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Symposium: Twelfth Annual LatCrit Conference Critical Localities: Epistemic Communities, Rooted Cosmopolitans, New Hegemonies and Knowledge Processes: **Huntington's White Patriotism** and Anzaldua's Brown Nationalism

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**SUMMARY:**

... Throughout his book, Huntington repeatedly asserts that his critique aims to defend American liberal, democratic principles that have been established by a WASP founding culture. ... Stated differently, Huntington expects Latin America and Latino/as to embrace a WASP national identity that has been historically and consistently responsible for a series of abuses committed against Latin American immigrants and Latino/as residing in the United States. ... There is plenty of data and research available addressing Huntington's anxieties that disprove most of Huntington's claims regarding Latino assimilation. ... Nationalist Borderlands Despite the problems present in Huntington's defense of a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant patriotic identity, his argument echoes similar conceptual arguments used by Chicana nationalists like Gloria Anzaldua. ... It is readily evident that both Anzaldua and Huntington accept capitalism as an ideological premise of their mythic nations, but my point is to suggest that at a conceptual level there is little difference between Huntington's WASP patriotic national identity and Anzaldua's Atzlan/borderlands myth. ... Likewise, critical approaches that are premised on global and post-colonial views and premised on a human rights discourse are also present in LatCrit approaches. ... Both narratives draw on essentialist constructions of race and the reification of a nationalist narrative in ways that continue to perpetuate a liberal ethos, an ethos that has found a constant companion in capitalist forms of subordination and exploitation.

**TEXT:**

[\*33]

In recent years, several faculty members of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University have been publishing texts that contribute to a politics of "backlash." These backlash narratives have been central to the framing of a conservative ideological discourse that has been seeking to overturn the progressive legacies of the New Deal and the civil rights movement. Harvey C. Mansfield has written a book on the misogynous virtues of manliness;<sup>n1</sup> Robert Putman has written on the challenges of diversity to civic engagement and social capital<sup>n2</sup> and, more recently, has published a prize winning essay offering empirical evidence that challenges liberal notions of diversity;<sup>n3</sup> and Samuel P. Huntington has published a book espousing the virtues of white Anglo-Saxon protestant (WASP) patriotic identity.<sup>n4</sup> These political scientists have been contributing to the promotion of a conservative ideological<sup>n5</sup> tradition that is often pre [\*34] mised on insinuations, vague suggestions, and truth claims that rely more on the blind connection of conceptual "dots" than a clear structural analysis that explores the relationship between individuals and structural realities. Suffice it to say that this academic "backlash" has been instrumental in sustaining an otherwise intellectually bankrupt and discredited ideological tradition.

In this article, I would like to begin to focus on one particular aspect of Samuel P. Huntington's recent defense of a white Anglo-Saxon protestant patriotic narrative that seeks to reclaim a central discursive space in the United States. Huntington's book, *Who Are We?*, seeks to resuscitate a series of intellectually bankrupt, racist, and nationalist ideologies in order to re-establish the predominance of a white Anglo-Saxon protestant and patriotic discourse against

the actual, potential, and imagined challenges posed by the presence of Latino/a (although primarily Mexican) immigrants. His overall argument relies on conceptual antilogies, insinuations, and incomplete and selective data as well as an ideological selection of de-contextualized historical events. Ironically, despite the poverty of Huntington's defense of a WASP patriotic ideology, his nationalist arguments echo similar arguments offered by Latino/a cultural nationalists like Gloria Anzaldua. Despite the difference in the political implications of Huntington's and Anzaldua's narratives, at a conceptual level their arguments are quite similar. In my opinion, this conceptual similarity poses a problem for scholars that rely on Anzaldua's borderland myth<sup>n6</sup> to substantiate alternative narratives of resistance.

At present, this paper is divided in three parts that address the two dimensions of my argument. Part I begins with a discussion of the conceptual limitations of Huntington's text by providing examples of the ideological character of the argument; the selection of events to narrate an incomplete history; a brief discussion of the nature of the data; and some suggestions concerning the place of structural inequalities in the object of discussion. Part II shifts the discussion to a comparison of both Huntington and Anzaldua's nationalist ideologies. Part III offers some comments on the application of LatCrit approaches to the premises of these nationalist ideologies. At present, the conclusion suggests two conceptual critiques that are premised on a leftist critique.

#### I. The Limits Of Huntington's White Liberal Democracy

In the foreword to his book, Huntington provides the reader with the following caveat or warning: **[\*35]**

This book is shaped by my own identities as a patriot and a scholar. . . . The motives of patriotism and scholarship, however, may conflict. Recognizing this problem, I attempt to engage in as detached and thorough an analysis as I can, while warning the reader that my selection and presentation of that evidence may well be influenced by my patriotic desire to find meaning and virtue in America's past and in its possible future.<sup>n7</sup>

Huntington's narrative proves to be more patriotic than scholarly. In fact, his "desire" to find "virtue" in America's past and in its possible future perhaps led him to create a narrative that could only be told through insinuations, conjectures, and incomplete claims that are often more stated than demonstrated. This narrative conveniently and disingenuously neglects to describe how the virtues of Huntington's America created the oppressive conditions that provide the context for his challenges. The patriotic desire to exalt the virtues of a white nationalist creed provides the context for Huntington's historical narrative. The reader who approaches his book with a WASP patriotic predisposition to make sense of his undeveloped statements can bring coherence to these arguments in a conservative ideological realm where only partial truths and faith can hold the narrative together.

