EIGHTEEN

The Thickening Borderlands: Bastard Mestiz@s, "Illegal" Possibilities, and Globalizing Migrant Life

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Thickening Borderlands

Borders thicken. Their reach expands beyond international boundaries. Military-like police or police-like military inspect; they divide; they scrutinize.[1] They erase distinctions between strangers and enemies,[2] between the criminal and the law-abiding, between immigrant and disenfranchised citizens in regimes of immigration enforcement. Anxieties about *the* territorial border translate into anxieties about those bearing "figurative borders."[3]

"The border" cuts through the nearby glass door of this restaurant in a small community on the outskirts of Chicago momentarily severing our communion. She erupts, amid the loud din of young families at this restaurant. Gone is the sparkling eye contact of this stocky, olive-skinned woman, modestly dressed in a white, flowered dress. Her confident gaze, cradled in deep folds of warm flesh, and warm smile of this mother of five give way as she begins to relate her experience of the ever thickening, painful effects of undocumented border crossing. Her head tilts farther downward as she recounts her arrest for driving without a license. Her voice is now a whisper. But she, this person I call Maria, speaks, definitely and defiantly: "I had always done it. I had driven [without a driver's license] taking my husband to work, my kids to

school, and going to work. And, yes, I'd been stopped before. But I would show them my National ID card. The officers usually let me off with a warning and I'm careful driver. But this time the officer was a woman. She was different." She continues to study the floor. "I was arrested." She repeats, "I was arrested. I'm a careful driver. And they took me to the police station. It was like two in the morning and I had just gotten out of work. I was exhausted. I was by myself." She describes her processing:

> The officer asked me my legal status and I was quiet. I told them I wouldn't answer their questions. The officer said to me people brought to the station are "illegal" and they are sent to immigration. And, if you're illegal, ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] would come in early in the morning to pick up the people. And I began to think to myself, is this true? And then they began to take my fingerprints. And I immediately began to think of my family, of my children. The woman police officer said, "Look call your family and with luck they can get you a lawyer and he can get you out of custody before Immigration comes." And then a couple of hours passed and Immigration showed up. And the official told me to sign some paper, and I said I wouldn't sign anything, because I didn't understand what the paper said and he [the ICE officer] got angry. And I still refused and then he got me and put on handcuffs and they took me to the immigration center. And then Immigration took my fingerprints, and that other stuff. And they asked me if I had children and I said yes, I have five. And then they asked if I had crossed the border illegally. Well of course, I did. They knew. They knew I had passed illegally. They already knew. They had taken my fingerprints years ago.

Maria had not crossed the U.S.-Mexico border since the 1990s. Instead its late neoliberal permutation now reached her here, thousands of miles away. The mammoth and seemingly ever intensifying policing regime once largely arrayed against undocumented migrations and drug smugglers in the U.S.-Mexico border region now grasps at undocumented life in the interior of the United States. They are exemplified by the notorious immigration laws of Arizona and Georgia and the far more pervasive, if less recognized, federal enforcement initiatives such as 287(g), Criminal Alien Programs, and Secure Communities. They are illustrated by Sheriff Joe Arpaio's "concentration camps," his spectacles of incarceration and humiliation that crystallize how the dynamics of international boundaries are now thickening, their reach longer, their edges sharper.[4] Indeed vast new regimes of deportation, incarceration,

and criminalization extend the border into the interior of nation-states amid the ruins of neoliberal globalization across much of the globe.

The arrest rendered María "subject to deportation." The authorities could drop by her home or work and sever her from her family, deporting her. Her potent memories of crossing the U.S.-Mexico border, its steel walls, its surveillance towers, its armed personnel, the swirling rumors of vigilantism and "killing deserts," haunt her, a culturally specific manifestation of racial terror (Gilroy 1993).

But "the border" cuts southward too. Listen to Nancy, the bespectacled director of an immigrant shelter in Oaxaca City, deep in southern Mexico. Her organization is one of many that began long ago as sites to steel Mexican migrants as they headed north to the United States or to deal with the remains of those who died in the United States. But things have changed. New migrations from Central America, the drug war in Mexico and the war on terror in the United States, and the security arrangements between the United States and Mexico cut deeply.

