Abstract

In this essay, I critically examined how the Chinese illegal immigrants were represented by the U.S. newspapers between the years 2000 and 2010. Four themes were unearthed. These four themes are 1) New Discourse of Racial Binary in Illegal Immigration, 2) Illegalizing “the Other”, 3) Victims of Chinese Culture, Politics and “Compatriots”, 4) Representation of Authentic Chinese Culture. The critical elaboration of these four themes demonstrated how the news discourse constructed Chinese illegal immigrants as the “outsiders within”. Ultimately, this project served two purposes. One was to “fill” the missing gap left unattended by the prior studies on Chinese immigrants. The other was to re-conceptualize the media representation of the “other” as a “contested and multilayered” process of excluding “the displaced outsiders”, who are struggling along the lines of social and national margins. It is through the critical exploration of the multiple theoretical perspectives and the ideological assumptions supported by the news texts that enables the disclosure of the dominant cultural discourse and politics of the host society.