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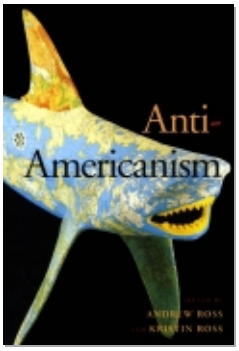
4: U.S. Prepotencia: Latin Americans Respond



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U.S. *Prepotencia*

Latin Americans Respond

George Yúdice

LATIN AMERICANS ARE DISPARATE PEOPLES, but there are few things that unite them more than their shared resentment at the persistent record of U.S. high-handedness in the region as a whole. Historically, and especially after Washington stepped up its regional interventions after the Spanish-Cuban-American War (1895–1898), many political figures and writers developed a continental Hispanic or Latin Americanist position that reprised a historical counterpoint between Iberian and Anglo-Saxon peoples. The advocates of this Latin Americanism emphasized the region's cultural and aesthetic identity over the overweening utilitarianism of the North. Equating the United States with the thin culture of nineteenth-century positivism, they associated Latin America with a new classicism based in part on its modern interpretation of the "Latin" legacy and its connections to Greek civilization. Primary among these values was an appreciation of *mestizaje,* which was seen to contrast markedly with white racial suprematism in the United States.

For the Cuban José Martí, for example, U.S. imperialism was the outward manifestation of a utilitarian mentality that underpinned the political and economic expedience of civic life within the United States. Such views were echoed in the observations of other political and intellectual figures of the early twentieth century. In his famous essay *Ariel* (1900), the Uruguayan writer José Enrique Rodó urged Latin American youth to cultivate their aesthetic sensibilities over and above the utilitarian preferences of North Americans. Only in this way, he argued, would disinterest guide their capacity to govern more justly. The Argentine diplomat and writer Manuel Ugarte upheld Latin Americanism

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as the cultural antidote to U.S. imperialism in *The Destiny of a Continent* (1923). In *The Cosmic Race,* the Mexican intellectual and politician José Vasconcelos contrasted the U.S. penchant for apartheid with the Latin American proclivity to mix racially. These and other critics embraced regional nationalism, continental Latin Americanism, and a renewed Hispanism as bulwarks with which to stave off the predatory actions of the United States. Today, with some exceptions, the pointed nationalism and the fervent Latin Americanism of the early twentieth century have not survived well. Nor has the culturalism of these earlier critics, largely because of the pervasive influence of U.S. commercial culture, particularly in Central America, the Caribbean, and the northernmost countries of South America.

Nonetheless, there has been a noticeable move toward Latin American economic and cultural integration in recent years, not least because of widespread dissatisfaction with twenty years of neoliberal policies, structural adjustment programs, and unequal terms of trade that resulted in ever greater income gaps. Regional integration is seen as an alternative to incorporation into a U.S.-led Free Trade Area of the Americas. In his recent book, *Latinoamericanos buscando lugar en este siglo* [Latin Americans Seeking a Place in This Century] (2002), Néstor García Canclini advocates policies for promoting Latin American cultural integration in the new global landscape so that "our identity will not be read in quotation marks." Integration for him does not translate into a continentwide version of nationalism but rather is a means to acknowledge the diasporas that have served to redefine Latin America. In particular, integration means regaining sufficient control over the means of production and distribution so that Latin American cultures are not Rickymartinized or choked off by global conglomerates. García Canclini argues that these dreaded outcomes should not be conceived of as "Americanization"—they are, instead, a corporatization of culture—and he cautions against a knee-jerk anti-Americanism, especially when "American" is also Latin American. Indeed, he calls for establishing strong connections with the Latin American diaspora in the United States in the interest of staking out a place for a truly different society.