"Mexico," remarks Nancy, "is like the wall of the United States. There are so many obstacles for [Central American] migrants going through Mexico. It is like a wall that is put up to exclude the migrants." The U.S.-Mexico—or best the U.S.-Latin America—border now reaches southward and deep into Mexico.

Forms of old rifle through the new. Contemporary forms of market dispossession, new regimes of racial subjugation as criminalization and criminalization as racial subjugation, the fraying seams between the military and law enforcement, once reserved for the international boundary between the United States and Mexico, now cut through both countries. But, the *borderlands* thicken as well. As Alejandro Lugo has noted, "There is a difference between those who write about borderlands and border crossings metaphorically, psychologically, sexually, and intellectually, and those who write about the border as imposed and sanctioned by nation-state policy makers and by government officials."[5]

Nancy's organization in this respect sustains life in the borderlands. It provides respite. It offers temporary shelter, meals, and clothing to undocumented migrants. But it also offers solidarity. Nancy explains: "We understand the migrant experience." She has friends and allies who have experienced daily life as undocumented migrants in the United States. Experiences of criminalized life circulate through the organization and inform its aid to migrants from Central America that violate Mexico's southern international boundary.

And listen. Listen to a dreamer celebrate her defiance of the United States and the borderlands begin to crystallize: "I went up there, and I did it. Undocumented, Unafraid, Unashamed. I stood strong, and let them know who I was. I crossed the border. I'm undocumented. . . . I am undocumented, exercising my first amendment rights, asking the world to be fair! This is my home, this is my country, this is OUR LAND. Yours and mine." Inhabitants of the borderlands hold close the raw memories of fights in the making of borders.[6] They foreground the new horizons of post- or antiborder possibilities. That is to say, be it the international boundary between United States and Mexico or that between Israel and Palestine or the borders being made between Baghdad's Green Zone and the rest of Iraq, the *borderlands* assert that such arrangements are fraught, incomplete, subject to contestation.

Borders, that is, incite dreams. The suggestion that the borderlands are thickening captures how the cordoning of old commons, the vigilance by the petty sovereigns of new racisms,[7] and the violent spectacle of the drug war in Mexico's north signify both renewed vulnerabilities and renewed possibilities. They render the intellectual tradition of the U.S.-Mexico border region increasingly paradigmatic, challenging "illegality" and its hermeneutics currently dominating the social sciences. Such currents urgently recast *mestizaje*, Latin America's generally and Mexico's specific iteration of dominant racial ideologies and processes of asymmetrical cultural and racial fusion and their resultant hybridities. Borders, checkpoints, undocumented migrations are becoming increasingly significant across the globe, as are the oppositional subjectivities that they engender.

Although the promise of earlier migration was the social and economic incorporation of immigrants in the receiving countries under the alternative paradigms of multiculturalism or cultural assimilation, vile ethnic and religious divisions have become the rule.[8] The new frontiers of immigration, these sovereign dictates over life and death or the permanent wars of the margins, the failed promises of economic integration now turned into dark dystopias, do not prohibit transnational migration. Rather they contain it. The concentration of security forces and their necessary incompleteness cause undocumented migrants to risk life and limb to cross international boundaries, effectively subjugating, criminalizing, and forging an irreconcilable difference on them, in the subject par excellence of neoliberalism "in the struggle and the work through which he or she confronts death."[9]

The discoveries of decapitated corpses in Mexico's north tell of new dominations of Other life in Mexico. The gruesome, violent exhibitions are another dimension of thickening borders, another illustration of "the governmentality

of immigration in dark times" in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.[10] Thickened borders signal how how mortality is the lethal edge of contemporary anti-immigrant racism.[11] It enables a state-mediated racisms or a "fatal coupling[s] of power and difference."[12] That is, the exposure of undocumented life to death effectively racializes migrants. *Humans—not bodies*—become objectified in the context of the new frontiers of the neoliberal Americas. They become dismember-able, detain-able, deport-able, incarcer-able in this latest amplification of the decidedly unexceptional "high intensity policing and low intensity warfare."[13] Thickening borderlands effectively capture the complicity of governing rationalities in these practices, how for migrants it has become a necessary strategy of economic survival for migrants and remittance-hungry nation-states alike and how civilian migrants must suffer the consequences.

