

## INTRODUCTION

### Immigrant Protest



#### *Noborder Scholarship*

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In April 2010, Arizona governor Jan Brewer signed into law what was touted as the nation's "toughest bill" yet on illegal immigration, *Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act* (commonly known as Arizona SB 1070). This controversial legislation made multiple ostracizing stipulations, including requiring immigrants to carry their documents at all times—which makes Latina/os especially (documented or not) vulnerable to surveillance and identity checks.

Shortly afterward, on Cinco de Mayo, a holiday that celebrates Mexican heritage, Chicano filmmaker Robert Rodriguez released an online trailer for the now cult "Mexploitation" action film *Machete* (2010): a cinematic announcement that might be read as a direct response to the punitive Arizona legislature. The trailer is introduced by the film's title character "Machete," played by frequent Rodriguez collaborator Danny Trejo. An intimidating figure, his body scarred and tattooed, he looks sternly at the camera and speaks angrily: "This is Machete with a special Cinco de Mayo message . . . to ARIZONA!" In the fast-paced scenes that follow, we see Machete performing over-the-top revenge on those who wronged him and we hear a voiceover: "They soon realized . . . they just fucked with the wrong Mexican!"

*Machete* rampages through the film like a Mexican Terminator, equipped with multiple steel knives attached to his body. Alongside him, armies of Mexicans with machetes and guns march out to kill white people. Highlighting what Bruce Bennett in this volume terms "an eye-jabbing aesthetic," *Machete* is a thoroughly violent spectacle in which the protagonist

insists on using his machete, ensuring that each killing is tactile. Slashed bellies, dripping blood, cut-off hands, gouged eyes, dangling intestines—the relentless stabbings, dismemberments, and beheadings—are visual tropes that dramatize immigrant rage.

These revenge killings are mirrored throughout the film by multiple scenes of anti-immigrant violence. In one of the early moments in the narrative, Von Jackson (Don Johnson), a vigilante leading the Border Patrol,

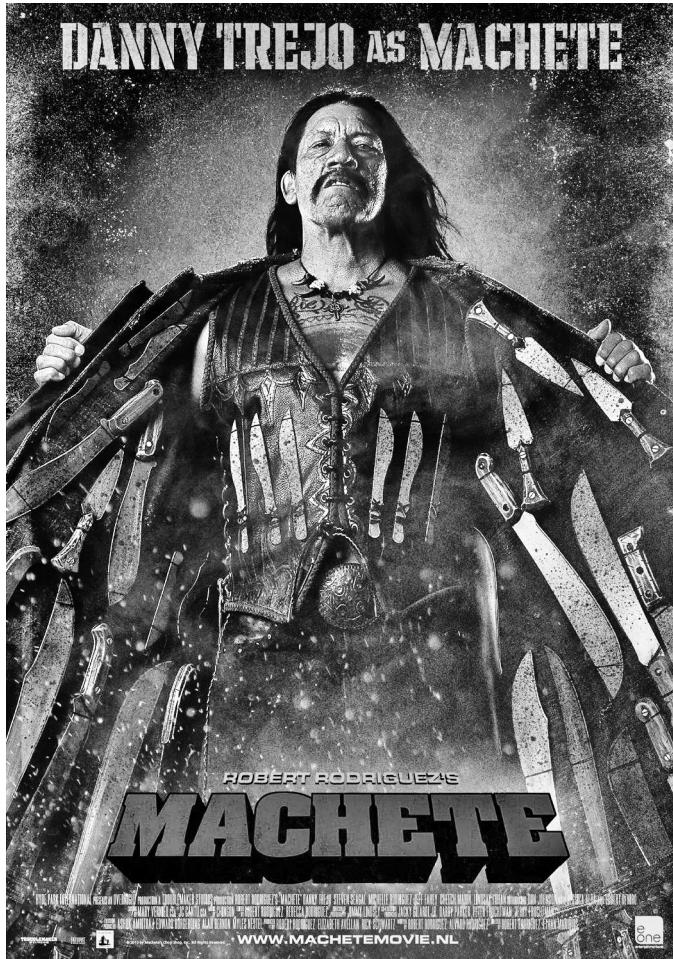


Figure I.1. *Machete*, DVD cover, 2011

nonchalantly shoots a pregnant Mexican woman at the border, saying, “You know, you trespassing, on my daddy’s land.” This brutality parallels the speeches by Senator John McLaughlin (Robert de Niro), a politician campaigning against undocumented crossers: “Make no mistake, we are at war. Every time an illegal dances across our border, it is an act of aggression against the sovereign state, an overt act of terrorism.”

In the history of cinema there has been a long-standing preoccupation with the fragile eye both as a literal object and as a privileged figure for vision, comprehension, and meaning (see, e.g., Clover 1993; Marks 2000; Tobing Rony 1996). In the famous opening scene of Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali’s 1929 silent surrealist film, *An Andalusian Dog* (*Un chien andalou*), a man, (played by Buñuel himself), slices open a woman’s eye with a razor, a scene purposefully offered in a close-up. An exemplary avant-garde film, *An Andalusian Dog* demonstrates the modernist conviction that art should not just entertain but should shock and disturb and open up new ways of seeing. *Machete* reworks this cinematic history; the motif of a jabbed eye, a blinded eye, underlines the ocular discomfort that characterizes the narrative as the film plays with the idea that eye jabbing enacts both immigrant and anti-immigrant rage. We see the evocative development of this idea in three scenes that feature either an immigrant or a “native” eye being stabbed: Machete stabs an attacker in the eye with a corkscrew; Shé (Michelle Rodriguez), an organizer of a legendary Network that helps people cross and finds them jobs in the United States, is blinded when Von Jackson shoots her in the eye, saying, “How about an eye for an eye?”; Agent Sartana Rivera (Jessica Alba), a conflicted Chicana immigration officer who eventually collaborates with Machete, stabs an attacker in the eye with her high-heel shoe. These visceral eye-jabbing moments might be read as metaphors for the *historical* and *cultural blindness* that characterizes public discourses of immigration politics in the United States.