The increasing hybridization of Latin Americanness has not rendered redundant the premises of the Bolivarian tradition, which, for the past two centuries, has been a repository of hope for Latin American integration. While clearly aimed at diminishing the ability of the United States to meddle in the affairs of the nations of the south, the new inte-

gration initiatives are also proactive and seek to define nonreactive terms for collaboration and cooperation. This affirmative character is most clearly discernible in the negotiations among the countries of the Common Market of the South (Mercosur), especially now that Brazil and Argentina are under the progressive leadership, respectively, of Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva and Néstor Kirchner. Trade and economic policy are counterbalanced by serious social justice concerns that reflect two decades of democratization movements in both countries. Both of these leaders have given Latin American politics the kind of hope that hasn't been seen since the euphoria of (re)democratization in the 1980s.

Placing all his hopes in a Latin American confederation that never materialized, Bolívar fretted over the role of the United States in the hemisphere, predicting that "in the name of freedom the U.S. seems destined by Providence to bring the plague of misery on [Latin] America" (Bolívar 2001).[1] Accordingly, Bolívar sought an integration that excluded the United States. Given the need for trade ties with the United States, this exclusion was unworkable, both then and now. Yet Bolivar's suspicion has only heightened over time as the United States has used trade and economic policies regarding Latin America as political intervention in the region by other means. U.S. domestic subsidies to large-scale industrial farming, for example, have devastated the production of corn—the most important Mexican staple. U.S. economic policy makers are also in a position to push for tough-love decisions at the IMF, as they opted to do in December 2001 by lobbying for the denial of further loans to Argentina, which led to default and political chaos. As the *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman (2002) saw it, IMF officials took their cue directly from the Bush administration and acted "like medieval doctors who insisted on bleeding their patients, and repeated the procedure when the bleeding made them sicker—prescribing austerity and still more austerity, right to the end." Nor, he added, did Latin Americans regard the United States as an innocent in this instance and others. In general, *estadounidenses* have a hard time understanding this perception, largely because they are unaware of Washington's long history of interventions, all too resonant for Latin Americans, beginning with the expropriation of Mexican lands in 1846–1848 and continuing unabated until the present day.[2]

With this history of two centuries of self-serving intervention in mind, it is impossible to argue that anti-Americanism should simply be dismissed as a misplaced animus. Yet, some prominent critics have

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advocated laying aside the animus as the most beneficial path for Latin America to adopt. The former Mexican minister of foreign relations Jorge Castañeda recently (2003) cautioned that venting against *pinches gringos* [fucking gringos] is not a viable political option; it doesn't win any points in trade agreements, border negotiations, immigrant guest-worker arrangements, and amnesty legislation. Yet, as Castañeda would surely concede, Mexican overtures and concessions did not establish a strong enough relationship to withstand the Bush administration's abandonment of negotiations with its southern neighbor in the wake of the September 11 attacks and its subsequent, exclusive turn of attention to the Middle East and South and Central Asia.

As Enrique Krauze noted, Latin America went entirely unmentioned in Bush's State of the Union speech in January 2003, and its citizens are now "aware that the United States has returned to an essentially reactive diplomacy that seems to come to life only when there are missiles pointing at its shores, Marxist guerrillas in the jungles, or revolutionary governments in the old banana republics" (Krauze 2003). Not even when the United States needed Mexican and Chilean votes on the UN Security Council did its representatives take a friendlier stance. Instead, Mexico was warned that there could be reprisals against Mexicans and Mexican Americans similar to those taken against the Japanese during World War II, if Mexico did not cast its vote for war. Bush himself stated that countries opposed to the U.S. war on Iraq would face "discipline" (quoted in Krugman 2003).