This ideological method, a method that is willing to displace truth in favor of a WASP patriotic approach to scholarship, provides the context for Huntington's text. To this extent, any significant discussion of Huntington's argument is bound to require a critical position that is willing to sustain ideological charges of being un-patriotic, treasonous, and un-American. Notwithstanding this effort to close-off scholarly debate and critique, I want to suggest that an immanent reading of *Who Are We?* inevitably leads to a dead end on its own terms. To be sure, in this part of the article I want to suggest four examples of the conceptual limitations of Huntington's argument. I begin with a discussion of Huntington's defense of a notion of An-glo-American liberal democracy that is more Anglo-American than liberal or democratic. This is followed by a discussion of egalitarian legal claims that are premised on everything but equality. A third focus of my argument questions the selective use of data to paint a comprehensive picture of Latino/as in the United States. I conclude this part with a discussion of the ideological implications of notions of self-responsibility within a capitalist social order. In sum, I argue that Huntington's book is premised on conceptual contradictions that can only be defended by ideological claims and insinuations, not by scholarly argument. **[\*36]**

Throughout his book, Huntington repeatedly asserts that his critique aims to defend American liberal, democratic principles that have been established by a WASP founding culture. Yet he simultaneously criticizes liberals for believing that:

A nation can be based on only a political contract among individuals lacking any other commonality. This is the classic Enlightenment based, civic conception of a nation. History and psychology, however, suggest that it is unlikely to be enough to sustain a nation for long. America with only the Creed as a basis for unity could soon evolve into a loosed confederation of ethnic, racial, cultural, and political groups, with little or nothing in common apart from their location in the territory of what had been the United States of America.<sup>n8</sup> (Emphasis added.)

In other words, Huntington dismisses the liberal notion of recognition that is premised on the idea that the individual can be a law-abiding, and even patriotic,<sup>n9</sup> public citizen, while simultaneously embracing private social and/or moral views of the world.<sup>n10</sup> Ironically, it is precisely the historical malleability of public/institutional forms of citizen-

ship that has been responsible for domesticating dissent in the United States and integrating different populations despite their private views of the world. Market-oriented law and policy and, later, capitalism have also been constant companions of the Anglo-American liberal ethos. Stated differently, the insidious genius of the American liberal project has been its ability to displace public dissent to the private realm and to shift the terms of debate from the public-political realm to the private arena. Hence, so long as the public realm can be sanitized and the terms of debate domesticated, the Anglo-American liberal polity can claim a sanitized notion of public equality or democracy.

However, Huntington's critique of liberalism is premised on the notion that in order for liberal democracy to maintain its stability in the United States, the private, cultural values of citizens should be consistent with the public ethos of the nation. In order to achieve this harmony, Latino migrants and immigrants should assimilate the WASP culture, which was presumably the "founding" culture of this nation's public institutions. In other words, the Latino immigrant is expected not only to assimilate public citizenship values, but also the private cultural ethos of a mythic and essentialized original culture. This hegemonic view of a WASP culture, of course, neglects to address the abuses and injustices that were both inherent in, and historically tied to it.<sup>11</sup> It follows that Huntington's notion of liberal democracy requires an assimilated subject that is not negotiating a conflict between his or her public and private positions. Whereas the traditional conservative approach would probably seek to eliminate the private-public divide, Huntington's narrative simply demands that immigrants abandon their private cultural identity by assimilating the hegemonic WASP culture. It follows that egalitarian notions of democracy are to be realized among subjects who share the same public and private cultural values.

In order to substantiate this argument, Huntington cherry-picks historical events and data that fit his patriotic narrative. These events and data are further represented in a manner that minimizes or in some cases eliminates controversies or inconsistencies. One example of this discursive strategy can be discerned from his engagement with the law. To be sure, describing the period following World War II and beginning in the 1960s, Huntington writes that:

Americans were one nation of individuals with equal rights, who shared a primarily Anglo-Protestant core culture, and were dedicated to the liberal-democratic principles of the American Creed. This, at least, was the prevailing image Americans had of what their country should be, and the goal toward which, in some measure, it seemed to be moving. In the 1960s powerful movements began to challenge the salience, the substance, and the desirability of this concept of America.<sup>12</sup>

The "powerful movements" that Huntington refers to were among others the civil rights movement comprised primarily, but not exclusively, of black citizens of the United States who had been denied full equality under the law and had been segregated under a harsh system of inegalitarian apartheid. It follows that civil rights challenges to the apartheid legal system created by Anglo-Protestant core values should be read as a destabilizing force that threatened America by creating the conditions that enabled the redefinition of the American public realm. Huntington's America is a place where dissent and challenges to abusive structures of subordination, oppression, and exploitation should be conceptualized as destabilizing and dangerous. [\*38]

Regarding the rule of law, Huntington suggests, without providing substantive examples, that:

Americans, it is often said, are a people defined by and united by their commitment to the political principles of liberty, equality, democracy, individualism, human rights, the rule of law, and private property embodied in the American Creed. . . . The creedal definition allows Americans to hold that theirs is an "exceptional" country because unlike other nations its identity is defined by principle rather than ascription and, at the same time, to claim that America is a "universal" nation because its principles are applicable to all human societies.<sup>13</sup>

I will assume that I need not discuss how the failures of the United States occupation of Iraq; the torture chambers in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay; the inconsistent trials of United States occupation soldiers committing murder, rape, and massacres; and the consistent lack of commitment to human rights conventions have contributed to discredit this patriotic statement. However, what I do want to note is that Huntington suggests the possibility of a notion of human rights that is irreconcilable with his own depiction of a white Anglo-Saxon protestant nationalism unless we equate this identity with a universal conception of humanity. Needless to say, unless humanity is meant to be modeled after a WASP national identity, one has to wonder what Huntington is talking about.

