

New Sociology: Journal of Critical Praxis

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

What does a border do, and how is it un/done? *New Sociology's* 7th issue, *Aesthesis: The Politics and Praxes of Un/bordering*, responds to this question, foregrounding the process of aesthesis. To approach un/bordering through aesthesis is to ask how power governs, and how this governance is in turn felt, sensed, rehearsed, and contested in everyday life. It is also to ask how people make, feel, and see otherwise beyond the arrangements of enclosure that seek to define the world as is. The works gathered below explore these inquiries, united by their refusal to leave the border at the level of a line, wall, checkpoint, or prison. Borders instead emerge as social relations, practices, and sensations; that which routes movement, organizes care, disciplines passage and shapes the terms upon which people are seen, heard, and made to belong.

Across poetry, visual commentary, photography, collaborative art practice, and reflective prose, borders appear across the collection, not only as stable state infrastructures, but as documentary rituals, racial scripts, inherited myths, professional codes, and intimate negotiations of power. Here, the border travels. It appears in visa forms, labouring bodies, languages of legitimacy, gender norms, institutions of care, nationalist imaginaries, and cultural spaces that determine who may enter on generous terms and who must arrive already explained. And although shaped by the stories of those too often managed through bordering, including Black, Brown, queer, disabled, and im/migrant communities, the pieces in this issue do more than expose the violences of bordering. They attend to the practices through which people interrupt, survive, refuse, and reimagine those violences, offering precisely the kind of theory in practice, counter-archive, and freedom dreaming that the issue set out to convene.

The issue is organized around three thematic sections: *(En)countering*, *Mobilizing*, and *Refusing*. Section I, *(En)countering*, opens the issue by foregrounding the embodied, relational, and creative practices through which borders are negotiated, interrupted, and reworked. It begins with our featured piece, *The Agency of Counter-Border Narratives*, by Giuliana Raccoa. Reflecting on a collaborative project of the same name, this photo essay documents how migrant women in Barcelona explore physical, mental, and emotional bordering through speculative writing, kite-making, collective mapping, and public performance. Here, creation itself is framed as a form of knowledge co-production, one that makes border experience tangible while concertedly opening space for solidarity, visibility, and alternative futures. Thereafter we have *From the Window to Wall: A Visual Commentary on Borders, Healing, and Transformation*, by Kevin Ufoegbune, which offers an intimate meditation on how borders shape therapeutic practice, Black masculine embodiment, professional identity, and spiritual relation. Also a photo essay, this piece explores how helping professions emerge as bordered spaces structured by whiteness, colonial gender norms, code-switching, and self-surveillance, yet can and have been transformed through vulnerability, Afrocentric/decolonial praxis, and intentional relationality. Together, these works show un/bordering as a method, relation, and practice that extends simple critique.

Section II, *Mobilizing*, turns to works that show (un/bordered) movement as something unevenly administered, documented, and endured. In *Two Passport Photos to Pass-the-Port to Port-Saïd Square*, author Marycarmen mediates mobility through photographs and forms that highlight the protocols of proving, the endless waiting, and the quiet discipline of bureaucratic compliance that foreground un/bordering, while also rejoicing in

the agency that can be found from within and against such colonial abstractions. For Marycarmen, paperwork is more than a requirement. It is a meditation on the paradoxical asymmetry of state legitimacy, and the fleeting forms of border justice that appear therein. In *Survival Etched into Flesh: Migration, Labour, and Debility*, by Thomas Tri & Tanisha Dang, migration appears in paradox once more, but this time, in the form of language. Mastering the English prose that has itself necessitated their own linguistic unbelonging, Tri & Dang use poetic-narrative to carry movement through the body and across generations: through factory work, racialization, and debility, and to make salient the inherent trap of aspiring toward stability through gaining proximity to whiteness. Read together, these pieces remind us that the border does not end at arrival. It persists in documentation, labour, memory, and the ordinary demand to be grateful for structures that diminish the very lives they claim to make possible and save.

Section III, *Refusing*, gathers works that close the issue in a different register: visionary, lyrical, insurgent. In Ufoegbune's second piece of the issue, *Border-Breaker (The Policing of Black Masculinity)*, Black masculinity is named as a checkpoint, as a site where vulnerability is watched, disciplined, and made suspect, even as the lyrics insists on healing, softness, love, and political clarity as ways of crossing the lines imposed upon Black life. This is followed by *A Recurring Theme of Displacement*, by Dani Kriatura, which expands the scale of the issue's inquiry by locating bordering within the mythology of colonialism itself. Specifically, Kriatura uses original, abstract art to name the narratives through which nation-states and empires naturalize displacement, dehumanization, conquest, and erasure, and instead ask what it means to un-border, to remember otherwise, and to restore right relations through praxis. Kriatura's last piece, titled *Crossroads*, is also the cover art of the issue. The closing piece of both the section and the issue is *I Dream: An Open Poem to Canadian Hockey Communities*, by Jordan O'Dell. In this poem, O'Dell turns to the national-cultural terrain of hockey and reveals its white-colonial, cis-heteropatriarchal borders of belonging, while

refusing to end there. Instead, he dreams of the sport as anti-racist, anti-colonial, queer, trans, feminist, collective, and accountable. Together, these works give the issue its closing force. They do not treat the border as destiny. They confront it as something made and, therefore, something that can be unmade—something that can be refused, exceeded, and imagined otherwise by the very people and communities it seeks to contain.

As a collective, this latest issue of *New Sociology: Journal of Critical Praxis* insists that borders are sites of aesthesis: colonial realities that are produced by states and institutions with the intent to control, but which are ultimately unable to against the everyday people who reproduce and produce borders anew through their affects, repetitions, fantasies, and dreams. For us and our authors, un/bordering is not a singular act. It is an ongoing and collective practice of witnessing, relating, negotiating, artmaking, caring, refusing, remembering, and imagining. What we offer is thus not one geography, one method, or one answer. Rather, we offer a set of encounters: between migration and memory, identity and vulnerability, administration and intimacy, myth and history, harm and healing, critique and world-making. In doing so, we ask our readers to not only critique the border, but to sense it differently and to remain accountable to the difficult, collective labour of un-bordering itself, especially for those whose lives continue to be most intensely shaped by bordering as a lived condition.

We would like to thank the authors, creatives, activists, and dreamers who contributed to our seventh issue, *Aesthesis: The Politics and Praxes of Un/bordering*. A special thank you to Dani Kriatura for creating the cover art for the issue, as well as to our copyeditors, Isaac Abban and Tigist Wame, and our social media manager, Evania Pietrangelo-Porco, for all their hard work. Most of all, we want to thank the readers of *New Sociology* for your continued support and dedication. You are, and continue to be, the heartbeat of our journal.

Michelle Molubi-Johnson, Lead Editor; Prilly Bicknell-Hersco, Chief-Deputy-Editor (CDE); Jellisa Ricketts, CDE; & Jay Williams, CDE, with Dr Jade CR Da Costa, Founder/Editor-In-Chief.