Shame at the policies of the Bush administration is no doubt more widespread in the United States than is reported in its mainstream media. To the degree that there is, among *estadounidenses,* this difference of opinion and sentiment regarding the United States's intervention in Iraq and other countries, some degree of anti-Americanism is partly misplaced. Indeed, many *estadounidenses* agree with the vast majority of people throughout the world who see the United States as a rogue state. Be that as it may, it is disingenuous, in my view, to ignore the overwhelming anti-American sentiment of the majority of Latin Americans. Even those who sympathized with the friends and relatives of victims of the September 11 attacks felt these sentiments give way to a more complex mix of emotions as the Bush administration adopted a unilateral stance for which other countries have already paid dearly. The dramatic decline of interest in the economies of the region has been diffi-

cult to ignore. Yet, again, Latin Americans were made to feel that they just don't matter.

To sample some of the complexity of these emotions, I decided to conduct an informal survey of a number of Latin American colleagues and acquaintances in the spring of 2003. In what follows, I draw liberally upon the results, alongside reports gleaned from the Latin American press before and after that date. In general, the results have led me to conclude that we are closer than ever to the early 1960s "Yankee go home" sentiment south of the Rio Bravo. And this despite the fact that Latin Americans both resemble *estadounidenses* in many external cultural trappings (e.g., consumerism), as mentioned by several respondents to my survey, and need the United States more than ever as a trading partner.

In drawing on this survey, I do not pretend to provide hard and fast scientific evidence.[3] Instead, I am trying to focus on the rather unmeasurable phenomenon of "international feeling." To be sure, indicators of animus can be devised, but I am less interested in such instruments than in the dramatic and performative aspects of the frustration, resentment, and exasperation that so many Latin Americans feel over the bullying arrogance or *prepotencia* of U.S. actions. This *prepotencia*—a word that conveys so much more than arrogance and that conveys high-handedness and abuse of power—was mentioned by *all* of my respondents and can be found in the historical record going as far back as Bolívar. According to Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta (2001), emotions help channel action. They dredge up those "uncomfortable memories" mentioned by Rohter (2003) in connection with Latin American anti-Americanism, which are sedimented in history; they (re)activate "forms of defiance patterned by historical and structural forces" (Eckstein 2001: xv).

If the United States is not to find itself a perennial target of worldwide opposition, *estadounidenses* will have to work hard to reverse the animus. But this cannot be done by insulting people's intelligence and feelings by recourse to Hollywood-style publicity. In the wake of September 11, the U.S. government enlisted the entertainment industries. Muhammad Ali and other celebrities were sought out for propaganda films shown in Islamic countries (Associated Press 2001). According to a *New York Times* report, the State Department planned "a television and advertising campaign to try to influence Islamic opinion; one segment

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could feature American celebrities, including sports stars, and a more emotional message" (Gordon 2001). Latin Americans, along with critics elsewhere, wondered whether the Bush administration was in touch with reality in assuming that Ali or some other celebrity could sell the U.S. invasion as if it were Coca-Cola. In any event, such crude PR could only backfire: in general, the military-industrial-media-entertainment complex under Bush has only exacerbated global anti-Americanism.

During the war in Iraq, viewers throughout Latin America were subjected to coverage that had been edited in a way that "violated CNN's own style manuals . . . and the norm of providing equal access to alternative opinions. In all of these respects, CNN broke its own codes, compelled by jingoism and blood-thirsty vengeance" (Piscitelli 2001). Significantly, no one suggested a Hollywood campaign aimed at improving the U.S. image among Latin Americans, no doubt because the region is perceived to be quite unimportant to the "war on terrorism." It may not be important at this juncture for Latin Americans to feel better disposed to *estadounidenses*—there is no other option, according to some analysts, than for the countries of the region to fall in line with the United States, since they have lost all capacity for resistance (Binder 2002: 100)—but they may be important allies in a not too distant future. Accordingly, Washington ought to be making some concessions in pursuit of its self-interest, whether or not its politicians take seriously their own rhetoric about reducing poverty and democratizing the world.