The vulnerability of the undocumented illustrates how thickening borders, or an amplification and perceived failure of security practices, inculcate virulent "anti-immigrant racism."[14] The recent history of intensified migration, particularly undocumented border crossings, from Mexico into the United States is quite telling in this respect. Consider that with the advent of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which lowered barriers for transnational commerce among Canada, Mexico, and the United States, the U.S. government intensified militaristic strategies of social control at the border largely on populations of civilian migrants. In the El Paso area Operation Blockade, later renamed Hold the Line to be more politically palpable, commenced on the eve of NAFTA.[15] Four hundred Border Patrol agents and their vehicles were positioned along a twenty-mile stretch of the border, and helicopters went up in a show of force. Shortly thereafter the Immigration and Naturalization Service modeled southern California's Operation Gatekeeper, south Texas's Operation Lower Rio Grande, and southern Arizona's Operation Safeguard on the success of this first campaign.[16]

The *Border Patrol Strategic Action Plan 1994 and Beyond* is instructive in this respect. Experts from the Department of Defense and chief patrol agents authored a strategic roadmap for the implementation of low intensity warfare as the government of unauthorized border crossers. It advanced a strategy of border and migration controls called "prevention through deterrence." It holds that with the militarized campaigns of the Border Patrol "violence will increase as effects of strategy are felt." The document further describes the strategy: "The Border Patrol will achieve the goals of its strategy by bringing a decisive number of enforcement resources to bear in each major entry corridor. . . . The prediction is that with traditional entry and smuggling routes disrupted, illegal traffic will be deterred, or forced over more hostile terrain,

less suited for crossing and more suited for enforcement."[17] The fatal coupling of power and anti-immigrant difference dramatizes the thickening powers of new frontiers in the neoliberal age. Several thousands of undocumented migrants have died of exposure avoiding the Border Patrol and, one can speculate, vigilantes. Hundreds more unidentified humans fill the coroners' offices in communities in the southwestern United States. And likely hundreds more unidentified remains remain buried and undiscovered in the desert, alongside the abandoned water bottles, torn shirts, boxers and panties, and footprints in the steep sandy hills and hundred-plus-degree heat of "the killing deserts."[18]

But again, undocumented migrants traveling from or through Mexico have overwhelmingly succeeded in crossing the securitized border. This is evident demographically and, more important, in terms of the nightmares of insecurity about undocumented migration currently reverberating across the United States.[19] Thus undocumented migrants evade the Border Patrol but are contained in the economic and racial order of the United States, while inciting ethnonationalist nightmares of insecurity among an aggrieved public, particularly following 9/11, and dramatically diffusing the effects of the U.S.-Mexico border deep in the interior of Mexico.[20] Such nightmares dehumanize *civilian immigrants*, casting them as an invading force and, increasingly, as an "enemy within."

This phenomenon is captured in the influential Center for Immigration Studies publication "Coming to America: The Weaponization of Immigration":

> America, historically secure and prosperous, with vast oceans as moats and peaceful trading partners buffering its unguarded frontiers, is the spiritual and material envy of the world. Yet the changing dynamics of war and warfare, from symmetrical to asymmetrical, confront it with the ugly reality that a nation uncertain in the defense of its borders, from even the casual trespass of those fleeing hunger to seek work, is, in turn, at the mercy of those who trespass it. The war on terror affirms that threats to liberty abound. America's borders are the tripwires of this war. Their violations sound an alarm heard in debates over immigration, terrorism, and national security. Over these debates looms the memory of laws and borders easily and violently broken on September 11, 2001. The story of 9/11 reveals this breaking began well before American Airlines Flight 11 struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center at 8:46 on that fate-filled Tuesday morning. If American intelligence is correct, that breaking continues and with it the sieve-like

migration of terror across United States borders, especially those of the Southwest.[21]

Calls for antiterrorist strategies transpose the deep histories of international divisions onto bodies crystallized in the pernicious laws, ordinances, and practices, such as the checkpoints on the highways across the southwestern United States.

