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Queering Citizenship: UndocuQueer and Immigration Reform

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Abstract: Analysis of the founding of the UndocuQueer movement and organizer, Julio Salgado, through Anzaldúan theory on *nepantla*, and in terms of cultural, sexual, and political citizenship, in the experience of those who came to the U.S. as children. This study assesses reasons for “coming out” as undocumented and queer through activism; argues that coalitional and relational activism challenges current anti-immigration policies and social factors; and advocates for a global and embodied citizenship.

Key Terms: UndocuQueer; Global citizenship; Nepantla; Social media; Julio Salgado

Activists involved in the undocumented and queer Migrant Rights Movement of the 21st century, affiliated with such organizations as the Undocumented Queer Youth Collective and the Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project, did not choose to cross the U.S. border. Instead, they arrived as children with their parents. Now young adults, they are making the conscious choice to “come out” as both undocumented and queer, many in direct challenge to current practices of a U.S. immigration system. This article reads the work of Julio Salgado and other UndocuQueer activists as *nepantleras*, a theoretical term developed by Gloria Anzaldúa, to describe the process of cultural, sexual, and political citizenship in the U.S.¹ Furthermore, I argue that their coalitional and relational activism challenges the current U.S. immigration system by advocating for a sense of global or planetary citizenship, shedding light on a new approach to embodied citizenship.

Outing oneself as an undocumented immigrant shares similarities with outing oneself as a non-heterosexual; thus many queer undocumented youth have had to “out” themselves twice, coming out of a double closet (Zonkel, 3). The landmark book by queer Chicana theorist, Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), offers insights for the activities of the UndocuQueer movement,² notably, her notion of physical material bodies as borderland sites. She compares her own physical body, often in pain, to the U.S.-Mexico border, described as an “herida abierta, a 1,950 mile-long open wound/dividing a pueblo, a culture” (2). Her Chicana heritage, non-conformist sexuality, and physical location

on the geographical border provided fodder for her theorization of liminal spaces. The sense of not belonging to either Mexico or the U.S., but rather to a third space, the borderlands, led to her theories about other liminal states. Anzaldúa later appropriated the Náhuatl term *nepantla* to signify the in-between spaces where one dwells and acts as mediator: “I associate nepantla with states of mind that question old ideas and beliefs, acquire new perspectives, change worldviews, and shift from one world to another.” (Anzaldúa, 1)

AnaLouise Keating, Anzaldúa scholar and her writing *comadre*, elaborates on Anzaldúa’s ideas about multiple sites of intersectionality and *nepantleras*, mediators who work for cultural change:

[... L]iving with and among multiple worlds, nepantleras use their frictional existence and discomfort to create alternative perspectives—ideas, theories, actions, and/or beliefs that contain yet exceed either/or thinking. This multiplicity compels them to redefine and thus slip through binary-oppositional frameworks and the dichotomous thinking on which it relies. They invent relational theories and tactics with which they can reconceive and in other ways transform the various worlds in which they exist. (Keating, 2013, 14)

Because of the threshold identities that mark nepantleras, they inevitably seek out others like themselves in an effort to build coalitions and to work for social change. These affinity groups account for intersectional identities and complex personhoods that are often not focused on any one single movement or identity marker, and yet have the potential to form movements. By theorizing UndocuQueer youth as nepantleras, I hope to recognize their many differences as I comment on their shared qualities of being queer and undocumented, while highlighting radical interconnectedness in the current immigration debates. This study seeks to problematize the binary citizen/noncitizen, as I explore the ideas of cultural, sexual, and political citizenship as it relates to UndocuQueer activists,³ in effect, Queering Citizenship.⁴

Relational identities and borderland theorizing led Anzaldúa to a concept that she and AnaLouise Keating developed as the idea of planetary citizenship, a notion that echoes Virginia Woolf: “In fact, as a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world” (*Three Guineas*, 1938, 129) but transcends gender as an identity marker. While theorists Thich Nhat Hanh, Paul Gilroy, Kwame Anthony Appiah, and Judith Butler focused on forming a moral community among humans, other theorists, such as Habermas, identify global citizenship with a focus on humanity above any nation-state identification, where one’s identity transcends geography or political borders under a world government. Anzaldúa’s planetary citizenship⁵ differs from both cosmopolitanism and global citizenship in that it includes non-humans and other forms of life in the universe. Her planetary citizenship is inclusive of all living forms, recognizes radical interdependence, and is relational. Anzaldúa and Keating privilege a nepantlera perspective to create a theory of planetary citizenship that challenges social identities and questions the citizen/noncitizen binary.⁶