While *Machete* is a fictional film about migrant revenge, it foregrounds the existing conditions of hostility, suspicion, and violence faced by many irregular migrants in the United States. Self-conscious of the pathologizing politics of alienhood (Marciniak 2006a), the narrative presents the inflammatory rhetoric that portrays Mexican border crossers as vermin and underscores the anti-immigrant violence and vigilante border policing this xenophobia incites. As Senator McLaughlin states in a TV campaign commercial in the film: “The aliens, the infiltrators, the outsiders, they come right across by day or night. They’ll bleed us, they’re parasites. They’ll bleed us until we as a city, a county, a state, a nation are all bled out.” During one of these ad spots, we see a close-up of writhing maggots, an image that evokes physical repulsion, as a voiceover declares: “The infestation has begun!” The maggots are then juxtaposed with the images of Mexicans

crossing through fields and rivers: “Parasites have crossed our borders and are sickening our country, leeching off our system, destroying us from the inside!” screams the ad. A further close-up of cockroaches is accompanied by the message: “No amnesty for parasites. John McLaughlin wants to protect you from the invaders.”

Conflating the images of crossers with the repulsive close-ups of bugs, *Machete* highlights familiar U.S. anti-immigrant rhetoric, offering all the customary denigrating tropes associated with the figure of the irregular migrant: invasion, parasitism, and disease. The film taps into the historical roots of anti-immigration sentiments, stretching back to the turn of the twentieth century when, rather than the U.S.-Mexico border, Ellis Island was a processing station and the symbolic site of the troubled history of migrant struggles to cross into the United States. The 1997 History Channel documentary *Ellis Island* details the humiliating bodily inspections that the newly arrived were subjected to. As political scientist Aristide Zolberg explains in the film, “There was a kind of fixation on disease as being something that an immigrant brought in” (*Ellis Island*). While speaking of the ideological impact of the national origin quotas established in the 1920s, historian Virginia Yans comments:

It is very clear that the effort was to limit people who were not thought to be of the same level of culture and civilization as resident Americans. What they [those establishing anti-immigrant laws] wanted to do was maintain the predominance of white Anglo-Saxons in the country. . . . There was a tremendous fear that people who came in from Southern Europe, from Eastern Europe, would pollute the blood of American population. (*Ellis Island*)

The U.S. postcolonial imaginary suppresses both this history of migrant processing and a longer history of nation formation achieved through the colonialization and genocide enacted upon its many indigenous inhabitants. As Ali Behdad argues, “Both the benign discourse of democratic founding and the myth of immigrant America deny that nationhood has been achieved, at least in part, through the violent conquest of Native Americans, the brutal exploitation of enslaved Africans, and the colonialist annexation of French and Mexican territories” (Behdad 2005, xii). One of the climactic scenes in *Machete* addresses this history directly as Agent Rivera, torn between enforcing the law and honoring the Network’s revolt, in a moment of epiphany, jumps on the hood of a car, raises her fist and shouts, addressing the migrants: “Yes, I am a woman of the law. And there are lots of laws. But if they don’t offer us justice, then they aren’t laws. . . . We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us!”

We began our introduction with Rodriguez's *Machete* because it so effectively dramatizes immigrant rage, presenting the audience with "images of racial anger, revolt, and empowerment," which arguably break sanitized Hollywood narratives of the "birth of the nation" more powerfully than "positive" multicultural representations of minorities (Shohat and Stam 1994, 203). Indeed, *Machete* speaks to both the history and the current fervor of anti-immigrant politics in the United States.

By 2011, Arizona SB 1070 was no longer the nation's "toughest" immigration bill as the states of Alabama and Georgia issued even more stringent bills that essentially legalized racial profiling. For example, Alabama's new measures, in addition to allowing law enforcement officers to arrest and detain anyone they suspect of being in the country illegally, introduces new rules for educators, landlords, and businesses: The new legislation makes it a crime for landlords to knowingly rent to undocumented immigrants and for citizens to offer a transport to "illegal" immigrants, while schools are required to collect citizenship information about their students, thus building databases of undocumented children. In all three of these U.S. states, these extreme anti-immigration measures have been met with passionate street protests about these new exclusionary and racist laws, which are creating a profoundly uncomfortable climate on the streets for all people of color regardless of their legal status.

