



Ingenious Citizenship: Recrafting Democracy for Social Change

Charles T. Lee

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In *Ingenious Citizenship* Charles T. Lee centers the daily experiences and actions of migrant domestic workers, sex workers, transgender people, and suicide bombers in his rethinking of mainstream models of social change. Bridging cultural and political theory with analyses of film, literature, and ethnographic sources, Lee shows how these abject populations find ingenious and improvisational ways to disrupt and appropriate practices of liberal citizenship. When voting and other forms of civic engagement are unavailable or ineffective, the subversive acts of a domestic worker breaking a dish or a prostitute using the strategies and language of an entrepreneur challenge the accepted norms of political action. Taken to the extreme, a young Palestinian woman blowing herself up in a Jerusalem supermarket questions two of liberal citizenship's most cherished values: life and liberty. Using these examples to critically reinterpret political agency, citizenship practices, and social transformation, Lee reveals the limits of organizing change around a human rights discourse. Moreover, his subjects offer crucial lessons in how to turn even the worst conditions and the most unstable positions in society into footholds for transformative and democratic agency.

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