



The ‘native’s point of view’ in the anthropology of migration

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Abstract

Under contemporary conditions of “globalization,” any anthropology of migration must confront the seeming paradox that our “globalized” era is profoundly marked by a proliferation of new (historically-specific) formations of the cultural politics of nativism (or what may be otherwise depicted in terms of “autochthony,” or “xenophobia”). Notably, during this same period, we have likewise witnessed the ascendancy of a reanimated anthropological dogma of cultural essentialism, in the guise of (pseudo-) “ontological” notions of irreducible and essentially incommensurable “difference.” This article examines the implications for an anthropology of migration that contemplates seriously the implications of the affinities between the sort of disciplinary nativism that derives from the pluralist commitments of cultural essentialism with the anti-immigrant politics of nativism that has become a defining and increasingly pervasive feature of our global political present.

Keywords

Nativism, xenophobia, autochthony, nationalism, identity politics, citizenship, pluralism

In memory of Raymond T. Smith (1925–2015), from whom I learned to think anthropologically about the politics of race and class

Over the last 25 years or so – during the period heralded as the era of ‘globalization’ or, more precisely, the era distinguished by the generalized entrenchment of neo-liberalism as the premier strategy of the global regime of capital accumulation – we have seen a proliferation on a global scale of new socio-political formations of ‘exclusion’ based on *nativism* (or what may be depicted in terms of ‘autochthony’ or ‘xenophobia’).¹ Very notably, this has been the case not only with regard to migrant

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'foreigners' (Brotherton and Kretsedemas, 2008; Ceuppens and Geschiere, 2005; Chavez, 2008; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2005 [2001]; De Genova, 2005: 56–94, 2007a; Fekete, 2009; Murray, 2011: 137–72; Perea, 1997; Shapira, 2013), but also toward minoritized fellow *citizens* who may be recast as virtual or de facto 'foreigners' – indeed, 'enemies' – *within* the space of the nation-state (Anderson, 2013; Appadurai, 1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2006; Ceuppens and Geschiere, 2005; Geschiere, 2009, 2013; Geschiere and Nyamjoh, 2000; Jackson, 2013; Mamdani, 2001; Mbembe, 2001). Likewise, a reanimated politics of expressly 'national' sovereignty has been widely articulated in terms of various formulations of a deeply *racialized* (and commonly, avowedly racist) politics of citizenship (Balibar, 1991; De Genova, 2005, 2010b, 2013a; De Genova and Ramos-Zayas, 2003; Fekete, 2009; Gilroy, 2012; Gullestad, 2002; 2006; Hervik, 2004, 2011; Sharma, 2008; see also Modood and Werbner, 1997; Pettigrew, 1998; Silverstein, 2005). Of course, none of these sociopolitical formations of nativism or racialized 'national' identity is without its deeply historical antecedents, coordinates, and underpinnings (Anderson, 2013; De Genova, 2006, 2007b; Mamdani, 2001; McKeown, 2008; Ngai, 2004; Parker, 2015; Smith, 1997). Nevertheless, under contemporary conditions of 'globalization' any anthropology of migration – much like any anthropology of citizenship, more generally – must confront the seeming paradox that our 'globalized' era is profoundly marked by a proliferation of new (historically-specific) formations of the cultural politics of nativism.

Notably, during this same period, we have likewise witnessed the ascendancy of a reanimated anthropological dogma of cultural essentialism, in the guise of (pseudo-) 'ontological' notions of irreducible and essentially incommensurable 'difference'.² It is beyond the scope of the present essay to interrogate the complicities and complacencies of this peculiar variety of quasi-theoretical culturalism in some quarters of the discipline of sociocultural anthropology. Nonetheless, it is necessary to underscore the striking affinities between this misguided anthropological fashion's predilection for truly and irredeemably 'other' Others and the wider cultural politics of suspicion, aversion, and hostility toward 'foreigners' that seems to be such a resilient and recalcitrant 'local' accomplice to our generalized subordination to the requirements of global capitalism. What indeed are the implications for an anthropology of migration that contemplates seriously the implications of the affinities between this disciplinary nativism with the anti-immigrant politics of nativism that has become a defining and increasingly pervasive feature of our global political present?