Huntington's allusion to notions of the rule of law is important because it can help us understand some of the ways that patriotic readings of United States legal history can obscure grave, structural injustices that form the basis for the very identity that Huntington expects Latino/as to embrace or assimilate. Stated differently, Huntington expects Latin America and Latino/as to embrace a WASP national identity that has been historically and consistently responsible for a

series of abuses committed against Latin American immigrants and Latino/as residing in the United States. The case of the annexation of the Mexican territories provides us with a useful example of the myopic nature of Huntington's mythical history. Huntington readily acknowledges that the United States usurped and conquered parts of the Mexican nation during the war of 1846-48.<sup>n14</sup> What he does not acknowledge is the process entailed in occupying the Mexican territories.<sup>n15</sup> The United States violated the Treaty of Adams-De Onis (1819) by enabling the settlement of Texas and, in turn, violated virtually all the tenets of [\*39] the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) when it allowed the states to pass racist citizenship laws that denied Mexican property owners the right to exercise their property rights.<sup>n16</sup> The United States government also violated its own agreement by declaring the Treaty invalid in 1898 and by denying Mexican citizens the right to land guaranteed under the terms of the Treaty.<sup>n17</sup> The point to be made is that Huntington's legal history avoids a discussion and recollection of important structural injustices that have contributed to creating the conditions that fuel a counter-United States narrative. To be sure, it is ridiculous to expect Mexicans and subjects of Mexican heritage to embrace a United States history that has been responsible for the creation of structural inequalities that lead to poverty, subordination, and outright exploitation.

Huntington disingenuously uses selective "data" to substantiate his ideological narrative and suggests that Mexican immigrants, and Latinos/as, more generally, are less likely to "assimilate" into the WASP national identity. Rather than looking at all of the available data on assimilation and developing an argument that takes into account actual political and methodological debates, he conveniently chooses to use data that can be reconciled with his project. This approach is especially egregious given the availability of data that directly challenges Huntington's claims on assimilation. To be sure, as Fraga et al. have noted in the *American Political Science Review*:

Examination of these claims has been facilitated by the development of a body of large-scale data sets, such as the National Chicano Survey (1979), the National Latino Immigrant Survey (1988), and the Latino National Political Survey (1989), by Latino politics researchers. As a result of research drawing on this data, charges that Latinos' deficiencies have been shown to be largely, if not entirely, unsubstantiated. Contrary to other assertions, this research finds that Hispanics are in fact, well "assimilated," with most Latinos holding or sharing the same core values and attitudinal predispositions associated with democracy as other Americans.<sup>n18</sup>

There is plenty of data and research available addressing Huntington's anxieties that disprove most of Huntington's claims regarding Latino assimilation. The question, however, is why did he neglect to engage the data [\*40] directly? My suspicion is that if Huntington would have engaged this data and research directly, it is not likely that he would have been able to substantiate the virtues of his patriotic ideology and the Mexican Other would have disappeared. More importantly, I also contend that the data on assimilation may simply be irrelevant to understanding the relationship of Mexican immigrants or, for that matter, the relationship of Latino/a immigrants to the United States polity because cultural assimilation may have little to do with public behavior in a liberal democracy that encourages its subjects to lead fragmented public and private lives.

In addition, Huntington correlates individual economic success with assimilation in a capitalist society. His arguments simply neglect to consider how discrimination and exploitation can act as barriers for the financial upward mobility of Mexican immigrants and Latino/as more generally. Drawing on a homogenizing and parsimonious narrative of the Mexican immigrant experience, Huntington identifies at least five examples of the economic malaises that are presumably representative of the failure of this immigrant group to assimilate. He argues that the "economic position of Mexican immigrants parallels, as one would expect, their educational attainment."<sup>n19</sup> Again cherry-picking data for one year (1989-1990), Huntington makes a broad and unsubstantiated suggestion that "Mexican-origin people" are likely to remain "distant from the American norm" in terms of educational levels.<sup>n20</sup> Of course, Huntington also neglects to explain that obstacles are present for Mexican immigrants regarding access to education,<sup>n21</sup> and that structural inequalities and market manipulation may in fact be creating the conditions that hinder access not only to decent education, but also to the kind of status-oriented educational institutions that will open doors later in life.<sup>n22</sup>

Additional arguments include "low" numbers of immigrants in professional and managerial positions, low rates of self-employment and entrepreneurship, higher rates of poverty and welfare dependency, and a presumed lag in wage-earning levels.<sup>n23</sup> It follows that assimilation will be the pre-condition for the achievement of the American Dream. The problem [\*41] with all of these arguments is that they ignore the structural hierarchies inherent in a capitalist system and institutionalized by a state that has reproduced vast structural inequalities. Huntington's arguments assume that immigrants and/or Latinos/as are, or can be, at an equal starting point as the WASP subject. Huntington also neglects to factor in the impact of the lack of egalitarian legal protections against discrimination towards immigrants particularly in the area of labor rights;<sup>n24</sup> the impact of wealth accumulation in the development of family on various forms of capital; and the real impact of glass ceilings for Latino/as wage earners. To be sure, Huntington's economic analysis relies on a

"built-in failure to consider structural and institutional aspects of power in contemporary capitalist liberal democracies."