Critics of anti-Americanism like Jean-François Revel argue that "U.S.-bashers" are either reacting out of timidity in taking action on behalf of national security (Europe) or irrationally putting on blinders regarding the desire of developing countries to have greater access to rich markets and corporate investment. Critics to the left of Revel argue that anti-Americanists are overshooting the targets of their animus by indicting all *estadounidenses*, thereby ignoring the diversity of viewpoints in the United States. This was the critique that Adolfo Gilly, a distinguished visiting Latin American historian, leveled at an early version of this paper, presented at NYU in February 2003. In his view, I had exaggerated the extent of anti-American sentiment among Latin Americans. The cases of acute anti-Americanism that I cited were exceptional, he argued, and the vast majority of Latin Americans could easily distinguish between the "American" people and the U.S. government as the object of their protest. While there is some truth to this observation, in the ensuing year, I have gotten a greater sense that the repudiation of the U.S.

government's actions in international affairs extends increasingly to what many Latin Americans imagine the majority of *estadounidenses* to be like. Most of the respondents to my survey report an increase in a generalized anti-Americanism that extends to all *estadounidenses.* No doubt, this tendency to imagine all *estadounidenses* as complicit with the Bush agenda is largely a result of the paucity of reporting on domestic opposition to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. After all, major media venues in the United States "narrate the nation to itself," as García Canclini (2003) notes, and because of their global reach, their framing of the news has an international impact. By contrast with the most popular media outlets among *estadounidenses,* Latin American newspapers and newscasters are not inhibited in their reporting on war casualties and the like. Nor have more recent political developments in the United States helped alter this perception. The election of Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor of California in October 2003 hardly mitigated the feeling among many Latin Americans that *estadounidenses* have bought into a noxious populism, strengthening the conditions for postmodern-style fascism.

On the evidence of my survey, the reactions to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, were like a release of pent-up rage at the long history of U.S. interventions in the region's affairs. Some prominent Latin American intellectuals felt vindicated, as if the attacks were also a retaliatory strike on their behalf. Perhaps the most extreme response was that of Hebe Pastor de Bonafini, a founder of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the group most identified with protest against the disappearances of dissenters carried out by the authoritarian military dictators of Argentina in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Bonafini declared her admiration for the men who piloted the planes that struck the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. She opined that they "declared war with their bodies, driving a plane that smashed and knocked the shit out of the greatest power on earth. It made me happy. Some may think that is wrong. Each will have to evaluate it and think about it. I will not be false. I will make a toast to my children, for so many who have died, for the end to the [Cuban] blockade." She also saw the deaths as a payback for the thousands of disappeared Argentines. "Now [North Americans live] the same fear that they produced in us, with persecution, disappearances and torture. . . . The [North American] people remained silent and even applauded the wars." Bonafini uttered these words during a class session

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on "imperialist war" [*Sobre la guerra imperialista*] at the People's Universidad Popular de las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo. While there were conflicting opinions expressed in this forum (Natalichio et al. 2001; Iramain 2001), important intellectuals, like David Viñas, Sergio Schoklender, and Vicente Zito Lema, expressed views quite similar to Bonafini's.

Viñas characterized the attacks as an expression of class struggle, a retaliation from below against the "institutional violence of empire" and the "violence encysted above." He compared these actions of the "subjected and humiliated of the world" to those of Robespierre and Castelli.[4] Zito Lema agreed with this "class analysis" and characterized Osama bin Laden as a revolutionary comparable to San Martín, Belgrano, Artigas, Che Guevara, and his "comrades fallen in battle" during the cold war. Shoklender did not see these as terrorist acts but, using the rhetoric of the U.S. government, as "surgical operations against specific power centers" of the "enemy that is destroying us." He added that he was happy to see that the United States was not invulnerable and that "we have the possibility to resist it and confront it."