As do certain anti–Central American currents coursing through Mexico. They experience "the wall" of Mexico amid the turmoil of the drug war. Fighting between the new regional cartels has spiraled into a battle for profits by territorial expansion. Tens of thousands of people in Mexico have been killed, disappeared, decapitated, and dismembered in the past four years, more than the toll of U.S. adventurism in Afghanistan over the same period. Fifty thousand Mexican federal troops and thousands more private security contractors, many of them from U.S. security firms employed by Mexico, are now deployed. The conjunction of spiraling poverty rates and U.S. addictions thickens borders southward.

Certainly military repression in Mexico is not new. During the dirty war, from the 1960s through the 1980s, the Mexican Army was given carte blanche to put down student demonstrations and guerrilla groups, and it carried out disappearances and illegal detentions, torture, and killings on such a scale that the United States noted "an emerging security problem." When President Felipe Calderón describes the current campaign as a "war," the word holds multiple political meanings. He and his ministers constantly spoke in these martial terms, and he compared the fight against the cartels to Mexico's celebrated defeat of an invading French expeditionary force on May 5, 1862.[22] But this war now is routine. Necropolitical government has become how neoliberal crisis is managed.

Imagined enemies that span borders, such as migrants from Central America, become its grotesque casualties. The stories of mass kidnappings and demands for ransom and the recent discovery of mass graves with nameless bodies only confirm it. Central American women traveling through Mexico are particularly vulnerable. Listen to Nancy, the director of the migrant shelter in Oaxaca City, hundreds of miles away from the U.S.-Mexico border: "We were not hearing four years ago about the kidnapping of two hundred migrants, the mass making of seventy, the killing of seventy-two here, one hundred twenty in Tamaulipas, and those are the ones we know about. Because there's a lot more."

Nancy notes:

> Central American migrants come and they say a man stripped my clothes off he took everything and afterwards he told me take your pants and get out of here, no? And so begins migrant fear of certain people that look like delinquents, right? And they walk through the jungle, and there they find delinquents who will rob them, or trap them in the jungle. Sometimes they have to go around the migration *garritas* [checkpoints] and they know that around there they surround there there's going to be someone that's going to rob them, right? And not just the delinquents but also maybe in stores in places where a soda costs five and to migrants they sell it for twenty and they say if you don't pay me then I'll call Migration. Everyone knows, but no one talks about it. Everyone knows that those who talk with those accents or who wear *traje (indigenous clothing)*—everyone knows they're not from here. Everyone knows that there are lots of migrants. Everyone knows that the officials take advantage of them.

But, silence rules. The blood of migrants courses through this latest thickening border.

The Thickening Borderlands of Mestizaje

Listen to Nancy and others who assist migrants from Central America in Oaxaca: "We provide them food, clothing, and temporary shelter." Her willingness to work with Central American immigrants crossing the wall of Mexico emerges from her knowledge of the racist practices against Mexican immigrants in the United States. Meanwhile scholars like Alejandra Aquino-Moreschi have charted indigenous mobilization in the immigrant rights marches of 2006 in the United States.[23] She holds that experiences as a subordinated population in Mexico spark the moral indignation against anti-immigrant legislation and infuse an unprecedented collective and transnational mobilization. The thickening of the borderlands, that is, captures how the sovereign dictates over life and death produce subjects whose "ideological and material agency move in counter-purpose to 'fatal couplings of power and difference,'" what Ruth Wilson Gilmore terms racism.[24]

As the materiality of borders cut deeper north and south and deepen divisions across other parts of the globe, new identities resignify the old. The thickening of the borderlands captures how migrants and their allies transform mestizaje, or the processes and ideologies of racial and cultural mixing in the Americas as a result of contact with Spanish colonialism. It must be

emphasized that mestizos, as Marisol de la Cadena notes, "are not simple, empirical hybrids, a plain result of biological or cultural 'mixture' of two (formerly discreet) entities."[25] Rather, as Ana Alonso writes, mestizos inscribe "a notion that has been a product of long-term, unequal dialogues in social fields of domination, exploitation, and subjectification."[26]