<sup>n25</sup> More importantly, Huntington's argument is premised on an obvious, conceptual contradiction that, on the one hand, calls for a patriotic, collective identity of assimilated immigrants and citizens alike and simultaneously embraces an atomizing and competitive, capitalist narrative. <sup>n26</sup> The reader is left with an economic critique of individual self-responsibility that does not account for the obstacles presented to immigrants by structural and institutional inequalities founded on racist and xenophobic ideologies. <sup>n27</sup>

Huntington's patriotic narrative can be read as an effort to construct an ideological justification to represent the Mexican immigrant, and the Latino/a more generally, as a potential threat. In order to achieve this, Huntington's narrative has to rely on a selective discussion of debates, history, data, and socio-economic representations of Latino/as. Rather than engaging the complexity of issues informing the debates shaping the impact of Mexican migrants and/or Latino/as more broadly in the United States, Huntington selectively navigates oceans of information until he finds islands of evidence that can lend credence to his patriotic story. In this sense, Huntington's text is simply another misleading form of nativist propaganda that carries the seal of an academic institution. This is just another text that legitimates a status quo that creates the conditions for the subordination, oppression, and exploitation of Latino/a immigrants. This is just one more text that contributes to the creation of an exploitative environment where it is justified to treat Latino/as, who do not fit Huntington's schema, as potential threats to a right-wing status quo. [\*42]

## II. Nationalist Borderlands

Despite the problems present in Huntington's defense of a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant patriotic identity, his argument echoes similar conceptual arguments used by Chicana nationalists like Gloria Anzaldua. Although the political premises of Huntington and Anzaldua's narratives have different goals, it is readily evident that both rely on a nationalist ideological framework to achieve the respective ends of their arguments. In fact, both Huntington and Anzaldua end up defending a nationalist narrative that continues to reproduce a petty-bourgeoisie form of capitalism through the reification of essentialist social constructions. Ironically, rather than engaging concrete material injustices, both Huntington and Anzaldua resort to founding racial myths and ideological psychobabble in order to substantiate what turns out to be a project that reifies a capitalist status quo. In the interest of space, I limit my discussion to two fundamental points that illustrate my argument, namely, the use of racial, founding myths and the social construction of a consciousness that avoids the present. I argue that a critical approach rooted in a leftist tradition should not lose sight of the influence of capitalism in shaping the contours of subordinated and exploited identities.

Huntington's anxieties with Mexicans and immigrants of Latin American heritage seem to be fueled by a sort of "underclass", nationalist rhetoric that describes most Latin American immigrants as "poor, unskilled, and not well educated" and seeking to colonize spaces within the United States. <sup>n28</sup> His main anxiety centers on the idea that Mexican immigrants, in particular, will seek to create an autonomous region in the Southwest that will secede from the United States, which will lead to a civil war between white nativists and immigrants. Ironically, Chicana writers like Gloria Anzaldua, as well as others, have not only defended the nationalist rhetoric underpinning Huntington's argument, but have embraced the nationalist borderlands debate as a central part of a subaltern narrative. Of course, it must be remembered that, while the political objectives may differ between Huntington and Anzaldua's narratives, at a conceptual level both rely on a similar set of myths and rhetorical claims.

Huntington's anxieties can be discerned from his discussion of the so-called re-conquista, or the social, cultural, and demographic re-conquest of the Southwest by Mexican migrants. This argument can be discerned from [\*43] his insinuation that migrants can be compared to armed soldiers occupying the United States, seeking to eventually re-claim for Mexico sovereignty over a mythical nation located in the Southwest territories named Atzlan. To be sure, Huntington writes:

If each year a million Mexican soldiers attempted to invade the United States and more than 150,000 of them succeeded, established themselves on American territory, and the Mexican government then demanded that the United States recognize the legality of this invasion, Americans would be outraged and would mobilize whatever resources were necessary to expel the invaders and to establish the integrity of their borders. Yet an illegal demographic invasion of comparable dimensions occurs each year, the president of Mexico argues that it should be legalized, and at least before September 11, American political leaders more or less ignored it or implicitly accepted the elimination of the border as a long-term goal. <sup>n29</sup>

This sort of alarmist propaganda, unsubstantiated by any evidence, ultimately ends up legitimating white-supremacist and nativist arguments that can only be addressed through extremist means. To use the analogy of a soldier

to represent an immigrant is, in some ways, legitimating the possible future use of the U.S. military as a force to counter-Mexican migration.

Yet, Anzaldua herself, while recognizing that North Americans conceptualize Mexican migrations as a "silent invasion," also endeavors to represent the migration of Mexicans to the Southwest territories as "the return odyssey to the historical/mythological Aztlan."<sup>n30</sup> While it is not readily evident that Anzaldua would embrace a martial representation of the immigrant, it is clear that migration should be conceptualized as the reconquest, from below, of an autonomous region, or rather a borderland between the United States and Mexico. This borderland space, Aztlan, would conceivably exist as a liberated space where Chicanos could develop a new consciousness that can withstand and challenge the hegemonic cultures of either nation. Of course, unlike Huntington's homogenizing culture, Anzaldua's culture would celebrate new ambiguities.

This concern with the physical conditions of the Southwest territories is yet another example of the contradictory statements that inform Huntington's overall patriotic narrative. To be sure, on the one hand, he asserts that the WASP national identity, or creed, is not rooted in any attachment to a [\*44] territory;<sup>n31</sup> yet he simultaneously validates the half-baked claims of advocates for a Chicano nationalist rhetoric when he writes:

Conceivably this could lead to a move to reunite these territories with Mexico. That seems unlikely, but professor Charles Truxillo of the University of New Mexico predicts that by 2080 the southwestern states of the United States and the northern states of Mexico will come together to form a new country, "La Republica del Norte." The basis for such a development exists in the surge of Mexicans northward and the increasing economic ties between communities on different sides of the border.<sup>n32</sup>

One has to wonder what is gained by publishing these "paranoid fantasies" that "imagine dire conspiracies."<sup>n33</sup> Notwithstanding Huntington's propagandist rhetoric, it is readily evident that his narrative finds political expression in the concern for the balkanization of the nation. The fear lies in the possibility that Mexican migrants may actually be part of a great conspiracy, with an actual programmatic agenda, to occupy a particular territory in the U.S. that happens to be closer to Mexico.