Nepantleras think in terms of the planet, not just their own racial group, the U.S. or Norte América. They serve as agents of awakening, inspire and challenge others to deeper awareness, greater *conocimiento*, serve as reminders of each other’s search for wholeness of being. (Anzaldúa, 293, qtd. in Keating, 14)

Perhaps aspirational, the idea of planetary citizenship offers an alternative to current national citizenship rationale and immigration policies, not by advocating for citizenship-for-all, but rather for the dismantling of nation-states that use citizenship as a mode of control and exclusion. As a queer political strategy, borderland theorizing and nepantlera subjectivity collapse the us/them binary to show the inefficacy of socially constructed borders.

NO BORDERS

Echoing the wall art in the background in each of the internet video posts that features a woman with long hair and the words “No borders,” I would like to turn now to the multimedia campaigns of UndocuQueer “artist,”⁷ Julio Salgado. I argue that social media has assisted him and other UndocuQueer activists to make visible and disseminate the group’s message of fearlessness as they challenge the current U.S. immigration policy. Via embodied graphic representations of undocumented queers, I show how Salgado and others were able to make their voices heard during the national discussion of immigrant rights of the 2012 election period. I frame this discussion in the theoretical context of border studies, arguing that the undocumented queer youth are employing their physical bodies as borderland sites in the tradition of Anzaldúa.

The Salgado family came to Los Angeles from Mexico in 1995, with valid passports and visas, when Julio was 11 years old. When his sister’s kidney condition was deemed life threatening, the family overstayed their visas, leaving them in the position of being undocumented (Kennedy, 2014, n.p.). Julio Salgado worked his way through school and studied political science and journalism at California State University, Long Beach. I came to know Salgado from his Facebook posts before he appeared in the *Time* magazine “Undocumented Americans” issue (June 14, 2012). As a follower of his Facebook feed, I watched his animated “Undocumented and Awkward” YouTube series, stayed abreast of immigration reform events via his digital artistic publicity, and more recently followed his weekly “Liberty for All” comic strip and his “Osito” videos. Via Facebook, YouTube, and Tumblr, Julio Salgado is a virtual presence on the undocumented youth scene. To be sure, social media has facilitated the channels of visibility and the organization of undocumented youth. In addition to social media, Salgado’s first UndocuQueer mural was installed at the corner of Bryant and 24th Streets

in San Francisco's Mission district in June 2013, during the city's Gay Pride month.⁸ Salgado also contributed to the print publication of *Papers: Stories by Undocumented Youth* (2012), and more recently to Nia King's *Queer and Trans Artists of Color: Stories of Some of Our Lives* (2014).

So while the majority of the U.S. populace probably does not follow Salgado's Tumblr page, some may have become familiar with Salgado when he hit mainstream consciousness via the "celebrity" outing of José Antonio Vargas, a U.S.-Filipino journalist, who revealed he was an undocumented immigrant in 2010, in a personal story featured in *The New York Times* and *Time* magazine. Vargas' article cracked the closet door on the estimated 12 million undocumented persons living in the U.S.⁹ Also included in the *Time* article was Salgado, a person who identifies as both undocumented and queer, embracing all aspects of his complex identity:

I use two identities that are supposed to make me weak and empower myself. As an undocumented person, I am seen as a criminal. As a queer person, I am seen as somebody who is going to hell. So how do you turn that [around]? For me, through the art, I turn that [around] by showing ourselves in dignified ways that embrace the terms that make us feel like we are less than human. (Salgado, qtd. in Seif, 300)

As a child immigrant, Julio Salgado is part of the liminal "1.5 generation" of Americans: not a first-generation immigrant, since his parents brought him to the U.S., and not a second-generation American, as he was not born in the U.S. Contrary to the narratives of some politicians promoting a current U.S. immigration policy that renders parents who migrate with their children criminals, Salgado portrays immigrants in a dignified manner and refuses to criminalize parents. He chooses instead to label them "courageous and responsible." In response to an American Apparel advertisement that objectified a Mexican-American day laborer, Salgado rewrites the cultural script of undocumented parents by portraying his own mother and sister in their struggle for better health care (see Figure 1). While Salgado is immersed in U.S. popular culture, his digital art does