As ever more anthropological research is in fact conducted 'at home' (usually among those minoritized groups predictably and more customarily apprehensible as properly 'anthropological' Others, but particularly with regard to the 'foreign' cultures of migrants or those deemed to be 'of migrant background'), more sociologically inclined approaches might proceed to conceive of migrants as though they are merely dislocated 'natives', 'displaced' or 'uprooted' from their presumptive 'natural habitat', now subject to all sorts of assimilatory and acculturative forces (De Genova, 2005: 79–94). In addition to (re-)problematizing the mobility of migrants as a sort of spatial disobedience, such approaches tend in fact to merely re-inscribe the stability of the epistemic partition between presumptively

separate and discrete places (De Genova, 1998, 2005: 95–143, 2013b, 2015b; cf. Çağlar, 2001; Glick Schiller, 2005; Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2009). On the other hand, a more recalcitrant anthropology has predictably proven perfectly capable of refashioning its conventional ‘natives’ into newly mobile ones, in a putative anthropology of migration that simply ‘transnationalizes’ the originary locus of ‘culture’ (such as a village) by *mobilizing* ‘the native’ and all the more insistently treating people as the mere embodiments of their ‘native’ culture. Indeed, in one particularly intransigent version of this kind of culturalism, migration becomes apprehensible as merely a more expansive trans-local process of ‘indigenization’ whereby ‘villagers’ extend the work of cultural reproduction onto a transnational scale.

From this standpoint, it is remarkable to witness an eminent ‘elder’ of the disciplinary ‘tribe’ such as Marshall Sahlins – a premier guardian of the culturalist faith if ever there was one! – embracing migration as a kind of unforeseen redemption for anthropology: ‘Today the huge phenomenon of circular migration is creating a new kind of cultural formation: a determinate community without entity, extending transculturally and often transnationally from a rural centre in the so-called Third World to . . . a “social village [that] spreads over thousands of miles”’ (Sahlins, 2000, quoting Uzzell, 1979). Within the purview of this classically culturalist variety of anthropology, now re-tooled as an anthropology of migration, you can take the proverbial ‘native’ out of the village but you can’t take the ‘village’ out of the native. Here, of course, ‘village’ is merely the most hackneyed disciplinary spatial shorthand, the significance of which is really to signal the imagined place of a presumptively pure, authentic, indigenous ‘culture’.

After all, as Clifford Geertz memorably proclaimed, in a classic expression of anthropology’s constitutive and deep-seated anti-urbanism: ‘anthropologists don’t study villages . . . they study *in* villages’ (1973: 22; emphasis in original). Referring to what he celebrates as a veritable proliferation of worldly ‘culturalism’, Sahlins elsewhere refers to ‘all kinds of new cultural entities, processes, and relationships [that] are in play – transnational cultures, global flows, ethnic enclaves, diasporic cultures’, and concludes with a devout re-affirmation of anthropology as the proverbial science of ‘otherness’ which revolves around ‘regard for ideas, actions, and ontologies that are not and never were our own’, concisely summarized with the elementary aphorism: ‘Different cultures, different rationalities’ (Sahlins, 1995: 13, 14).³ For present purposes, such disciplinary conservatism – devoted above all else to the *conservation* of the concept of ‘culture’ and the figuration of anthropology’s ‘natives’ as simple repositories and receptacles of their essential and irreducible cultural (now ‘ontological’) differences – comes to be articulated as an anthropology of migration by upholding a simple dictum: once a native, always a native.