Beyond the United States, the staggering economic inequalities effected by neoliberal globalization have led to an increase in migrations and often perilous border crossings around the world, particularly from the former communist bloc and the Global South toward the more affluent countries of the Global North. Migrant protests are forms of response to the deteriorating conditions for refugees, asylum seekers, economic and other unwanted and irregular migrants on the ground. Indeed, the last decade has witnessed a global explosion of "immigrant protests," political mobilizations by irregular migrants and pro-migrant activists. Indicative examples include: the rise of the Sans-Papiers movement in France (see McNevin 2006), the spectacular protests of millions of undocumented Latin American workers in the United States in Spring 2006, under the banner "A Day Without Immigrants" (see De Genova and Borcila 2011; Marciak 2013), events which, in turn, inspired the "A Day Without Us" marches and strikes in Italy, Greece, Spain, and France in 2011. This upsurge in immigrant protest is a consequence of the intensification of border security measures across the globe in recent decades, the abjectifying effects of which have been well documented by scholars and activists. In the face of the incremental militarization of national and regional borders and the emergence of a "lucrative political economy of border policing and immigrant detention" (De Genova and Borcila 2011), immigrant protests constitute critical coun-

terpolitical movements, highlighting and protesting deteriorating conditions for irregular migrants and refugees, exposing the violence engendered by border controls, and challenging the abstract and fetishized political rhetoric of “illegal immigration.”

New media, such as the Internet, 3G mobile video phones, Weblogs, social media, and instant messaging have inordinately strengthened migrant politics. These technologies are employed to coordinate the swarming of bodies on the streets, to capture and upload videos of protests and police violence and to generate publicity for struggles. The advent of these digital communication systems means that protests staged in one physical place are now transmitted across borders so that even smaller-scale protests such as riots, fires, and hunger strikes by immigration detainees, and individual anti-deportation campaigns have the potential to resonate internationally (Cottle 2011). International coalitions such as the *European NoBorders Network* and the *No One is Illegal* movement have emerged as important horizontal umbrella networks for protesters to connect and coordinate across borders, transforming online spaces into supra-national “common spaces” (see Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013). These movements for migrant rights and visibility are often moving and inspirational but they are also politically and ethically complex as they make us think about the forms of solidarities and alliances that are possible and impossible between citizens and noncitizens (see Rigby and Schlembach 2013).

*Immigrant Protest* is the first volume to explore the rise of immigrant protest in a transnational context. With a specific focus on the centrality of aesthetics to migrant resistance movements, the project examines dissent, resistance, and revolt against the conditions and social attitudes faced by regular and irregular migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and other unwanted “illegal” persons, within a range of national and regional border zones. Introducing the work of a group of international scholars, visual and performance artists and activists, the collection offers a rich series of accounts and analyses of protests and protest materials, which foreground the relationship between visibility, power, representation, and political agency, an arena that is underrepresented and underexplored in migration studies. Alongside contributions that analyze protest and resistance “in the field” in the context of Germany (Rostock), Greece (Zavos), Sweden (Sager), UK (Piacentini, The Anti-Raids Campaign Coalition), Palestine (Faulkner), and women’s human rights (Waller), the book engages cinema, media, and performance and installation art as sites where migrant political struggles converge with aesthetic practices. This focus on political aesthetics and issues of in/visibility is critical for us as it connects work on aesthetics with work on politics and social movements.

The chapters variously document and examine protest in a range of mediums and theoretical dimensions, toward a shared goal of reimagining foreignness beyond the xenophobic logic of negativity, inadequacy, and deficiency. Within this framework, the individual contributions address immigrant protest in everyday, local, and wider national and transnational contexts. Employing a variety of feminist, transnational, and postcolonial methodologies, they explore forms of social, political, and aesthetic engagements in migrant politics. The contributions focus on vast array of themes, including desire and neocolonial violence in film, visibility and representation, pedagogical function of protest, and the role of the arts and artists in the explosion of political protests that challenge the intense precarity of migrant life in Global North. Other topics include shifting practices of boundary making and boundary taking, changing meanings and lived experiences of citizenship, embodied and affective dimensions of nationalism, and the many intersecting axes (class, race, gender, ethnicity, nativism, status) through which daily lives are lived, endured, and protested.

### In/Visibility

The majority of contributions to this book are concerned with the ways in which migrants and their activist allies engage in political strategies of visibility in order to “make public” their specific concerns and grievances. Indeed, making migrant experiences visible and audible is often the overarching aim of immigrant protests. As Peter Nyers suggests, migrant struggles are often not only concerned with “legal status” and “justice” but are often also struggles “for recognition as someone with an audible and corporeal presence that can be described as ‘political’” (Nyers 2007, 3). As noncitizens, migrants have few routes to self-representation available to them and often have no autonomous public voice. Madjiguène Cissé, for example, a spokeswoman for the Sans-Papiers movement notes, “In France up until now our fate as immigrants was: either take part in the Republic’s process of integration, or be deported like cattle. . . . We have made ourselves visible to say that we are here, to say that we are not in hiding but we’re just human beings. We are here and we have been here a long time” (Cissé 1997). However, it is not that undocumented or irregular migrants are invisible in the public domain; on the contrary, “immigrants” and the topic of “immigration” are “hypervisible” (see Tyler 2006). As Rodriguez’s *Machete* reveals, the figure of the immigrant is invoked continuously in overdetermined, stereotyped, and stigmatized forms within mainstream media and political rhetoric. It is precisely the visibility of “the immigrant” and particularly the production of the “illegal immigrant” as a “national abject” which screens the realities

of migrant lives from view and silences migrant voices (Tyler 2013). Grappling with social paradoxes of in/visibility in relation to her immigrant life in Canada in the 1970s, writer Bharati Mukherjee, for example, observed: “The oldest paradox of prejudice is that it renders its victims simultaneously *invisible* and *over-exposed*. I have not met an Indian in Canada who has not suffered the humiliations of being overlooked (in jobs, in queues, in deserved recognition) and from being singled out (in hotels, department stores, on the streets, and at customs” (Mukherjee 1981, 36; our emphasis).