Fig. 1. "Julio Salgado: Undocumented and Awkward." Studio360. 29 June 2012. Web. Feb. 7, 2014. <<http://www.studio360.org/story/219144-julio-salgado-undocumented-and-awkward/>>

not perpetuate the status quo. Although he identifies as queer and as a migrant, Salgado's experience is not one of sexual migration.¹⁰

Students who identify as DREAMers organized nationally leading up to the 2010 vote that defeated the early DREAM Act proposal, which would have provided a pathway to citizenship for undocumented youth. In 2012, President Obama's executive action launched DACA, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy.¹¹ Many of the key DREAM organizers were also members of the LGBTQ community. Hinda Seif has noted this parallel:

[...] Unlike previous Latino social movements that have marginalized LGBTQ persons and perspectives, young people who live and speak at the intersection of undocumented immigration status and sexual difference were central to establishing significant immigrant youth organizations and strategies. Along with creating space for immigrant rights organizing that

were also queer-friendly, these young organizers have forged linguistic and political practices that reflect their intersectional social locations. (89)

The fact that many immigrants were also members of the LGBTQ community could explain why immigration reform organizing has employed tactics associated with the LGBTQ community.¹² Therefore, the pairing of “Undocu” and “Queer” should not be surprising.

CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP

Through his activist art, Julio Salgado is one of the most visible UndocuQueer activists. As a nepantlera using his personal experience to expose the complexities of the U.S. immigration system, he is a mediator in terms of his immigration status, his sexuality, and his generational status. As a cultural citizen, Salgado has harnessed social media to enact “the capacity to participate effectively, creatively, and successfully within a national culture” (Evans, qtd. in Robson and Kessler, 540). Utilizing digital space,¹³ Salgado and other UndocuQueer activists are rewriting U.S. culture:

Another very important aspect was [...] that we were doing this through Facebook. The coming out process became literally a click on the keyboard. [...] I think social media has been a blessing and a curse; a blessing for communities like ours where we might not be able to travel, but a lot of us met through these networks [...] The ways I shared my art—Facebook, tumblr, twitter—were huge. They were tools at our disposal. I sort of equated it to the 1990s when they had ’zines. [...] It’s a tool that we’ve used, but you still need the physical interaction. The civil disobediences happened because they met on Facebook, but we still need the rallies, [...] social media is only a tool. (Salgado, qtd. in Seif, 307)

Social media allowed Salgado and other nepantleras to organize around shared identities (queer and undocumented) in order to expose the injustice of the immigration

system. No longer isolated, UndocuQueer activists gained strength in numbers; through this strength, they became fearless. Knowing there was a community of individuals in similar situations, UndocuQueer activists used their experience as cultural Americans to exert influence as non-U.S. citizens. Social media allowed for the creation of community, based on the interconnection of experience.



Fig. 2. Viral Facebook profile picture on March 26, 2013.

Collective action movements have found fertile ground through social media. UndocuQueer activists have claimed digital and occasionally shelf space and billboard space to voice their opinions as cultural citizens. Julio Salgado has lent his artwork to countless anti-deportation petitions, which have been successful in stopping the deportation of numerous undocumented individuals. Likewise, because many of the founding members of the UndocuQueer movement are also members of LGBTQ movements, there are similarities in the use of social media to advance both marriage equality and immigration reform. Allow me to illustrate how these two events are connected by a series of Facebook profile pictures with the caveat that it is almost impossible to know the origins of images on the web.

Figure 2 shows the Human Rights Coalition equality symbol dyed red and pink, reflecting traditional colors of love, that went viral as a Facebook profile picture on March 26, 2013 when marriage equality was up for debate in the Supreme Court. As the day progressed, there were various renditions of the “equality for love” pictured as in Figure 3.



Fig. 3. Facebook profile pictures on March 26, 2013.