Indeed, anthropology as a discipline has remained largely impervious to Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s call for ethnographies that ‘question the symbolic world upon which “nativeness” is premised’ and which could thereby reveal that the intrinsic alterity of ‘the native’, wherever and however configured, is a fundamental ‘product – symbolic and material – of the same process that created the West’ (1991: 40). Whereas much of sociocultural anthropology has long been directed toward the

interpretive evocation of the so-called ‘native’s point of view’ (Malinowski, 1984 [1922]: 25; cf. Geertz, 1971), it may therefore be instructive to consider the following question: What precisely is at stake when an anthropologist does *not* go out from the imperial metropole to some more or less ‘faraway’ and ‘exotic’ place (Ardener, 1987) to conduct research among people in their own ‘native’ place, but rather, when the people with whom the anthropologist conducts research come to the place where it is the anthropologist who is ‘at home’, indeed, where it is the anthropologist who is a ‘native’?⁴ What happens, in other words, when we consider seriously the curious inversion through which the fact of migration means that the anthropologist becomes the ‘native’? What happens to an anthropology of migration, moreover, when we unsettle this disciplinary commitment to the epistemic stability of the located-ness of its ‘natives’ within an essentialist conception of ‘culture’? Once research on migration compels us to ‘nativize’ the anthropologist, the social location of ‘the native’ is no longer a simplistic and groundless abstraction about geographically determinate ‘cultural’ difference in some presumably isomorphic correspondence of people, culture, and place (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992). Instead, the anthropologist’s position as ‘native’ is, above all, significantly substantiated in his/her juridical status as citizen, and so entails a social relation to the state; as such, it is an eminently *political* identity, indeed a *bordered* identity (De Genova, 2015a).

To conduct research related to the migrant non-citizens of a given nation-state from the unexamined standpoint of its citizens clearly would involve the kind of uncritical ethnocentrism that is, by definition, a perversion of anthropology’s putative aims as a distinctive mode of inquiry. Of course, this is not to suggest that anthropologists of migration would ordinarily be inclined to xenophobic aversion or racist hostility toward their migrant interlocutors. (The contrary could very plausibly be expected to be almost universally the case.) Nevertheless, particularly during an historical era of heightened nativism and anti-immigrant racism, without seriously taking stock of these constitutive inequalities as material and practical conditions of possibility of the ethnographic encounter itself, and without critically destabilizing the conceptual presuppositions and conceits that accompany them, the anthropology of migration risks becoming merely one more unwitting manifestation of methodological nationalism (De Genova, 2005, 2013b; Glick Schiller, 2009; Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2003). Moreover, an anthropology of *im/migration* posited from the epistemic standpoint of the migrant-*receiving* nation-state, and from the unproblematized perspective of those who authorize themselves to speak as its natives (i.e. its citizens), recapitulates what I have called, with deliberate irony, ‘the native’s point of view’, which is to say the uncritical standpoint of the ‘native’, which is, after all, the animating impulse of the ethnocentric and chauvinistic politics of nativism (De Genova, 2005: 56–94), the very politics that most anthropologists of migration would tend to actively reject and disparage.

Anthropology and the figure of ‘the native’

Despite the increasing prominence of diverse manifestations of nativist political impulses, the anthropology of migration has scarcely begun to grapple with the

deep affinities and possible complicities between the standpoint of nativism and anthropology's disciplinary fetish regarding 'the native's point of view'. Why indeed has nativism been generally so resistant to critical anthropological scrutiny? Some very crucial clues may be excavated from an important, if under-appreciated, early essay by Arjun Appadurai (1988), dedicated in part to problematizing anthropology's distinct and defining construction of the figure of 'the native'. Of course, 'the native' in question for Appadurai was that 'technical preserve of anthropologists' (p. 36), that special if nonetheless routine terminology by which the discipline has long been complacently accustomed to refer to its conventional 'objects' of ethnographic inquiry – namely, the people subjected to anthropological study, who have been pervasively figured as those born in, and presumptively *belonging* to, the particular places under observation, 'distant from the metropolitan West' (p. 37; cf. Ardener, 1987). Here, then, is a first and fundamental clue for present purposes, because as a discipline, anthropology has been overwhelmingly oriented *elsewhere* (De Genova, 2007b). Despite the apparent descriptive neutrality of the term, Appadurai notes, 'native' is in fact not applied uniformly:

tied to the vagaries of our ideologies of authenticity ... proper natives are somehow assumed to represent their selves and their history, without distortion or residue. We [anthropologists] exempt ourselves from this sort of claim to authenticity, because we are too enamored of the complexity of our history, the diversities of our societies, and the ambiguities of our collective conscience. ... The anthropologist rarely thinks of himself as a native of some place, even though he knows that he is from somewhere. (1988: 37)

This important insight provides another clue, as there is something systemic about the anthropological disciplinary orientation that generates the almost constitutive incapacity of an anthropologist to ordinarily recognize, much less critically theorize, that the very same conceptual tools and presuppositions that s/he deploys in the objectification of the putative authenticity and cultural particularity of 'natives' ought to be plausibly applicable to him/herself. The fetishized ethnographic affiliation of anthropology's interlocutors with contrived 'native' places of ostensible 'cultural' homogeneity has thus served to detach and fracture both anthropologist and 'native' from their mutual (albeit radically unequal) lived interconnections with one another through the broader (global) configuration of social relations and political struggles (Glick Schiller, 2009, 2012).

Here, of course, we must acknowledge that 'the native' of anthropology – not unlike other terms 'taken from the vocabulary of missionaries, adventurers, and colonial administrators [that] have been expunged from anthropological usage' (Appadurai, 1988: 36) – has always been fundamentally consonant with 'the native' of colonialism. And as Frantz Fanon memorably noted, it was always the very system of colonialism that literally 'brought the native into existence' and perpetuated her existence (1963 [1961]: 36). This colonial heritage of anthropology's 'native' is precisely what Appadurai indicts when he underscores what

‘native’ really means, beyond merely being from a particular place. ‘What it means’, he clarifies emphatically, ‘is that natives are not only persons from certain places, and belong to those places, but they are also those who are *incarcerated*, or confined, in those places... Natives are in one place, a place to which explorers, administrators, missionaries, and eventually anthropologists, come. These outsiders, these observers, are regarded as quintessentially mobile; they are the movers, the seers, the knowers. The natives are immobilized by their belonging to a place’ (2008: 37; emphasis in original). Thus, we may discern another important clue for the purposes of a critical anthropology of migration: the figure of ‘the native’ has conventionally been ensconced within an image of *immobility*.

Installed within the asphyxiating perimeters of a defining (and confining) parochialism, the figure of ‘the native’ stands always in glaring juxtaposition to the eminent mobility of the anthropologist as a figure of cosmopolitanism and universality. In the case of ethnographic curiosity directed toward migrants – quintessentially mobile people who are plainly not confined to their ‘native’ place – we therefore must confront the predictable tendency toward a culturalist short-circuit that would re-parochialize migrants as ‘natives’ out-of-place, to be re-incarcerated in the ostensible place where they ‘belong’ by having that very place now reinscribed upon their own mobile bodies, or otherwise reconstituted as a migrant ‘ghetto’ (Çağlar, 2001; De Genova, 2015b). These entrenched ‘nativizing’ conceits of the anthropological endeavour are plainly inimical to the task of detecting the epistemic affinities between the standpoint of the anthropologist-as-native and the nativism that otherwise ubiquitously underwrites the politics of immigration.