Hostile political and public discourses depict immigrants as a dehumanized and undifferentiated foreign mass, mobilizing images of natural disaster (floods, plagues) to communicate the “crises” of migrancy. To counter these depictions, the representational strategies adopted by movements such as Sans-Papiers and, in more problematic ways, by various humanitarian organizations on behalf of migrants, provoke publics to recognize “the human face” of specific migrants. Indeed, a favorite device of humanitarian publications is the use of photographic close-ups of migrant faces and first-person accounts of their experiences. These affective technologies of the “close-up” aim to move the reader in ways that will enable citizens to identify with migrants as “human beings” (see, e.g., Hesford and Kozol 2005; Marciniak and Turowski 2010; Tyler 2006). In other words, these strategies attempt to counter the dehumanizing rhetorics by “humanizing” refugees and irregular migrants as *subjects who matter*, “like us.” These kinds of publicity strategies, whether they are appeals made by agents or agencies on behalf of migrants, or whether, they are made by migrants themselves, can be extremely effective. As the contributions to *Immigrant Protest* suggest, the works of artists, writers, and filmmakers not only document immigrant protest but are a form of protest in their own right. The underlying assumption of the forms of “art-activism” presented in this book is that the work of creating alternative forms of visibility, or disrupting prevailing norms of representation, clears the ground for the political agency of migrant populations, denaturalizing xenophobic ideologies.

In his influential writing on politics and aesthetics, Jacques Rancière argues that “politics is aesthetic in that it makes visible what had been excluded from a perceptual field, and in that it makes audible what used to be inaudible” (Rancière 2003, 226). Rancière’s thesis speaks to long-standing debates about visibility and audibility in postcolonial studies. The question of in/visibility is, for example, at the heart of Edward Said’s project in *Orientalism*, which details “the crude, essentialized caricatures of the Islamic world” that underpin European and North American art, literature, and scholarship depicting the Middle East (1980). Imperialistic representational frames screen colonized and former colonized populations from viewing and,

in so doing, curtail the political agency of subjugated populations (see Said 1979). For Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, it is the question of the “audibility” of subjugated populations that is central. In her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” she argues that first world’s attempts to ameliorate the conditions experienced by subaltern populations, through for example “acts of translation,” often reinforce the inaudibility of “waste populations” (Spivak 1985). As both Said and Spivak variously suggest, a series of risks and tensions unfold from political strategies of visibility and audibility. In very material ways, “becoming visible” exposes irregular or undocumented migrants to the full force of state border controls. Hence, for many migrants, making themselves visible is an activity engaged in only as a last resort.

The punishing effects of visibility have led Dimitris Papadopoulos and Vassilis Tsianos to argue that “visibility, in the context of illegal migration, belongs to the inventory of the technologies for policing migrational flows” (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2008). As they state, “This is the end of the politics of representation. And the decline of representation means simultaneously the end of the strategy of visibility. Instead of visibility, we say imperceptibility” (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, migrant activism reveals that “becoming perceptible” is also sometimes a necessary *survival strategy*. In this regard, it is of critical importance that we examine the ways in which migrants negotiate the contradictions and losses and gains of in/visibility in their interactions with sovereign power. It is the capacity for counter-representational practices to generate uncertainty about “commonsense” understandings of belonging that we want to insist upon here. Whether we understand migrant protests as forms of “fight back” against the exclusions of sovereign states or as marking the emergence of a new form of global citizenship against the inequalities and injustices of neoliberal capitalism, the visibility of these struggles is enacting new forms of political community on the streets.

### Part I: The Aesthetic Performance of Immigrant Protest

One of the distinguishing contributions of *Immigrant Protest* is that it opens up a dialogue between a diverse range of scholars and artists, and tracks the important relation between theoretically oriented work and art activist practices. Indeed, the first section of the book focuses on the aesthetics of protest and the central role of artistic practice, visibility, recognition and representation to migrant social and political movements. The first three chapters form an exciting forum for a new generation of artists (Akšamija, Borcila, Šimić) working in art installation, performance, and visual art whose narratives are intensely preoccupied with transcultural themes of mobil-

ity, displacement, and migrant experiences. These artists and art-activists variously examine what it means to be an immigrant other in a series of national contexts.

In “Dare to Wear—a Mosque! Immigrant Protest as Cross-cultural Pedagogy,” Sarajevo-born Austrian artist and architectural historian Azra Akšamija explores increasing conflicts over the building of mosques in Europe and North America. As Akšamija argues, it is increasingly the case that, if a planning application for a new mosque is to be allowed, “this is only acceptable as long as the proposed mosque does not look like one.” Conflicts around the building of mosques have led Akšamija to consider the creative means through which Muslim diasporas in the Global North might protest stigmatizing anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic propaganda. Through a series of provocative art projects she collectively titles “Wearable Mosques,” Akšamija develops a visual and design-inspired approach to Muslim xenophobia. Her art practice makes a critical comment on the limits imposed on Muslims to exercise their legal rights to visibility and religious practice in public spaces.

The second chapter, “The Political Aesthetics of Immigrant Protest,” is an interview with the Romanian artist and Chicago-based migrant activist Rozalinda Borcila. In this interview we explore with Borcila her past work on borders and migrancy and her recent activist work with young migrants in Chicago. In her various performance projects Borcila experiments with and obsessively tests the limits of the citizen/foreigner binary in the U.S. context. This interview also opens up a series of theoretical questions that are pertinent to this book as a whole, namely, the relationship between art and activism, and between singular and collective modalities of resistance and protest, and the question of what “political aesthetics” means, for example, in terms of thinking about the ways in which “art” shapes creative strategies for resistance that “conventional” modes of protest might learn from and draw upon.