Three weeks later, on April 10, 2013, an immigration reform bill was taken up in the Senate, and Facebook witnessed another variation of the equality sign, this time to “Stand in Solidarity with 11 million undocumented immigrants.” Figure 4 shows the same equality symbol of the Human Rights Campaign, now vertical to reflect the number eleven. The Human Rights Campaign logo was used despite the homonormative policy and single-issue tactics of the HRC that requested that the Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project speaker, Jerssay Arredondo, not speak of his immigration status at a rally in D.C. (QUIP, YouTube video). And despite the fact that most estimates place the number of undocumented immigrants between 12 and 20 million, the 11 million figure worked for this campaign because it piggy-backed on the apparent support that marriage equality had won just weeks prior, with the ruling of DOMA as unconstitutional. This is merely an observation, as I have no knowledge of top-down strategizing between the Human Rights Coalition and Immigrant Rights groups. The similarities, however, beg mention.

More recently, undocumented youth have exposed the inequalities of the U.S. immigration system for its treatment of the Canadian-born pop singer, Justin Bieber.



Fig. 4. Facebook Profile Picture April 10, 2013

In January of 2014, Bieber was arrested and released for causing \$20,000 worth of damage by egging his neighbor’s house. The following week, Bieber was again detained for driving under the influence of alcohol and marijuana, driving without a valid license, and resisting arrest. Prominent UndocuQueer activist, Prena Lal, immediately likened Bieber’s case to that of Miguel Morales Patzán, an undocumented worker who was jailed for 10 days for driving without a license and was facing deportation at the same time that Bieber was arrested (*Race Files*, January 23, 2014).

Other undocumented youth quickly took to the interwebs to create the hashtag #undeportable¹⁴ in which they compared far less severe offenses committed by undocumented youth to Bieber’s crimes, in order to highlight a U.S. double standard of deportability (see Figures 5 and 6). These undocumented youth brought discussion of racial profiling into the immigration debate, arguing that because Bieber is a famous Caucasian pop star (with an O-1 Visa for extraordinary artistic talent), he was not deportable. In fact, Bieber was not deported. The story was picked up by Univisión and *The Huffington Post* and received some mainstream attention (see “Campana #Undeportable” and Nevarez). Here, UndocuQueer artists used Twitter to protest social injustice through digital art. In effect, social media has facilitated nepantlera radical interconnection by allowing artists and activists real time media outlets to connect to others in their affinity groups and to expose systematic injustice.

SEXUAL CITIZENSHIP/SEXUAL SUBJECTS

Salgado and other UndocuQueer activists are also rewriting sexual citizenship by simultaneously coming out as undocumented and as queer. While no one definition of sexual citizenship exists, David Bell and Jon Binnie argue that all citizenship is sexual because all (potential) citizens are sexual, but go on to note “we are not equal sexual citizens” (qtd. in Robson and Kessler, 543). Jeffrey Weeks argues that “the sexual citizen breaches public/private divide by bringing sexuality into the public sphere”



Fig. 5. Britto Schwartz, Juliana. "Undocuyouth respond to Justin Bieber Deportation Buzz." *Feministing*, n.d. Web. Feb. 7, 2014. <<http://feministing.com/2014/01/24/undocuyouth-respond-to-justin-bieber-deportation-buzz/>>

(qtd. in Robson and Kessler, 542). And American political scientist Shane Phelan argues, "sexual minorities in the United States are 'strangers' excluded from full citizenship [...] the stranger is a figure of ambivalence who troubles the border between us and them" (qtd. in Robson and Kessler, 543). The ideas of inequality among sexualities, of sexual citizens collapsing the public/private binary, and of sexual minorities being figures of ambivalence that threaten to topple the binary between "us and them" are all aligned with Anzaldúa's *nepantla*. Anzaldúa theorizes from a place of difference to arrive at her liminal *nepantlera*. Anzaldúa's *nepantlera* is a philosophical if not metaphorical definition of difference, and when applied to sexual citizenship, does not address the legal regulations of sexuality.¹⁵

The previous section of this essay addressed the junction of marriage equality activism and the UndocuQueer movement in a series of Facebook posts. It is important to note that at a time of rapid change in the U.S. in terms of marriage equality, Salgado and other UndocuQueers are resisting homonormativity and are challenging the massive resources dedicated to marriage equality. For many youth, the term "gay" points to what Lisa Duggan has theorized as the new homonormativity, of a "demobilized gay constituency and a privatized depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (Duggan, 2002: 179, qtd. in Seif, 91). For this reason, Salgado and others prefer to describe their sexuality and their politics as queer. Mainstream gay culture has often been seen as white and male, and both Salgado and Anzaldúa address this cultural difference. Anzaldúa states:

For me [...] the term lesbian es problemón [...] 'lesbian' is a cerebral word, white and middle-class, representing an English-only dominant culture, derived from the Greek word Lesbos. I think of lesbians as predominantly white and middle-class women and a segment of women of color who acquired the term through osmosis, much the same as Chicanas and Latinas assimilated the word 'Hispanic.' (1998, 263)

Salgado echoes Anzaldúa:

A couple of years ago, I would have said 'gay.' But the more I find out and experience what the word 'gay' means to the mainstream—this idea of clean, white, male, white picket fence ideal. Gay marriage. That's what I think when I hear the word 'gay.' And that doesn't necessarily represent who I am. While I understand the idea of gay marriage—everyone should be able to marry who they want—there is more to my identity. Being undocumented. Our trans brothers and sisters who are in detention centers. Using the word 'queer' embodies more than

this one identity that the mainstream has. (Salgado, qtd. in Seif, 304)

Both Anzaldúa and Salgado use “queer” in a non-normalizing way that accounts for the intersections of their identities. Neither Anzaldúa nor Salgado speak from a position of sexual migration seeking asylum in the U.S., yet both speak from within the U.S. searching for a sexual space that accounts for their lived experience. The use of the word “queer” and the lack of focus on mainstream issues like marriage equality point to a neopantleria politics that mirrors Cathy Cohen’s use of a queer politics. Cohen urges queer theorists and activists to not assimilate into the academic mainstream, and states that if queer theory intends to be truly revolutionary in its aim for social change, it should align itself with the most marginalized of citizens, the punks, the bulldaggers and the welfare queens (22). In the current debate, undocumented queer youth are subjected to marginalization but are resisting neoliberal lures of assimilation and consumption as sexual subjects to enact a queer politics.

(PRECARIOUS) POLITICAL SUBJECTS

While UndocuQueer activists are challenging cultural and sexual citizenship in the U.S., they are also lobbying legislators, engaging in anti-deportation activism, and participating in acts of civil disobedience as political subjects. In this metaphorical theorization of queer undocumented youth as participating in different forms of citizenship, I do not argue that discussing formal legal political citizenship is unimportant.

“Undocumented immigrants have been empowered through their leadership and activism [...] and have thus called into question the sovereignty of the state” (Corruner, 166). Participating as cultural and sexual subjects, UndocuQueer activists have become political by advocating for systemic change in the immigration system. Importantly, this fight for humane immigration reform is coalitional. “[We need to highlight] the complexities about immigrants in this country. [You can’t] just throw people under the bus if *you’re* OK [because you have DACA]” (Salgado, qtd. in Seif, 308, italics in original). Salgado and other undocumented queer youth are working toward more than individual personal immigration integration, as other migrants have done historically. For them, the movement is about systemic change and they understand that systemic change takes time:

The current movement—we still have a long way to full acceptance. But I feel that it’s beyond that. Now it’s about owning ourselves. I just made an image, Be Your Own Savior. That was because people [like citizen advocates] who want to come save you—they make you a victim. We have to save ourselves. As queer people, we know what it’s like to have a secret. You can connect that to being undocumented. (Salgado, qtd. in Seif, 308)

Fig. 6. Britto Schwartz, Juliana. “Undocuyouth respond to Justin Bieber Deportation Buzz.” Feministing, n.d. Web. Feb. 7, 2014. < <http://feministing.com/2014/01/24/undocuyouth-respond-to-justin-bieber-deportation-buzz/> >



Not merely adding another axis to intersectionality (although UndocuQueer activists do remind the documented of their daily struggle without papers), UndocuQueer activists are forming coalitions for change. The coalitions are importantly not single-issue oriented, as UndocuQueer activists stand at many intersections of identity. Salgado also acknowledges that the struggle for full citizenship will not be achieved simply by obtaining legal status.

Visibility campaigns demand recognition of their situation without documents and their situation as queers, and more importantly, demand recognition of their humanity. UndocuQueer artists seem to be appealing to universal citizenship; making their human presence known so as to draw attention to the inhumane U.S. immigration system. There is a search for wholeness in Salgado's activism, although he does not call it a "spiritual quest" as does Anzaldúa:

We can never get comfortable. There's still a long way to go. And I'm not talking about policy. That's a whole different conversation. [I'm talking about the healing of ourselves, understanding ourselves, finding ourselves. That's what we need to tackle more. Because a lot of the time, there's the idea that if we get papers we're going to be fine. The reality is that it's not [going to be fine] It's not going to change everything. It's not going to change the anti-migrant culture. It could make it worse—the idea that you're rewarding criminal activities.