My concern here, however, is not with Huntington's shoddy defense of patriotic ideologies, but rather with the ways in which this argument reproduces Latino/a borderlands narrative such as those articulated by Chicana writers like Gloria Anzaldua. It is ironic that Huntington's argument echoes the arguments of Chicana writers like Anzaldua and other Chicano nationalists.<sup>n34</sup> Of course, at the core of my argument, lies a blanket rejection of nationalism as the best way to organize a political community in both the present as well as in the future. I am convinced that it is possible to demonstrate how nationalist narratives reproduce undesirable forms of exploitation, subjugation, subordination, and oppression. This cultural narrative inherently domesticates political dissent and creates the conditions that exempt the state or Federal government from using public funds to address the structural inequalities that underpin the exploitation and subordination of immigrants and Latino/as more generally. It is readily evident that both Anzaldua and Huntington accept capitalism as an ideological premise of their mythic nations, but my point is to suggest that at a conceptual level there is little difference between Huntington's WASP patriotic national identity and Anzaldua's Aztlan/borderlands myth. [\*45]

Huntington's narrative seeks to rescue the founding principles of the nation, which are under attack from a passive occupation being carried out by Mexican and other Spanish-speaking immigrants who refuse to assimilate to the white culture. This founding identity, Huntington tells us, should be represented in the following manner:

The American people who achieved independence in the late eighteenth century were few and homogenous: overwhelmingly white (thanks to the exclusion of blacks and Indians from citizenship), British, and Protestant, broadly sharing a common culture, and overwhelmingly committed to the principles embodied in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and other founding documents.<sup>n35</sup>

Huntington's project seeks to reclaim a new type of patriotism that saves the nation against the foreign invasion of Mexican nationals.

One way to discern the racial nature of this project is to engage his discussion of the emergence of a new type of "white" nativism that presumably could be recast in a non-pejorative and neutral manner. Presumably, Huntington suggests that it would not be wrong to "vigorously" "defend one's 'native' culture and identity and to maintain their purity against foreign influences."<sup>n36</sup> Citing the work of Carol Swain, Huntington suggests that the "new breed of white racial" advocates could conceptualize race as a fixed and unchangeable source of culture.<sup>n37</sup> More importantly, Huntington notes, that since:

The shifting racial balance in the United States means a shifting cultural balance and the replacement of the white culture that made America great by black or brown cultures that are different and, in their view, intellectually and morally inferior. This mixing of races and hence cultures is the road to national degeneration. For them, to keep America America, it is necessary to keep America white.<sup>n38</sup>

Of course, Huntington's allusions are couched in a renewed and distant claim to being an objective observer of a new reality. Yet, this new reality draws on the same racist arguments that he defends in his patriotic quest to resuscitate white, cultural hegemony. What is important to note is that Huntington alludes to historical and alien notions of white, racial narratives that have become discredited in the public realm because of their persistent [\*46] relationship to racist structures of oppression and exploitation. Presumably, this "neutral" form of nativism could be recast as a new form of patriotism, a patriotism that seeks to reaffirm the supremacy of the white culture in the United States.

Anzaldua's borderlands narrative embraces a sort of historical millennialism that also traces the essentialist origins of the Aztec empire to the southwestern territory known as Atzlan. According to this founding myth:

The oldest evidence of humankind in the U.S.--the Chicanos' ancient Indian ancestors--was found in Texas and has been dated to 35000 B.C. In the Southwest United States archeologists have found 20,000-year-old campsites of the Indians who migrated through, or permanently occupied, the Southwest, Atzlan--land of the herons, land of whiteness, the Edenic sic place of origin of the Azteca.<sup>n39</sup>

Like Huntington's Anglo-Protestant founding myth, Anzaldua suggests that the core culture of Chicanos can be traced to the Aztec homeland, and, more importantly, all Chicanos should rescue this core culture that has been threatened by artificial physical, cultural, and psychological borders.

Anzaldua's representation of the founding racial myth describes the "Aztecas del norte" as a single nation or indigenous tribe, which today would be known as Chicanos.<sup>n40</sup> More importantly, Anzaldua's narrative also calls for the re-conquest of the mythical homeland: "We have a tradition of migration, a tradition of long walks. Today we are witnessing la Migracion de los pueblos mexicanos, the return odyssey to the historical/mythological Atzlan. This time, traffic is from south to north."<sup>n41</sup> Ironically, despite her recognition of the brutal nature of the Aztec empire, Anzaldua is willing to use this historical representation of the indigenous subject as the starting point of the founding of Atzlan.<sup>n42</sup> Rather than taking the contemporary ethos of the Indian, the Mexican, or the Chicana as a starting point for a politics that responds to present needs and concrete forms of oppression, Anzaldua chooses an alien myth.<sup>n43</sup> This myth, like most myths, neglects to engage the present on its own terms, and ultimately leaves us with a story that depoliticizes the struggle of Chicanas and Latino/as more generally. Stated differently, rather than framing a political position that [\*47] engages oppressive and exploitative institutions, the reader is left with a therapeutic option--acquire a new consciousness.

