both came together in a 17 March 1997 letter to the editor in the *New York Times*. The author responded to the recent spate of marriages between immigrants and American citizens (reported by the paper as part of an effort by foreigners to acquire residency) by calling attention to the "irony" of the fact that Americans allow this abuse of marriage for instrumental purposes while continuing to deny marriage to those who really value it, gay couples in love. For a more detailed discussion see Honig, *No Place Like Home*, chap. 4. Two essays that touch on this intersection, the latter in more detail, are Michael Warner, "Normal and Normaler" (unpublished manuscript), and Lauren Berlant, "Face of America," in *Disciplinarity and Dissent in Cultural Studies*, ed. Dilip Gaonkar and Cary Nelson (New York: Routledge, 1996).

34. Susan Okin makes this argument without apparent ambivalence ("Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?" *Boston Review* 22 [October/November 1997]: 25–28). For my response see "Complicating Culture," *Boston Review* 22 (October/November 1997): 30–32.

35. As Kant was well aware, the universal cannot survive in the absence of particular enactments of its law. Hence Kant's repeated, transgressive use in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* of particular examples to represent the moral law on whose unrepresentability he was otherwise insistent. See Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Indianapolis: Bubbs Merrill, 1959).

36. Schuck and Smith, *Citizenship without Consent*, 130.

37. Ibid., 123–24.

38. Ibid., 131–32.

39. Although why we should seek further to legitimate an institution whose legitimacy ought properly always to be in question is beyond me.

40. Sanford Levinson, *Constitutional Faith* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 99.

41. Schuck and Smith, *Citizenship without Consent*, 109.

42. That is, new immigrants need to be taking on citizenship for the right reasons. In short, what we have here is an uneasy dependence of the performative (consent) on the constative (the right reasons). On the final unsustainability of J. L. Austin's distinction between these two see Derrida's critical appreciation of Austin in "Signature, Event, Context," in *Limited Inc.*, trans. Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 13–19. For my own extended reading of Derrida and Austin on this topic see *Displacement*, chap. 4.

43. Schuck and Smith, *Citizenship without Consent*, 122.

44. By stressing the right of the existing community of citizens to "consent" to newcomers, Schuck and Smith perversely turn Lockean consent from a device designed to limit state power into a device for its enhancement. A similar move is

made by Levinson (*Constitutional Faith*), though at least his way of making the point does not press into service the device of consent: "A 'double choosing' is involved: An immigrant's choice to 'adopt' an American identity is coupled with that immigrant's need to be chosen by the United States itself as a suitable member of the political community" (97). See also Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic, 1983), 31, 39.

45. It should be noted, though, that Schuck and Smith (*Citizenship without Consent*) also say that "children (and perhaps their parents as well) may have legitimate moral or humanitarian claims upon American society" (98, 100, passim) apart from whether they have a claim to citizenship. "It is enough for present purposes to affirm that the Constitution need not and should not be woodenly interpreted either to guarantee their children citizenship or to cast them into outer darkness" (100).

46. Ibid., 107. One measure of the devaluation of citizenship is a Supreme Court decision like *Graham v. Richardson*, which insists that social welfare benefits cannot be restricted to legal residents. In a later article, Schuck is more resigned to the "devaluation of citizenship." He rightly situates this development in the context of increased international integration and migration, and he thinks, four years after *Citizenship without Consent*, that recent changes in national citizenship are "probably irreversible." But he is unwilling to let citizenship go, for

> it provides a focus of political allegiance and emotional energy on a scale capable of satisfying deep human longings for solidarity, symbolic identification and community. Such a focus may be especially important in a liberal ethos whose centrifugal, cosmopolitan aspirations for global principles and universal human rights must somehow be balanced against the more parochial imperatives of organizing societies dominated by more limited commitments to family, locality, region, and nation.

See Peter Schuck, "Membership in the Liberal Polity: The Devaluation of American Citizenship," in *Immigration and the Politics of Citizenship in Europe and North America*, ed. William Roger Brubaker (Lantham, Md.: University Press of America, 1989), 64–65. Schuck is right that the nation-state sometimes balances the drives toward globalization and localization. But the contrary is also true. The nation-state is often a *vehicle* of globalization as well as localization, as was clear in the move to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and ongoing efforts to localize the administration of social services. Moreover, global and local affiliations are not necessarily disempowering or undemocratic. They can provide helpful, democratizing checks against the coercive powers of the nation-state. It is therefore important to think about the ways in which the emotional "human" satisfactions of citizenship can be appropriated for nonnational entities. Thus, I agree with the last line of Schuck's 1989 essay but take it as one of my starting points: "Today's conception of citizenship may not be adequate to meet tomorrow's needs" (64–65).

47. Kitty Calavita, *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the I.N.S.* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 167, passim.

48. This is a practice of which Michael Walzer was rightly critical. See Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, chap. 2.

49. It should be noted, however, that consent and voluntarism are not obviously or necessarily enhanced by moving away from *jus soli*. That move makes citizenship (contrary to the authors' stated intentions) more ascriptive, not less

so; it becomes a status that is more obviously inherited (or not) from one's parents. Moreover, the practice of *jus soli* is no less consensual than other mechanisms (tolerated by the authors) that accord children citizenship and nationality at birth.