So we need to change culture—to write poetry, to make images and writings. Not to show us as the perfect migrant, but to give us depth, the different layers of humanity that we have. We're *not* perfect. That's what the politicians want to sell. (Salgado, qtd. in Seif, 308, emphasis in original)

As political subjects, Salgado and other UndocuQueer activists use their personal lived experience as cultural and sexual mediators, or nepantleras. Mediators rewrite culture: "UndocuQueer" is not a law. It is not a bill. It's an idea. As culture makers, we need to put those ideas out there. That's

what artists do—have creative ideas, creative ways to get messages out there" (Salgado, qtd. in Seif, 306). Salgado uses his artistic talents and social media to make visible the UndocuQueer experience. For Salgado, and other queers of color, like Gloria Anzaldúa, it is important to document the struggle. Salgado emphasizes that "drawing was a way for me to speak out and to document what was going on. And to make sure that as undocumented people—that WE tell the stories. That WE own the narratives" (Salgado, qtd. in Seif, 303, emphasis in original).

Rewriting culture in the form of art is necessary for social change. Art is inspirational and artists tend to think in aspirational manners, envisioning the world they would like to inhabit. Anzaldúa theorized on the importance of visionary thought and art for social change: "Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads" (1987, 109). Part of Anzaldúa's nepantlera philosophy that she labeled as "new tribalism," is a worldview where the subject is defined by what it includes rather than excludes, and is coupled with the realization that desired realities first take root in the mind. Anzaldúa's queer revolution questions, deconstructs, and finally occurs outside of the binary system. Anzaldúa's nepantleras include artists like Julio Salgado who construct the queer worlds they would like to inhabit.¹⁶ At times, Salgado's art humanizes undocumented queer immigrants, and at times his art is confrontational.

Despite Salgado's humanizing efforts, the DREAM Act did not pass, DACA was limited in scope, and the President's 2014 Executive Action on Immigration (now suspended) was to widen the group eligible for deferred action, but fell short of amnesty and a path to citizenship. Contrary to Autumn White, I don't think there will be a massive "we are all undocumented" movement that sends the word into a Deluezean generative crisis (993-994), but I do think that art is powerful and that art that humanizes UndocuQueer activists has the potential to raise awareness and influence political change, which, if it occurs along Anzaldúan lines, begins within the individual and expands outward into the world through their acts and speech.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS?

In conclusion, I would like to return to the idea of undocumented youth as nepantleras, as threshold identities, and I want to place this idea in the arena of citizenship. Undocumented queer youth, in my opinion, have used their physical bodies and personal stories to challenge

ideas of U.S. citizenship and sexuality. UndocuQueer activists are engaging in civic debate as “noncitizens” to change the nation’s political landscape to better reflect the reality of our nation. These queer youth are employing a nepantlera perspective, in Anzaldúan terms, of not belonging to one or the other, but to a third group: non-U.S. citizens by birth, but full U.S. citizens by life experience, a peculiar liminal situation that has forced them into the nation’s limelight. As cultural Americans, and as political subjects, they are exercising political agency; cultural citizenship effectively dissolves the binary citizen/noncitizen. As “sexual citizens” they are also queering discussion of citizenship by publicly announcing their queer desire and challenging heteronormative immigration policy. As planetary citizens, they are demanding movements that account for multiple identities and multiple issues. This form of planetary citizenship is not one that advances exclusionary citizenship for all, but rather does away with nation-state borders that separate people from opportunities and their surroundings.

Through social media and empowered art, Julio Salgado and other UndocuQueer activists are coming out of the closet to let the country know that they do exist and that it is our country’s duty to fix a broken immigration system that does not yet account for complex personhood. While planetary citizenship may still be a utopian alternative, Anzaldúa and UndocuQueer artist, Julio Salgado, laid the groundwork for this possibility.