This artist interview is followed by another dialogue, “Becoming British: Exploring Citizenship through Arts Practice,” between Imogen Tyler and the Croatian performance artist and political activist Lena Šimić. This chapter focuses on Šimić’s ongoing art project “Becoming British” which began with Šimić applying for British citizenship as an “art protest” against what she described as “the social injustices of border controls.” Šimić’s intention was to reveal the contradictions between her position as an artist, a precarious but nevertheless valued middle-class “cultural worker” from Eastern Europe, and as a stigmatized migrant other.

Erik Swyngedouw uses the term *governance innovation* to describe the ways in which the expansion of purportedly democratic forms, such as citizenship, operate as mechanisms of neoliberal ideologies, as freedoms are retract-

ed from individuals and communities and wealth and power concentrated in the hands of social and political elites and global corporations (Swyngedouw 2005, 1992; Tyler 2010). A “reality gap” has opened up between normative political rhetorics of “deepening democracy” through citizenship (including the exporting of “liberal democracy” through the “war on terror”), and the abjection of “illegal” populations from the rights and protections of citizenship through the enforcement of often brutal and inhumane immigration controls. This “liberal paradox” is further complicated by the incongruity between the opening up of international borders to flows of capital and the simultaneous “damming” of states and regions to “undesirable” migrants from the Global South: a migratory pull that is paradoxically fueled by market demands for cheap unregulated migrant labor in the Global North (see de Hass 2007; Hollifield 2004). By knowingly submitting herself to legal regimes of British citizenship, and by engaging with citizenship as a performative practice, Šimić’s intention was to examine the paradoxical effects of these contradictory forces. She set out to document, expose, trouble, and protest the incongruity of different technologies and regimes of citizenship operating within the British state from the perspective of migrant experience. As the “Becoming British” project develops, however, it comes to encompass many other migrant experiences. By organizing a series of workshops in a local community center, Šimić began working collaboratively with a disparate group of migrant artists to document their different experiences of coming to citizenship. This “Becoming British” arts collective included Pa Modou Bojang, a Gambian poet, journalist, and then “failed asylum seeker” facing imminent deportation. The involvement of Pa Modou introduced refugee politics and the local vibrant anti-deportation and asylum advocacy movements in Liverpool to the project, and for a period transformed “Becoming British” into an anti-deportation campaign, as the group campaigned and raised funds for his legal appeal.

The last three chapters in this section focus on cinema and representational affectivities of protest. In “Border Disorder,” Alex Rivera speaks with Katarzyna Marciniak about his stylistically original film projects in the context of Latino/a politics and the Mexico-U.S. border. Reflecting on the conceptual development of his films, Rivera traces his engagement in border politics since 1990s against the background of various influential and deeply contradictory historical moments: the introduction of NAFTA, an “open border” policy for trade and the promise of borderless economy, the creation of the first border wall, the rise of the Internet, the initiation of Operation Gatekeeper, which started to fortify the U.S.-Mexico border, and more recent national initiatives such as Secure Communities, a deportation program that engages federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. In a series of films, Rivera explores the satirical idea of “tele-migration” as an

original “solution” to the migration “problem.” His *Papapapá* (1995), the 1997 mockumentary *Why Cybraceros?* and his award-winning *Sleep Dealer*, hailed as the first “Third World science fiction,” offer a representation of a long-distance farm worker, one whose body physically remains outside the United States while his hands perform work inside the nation. As one of the characters in *Sleep Dealer* states, “We give the Americans what they have always wanted—all the work and none of the workers.”

Film scholar Bruce Bennett’s contribution to the book, “Loving the Alien: Indigenous Protest and Neo-Colonial Violence in James Cameron’s *Avatar*,” moves the discussion away from more independent productions such as Rivera’s work into the commercial world of Hollywood cinema. The chapter starts with Cameron’s provocative comment that “we are all alien,” a point that the director sees as the narrative premise of *Avatar*. Interrogating this authorial intent to disrupt the native/alien binary, Bennett’s analysis reveals *Avatar* as an intriguing case study in the potential and limitations of mainstream science fiction cinema as social criticism. In orienting its account of the violent conflict between the colonizing/immigrant minority and the indigenous majority around the perspective of a boundary-crossing protagonist, who is branded a race traitor, the chapter discusses *Avatar* as a self-reflexive film offering a powerfully affective but ultimately ideologically ambiguous account of the structural relationships between imperialist brutality and Western consumer culture. The chapter specifically examines the ways in which Cameron’s film dramatizes issues of indigenous protest, immigration, and colonization and attempts to trouble the alignment of the spectator with particular positions, employing an immersive aesthetic to emphasize this disorienting sense of destabilized boundaries. The discussion ends with a foray into real life protests in the Palestinian border village of Bil’in where various activists, dressed as Na’vi characters from the film staged an “Avatar Protest.” In moving his examination from a narrative analysis into public space, Bennett explores the film’s political resonance for indigenous rights: “As a particularly visible attraction of contemporary entertainment culture, *Avatar* becomes available to colonized peoples as a tool which allows for active forms of political consciousness raising through the re-performance of violence and injustice in the neo-colonial political present tense.”