In Mexico the so-called cult of the mestizo emerged from the ashes of this country's revolution as a remarkably successful attempt to exorcise its violent legacy. A cadre of intellectuals, ranging from Manuel Gamio—trained at Columbia University and a disciple of the famed anthropologist and public intellectual Franz Boas—to the Hispanophile scholar of letters José Vasconcelos, himself a child of the border, imposed a new politics of subjugating life: a state-organized aesthetic of mestizaje. Bolstered by the new science of anthropology, mestizaje situated the beginnings of Mexican history firmly in the indigenous past.

The natives of Mexico were presumed to be a dead or dying culture. They were romanticized as Mexico's vital origins, but living ones were seen as backward after centuries of colonialism and oppression. Indians, then, had to be redeemed by the postrevolutionary science of racial fusion between the Spanish and the indigenous peoples, marshaled by the Mexican state. This new mythic revolutionary history considered racial mixture to be positive and became the cornerstone of a new state-driven cultural and aesthetic project that was explicitly anti-imperialist and anticolonial and that permeated state institutions such as schools and the mass media.[27]

Mestizaje, south of the border, thus provides an enduring map of social relations in Mexico as well as throughout much of Latin America. Its all too often racist sensibilities circulate in government statistics and in public schools. It flows among the blondes of the elite barrio of Santa Fe in Mexico City who, sheathed in black, tell themselves that there is no racism in Mexico.

Such problematic currents reverberate in Mexico's diaspora in the United States. It can be heard among those who celebrate the Sambo-like characters of la India Maria or the Memín Pinguín and who express bewilderment at the outrage toward the latter and other parallel images in the United States. Such latent racisms similarly emerge among elderly grandmothers in Mexico's north and the U.S. Southwest who insist that their grandchildren remain covered in the sun so as not to grow "too dark." Mestizaje dissolves black and brown into white in a national space thick with the dialectics of racial formation and in synchronization with always reconstructing—and always contested—borders.

Indigenismo is a related cultural current inextricably tied to mestizaje and further thickens the border. As a derivative of mestizaje, it celebrates an abstracted dehistoricized Indian identity. The ever-present specter of revolutionary violence haunts this official management of the indigenous. Indeed despite the profound disagreements that plunged Mexico into a half century of political chaos, in the immediate context of the Revolution liberals and conservatives shared a common concern about the Indian problem.[28] In this respect Manuel Gamio, probably indigenismo's architect, held positivist vision of Mexico's "national race." A key player in the eugenics movement, he recognized his commitment to "bettering" Mexico's indigenous peoples and to preparing them for "racial fusion . . . cultural generalization and linguistic unification."[29] In *Forjando Patria* (Forging a Nation) he ruminated on the "central, troubling issue of how to forge one nation out of the two races inhabiting the country—one of Indian descent, the other of European descent."[30] Moreover Gamio held that the return of émigrés from the United States would effectively whiten Indians. Contemporary interpretations of indigenismo underscore how it "repeatedly celebrates the Indians' spectacular contributions in realms historical, artistic, cultural, and scientific . . . all the while meticulously plotting out their absorption into a future nation" built on a whitening trajectory of racial and cultural fusion.[31]

These problematic roots lead many thinkers to caution against a problematic indigenous essentialism, if not racism, in the mobilization and analysis of mestizaje north of the border, or in the United States. Chicano studies, in this respect, a U.S.-based, decidedly post- or antidisciplinary field, resignifies the now hegemonic racial and cultural meanings of mestizaje. It privileges the indigenismo currents of mestizaje discourse, which are central to the decolonizing currents that oscillate from it. Yet a paradigm of Chicanos/as as Indians "run[s] the risk of representing the [mestizo] body as the realm of 'the real,'" superimposing a physical essence on ethnicity.[32] Relatedly, as Nicole Guidotti-Hernández has put it, "in privileging an 'Indian essence,' mestizaje be it north or south of the border fetishizes a residual, abstract, dehistoricized Indian identity."[33]

Moreover, mestizaje in neoliberal Mexico increasingly no longer signifies ideologies of racial mixture. Instead the term approaches the racial project of whiteness in the United States. An effect of the asymmetrical integrations of the U.S. and Mexican economies, to be mestizo in Mexico is to be nonindigenous, to be nonblack, and to definitely *not* be the bleached elite of Mexico.[34] It is the taken for granted; the unremarkable.