For Anzaldua, "nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads."<sup>n44</sup> Even economic exploitation is subordinated to the cultural and psychological realms in her narrative. Much like Huntington argues, Anzaldua writes:

Chicanos and other people of color suffer economically for not acculturating. This voluntary (yet forced) alienation makes for psychological conflict, a kind of dual identity--we don't identify with the Anglo-American cultural values and we don't totally identify with the Mexican cultural values. We are a synergy of two cultures with various degrees of Mexicanness or Angloness.<sup>n45</sup>

Again, rather than engaging a politics of concrete, material exploitation, the reader is left with ambiguities and fluid metaphors that will somehow empower the oppressed. I would like to see how this new consciousness would empower a migrant who is being treated like an animal by a foreman in a sweatshop and/or a border patrol agent. Anzaldua's argument becomes nothing more than a poetic inspiration that seeks to create a new age consciousness in an ambiguous realm that is not just mythical, but also disengaged from the concrete material experiences of the exploited and oppressed. The institutional status quo is not challenged by this narrative.

Anzaldua argues that her notion of race opposes the "theory of the pure Aryan," and "the policy of racial purity that white America practices."<sup>n46</sup> Drawing on an essentialist narrative of genomics, Anzaldua offers the possibility of a new mixed or mestiza race that provides the basis for a new ideological, cultural, and biological cross-pollination that will, in turn, lead to the creation of a new consciousness. Presumably, this mixture can be read as the creation of a "cosmic race" that will heal the fragmented psyche of borderland inhabitants and will encourage a liberal vision of tolerance. Yet, this new cosmic race is rooted in a borderland, an exceptional and mythical place that is in between nations.

The problem with this narrative is that it continues to hinge on an essentialist notion of a race, albeit a cosmic one that is located in an ambiguous national space, the borderland space between the U.S. and Mexico. The ambiguity, the fluidity, and the mobility of this identity become fixed in this borderland abstraction. The question remains, who can be accepted as a good citizen in this fluid, albeit national place? Can an individual who [\*48] does not have the cosmic, genetic heritage find a democratic sense of equality in this national space? Is the individual forced to assimilate in order to lead a meaningful life there? Will market-oriented and capitalist structures be challenged in this space? Anzaldua's text suggests that at the end of the day her argument is yet another effort to reform a Western liberal system by creating a more tolerant national space. This borderland space is merely a celebratory space within a hegemonic liberal culture, the status quo.

### III. A Latcrit Perspective?

Over the years, LatCrit has been encouraging a conversation across disciplines. Unfortunately, the work of academics and poets like Huntington and Anzaldua provide normative arguments that contribute to various legal and public policy debates. At this particular time when immigration reform is on the legislative agenda and when right-wing rhetoric has been shaping the contours of the limits for legal reform, it is imperative that scholars engage these debates. A LatCrit approach could use as a starting point the relationship between these debates and the law, race, and nationalism.

Neither Huntington nor Anzaldua's arguments offer much in the form of a conceptual critique of law. Huntington's argument is reminiscent of a right-wing, original intent approach to the interpretation of law. Huntington's argument would encourage us to look at the "original" principles and interpretations embraced by the founding "fathers" as a guide to interpreting the constitution. His argument would ignore the important and radical transformations of both the constitutional text and the interpretation of the law that have resulted from long and protracted struggles. Huntington's argument neglects to consider how these socio-legal changes have been part of a mutually constitutive story of nation-state building that has abandoned the founding principles of his white Anglo-Saxon protestant patriotic identity. Simply put, the history of changes in law and society are descriptive of a new and constantly changing United States-American identity.

In contrast, Anzaldua's argument seems to suggest a focus on the penumbras of the law. Anzaldua's argument suggests that there is a need to break with the fixed dualities present in law in order to open up a more fluid space to re-think the law. Law can become something else that is more malleable and open to multiple sources beyond black letter law and the positivist influences of a formalist approach. This conception, however, leaves us with a quandary, namely, to what extent will this fluidity lend itself to take measure position on questions of justice. Stated differently, to what extent can the law be used to prohibit injustices? Yet, Anzaldua also suggests that law, here understood as a concrete institution, may become irrelevant when the new mestiza consciousness takes hold of the borderland [\*49] subject. Perhaps Anzaldua's critique may lead to an anarchic conception of society where law no longer matters. The ambiguities in Anzaldua's narrative leave open either of these possibilities.

The LatCrit approach argues that race is a social construction and that essentialist categories contribute to the subordination of subjects.<sup>n47</sup> To this end, any form of essentialism, strategic or otherwise, goes counter to a Lat-Crit approach. I also believe that it is possible to take a stance against racism without having to have a reified narrative of race. It is possible to denounce forms of oppression without having to accept an essentialist narrative of race. Huntington's narrative assumes the hegemonic supremacy of a founding racial-culture at the expense of other socially-constructive narratives of race. More importantly, it is premised on the idea that non-WASPs have to assume a WASP cultural ethos in order to become good citizens and in order to preserve the stability of the nation-state. Ironically, Huntington's narrative exempts from responsibility the WASP narrative, which has both created the oppressive and exploitative conditions that have led to challenges by non-whites and been responsible for the institutionalization of racist social constructions. To the extent that Huntington's ideology provides a normative basis or explanation for the new immigration reforms, it should be challenged by a LatCrit approach.