Like the opening chapter by Akšamija, Katarzyna Marciniak’s “Pedagogy of Rage” too has a distinctive focus on pedagogical function of oppositional art. Her essay begins with the conviction that to write about immigrant protest means to write about immigrant rage. Especially within U.S. media culture, rage is typically coded negatively as an emotion that needs to be treated or healed and when expressed by a migrant, it is considered intolerable, offensive, and insulting. In order to prove adequate and acceptable,

the migrant is required to occupy the place of a metaphorically “clean” subject—humble, disciplined, grateful, and thus only tenuously vocal and politically barely visible (see Marciak 2006b). Against such complexities, she recalls students’ affective responses while studying Courtney Hunt’s 2008 border film, *Frozen River*, and reflects on the possibilities and limits of enacting “immigrant protest” and “immigrant rage” in the classroom. Her interest lies in rage as a political category of intervention, one that can influence students’ sensibilities and open them up to new ways of thinking resistance to oppressive forms of phobic nationalisms and exclusionary practices of citizenship. The chapter weaves the analysis of anger performed by two central female characters in the film, a Mohawk Indian and “low-class” white American, both engaged in smuggling the migrants’ bodies across the Canadian-U.S. border, with wider and highly contradictory manifestations of the politics of rage in the U.S. culture. Drawing upon theories of affect in relation to pedagogy, the analysis culminates in a meditation on the “pedagogy of rage” as a potent philosophical platform to teach from. It is a pedagogy that has the power to challenge students and teachers by creating spaces for provocative encounters; a pedagogy that “demands that we think about politicized anger in nuanced ways and recognize that the ‘rage of the oppressed is never the same as the rage of the privileged’” (hooks 1995, 30).

## **Part II: In the Field: Acts of Immigrant Protest**

The second section has a focus on activism and everyday protest, struggles over the legitimacy of migrant voices and experiences, rights to political subjecthood, and strategies of dissent. Organized around the theme “acts of protest,” a concept developed from Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen’s “acts of citizenship” (2008), it explores the diverse forms that protest takes and considers how even small acts of protest and resistance can grant marginal populations political voice and recognition.

Simon Faulkner’s contribution, “On Israel/Palestine and the Politics of Visibility,” explores the relationship between politics, aesthetics, and protest through a focus on the strategies of resistance employed by Palestinians and their activist allies in the occupied territories. While not formally “migrants,” Faulkner highlights the ways in which Palestinians find themselves in the situation of extreme precariousness (for example, in terms of rights of residence and belonging) that characterizes the struggles of disenfranchised populations in the multiple border zones explored in this book. Palestinians in the occupied territories face the same conditions of “inclusive exclusion” as many migrant populations, in which subjugated people are subject to sovereign power whilst being excluded from the rights and protections of citizenship. The relationship between indigenous and migrant forms of

struggles against sovereign and corporate forms of displacement and disenfranchisement is an important one—which complicates easy understandings of “illegality” (see also Tyler 2013).

In this chapter, Faulkner examines the ways in which the Israel/Palestine conflict is fundamentally bound up with ways of seeing and perceiving the subjugation of the Palestinian people both “within the geographical space of Israel/Palestine and the broader international context.” Foregrounding the problematic of in/visibility, Faulkner introduces a series of nonviolent resistance projects all of which focus on *transforming the perceptual frames* through which the struggles of the Palestinian people to justice and the rights of self-determination are understood. To this end, he details the activism of the Israeli journalist Michel Warschawski—who founded the Alternative Information Center (AIC), a joint Palestinian-Israeli nongovernmental organization in 1984; the interventions made by Ramallah-based Palestinian art-activist Khaled Jarrar through his checkpoint photography and temporary “exhibitions” at border zones and the theatrical image-making border activism of the *Bil'in Committee of Popular Resistance* in the West Bank village of Bil'in (see also Bennett this volume). As Faulkner details, in the case of Bil'in, this is a population who have been engaged in several years of struggle against “the confiscation of their land for settlement construction and the building of a section of the West Bank Barrier.” What is exemplary about the struggle in Bil'in is the ways in which resistance is forged through practices of “image making,” which, both in the moment of the event and in the documentary afterlives of these protests, refuse the construction of Palestinians as either passive “victims” or as illegitimate subjects. Drawing throughout on Jacques Rancière's work, Faulkner assesses the limits of these forms of protest to effect political change on the ground, but concludes optimistically by arguing that “the demonstrations in Bil'in affirm . . . the fact that it is possible to create interventions into the occupation regime that problematize and disrupt the given order of things and generate new meanings and possibilities.”

In “Everyday Acts of Resistance: The Precarious Lives of Asylum Seekers in Glasgow,” Teresa Piacentini draws upon the seminal work of James C. Scott (1985, 1990) to develop an account of “migrant resistance” that focuses not on explicit public acts of protest but on the more subtle and banal forms of everyday resistance employed by disenfranchised and marginalized migrants on the ground. Drawing on rich empirical data from her ongoing ethnographic study of asylum seekers' support networks in Glasgow, Scotland, Piacentini examines how “chance encounters” and everyday informal interactions enable migrants to come together, forging friendships and thick networks of mutual support. These informal modes of care and assistance among migrant populations work against the “isolating effects of

displacement and invisibility” but also, she argues, transform conditions of exclusion into positive forms of “cultural and social belonging.” Over time, as she details, informal networks develop into more formal structures and groups with “aims, objectives, and constituted members.” Through close analysis of these developing processes of mutual support, Piancetini argues that everyday acts of resistance, characterized by care, support, and commonality of experience, “chip away, in often imperceptible ways at prevailing power relations and *over time* can and do effect important social change.”