While Latin American intellectuals are entitled to begrudge and to resist U.S. interventions in their countries, the idea that the death of three thousand people from eighty countries, many of them workers and an inestimable number of them undocumented, can be regarded as retribution shows an egregious lack of judgment and a lapse in the human rights activism for which Bonafini and some of these other activists and intellectuals are known. What I am trying to emphasize here, however, is the intensity of their feelings, which led many to conclude that the United States had finally got a taste of its own medicine. As the Puerto Rican intellectual and academic Ramón Grosfoguel put it: "One can't expect that the North American state can bomb Iraq for an entire decade, finance the Israeli state's daily massacre of Palestinians, invade Panama with a death toll of thousands, train military executioners in the arts of terrorism in the School of the Americas, and subsidize military dictatorships throughout the world for decades on end without someone someday getting it dished back" (2002: 132).

There was also a sense of retribution expressed in a performance by the Mexican performer Jesusa Rodríguez and the Argentine actress Liliana Felipe that I witnessed in Mexico City in early October 2001. It was the most unmerciful treatment of the event that I have seen or read about; any notion of tragedy, a term used in many newspaper reports, was rejected. The actresses vented much spleen, including jokes about

the rain of bodies falling from the Twin Towers. It appeared to be cathartic to them to publicly indulge their anger at the *estadounidenses* who had gotten a taste of their own medicine. Several of the Mexican friends who took me to the performance were deeply embarrassed. I myself was torn between commiseration with the aggrieved relatives whom I had seen in New York in the aftermath of the attacks and understanding that we *estadounidenses* could no longer shield ourselves from the many reasons why "they hate us so much."

Similarly, one of the Brazilian respondents reported that "a significant number of people identified with the attackers. In the artistic sphere, there was an episode that generated much debate and commotion. CEP 2000, a well-known group of young poets, performers, and artists, quite influential in Rio de Janeiro, sponsored a commemoration in which they installed numerous television screens of different sizes showing images of the exploding towers and groups of people applauding and shouting 'Hosanna bin Laden,' as they genuflected in religious ritual. Many in the audience did the same." Another respondent, from Cuba, wrote that he witnessed many of his countrymen "applauding, some openly and others more discreetly, and celebrating that *estadounidenses* were getting a taste of their own infliction of war, in their flesh and not only in Hollywood films." Academics who had either studied or worked at U.S. institutions for many years made quite brazen statements: "Anti-Americanism will exist so long as the actions that provoke that anti-Americanism continue"; "anti-Americanism is vengeance for the treatment of our immigrants"; "the reason for anti-Americanism is that *estadounidenses* are egotistic and supremacists, they disdain the rest of the world and define themselves in opposition to the rest of the world"; "violence is not justifiable, but allowing so many children to die, not doing anything about the millions who starve worldwide as *estadounidenses* generate huge agricultural surpluses, among other things, are also forms of violence that the U.S. tolerates."

The premise that sharing U.S.-style values would make others more sympathetic to the United States is belied by another respondent's analysis of the contradictory situation in Brazil. From the cultural point of view, he wrote, Brazil more and more resembles the United States, "as in the Workers' Party's democratic pageantry or the establishment of quotas for Afro-Brazilian minorities in the university and in public service. Pop culture has a massive presence in all sectors of the culture industries: I can't remember the Oscars ever having such importance as

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now. [This is a reference to the extensive Internet campaign among Brazilians to canvass votes for *Central Station* and *City of God* in the Oscar competition.] And then there is the complex issue of gay identity—should one assume it or not? This is a very American thing. Even in areas that used to be dominated completely by European models, such as literary and cultural criticism, one sees the influential presence of North Americans or those who work in the U.S. In sum, U.S. cultural influence might be pervasive but never before has regard for the U.S. been so low."