50. See Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz," 549–66.

51. That is to say, I am hazarding a strong, logical claim, by contrast with Michael Rogin, who is wrongly charged by Rogers Smith with making claims about the logic of liberalism. Rogin's rather substantial arguments about America's history of exclusion and genocide are historical, not logical. See Smith's response to Jacqueline Stevens, "Beyond Tocqueville, Please!" *APSR* 89 (December 1995): 987–90, 990–94. See also Michael Rogin, *Ronald Reagan, the Movie: And Other Episodes in American Political Demonology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

52. All the recent attention paid to John Huang and other "foreign" or hyphenated lobbyists and contributors distracted attention from the real problems of money in American politics. The Center for Responsive Politics did a study of foreign money in 1996. Using some very generous definitions (for example, U.S. firms that are subsidiaries of foreign companies), the center found that these organizations contributed a total of $12.6 million to federal candidates. A conservative estimate of the total cost of federal elections is $1.2 billion ($200 million in soft, $200 million in public, and $800 million in hard money [congressional races]). So foreign money accounts for no more and probably less than 1 percent of contributions to federal elections—if that. The web page of the Center for Responsive Politics features this particular study at www.crp.org/for1/global4.htm. I am indebted to Steve Ansolabehere for these figures and estimates.

53. The authors unwittingly call attention to this deeper problem when they say that they are seeking to complement the "actual consent [that] is expressed symbolically only through periodic elections" in America (*Citizenship without Consent*, 110). Concerned only about the periodicity of election-based consent, they do not mention the fact that no more than a minority of American citizens vote in American elections. This unselfconscious projection of the corruptions of American citizenship onto illegal aliens is paralleled by Michael Walzer's more self-conscious metaphorization of withdrawn American citizens as "psychological resident aliens." But Walzer's metaphor also misleads. Just as the metaphor of illegality slides from status to behavior in Schuck and Smith, so in Walzer a juridical status assigned by the state—resident alien—slides into a political attitude imputed to the person: political withdrawalism. But there is no evidence to support the identification of resident alien status with political uninvolvement (at least not with any level of uninvolvement worthy of remark). Nor is there any evidence for the converse: that naturalizing immigrants are prone to political involvement. See Michael Walzer, "Political Alienation and Military Service," in *Obligations*, ed. Michael Walzer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 99–100, 112–13. Cited by Levinson, *Constitutional Faith*, 113.

54. James Madison, "Charters," in *The Writings of James Madison*, ed. Gaillard Hunt (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1906), 83. First published in *The National Gazette*, 19 January 1792.

55. See Jamin Raskin, "Legal Aliens, Local Citizens: The Historical, Constitutional, and Theoretical Meanings of Alien Suffrage," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 141 (April 1993): 1391–469. Raskin explains that this history was "undone by the xenophobic nationalism attending World War I" (1397).

56. It should be noted, however, that residency can be a restrictive rather than a permissive requirement. Long Island, for instance, uses stringent proof-of-residency requirements to keep immigrants out of public schools. See Doreen Carvajal, "Immigrants Fight Residency Rules Blocking Children in L.I. Schools," *New York Times*, 7 August 1995, A1, B4.

57. Another example of an organization devoted to immigrant worker empowerment is Choices, a domestic worker cooperative in the San Francisco area. See Leslie Salzinger, "A Maid by Any Other Name: The Transformation of 'Dirty Work' by Central American Immigrants," in *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis*, ed. Michael Burawoy, Alice Burton, Ann Arnett Ferguson, and Kathryn H. Fox (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 139–60. Other examples include Asian Immigrant Women's Advocates and UNITE. The L.A. Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born may be seen as an ancestor of these and other groups seeking alien empowerment and rights protection.

58. "U.S. Surveys Find Farm Worker Pay Down for 20 Years," *New York Times*, 31 March 1997. Marshall is cited in Calavita, *Inside the State*, 167.

59. Empowering aliens to act as citizens, even when they lack that juridical status (which is the goal of the democratic cosmopolitanism advocated here), attenuates the lines between aliens and citizens, something Schuck and Smith are out to resist. They disapprove of Supreme Court decisions like *Plyler v. Doe*, which awards social benefits and rights to noncitizens. Oddly, such developments are seen by Schuck and Smith as symptoms of a more communitarian judiciary (one would have thought *cosmopolitan* to be a better adjective): A more communitarian judiciary increasingly compels government to consent by imposing obligations toward aliens that it has not voluntarily undertaken; sometimes, as in *Graham*, courts override the legislature's explicit refusal to consent" (Schuck and Smith, *Citizenship without Consent*, 109). But isn't this what courts do? Compel governments to provide services or respect rights in ways that they do not voluntarily undertake?

60. Of course, people often find themselves involved in political activity that is risky and even dangerous. That is because political involvement often does not happen as a matter of rational calculation based on incentives. As in my gloss on Hannah Arendt, calculation just produces a cycle of willing and nilling that would be endless were it not for the fact that "political action comes to us, it involves us in ways that are not deliberate, willful or intended." Political action "happens to the as yet unready and not quite willing (because still also nilling) subject in the private realm" and thrusts the subject into the risky visibility of the public sphere. See my "Toward an Agonistic Feminism," in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), 223–24.