In “Pushing the Boundaries: Everyday Resistance in Swedish Clandestinity,” Maja Sager, like Piacentini, draws upon original ethnographic research to examine the ways in which asylum seekers in Sweden engage practices of everyday resistance in order to survive as rightless people in a foreign land. Sager’s essay focuses on a population she terms “clandestine asylum seekers”: those migrants who “stay in Sweden after their asylum applications have been rejected and who consequently ‘hide’ from the police and the authorities in order to avoid deportation.” What Sager argues is that many clandestine asylum seekers in Sweden are not, as popular media depictions of “illegals” suggests, in “hiding,” but are, on the contrary, “actively underground,” employing multiple strategies of survival. As Sager details, undocumented migrants organize themselves as social and political actors employing both formal and informal methods and creating networks of family, friends, NGOs, and activists to access welfare services such as healthcare, education, and childcare. As in the case of Glasgow, what Sager discovers is that for these migrants their clandestinity can become a source of positive commonality and community formation. In other words, a status that seemingly marks this population as “abject outsiders” can become a source of positive counterpolitical identification and community formation on the ground.

In “Subjects that Matter? Nonidentitarian Strategies of Pro-‘Migrant’ and ‘Migrant’ Protest in Germany,” Petra Rostock examines two pro-migrant organizations in Germany: the feminist group FeMigra, which is based in Frankfurt and Main, and Kanak Attak, which has networks across several West German cities. These organizations, both founded in the 1990s, contrast with many of the mainstream NGO migrant organizations in Germany in assuming an open-borders, antinational philosophy. In particular, both these groups reject an identitarian political framing, in which citizens are pitted against migrant illegality. As Rostock details, the common concern of these two organizations is “to make migrants visible as integral part of German history and present.” To further this aim, both groups employ different strategies: FeMigra intervenes in the public sphere “through lectures and the distribution of publicity materials, targeting organizations and events focused on women and migrant politics and antiracist events and conferences,” while Kanak Attak employs theoretical and artistic strategies that

call for the granting of citizenship to all while, at the same time, undermining the essentialist notions of belonging on which German citizenship is grounded. As Rostock argues, both these organizations understand resistance in terms of the labor of politicizing processes of exclusion and inclusion from below—troubling “who may—or can—speak for whom when, where, and how.” What is useful about Rostock’s analysis is that as well as detailing how these two organizations antagonize and disrupt nationalist and racist discourses of citizenship and illegality, she exposes the limits of these activist interventions and the difficulties of achieving lasting solidarities between citizens and noncitizens.

In “Gender and the Politics of Antiracist and Immigrant Protest in Greece,” Alexandra Zavos undertakes a close analysis of the materials and protest events of pro-migrant antiracist activists in Athens. Weaving together accounts of three protests, she details the ways in which Greek gender politics and pro-migrant politics collide. In particular, she examines how the parentalistic discourses of the Greek antiracist movements work to produce often problematic depictions of migrants as “feminized, subordinate, and dependent” subjects. Zavos focuses on the ways in which migrant women are “discursively invoked through stereotypical roles such as courageous mothers, dependent wives, or, exploited sex objects” and how migrant women both draw upon and resist these stereotypes as they attempt to intervene as political actors within migrant political struggles for rights and residency. Zavos argues for the need for Greek activists to create spaces for migrants within antiracist struggles for their own emancipation, highlighting the need for collations, such as those detailed by Rostock in Germany, in which migrants, and in particular migrant women, are able to be conceived as political actors in their own right.

In “Immigrant Protest and the Courts of Women,” Marguerite Waller explores a paradigm of transnational human rights activism that originated in the Global South. The “Courts of Women,” a project begun in the early 1990s, were created to circumvent statist logic and the ways it does and does not bring into visibility the manifold forms of violence against women for which there are no legal remedies on local, national, or international levels. Over a quarter of a century, this series of public hearings and the years of planning they entail, have been organized transnationally by networks of activists addressing interlocking issues of migration, property rights, HIV, trafficking, development, sustainability, and many others. The Courts were an outgrowth of the work of the Asian Women’s Human Rights Council, and galvanized early on by its participation in the Tokyo Tribunals on the Japan’s use of military sexual slaves or “comfort women” during World War II. Originally based in Bangalore and Manila, and directed by Corinne Kumar and Nelia Sancho, the model of the Courts of Women came to the Arab World and sub-Saharan Africa when Kumar, a lifelong women’s and

indigenous rights activist, became the secretary general of El Taller International in Tunis. Partnering with more than five hundred other organizations, including the World Social Forum, more than thirty-eight Courts of Women have been convened since 1992. Offering a detailed account of the work of the Courts, Waller argues that the practices and strategies they implement open spaces for thinking about immigrant protest that puts the violence of sovereignty and the logic of citizenship on trial. Notably, while initially located and coordinated in the Global South, the Courts of Women came to the United States in 2012, with a Court of Women on Poverty: Disappeared in America, held in Oakland, California. As a particular form of protest, the practices and choreography of the Courts illuminate the nature of the epistemological and empirical violence exercised against indigenous, migrant, and immigrant women as well as the ways in which different “Souths,” including those in the North, can work together to claim political subjectivities despite their social marginality and cultural invisibility.