In contrast, Anzaldua's narrative merits particular attention because, while it pretends to open up a debate on race by creating a fluid or hybrid racialized space, it continues to reify genetic, biological, cultural, and ideological notions of race. The assumption, of course, is that it is possible in the first place to talk about essential races comprising a so-called cosmic race in a borderland space, a space reminiscent of traditional forms of American exceptionalism. A Lat-Crit approach to this founding argument would question the essential character of any founding racial narrative, regardless of the efforts to re-cast race in a more fluid manner.

The question of nationalism remains subject to debate in the LatCrit approach. Progressive forms of nationalism, here understood as anti-imperialist locations that provide a space for critical and autonomous self-determination, are

popular among some LatCrit scholarship.<sup>n48</sup> Likewise, critical approaches that are premised on global and post-colonial views and [\*50] premised on a human rights discourse are also present in LatCrit approaches.<sup>n49</sup> I am not sure that it is possible to reconcile these positions, but LatCrit provides a space for this tension.<sup>n50</sup> What is clear, however, is that a LatCrit approach would question nationalist forms of exclusion and subordination. Huntington's narrative is by definition antithetical to any LatCrit approach. Anzaldua's nationalism, without the essentialist racial premises, could be appropriated to create a performative space where other fixed identities could be challenged.

#### IV. Concluding Thoughts

Historically, leftist debates have been rooted in a Marxist critique of capitalism. One of the perils of the Marxist position, however, has been that it has traditionally reduced all questions of identity to a class analysis. Instead of simply becoming social constructions, race, identity, and nationalism become class-based constructions to alienate workers from one another. Of course, social narratives are also primarily shaped by capitalist structures. It follows from a Marxist perspective that once the class based or material dimensions of society are addressed, the dimensions that alienate subjects and workers in different ways, including problems of racism and nationalism, should fade away. More importantly, there is a traditional assumption that workers will rationally privilege their material well-being over other ideological forms of subordination when seeking to address conflict. Unfortunately, it is possible to argue that individuals or groups have also been willing to adopt racist and xenophobic stances against fellow workers, even when these stances may actually contribute to their own subordination and exploitation. The LatCrit approach creates a space where the multiple dimensions of those cleavages can be explored without being subordinated to a rigid class-based paradigm.<sup>n51</sup>

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to rehash the counter-critiques of the LatCrit approach,<sup>n52</sup> I do want to suggest that the focus on anti-essentialism and the multiple dimensions of subordination leave a door [\*51] open to a critique of racism and xenophobia that can draw on a traditional Marxist left. This approach, however, demands that categories of oppression should not be reduced to mere class relations. Rather, what is at stake is a concern with multiple relations of power and an understanding of context in multiple ways. Huntington's racist and xenophobic narrative provides us with yet another example of the ways in which right-wing positions continue to legitimate ideologies of human subordination in the name of white Anglo-Saxon protestant patriotism in a capitalist system. Anzaldua's argument neglects to challenge the role of capitalism in shaping the contours of racial, albeit hybrid, national space. Both narratives draw on essentialist constructions of race and the reification of a nationalist narrative in ways that continue to perpetuate a liberal ethos, an ethos that has found a constant companion in capitalist forms of subordination and exploitation. The LatCrit approach can offer potential insights into the ways that both Huntington's and Anzaldua's narratives reproduce capitalist constructions of race and nation, and how these can become normative guides for the development of legal ideologies.

#### Legal Topics:

For related research and practice materials, see the following legal topics:  
 Immigration LawImmigrantsEmployment Based PreferencesInvestors & EntrepreneursInternational LawSovereign States & IndividualsHuman RightsTorture

#### FOOTNOTES:

n1 HARVEY C. MANSFIELD, MANLINESS (2006). For a response, see generally Gary Wills, Mousiness, 53 THE N. Y. REV. OF BOOKS, June 6, 2006, available at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/19052> (last visited Sept. 11, 2007).

n2 ROBERT D. PUTNAM, BOWLING ALONE, THE COLLAPSE AND REVIVAL OF AMERICAN COMMUNITY (2000). For a response, see generally Vicente Navarro, A Critique of Social Capital, 32 INT'L J. OF HEALTH SERVICES 423 (2002); and Rodney E. Hero, Social Capital and Racial Inequality in America, 1 PERSPECTIVES ON POLITICS, March 2003, at 113.

n3 Robert D. Putnam, E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century, The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture, 30 SCANDINAVIAN POLITICAL STUDIES 137 (2007), available at <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-9477.2007.00176.x> (last visited Sept. 11, 2007).

n4 SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON, WHO ARE WE? THE CHALLENGES TO AMERICA'S NATIONAL IDENTITY (2004).

n5 For a substantive discussion of competing visions of the notion of ideology, see generally DOGMAS AND DREAMS: A READER IN MODERN POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES (Nancy S. Love ed., 3d ed. 1998).

n6 GLORIA ANZALDUA, BORDERLANDS/LA FRONTERA, THE NEW MESTIZA (2d ed. 1999).

n7 HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 4, at xvi-xvii.

n8 *Id.* at 19.

n9 Kwame Anthony Appiah, Cosmopolitan Patriots, in COSMOPOLITICS, THINKING AND FEELING BEYOND THE NATION 91 (Pheng Cheah & Bruce Robbins eds., 1998).

n10 Charles Taylor, The Politics of Recognition, in MULTICULTURALISM AND THE "POLITICS OF RECOGNITION" 37 (Amy Gutman ed., 1992).

n11 Luis R. Fraga & Gary M. Segura, Culture Clash? Contesting Notions of American Identity and the Effects of Latin American Immigration, 4 PERSPECTIVES ON POLITICS at 279, 283 (2006).