Yet, as the border thickens, the roots and routes of transnational migrants,[35] particularly migrant experiences of competing racial projects in Mexico and the United States, interrupt certain processes of normalization. They informs new horizons of complex comminglings of Central Americans in Mexico and movements like the Dreamers in the United States. Such movements openly refuse their marginal status as "illegal aliens" or "undocumented" border crossers or their progeny do. That is, migrations and (un)documentation, identity and power birth a new mestizaje, echoing Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* from years ago.

In this respect certain theorists, such as Paul Gilroy, have argued that diaspora and the hybridities it provokes offer "a ready alternative to the stern discipline of primordial kinship and rooted belonging." Diaspora does not constitute "successive stages in a genealogical account of kin relations, equivalent to single branches on a family tree. One does not beget the other in a comforting sequence of ethnic teleology."[36] Diaspora, or in this case the ever thickening borderlands with respect to undocumented migrations, becomes an antidote to what Gilroy calls "camp-thinking."[37]

The thickening borderlands, similarly, thus disrupt oppositional, exclusive, and essentialist modes of thought about people and culture that rest on assumptions of purity and absolute cultural identities. Liberal modern exclusions of mestizaje and accompanying painful projects of incorporation of Latin American mestizaje must be held in critical abeyance to the emergent, alternative orientations and frequencies of a way of possible alternative ways of life that seek to become, incited by those living in exclusion in both Mexico and the United States. One can speculate that such migrant identities have a global relevance. As more and more people or their friends and their families live in the restless in-betweenness of undocumented immigration, the thickening borderlands become a global condition.

The New Reach of Borders

To dwell on such dark governmentalities or the condition of "illegality" or even the thickening border risks erasing the insistence by theorists of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands that borders birth vibrant alternatives. Borders kindle new dreams. A critical appreciation of Maria's experience or Nancy's analysis would insist on not only recognizing the disabling nature of contemporary order making as border making; it would likewise insist on recovering the formation of oppositional consciousness that border making and accompanying regimes of illegality birth. These oppositional dynamics are frequently neglected in the social sciences. Néstor Rodríguez long ago reminded schol-

ars that defying international boundaries could be taken as acts of autonomy, as acts of an autonomous working class engaged in projects of existence.[38] I would add that defying international boundaries can spark tremendous decolonial imaginaries, to echo Emma Perez.[39] Undocumented migrant life, stripped bare of protections, its kin, collaborators, and allies, birth new possibilities. That is, migrant subjectivities in Mexico, or those from Mexico or Central America in the United States, bring new energies, new frequencies, new orientations, ranging from quotidian techniques of survival to mass political mobilization. In the act of defying borders the repressed histories of colonization, conquest, enslavement, and domination nourish effective forms of resistance under contemporary global conditions: they are key to the imagination of decoloniality—and accompanying reversals of ideology—in its most utopian sense.[40] The mass graves of dismembered bodies of Central American migrants caught in the vicious crossfires of the drug wars in Mexico or undocumented life caught in the dynamics of racial terror in the United States generate new theories of the flesh and bring new flesh to theory.[41]

Such oppositional consciousness is irrevocably tied to what I have elsewhere termed the necessary incompleteness of borders, their radical defiance by undocumented border crossers, and the subsequent "nightmares of insecurity" that they generate.[42] Anxieties about incomplete borders, about walls between countries that are never finished, about bodies burrowing under borders hail aggrieved subjectivities in both Mexico and the United States. The demonization of migrants from Central America in Mexico and of Mexicans in the United States feeds dystopic narratives of contamination and national deterioration and spiraling calls for greater immigration controls. But the challenges and rebellions that such powers engender invite critical analysis and reflection.

