

"Xendex" of Immigration Labels

<i>xenophobia</i>	(zen-o-FO-bee-yuh)	irrational fear of foreigners
<i>xenodeim</i>	(zen-o-DAME)	reasonable concern about immigration
<i>xenotrauma</i>	(zen-o-TRAW-muh)	shock of too much immigration
<i>xenophilia</i>	(zen-o-FEE-lee-yuh)	fondness for foreign things and people
<i>xenopathy</i>	(zen-AH-puh-thee)	overwhelming identification with foreigners
<i>xenomania</i>	(zen-o-MAY-knee-yuh)	irrational foreign attraction, with little regard to effect on one's own nation
<i>xenomels</i>	(ZEN-o-mels)	people interested in immigration
<i>xenosophs</i>	(ZEN-o-sawfs)	people prudent in immigration matters
<i>xenomores</i>	(ZEN-o-mores)	people reckless in immigration matters

Armed with these labels, an immigration reformer accused of *xenophobia* might well answer: "I'm not a *xenophobe*. I'm much too rational, and I don't hate foreigners. In fact, I'm really quite a *xenophile* when it comes to an appreciation of foreign cultures and peoples, although I don't go to extremes; I'm certainly no *xenomaniac*. Like many *xenomels*, my *xenodeim* about the effects of mass immigration on our society leaves me no choice but to be a *xenosoph* by seeking prudent levels of immigration."

After accusers tried to sort out all the nuances of the suffixes, perhaps they would decide just to skip using "xen" words altogether.

Scip Garling is Chief of Research at FAIR (The Federation for American Immigration Reform) in Washington, D.C. With a double major in Latin and Greek from Dartmouth, and as former treasurer of the Classical Association of New England, Mr. Garling is well-qualified to produce the following "xendex," which is not entirely tongue-in-cheek.

'Xen' and the Art of Nomenclature Maintenance

New Labels for Advocates of Open-Ended Immigration Policies

By Scip Garling

Words can be used as tools or as weapons. *Xenophobia*, for example, continues to be used as a weapon (see Roy Beck's article in the Spring 1992 issue of **THE SOCIAL CONTRACT**). To lighten the load on this overburdened word, I suggest some new terms for discussing immigration in America.

Before we meet these terms, a word to the

linguistically squeamish: there is nothing wrong with creating new words. Words do not grow on trees; people make them up. *Xenophobia* is a made-up word from "phobia" — which is another made-up word. You will not find "phobia" in either a Latin dictionary or a Greek lexicon. It is a modern English word (with a Greek root and a Latin ending), invented within the

last century by psychologists. If they can do it, so can we.

Many opponents of immigration reform pride themselves on being *xenophiles*, people with a fondness for the foreign. They may in fact be *xenomaniacs*, people with an obsessive devotion to the foreign. A xenophile is likely to perceive the good that a foreign culture or foreign person has to offer; a xenomaniac is unlikely to perceive anything else.

A xenomaniac might point out that xenophobia springs from insecurity: insecurity about one's safety. Likewise, xenomania stems from an insecurity: insecurity about one's worthiness. Such insecurity is certainly related to *dyspatriotism* (the belief that one's country is bad or wrong in any situation), *ethnoseverism* (the desire to cut oneself off from one's own culture), and *xenopathy* (overwhelming identification with foreigners).

"Xenophobia," to quote Louisa Parker of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, "is the *irrational* fear of foreigners. There is a very rational fear of the impact of immigration — legal and illegal" (*USA Today*, July 15, 1993). What we need is a word to describe that rational, reasonable fear.

Fortunately, the ancients were thoughtful enough to make a distinction between having an irrational fear (*phobein*) and a rational one (*deidein*). From those verbs come the names of the two sons of the Greek war-god, Ares: Phobos and Deimos. The astronomically-inclined reader may recognize these as the names of the two moons of the planet Mars (and Mars is the Roman name for Ares, the war-god).

***"A xenophile is likely to
perceive the good that a
foreign culture or a foreign
person has to offer; a xenomaniac
is unlikely to perceive
anything else."***

So, if someone with an irrational fear of foreigners is a xenophobe, then someone with a rational fear is a *xenodeid*. Since xenodeidic concern usually focuses not on foreigners themselves but rather on their impact on society, we need a word to describe that impact. Try *xenotrauma*, the shocking effect of too much immigration on our societal systems.

The very use of roots like "philia," "phobia," and "mania" puts the immigration debate into emotional terms: loves, fears, madnesses. Perhaps it would be better to discuss the matter with more rational, intellectual terms. How much different the immigration debate seems when it is between *xenosophs* (those who are prudent in importing foreigners) and *xenomores* (those who are reckless). On the other hand, discussants could pride themselves

on being *xenomels* (people who are concerned about immigration and how it affects them) from the Greek *melie*, "it concerns."

Xenomels would give thought to plans for limited immigration. But what could they call it? As immigration is not new, neither is the idea that it should be limited. So it should come as no surprise that the Greeks (the Spartans, specifically) had a word for it: *xenelasia*. [You may be wondering where the "o" is in the familiar prefix "xeno-" — in Greek word-formation, the initial "e" of the base word "elasia" overrides the final "o" of the prefix "xeno-."]

With *xenelasia* as an operative term, the supporters of laws to limit immigration could be called *xenelasts*. Bills to limit immigration would, of course, be termed *xenelastisic* — although that might be stretching it a bit!

Dennis Meadows, of *Limits to Growth* fame, once told me: "If your only tool is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." If xenophobia is the only tool for describing attitudes of concern about immigration, everyone will look like a xenophobe.

If we expand our tool kit and use some of these new words as our instruments, it may become easier to debate and build a better immigration policy. ■