Finally, and probably most importantly, Appadurai argues that ‘the critical part of the attribution of nativeness to groups in remote parts of the world is a sense that their incarceration has a moral and intellectual dimension. They are confined by what they know, feel, and believe. They are prisoners of their “mode of thought”’ (2008: 37). As Appadurai goes on to explain, while there is no necessary correspondence between this sort of cultural essentialism and the specifically spatial coordinates underpinning the ideology of ‘native’-ness as a confinement to place, they are profoundly – arguably inextricably – linked. This is because the kind of cultural essentialism at stake here is predicated on a notion of wholeness and boundedness that itself implies confinement. Here, then, we have still another clue for the purposes of problematizing the anthropology of migration. An anthropology of migration that figures migrants as mere ‘natives’-in-motion or ‘natives’-out-of-place, incarcerated as ever within contrived (if ‘transnational’ or ‘diasporic’) spaces of putative ‘cultural’ purity, simply transposes this sort of essentialist confinement, such that you can take ‘the native’ out of her village, but you can never take the ‘culture’ out of ‘the native’. After all, there is a deep affinity between the anthropological complex of ‘culture’ – classically entailing a combination of holism, integration, determinism, pluralism, and relativism (Stocking, 1968) – and the elementary recurrence of these features within nativism.

Nativism

So what exactly is nativism? While the opposition of 'native' and 'foreign' is surely crucial for adequately apprehending the anti-immigrant politics of nativism, what is ultimately decisive in defining this politics is precisely *not* a preoccupation with the 'foreign'-ness of any particular migrants (or other internal minority) so much as with the 'native'-ness of the putative citizens, and the promotion of the priority or prerogative of the latter – exclusively on the grounds of their being 'native'. Nativism, therefore, is not at all reducible to the sort of aversion to or distrust of 'foreigners' that tends to be called xenophobia, much as it may be typically entangled with it. Nativism poses a problem about 'the foreign' not necessarily because of any specific difference pertaining to the 'culture' of migrants, but rather, more fundamentally, because 'the immigrant' is simply *not* 'native'. Nativism's problem of 'the foreign', in other words, is never reducible simply to 'cultural' differences marked as 'foreign'. More importantly, nativism may be overtly disarticulated from both xenophobia and racism. Some forms of nativism, in other words, may even be fashioned as 'anti-racist' and promote their politics of immigration restriction on the basis of an ostensible commitment to racial justice. It is decisive here to emphasize this point because what is at stake is not only the more predictable right-wing nativism but also a nativism from the left, which calls for immigration restriction in the purported interests of 'native' workers in general and 'native' minorities in particular. Hence, rather than any particular rejection of the 'alien' or the 'foreign' as such, nativism is better understood as the promotion of the priority or prerogative of the 'native'.

What nativism is, then, is precisely native-ism – a preference for the 'native' exclusively on the grounds of '*being* native'; thus, it is a premier exemplar of 'identity' politics (Michaels, 1995: 13–14). 'The power of nativism', Walter Benn Michaels argues persuasively, 'depends upon its pluralism, its transcendence of questions about superiority and inferiority. The point of suspending the question of [the nation]'s goodness is to make clear the fact that our attachment to it is based only on our identity with it' (1995: 77). Rather than making claims for the superiority or inferiority of one's 'nation', 'culture' or 'race', therefore, nativism rejects the validity of a common hierarchical scale of comparison in favour of a relativistic politics of 'identity' that assumes the existence of a plurality of irreducibly distinct and essentially different *groups*. Once the differences among such 'groups' are posited as mutually exclusive and absolute, these differences serve to define them – *as groups* – in terms of their respectively incommensurable 'identities'. In this respect, nativism's pluralist commitment to essentialized difference – difference as such – is anti-assimilationist; it refuses any basis for overlap or intersection among those apparently fundamental differences. Thus, nativism tends to render each 'identity', in and of itself, as unrelated, incommensurable, incomparable, and finally incompatible (Michaels, 1995: 66). In the nativist project, therefore, a conception of identity (based on the assumption of a plurality of discrete groups) may be variously posited in terms of 'culture', or 'race', or 'nation' – and it ultimately makes very little difference to its more elementary politics of *identitarian* difference.

'In pluralism', Michaels contends, 'one prefers one's own race' – or one's own 'culture' or 'nation' – 'not because it is superior but because it is one's own' (1995: 67). Furthermore, the mere plurality of such 'group' differences – whether these are glossed as 'cultural', 'religious', 'ethnic', 'racial', or 'national' – tends to be presumed to be sufficient to reify (and naturalize) the basic divisions and effectively permanent antagonisms among them (Smith, 1996: 101–9).