The concept of the thickening borderlands scandalizes debates on immigration and race. They and our concepts are too often limited by the nation-state and its multiple horizons. Borders, in the words of Gloria Anzaldúa, are "una herida abierta [an open wound] where the Third World grates against the First and bleeds." Before a scab can form "it hemorrhages again, the life-blood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture."[43] Anzaldúa's iconic and original bloody metaphor seems ever more appropriate as the border cuts deeper into both the United States and Mexico. This year at least two dozen states have considered laws modeled on Arizona's heinous SB 1070; officials from fourteen states have pledged to try to repeal birthright citizenship in their states; and others are working to curtail public services to undocumented immigrants.

Conceptually the thickening of the borderlands captures how borders now cut deep, sometimes deep enough to decapitate in Mexico or to sever parents from children, as with Maria in Chicago and millions of others across the United States. Wars on crime, drugs, and terror merge. In regimes anchored in permanent warfare, traffickers and undocumented migrants are depicted as insurgents and terrorists. The discovery of mass graves, of caches of guns in Mexico, and the lower intensity draconian anti-immigrant policing initiatives and legal measures in the United States illuminate the logics of war-like policing and policing-like warfare as contemporary government. They thicken the border.

And, they thicken the borderlands.[44] To emphasize such dark arts in the governmentality of migration risks neglecting the renewed "methodologies of the oppressed"; the living dreams of Dreamers who openly claim their undocumented status, the daily workings of NGOs and their constituencies in Mexico and the United States in support of their undocumented status, the marchers of 2006, and countless other examples across the globe speak to how defying international boundaries and their internal reaffirmations reignite longings, hail subjugated knowledges of the making of borders, and consequently decolonial imaginaries, which dominant trends in the humanities and social sciences would neglect. Dreamers organize; sovereignty bends. The president of the United States recently put in a program called "deferred action," designed to give some relief to immigrant youth. Nancy's organizations and countless other, less formal solidarities survive.

The new borderlands likewise births alternative racial recognitions. A gradual reworking of mestizaje is born. The drug war in Mexico and the war against undocumented migration in the United States illuminate a perpetual thickening of the U.S.-Mexico border in the ruins of NAFTA and disturbing reverberations across the globe. But migrants and their allies do not experience social death.[45] They suffer gross marginalization. They suffer politically organized, premature near-death experiences as they cross international boundaries and the daily in the informal wars against immigrant—and those imagined as immigrant—Others fueled by anti-immigrant racisms, be they in Mexico, in the United States, or elsewhere in the globe, where to be imagined as a foreigner casts one as a source of insecurity and toward an ever greater proximity to death. In the process some, if not many, become politicized in living these thickening borders of exclusion, or the actual or gradual strangling of life as "the undocumented," as "illegal aliens," or even beheadings. This phenomenon demands a certain diasporic sensibility that divorces mestizaje from its increasingly problematic roots in Mexico and other parts of the Americas.

It is emergent. The tremendous new horizons, solidarities, and methodologies of the oppressed are evident in Mexico, in the United States, and in other parts of the globe. They demand the globalization of scholarship from the U.S.-Mexico border region.

NOTES

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1. Lugo, "Theorizing Border Inspections"; Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth*.

2. Balibar, *Strangers as Enemies*.

3. Chang, "A Meditation on Borders," 247.

4. For more information, see Mahwish Khan, "Arpaio Boasts about His "Concentration Camp," Calls Out Puente Arizona for Challenging Him," America's Voice, June 6, 2012, accessed July 7, 2012, http://americasvoice.org/blog/arpaio-boasts-about-his-concentration-camp-calls-out-puente-arizona-for-challenging-him/.

5. Lugo, "Theorizing Border Inspections," 356. See also Lugo, *Fragmented Lives, Assembled Parts*.

6. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 8.

7. Chappell, "Rehearsals of the Sovereign."

8. Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers*.