On February 25, 2012, at a concert at “The Coronet,” a music venue in Elephant and Castle, South London, mostly attended by Latin Americans, a massive immigration raid took place which saw numerous police and immigration officers checking the papers and the migration status of those queuing to get into the venue: by the end of the evening, ninety people were detained in immigration removal centers, some of whom were deported a few days later. We have chosen to end *Immigrant Protest* with the work of the “Anti-Raids Campaign Coalition in London” which formed in direct response to this raid. The Anti-Raids Campaign is a network of community-based groups composed of migrants and precarious workers in response to immigration raids by the UK Border Agency and the police in London. The “Anti-Raids Campaign Coalition in London” focuses on developing materials, such as the bust card and solidarity leaflet included here, to enable migrants to know their rights if they are arrested and detained. The short text that accompanies these materials captures the conditions of urgency that often face migrant and art activists on the ground as they seek to intervene within often brutal immigration and border control regimes, and protect lovers, friends, and co-workers from detention and deportation.

### **Conclusion: No Border Scholarship for a Noborder Politics**

While there has been much recent scholarship on the changing ideologies of citizenship, the growth of detention landscapes, and border securitization in various national contexts (see, e.g., *Beyond Walls and Cages*, *Acts of Citizenship, Rallying for Immigrant Rights, Taking Local Control: Immigration Policy Activism in U.S. Cities and States*, *Art in the Lives of Immigrant Communities in the United States*), not enough attention has yet been paid to the significant role of mass immigrant protests that have arisen in response to these

enforcement measures in a transnational context. Even fewer authors consider the aesthetics and technologies of these burgeoning social movements and the artists so central to their successes. Moving across both sovereign and disciplinary borders, this collection offers a series of scholarly essays, interviews, art, and activist projects, which detail an array of mainstream and marginal artistic, cultural, and political engagements with migrant and indigenous protest and resistance movements against the exclusionary logics of border controls. The collective aim of the authors and artists in *Immigrant Protest* is to open up the question of what counts as protest and to explore the ways in which political activism, art, and popular culture can work to challenge the multiple forms of discrimination and injustice faced by displaced peoples. What ties this project together is a concern with forms of political aesthetics that seek to confront forms of “common sense” and “status quo” around migration. The book contests those forms of knowledge, politics, and representations which rely upon and continuously reproduce the idea of migration as a foundational problem.

Rancière argues that “nothing is political in itself,” but anything may become political if it gives rise to a meeting of two logics, namely the logic of the state and the logic of equality (Rancière 1999, 32). In his account, the political is located not within the official workings of government or the hegemonic aesthetics of mass media, nor in the “event” of protests themselves, but rather in the “dissensus”—or the “third space”—such protests can open up in the public sphere. Rancière suggests that what matters is the interruption that “fearless speech” gives rise to and the disputes which unfold from them. Such disputes, Rancière suggests, can produce new inscriptions of equality “and a fresh sphere of visibility for further demonstrations” (*ibid.*, 40). What we might understand by this is that “the possibilities of resistance to migrant abjection lie not in singular acts of resistance but in the building of wider communities of struggle that question the inclusive/exclusive logic of citizenship, the economics of illegality and the global marketization of migration” (Tyler 2013). The case studies explored in this book testify to the ways in which the “theatricalization of political rage” (Butler 232) can trouble prevailing forms of common sense about the meaning of democracy and rights. So, while local forms of migrant protests or the art projects that attempt to represent them might register as little more than minor disturbances within the public sphere, the restaging and repetition of these acts form part of a critical practice of countermapping, which creates a transnational fabric of political resistance.

Pondering the politics of immigration scholarship, Ruben Andersson writes: “To capture the paradoxes of today’s migrations, which seem to pound against the walls of our reality, we might similarly need to break through the conventions that have defined so much research, activism, art and journalism concerned with migration” (Andersson 2008). He argues that it is necessary

to focus on “the energy, creativity and determination of migrants themselves” as well as to engage in what he terms “stylistic and methodological promiscuity” in order to break through the limits of disciplinary research. Andersson’s point about “stylistic and methodological promiscuity” most compellingly describes the spirit of our book. The energy of the collection is driven precisely by immigrant voices that actively resist mainstream representations of immigrants as bodies without emotional complexities, too often boxed into binaries such as “passive” or “criminal.” The authors go beyond eschewing such superficialities and instead mock them, from artistic play with the veil to ironic representations of migrant labor, to outrageous performances of “good citizen” and “bad migrant.” From the outset, our intention has been to create a project that, like Rodriguez’s *Machete*, is an unapologetic fusion of styles that provoke with the breadth of disciplinary employment and depart from ways of creating knowledges that too often rely on one theoretical paradigm, discipline, or region. Through its form and content, the book argues for a noborder politics which has to be enacted through a noborder scholarship.

Noborder scholarship must push through the limits of disciplinary boundaries, must honor intellectual messiness, demand agility, fluidity, situationality; it must create new conceptual bridges. The building of such new bridges is always about methodological innovations and thus about methodological pleasures and risks. And noborder scholarship must embrace those risks. Bridges demand that we resist the temptation to think of knowledge in territorial ways. The productive risks associated with such methodological “promiscuity” entail dislodging the fields of study from their accepted boundaries and from the defenses of those boundaries.

An interdisciplinary and multiperspectival hybrid situated at the intersection of migration studies, transnational studies, and media studies, both stylistically and methodologically, this project enacts cross-pollination by opening up a dialogue between diverse discourses in the humanities and social sciences, tracking the relations between empirical, theoretical, and art activist practices. Through this interdisciplinary approach, *Immigrant Protest* develops a comparative, non-nationalistic approach to immigrant protest, foregrounding the importance of breaking the silence that often accompanies im/migrant experiences and, in doing so, offers counternarratives to anti-immigrant actions and politics in various geopolitical contexts where im/migrant struggle is predominant.

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