n12 HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 4, at 141.

n13 *Id.* at 46-48.

n14 *Id.* at 45.

n15 I refer to the Mexican territories as a conceptual example. In my opinion, the Mexican government was acting as an imperialist and authoritarian force against indigenous populations.

n16 See Richard Griswold del Castillo, Symposium: Manifest Destiny: The Mexican-American War and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 5 SW.J. L. & TRADE AM. 31 (1998).

n17 *Cessna v. United States*, 169 U.S. 165 (1898).

n18 Luis R. Fraga, John A. Garcia, Rodney E. Hero, Michael Jones-Correa, Valerie Martinez-Ebers, & Gary M. Segura, Su Casa Es Nuestra Casa: Latino Politics Research and the Development of American Political Science, 100 AM. POL. SCI. REV. 463, 518 (2006).

n19 HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 4, at 234.

n20 *Id.* at 237-38.

n21 Maria Pabon Lopez, Reflections on Educating Latino and Latina Undocumented Children: Beyond Plyler v. Doe, 35 SETON HALL L. REV. 1373 (2005).

n22 San Antonio Sch. District v. Rodriguez, 411 U.S. 1 (1973) (suggesting that poverty and educational attainment are not necessarily indicators for success in a capitalist society).

n23 HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 4, at 234-38. For reliable data on wage earnings among foreign-born or immigrant Latinos, see RAKESH KOCHHAR, PEW HISPANIC CTR 1995 - 2005: FOREIGN-BORN LATINOS MAKE PROGRESS ON WAGES (2007), available at <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=78>.

n24 Hoffman Plastic Compounds, Inc. v. NLRB, 535 U.S. 137 (2002) (addressing the ability of immigrant workers, documented and undocumented alike, to pursue redress for the unlawful actions of their employers).

n25 Antonio Y. Vazquez-Arroyo, Agonized Liberalism, The Liberal Theory of William E. Connolly, RADICAL PHILOSOPHY, Sep./Oct. 2004, at 8, 10.

n26 Navarro, *supra* note 2, at 427.

n27 Rachel F. Moran, Neither Black Nor White, Symposium, LatCrit Theory: Naming and Launching a New Discourse of Critical Legal Scholarship, 2 HARV.LATINO L. REV. 61 (1997).

n28 Failing to recognize how United States foreign and domestic policies have shaped Cuban immigration at a structural level, Huntington proceeds to suggest that Cuban immigration may not be as bad as Mexican immigration due to the role of class in the supposed character of the immigrants. HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 4, at 252-53.

n29 *Id.* at 317-18.

n30 ANZALDUA, *supra* note 6, at 32-33.

n31 HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 4, at 49-50.

n32 *Id.* at 246.

n33 *Id.* at 311.

n34 See, e.g., ATZLAN, *ESSAYS ON THE CHICANO HOMELAND* (Rudolfo A. Anaya & Francisco Lomeli eds., 1989).

n35 HUNTINGTON, *supra* note 4, at 11 (emphasis added). Again, note how Huntington neglects to address the crux of the exclusion of blacks from the polity by a recasting of the effects of a slave holding culture and identity through an allusion to the notion of citizenship.

n36 *Id.* at 310.

n37 *Id.* at 312.

n38 *Id.*

n39 ANZALDUA, *supra* note 6, at 26.

N40 *Id.* at 23.

n41 *Id.* at 33.

n42 *Id.* at 54.

n43 For an important critique of Anzaldua's Indian, see generally Josefina Saldana-Portillo, *Who's the Indian in Aztlan? Re-Writing Mestizaje, Indianism, and Chicanismo from Lacandon*, in *THE LATIN AMERICAN SUBALTERN STUDIES READER* 402 (Ileana Rodriguez ed., 2001).

n44 ANZALDUA, *supra* note 6, at 109.

n45 *Id.* at 85.

n46 *Id.* at 99.

n47 See, e.g., Francisco Valdes, *Latina/o Ethnicities, Critical Race Theory, and Post-Identity Politics in Postmodern Legal Culture: From Practices to Possibilities*, 9 *LA RAZA L.J.* 1, 24-30 (1996) (offering three possibilities to challenges of liberal approach to identity politics).

n48 See generally PEDRO A. MALAVET, *AMERICA'S COLONY: THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CONFLICT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND PUERTO RICO* 13, 100-16 (2004) (offering "a pluralistic communitarian proposal to reform the construction of

citizenship in traditional liberalism in general and American constitutional liberal theory in particular."); Angel R. Oquendo, National Culture in Post-National Societies, 50 VILL. L. REV. 963, 965-66 (2005).

n49 See generally Berta Esperanza Hernandez-Truyol, Globalized Citizenship: Sovereignty, Security and Soul, 50 VILL. L. REV. 1009 (2005).

n50 For an alternative perspective, see generally Maria Clara Dias, Moral Dimensions of Nationalism, 50 VILL. L. REV. 1063 (2005) (discussing nationalists' adoption of human rights policies that follow human rights norms).

n51 See generally The Proceedings of the Tenth Annual LatCrit Conference, Critical Approaches to Economic Injustice, Caribe Hilton Hotel, San Juan, Puerto Rico, Oct. 6-10, 2005, <http://biblioteca.rrp.upr.edu/LatCritCD/annualconferences/acx/finalprogramlatcritx.pdf>.

n52 For a summary of some of these debates, see generally Sylvia R. Lazos Vargas, "Kulturkamps" or "fits of spite"?: Taking the Academic Culture Wars Seriously, 35 SETON HALL L. REV. 1309 (2005).