In response to my query on the perception of U.S. culture now and five or ten years ago, respondents agreed that even though the United States might be influential in their own society and in their own daily life, their views of U.S. culture had altered. "My perceptions have changed significantly," wrote one participant. "I am extremely concerned about U.S. culture's provincialism, derived in good measure from an information-communication system that binds them to a very restricted view of the world. Never did I have to go out of my way to make an effort to 'feel that I was in the world' as when I was a visiting scholar at Stanford. . . . The world seemed so distant, even evanescent, and the effort to [be in the world] so exhausting that I almost gave up and nearly accepted that CNN or Fox view of the world with which I was bombarded. . . . Gringoness [*la gringuidad*] is such a challenging and complicated object of reflexion. Its individualism, puritanism, belief in predestination, etc. preoccupy me. I guess I believe that anti-Americanism is less a reaction to an overwhelming and deafening power than a reaction to the spectacularization of a power that fails to establish contact with, learn from and gain the respect of other cultures and nations."

Others pointed out that the Bush administration and the media elites had taken advantage of September 11 to launch a vast attack at the level of civilization itself, "drawing others into the conflict, by any means necessary. Other countries, many of them European—Italy and Germany in the 1970s, Ireland and Spain for decades—have suffered all kinds of terrorist attacks but the international community never considered these as an attack on Western civilization as it is now being endlessly imaged and sold to us, and never suspended the revered rule of law so shamelessly. This, together with the numerous interventions, sponsorship of coups d'etat and wars, and support for dictatorships, is what makes it hard to decide whether or not the U.S. deserves the pun-

ishment that one would otherwise believe that no nation deserves. Said otherwise and using the terms of the German guerrillas of the 1970s, it's a matter of 'socializing the pain' (one of the first actions of the Baader-Meinhoff was to bomb a supermarket so that Germans would experience the suffering of the Vietnamese)."

Almost all of my respondents characterized the U.S. campaign against terrorism as hypocritical, a view that echoes throughout the Latin American media. Efforts on the part of U.S. officials to show concern for the devastation in Iraq did not help matters. For example, at a September 2003 meeting of the Organization of American States, held in Mexico City, the U.S. representatives from the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs offended their peers from the other member states by presenting an Iraq heritage protection initiative that was little more than a blatant fund-raising pitch. The relevant communiqué—"How to Donate Money to the Reconstruction of Iraqi Cultural Heritage"—explained that the United States had spearheaded the implementation of the Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act and boasted about its track record in protecting cultural heritage. Nowhere was there any mention of the destruction of cultural sites during the war on Iraq in March 2003. This blatant omission, added to the generally inept propaganda efforts undertaken by the State Department, only reinforced the disbelief and anger felt by other representatives.

A similar reaction was elicited by the impression that the Bush administration's business cronies are reaping war profits. As one respondent noted, Washington is "making billions of dollars available to U.S. companies for reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq. The U.S. government bailed out the airline *industry* but not the 100,000 airline *employees*. The U.S. government will spend billions on Iraq and the `attack on terrorism' while social spending in the U.S. is cut and aid to Latin America and developing countries eliminated." When the United States does provide aid, such as the $30 billion bailout of Brazil in early August 2002, it does not reflect any genuine concern for Latin Americans. On the contrary, as a *New York Times* reporter suggested, the bailout safeguards the vast interests of American banks like Citigroup, Fleet Boston, and J. P. Morgan Chase and their many industrial investments in Brazil (Andrews 2002).

The phrase "forgotten friends" captures quite well the recent state of U.S–Latin American relations: the lack of response to the Argentine

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economic crisis, the closing of the U.S.-Mexico border, and the abandonment of an amnesty for Mexican and Latin American undocumented workers. The one area in which the United States has not forgotten its friends—the drug war—is hardly uncontroversial. Washington has cast its antiterrorist net ever wider by assimilating drug traffic and guerrilla movements into an integrated antiterrorism policy aimed at military buildup rather than at resolving the economic crisis for farmers and the unemployed. Even the piracy of media and software products—of strategic interest to the U.S. culture industries—has been included under the rubric of this antiterrorism policy, thereby safeguarding corporate interests in this sector. One respondent was aghast that Latin American militaries, "which had lost their legitimacy in the dictatorship years, are now being given a spurious place in the security business." Latin American reporters like Miguel Bonasso (2001) see the inclusion of Latin American militaries in Operation Centaur as a way of increasing their budgets. According to Fuentes and Rojas Aravena (2003), this is the only way for them to increase their funding.