Nativism can ultimately relinquish not only overt references to 'race' but also explicit commitments to particular claims of 'culture' as well. Nevertheless, what nativism cannot do without is the more elementary pluralism that both racist and culturalist understandings of difference share. Nativism must always privilege one or another notion of 'identity' against the rest. Indeed, this is precisely what nativism serves to do for nationalism – it produces an identitarian 'we' that can appear to resolve a fundamental problem of all nationalisms, namely, that there is nothing natural or objective or intrinsically necessary about any 'nation'. Nativism thus serves to mediate the more or less accidental character of 'the nation'. Whereas Benedict Anderson has discerned the necessity for every nation to have limits – the requirement of imagining any nation as a unity defined by boundaries (1991 [1983]: 7), the contingency of all nations derives from their fundamental lack of any organic unity or natural, immutable boundaries. Thus, nativism's pluralism supplies nationalism with a politics of 'identity'. More precisely, nativism equips the nation-state with a 'national identity' by which to fashion its people. It posits a 'we' whose identity is simply incommensurable with everything external and 'alien' to it. In his classic study of 19th-century nativism, John Higham has incisively observed that 'through each separate [nativist] hostility runs the connecting, energizing force of modern nationalism' (1988 [1955]: 4), but the more pertinent concern may be to identify how nativism is indeed a unifying and animating force within nationalism itself.⁵ Nationalism may exceed its nativist moment, but in this respect, the identity politics of nativism can never be fully excised. No nationalism is ever truly recuperable from its nativism.

Pluralist affinities: The inversion of 'native'-ness and the subversion of the 'native's point of view'

By now, it should be clear that the foundational pluralism and relativism of the modern anthropological conception of 'culture' (Stocking, 1968), which have been so uncritically reinvigorated in the name of the so-called 'ontological turn', are shared by nativism's politics of identity, predicated upon a pluralism of essentially incompatible and mutually exclusive differences that demarcate the elementary division between 'native' and 'foreigner'. This affinity between the politics of nativism and what can be called anthropological nativism is as revealing as it ought to be troubling. This is all the more relevant for any purported anthropology of migration precisely because of the uncanny inversion of the problem of 'native'-ness that arises when it is the anthropologist who turns out to be the only 'native', in any substantive socio-political sense, within the ethnographic encounter.

Within the standard politics of 'immigration', all discourses concerning 'immigrants' are ultimately unified by what I am calling the 'native's point of view'. Both liberal and conservative discourses of 'immigration' collude in the shared presumption of their own 'native'-ness. The 'native's point of view' is an effect of the nativist presupposition of any nationalism by which participants on both sides in the debate authorize themselves as citizens to debate the questions of immigration policy, and thereby tend to produce themselves as its 'natives'. Disagreements notwithstanding, the disputes that unite both sides in discourse are systematically concerned with what a native 'we' should do with a foreign 'them' and are defined around a variety of contending interpretations of what might be best for 'the nation' ('our nation') and its citizens ('us'). In this regard, the anthropologist-as-native may be inclined to sincerely situate him/herself as a sympathetic defender of migrants and as a champion of 'immigrants' rights' (elusive or illusory as those may often be, in fact). Without a rigorous critique of the nativist presuppositions that undergird this discursive field, however, anthropologists become often unwitting liberal accomplices to the dominant discourse. It could not be otherwise without a systematic effort to formulate an anthropology of migration from the critical standpoint of migration itself – one that could subvert the 'native's point of view' that supplies the identitarian orientation of any nationalism. An anthropology of migration adequate to the analytical task of foreclosing nativism therefore cannot confine itself to the customary disciplinary conceit that essentializes and fetishizes cultural 'difference' which, after all, shares with nativism its elementary identitarian pluralism.