9. Mbembe, "Necropolitics," 14.

10. Fassin, "Policing Borders, Producing Boundaries."

11. Mbembe, "Necropolitics."

12. Gilmore, "Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference."

13. Rosas, "The Thickening Borderlands," 337.

14. Rana and Rosas, "Managing Crisis," 229.

15. Agent Silvestre Reyes had implemented similar polices in McAllen, Texas, prior to becoming chief of the Border Patrol in El Paso and, later, a state senator and implementing Operation Hold-the-Line in El Paso. Peter Brownell writes, "These operations did not draw Washington's attention until October and November 1993; just before implementation of NAFTA, Operation Blockade caught presidential attention and became the basis for a border-wide strategy." Peter Brownell, "Border Militarization and the Reproduction of Mexican Migrant Labor," *Social Justice* 28.2 (2001): 278.

16. As Nicholas De Genova contends, "U.S. immigration law has generated the juridical categories of differentiation among various migrations, defined the parameters of 'legality,' and continually revised the possibilities for 'legal' migration in ways that have been disproportionately restrictive for Mexicans in particular." Nicholas De Genova, *Working the Boundaries: Race, Space, and "Illegality" in Mexican Chicago* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 8.

17. U.S. Border Patrol, *Border Patrol Strategic Plan*, 5–8.

18. Rosas, *Barrio Libre*.

19. Although border enforcement funding has more than doubled between 2001 and 2006, the Mexican-born population in the United States, both legal and illegal, has continued to grow at an average rate of 500,000 per year over the past decade. Between 2000 and 2005 America's undocumented population increased by 24 percent, from 8.4 million to 11.1 million. At the end of the 1990s and continuing into this decade, the pace of unauthorized new arrivals began to accelerate, averaging 850,000 per year. Indeed increased enforcement at certain sections of the border has rerouted illegal crossers to less fortified areas, but the U.S. Border Patrol has had no more success apprehending illegal entrants in 2005 than it did in 1996. Statistical information can be found at Faye Hipsman and Doris Meissner, "Immigration in the United States: New Economic, Social, Political Landscapes with Legislative Reform on the Horizon," Migration Information Source, April 16, 2013, accessed September 22, 2013, http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/immigration-united-states-new-economic-social-political-landscapes-legislative-reform.

20. See Rosas, *Barrio Libre*.

21. Cato, "Coming to America," 311.

22. Gregory, "The Everywhere War."

23. Aquino-Moreschi, "De la indignación moral a las protestas colectivas."

24. Gilmore, "Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference," 16.

25. Cited in Alonso, "Conforming Disconformity," 460.

26. Alonso, "Conforming Disconformity," 460.

27. Alonso, "Conforming Disconformity," 463.

28. Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence*.

29. Buffington, *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico*, 152–54.

30. Gamio, *Forjando Patria*, 206.

31. Saldaña-Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development*, 206.

32. Perez-Torres, *Movements in Chicano Poetry*, xv.

33. Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence*, 6

34. Korinta Maldonado, Totonac "usos y custombres": Racial Sensibilities and Uneven Entitlements in Neoliberal Mexico. PhD diss., University of Texas, Department of Anthropology, 2012.

35. Clifford, *Routes*.

36. Gilroy, *Between Camps*, 123, 128.

37. Wade, "Hybridity Theory and Kinship Thinking," 84.

38. Rodríguez, "The Battle for the Border."

39. Perez, *The Decolonial Imaginary*.

40. Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*.

41. Moraga, *Loving in the War Years*.

42. Rosas, *Barrio Libre*.

43. Anzaldúa, *La Frontera/Borderlands*, 25.

44. Thickening borders speaks to how violent technologies of criminalization are the modus operandi and chart their migration from the margins of nation-states and the globe to the centers. Low-intensity conflict, once reserved for the so-called Third

Worlds, has moved from the margins to the core. Conflicts now proliferate across the constantly thickening U.S.-Mexico border. Border inspections, a concept theorized by Lugo, and not just "border crossing" but their radical defiance, have a way of life (Lugo, "Theorizing Border Inspections").

45. Compare Cacho, *Social Death*; see Zavella, *I'm Neither Here nor There*.