The reach of such security and surveillance schemes is not limited to terrorism and piracy suspects but extends to millions of Latin Americans who have voiced outrage when the schemes were uncovered. As Rohter reports, "the United States has been quietly buying up computerized data banks that contain the names, addresses, telephone listings and identity card numbers of hundreds of millions of people in 10 Latin American countries [drawing] broad criticism and expressions of alarm throughout the region" (2003). The Nobel Peace Prize winner Oscar Arias denounced this increase in militarization and securitization, arguing that a mere 5 percent of defense expenditures, rerouted to humanitarian defense, could allay hunger, eliminate disease, increase education, and safeguard the environment (Hulshizer 2002).

In conclusion, it is important, first of all, to acknowledge the intensity of Latin American emotion on the topic of anti-Americanism. However, we must also see beyond the expressions of vindication or glee of the sort offered by some of my survey participants in their responses to the September 11 attacks. These emotions are surface symptoms, but they make sense when viewed against the cumulative backdrop of the *prepotencia* of deleterious U.S. policies and actions in the region, and they are actively feeding the new sense of regional solidarity. This continental identity is further bolstered by a shared antipathy to the current U.S. positions on neoliberal trade, the death penalty, global warming,

preemptive force, and global consumerism (Fresnada 2000). Latin Americans also tend to share, along with western Europeans, the belief that U.S.-style globalization is further eroding sovereignty and traditional cultures (Pew Research Center 2003). Finally, there is the fear that the United States has entered a proto-fascist phase of its political development, but that topic warrants an entirely new survey.

NOTES

1. There were 517 hits on Google for this statement by Bolívar, many of them invoking it in the context of the U.S. war on Iraq.

2. Like many others, including my respondents, I object to the use of the term "American" to refer to U.S. citizens and hence use the Spanish term *estadounidenses,* or Unitedstatesians, which, although awkward in English, sounds perfectly normal in Spanish. However, at times I use the term—in quotes—to reflect the way that most U.S. citizens, the press, and the media refer to themselves.

3. In February 2003, in preparation for writing the first version of this essay, I sent a request to about fifty Latin American friends and acquaintances for them to answer seven questions. I received twenty responses. I asked the following questions:

> Have you observed an increase in anti-Americanism in the past few years? If so, exactly when would you date this increase? Also, if there was an increase, what are the reasons for it? (2) Do you think that the events on September 11, 2001, contributed to anti-Americanism? Was there sympathy toward the victims of the World Trade Center? (3) Some have argued that *estadounidenses* deserved such an attack. Do you find such an argument justified? Why or why not? (4) Do you think the war in Afghanistan or the impending war in Iraq are justified? Do they contribute to anti-American sentiment? Among whom? (5) Do you believe that anti-American sentiments extend to all *estadounidenses*? Are they limited? (6) How do you see U.S. culture today? Has there been a change in your view over the past five years? (7) What else can you add about anti-Americanism?

Not everyone who responded wanted to be cited, so for the sake of consistency I do not divulge respondents' names, with one exception. Octavio Getino and Susana Velleggia published their response to me in the online journal *Pimienta Negra.* Like them, several respondents gave very long and detailed answers, which went beyond the scope of this essay.

My survey has no scientific pretensions. In order to broach the topic, however, I did feel that I could rely on the wisdom of people whom I have known

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to be reliable social and cultural analysts. By "reliable" I mean that they do not simply vent their partisan allegiances but take a range of arguments seriously in their analyses. They do not, of course, make any pretense of objective neutrality, since they, like myself, do not believe that such a position exists.

4. All of the quotations from the discourses of Viñas, Bonafini, Shoklender, and Lema can be found in Verbitsky (October 11, 2001). The complete text of Bonafini's discourse can be found in Bonafini (2001).

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