For an anthropology of migration to be able to grasp anything of the celebrated 'native's point of view' of disciplinary legend – to be able, in other words, to apprehend the critical perspectives and lived experiences of migrants – the anthropologist-as-native is now compelled to systematically *repudiate* his own 'native's point of view', the self-evident standpoint of the 'native', that is the epistemic burden of his birthright (De Genova, 2005: 56–94). This is more than merely a matter of ideas or a 'point of view', however, because the anthropologist's problematic self-identification with any semblance of unproblematic 'belonging' within the space of his 'own' natal (nation-)state – the capacity to take for granted his own 'native'-ness, indeed, to not even recognize it as a problem – corresponds, materially and practically, to the inequality intrinsic to his citizenship itself.⁶ Talal Asad memorably denounced the ethnographic myopia that systematically precluded anthropological knowledge from including within its purview a critical analysis of the wider socio-political system of colonialism, whereby the very distinctly disciplinary type of anthropological expertise could ultimately only be judged to have been, in his damning phrase, 'malformed' (1973: 18). So also for the sort of anthropology of migration that is posited from the uncritical (effectively nativist) standpoint of the (non-migrant) citizen of a (migrant-'receiving') nation-state, which could only ever re-inscribe the global inequalities that geo-politically and juridically *produce* mobile people who cross state borders as non-citizen 'outsiders', 'foreigners', indeed, as 'migrants' (De Genova, 2013b; Glick Schiller, 2009).

A truly critical anthropology of migration must be capacious enough to theorize migration in relation to both the transnational class politics of human mobility, which routinely transposes a global relation of capital and labour into the ostensibly insular statist ('national') politics of 'immigration' and border policing, as well as a global postcolonial politics of race that reactivates and refortifies 'national' (or supranational) state borders as so many 'colour lines', which nevertheless may be seen as often as not to dissimulate race in favour of a nativist politics of citizenship. Thus, such an anthropology would therefore be predicated upon the irresistible and incorrigible inclination of human mobility to surmount any 'legal [or other] extra-economic impediments to its freedom of movement' (Marx, 1976 [1867]: 1013). Over and against any regime of state borders and immigration controls – indeed, over and against any regime for the government of mobility, more generally – a genuinely critical anthropology of migration would have to take as its first premise the priority and prerogative of the elemental and elementary human freedom of movement.

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1. Much of my work has been dedicated to the problematization of any simplistic binary of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion', in part through the elaboration of the concepts of 'inclusion through illegalization' (De Genova, 2002: 439, 2004: 173, 2005: 234) and 'inclusion through exclusion' (De Genova 2010a, 2010b, 2013a).
2. For an altogether different theorization of the question of ontology in relation to migration, labour, and the problem of anthropology, see De Genova (2012; cf. 2010a).
3. Both within anthropology and beyond, moreover, culturalist conceptions of 'diaspora' or (migrant) 'community' commonly provide easy surrogates for essentialist notions of 'culture', effectively trans-localizing what remains an effectively bounded and insular formation of presumptive identity and ascriptive belonging.
4. Here, I am not referring to the parallel, explicit, more or less deliberate positions adopted, sometimes critically, sometimes not, by self-styled 'native anthropologists' (e.g. Abu-Lughod, 1991; Limón, 1991).
5. Notably, the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), a prominent advocacy organization dedicated to US immigration restriction, has sought to utilize the scholarly writings and centrist political interventions of John Higham – as the most celebrated 'expert' on nativism – in the effort to deflect the allegation of nativism, while yet in support of their own nativist agenda (see: <http://cis.org/higham>). I am grateful to Nina Glick Schiller for calling my attention to this distinctly neoconservative gesture of appropriation.

6. Indeed, one of the foundational inequalities of citizenship derives from the patriarchal domination of women; hence, my use of the masculine pronoun here is deliberate, inasmuch as feminist scholarship has long problematized the notion that women have ever had any semblance of equal citizenship.

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