ENDNOTES

- 1 I arrived at the cultural, sexual, and political categories from my research in sexual citizenship literature. Robson and Kessler offer a thorough review of T. H. Marshall’s tri-part citizenship consisting of the civil, political, and social. Marshall was criticized first for omitting the cultural and economic, and then later for failing to recognize citizenship as racialized, gendered, and sexualized (540). This essay takes up the cultural, sexual, and political aspects of UndocuQueer organizing because they seem to be the most visible in the movement.
- 2 While few academic articles focus on this connection, Natasha Rivera-Silber’s article, “Coming Out Undocumented in the Age of Perry,” and Hinda Seif’s “‘Coming out of the Shadows’ and ‘UndocuQueer’: Undocumented Immigrants Transforming Sexuality Discourse and Activism,” stand out. In addition to academic journals, many newspapers have reported on the UndocuQueer movement.
- 3 As a queer-identified U.S. scholar and citizen who has experienced gender/sexual marginalization, but who is privileged by the geographic accident of my birth, I am inspired by the courage of the UndocuQueer activism. Reading personal testimony from UndocuQueer activists has been transformational in shifting my consciousness and has fueled my desire for social change.
- 4 This title draws on Michelle Chen’s July 29, 2012 article, “Queering Immigration.”
- 5 While “global” may be a more common term to use currently, Keating has labeled Anzaldúa’s theorizing as planetary citizenship. Anzaldúa claimed to be a citizen of the universe and had a very expansive and inclusive view of life. Nepantlera subjectivity was not limited by nation-state exclusivity.
- 6 Many thanks to El Mundo Zurdist@s, AnaLouise Keating, Kelli Zaytoun and Robin Henderson-Espinoza, for helping me think through these concepts.
- 7 Salgado uses the term “artist” to describe his digital art that serves activist purposes.
- 8 This mural challenged the city’s gay community to include nonwhite and undocumented subjects into their celebration.
- 9 Vargas’ outing as undocumented mirrors other recent celebrity outings, including television personality Anderson Cooper, and professional athletes Jason Collins (NBA) and Michael Sam (NFL).
- 10 Salgado did not come to the U.S. seeking asylum based on sexual persecution, experiences that go without study by sexual migration scholars such as Eithne Luibhéid and Cymene Howe.
- 11 Interestingly, the discriminatory “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy in the U.S. military prohibiting open homosexuality was defeated in December of 2010, and in September of 2014, a policy was approved to allow DACA recipients to serve in the military.
- 12 I should also note that there are similarities in LGBTQ activism and racial civil rights activism; so it could very well be that DREAMers were looking to successful role models for social change (racial civil rights activism ended Jim Crow laws and LGBTQ activists received important Supreme Court decisions in the summer of 2013). Because of this overlap in civil rights organizing, it is not surprising to find similarities between racial

- groups and LGBTQ groups; indeed these groups are not mutually exclusive. Racial slogans of “Chicano Power” and “Black Power” are mirrored in ideas of empowerment of “Black is beautiful” and “Brown is beautiful.” Kobena Merer notes a borrowing of racial pride to pride in sexual desire in that “white gays derived inspiration from the Black Liberation Movement, even to the point of adopting the notion of “Pride” and translating ‘Black Pride’ into ‘Gay Pride’” (Sullivan, 67).
- ¹³ Melissa Autumn White cites Dmitri Papadopoulos and Vassilis Tsianos (2008) who “argue that mobility is not about ‘movement’ per se; rather it is about ‘the appropriation and remaking of space’” to argue that queer migrant justice activism is inherently a spatial politics. White notes that “at best, queer migrant activism could be respatializing, challenging the territorialities of the nation-state form that power that produces the vulnerability that it is then asked to ameliorate—and also that of gender and sexual identity—which, through the inherent violence of representation, territorializes desire, holding it in place” (White, 992). I wonder if this argument also applies to digital space.
- ¹⁴ Other groups have also harnessed Twitter’s potential. The Southeast Immigrant Rights Network launched their multimedia campaign, #WeAreTheSouth/#SomosElSur in September of 2014.
- ¹⁵ See R. Robson and T. Kessler’s “Unsettling Sexual Citizenship” (2008) for a discussion on the legal ramifications of citizenship. This paper, and Anzaldúa’s theories, focus on metaphorical citizenship without downplaying the need for formal legal citizenship in an effort to imagine alternatives to nation-state citizenship.
- ¹⁶ Anzaldúa’s vision of new reality predates and mirrors José Muñoz’s notion of “world making,” a strategy for queers to create alternative views of the world. See *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*.
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