ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: WALKING THE MIGRANT TRAIL: MOBILIZING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND COMMEMORATING CLANDESTINE MIGRATION IN THE ARIZONA-SONORA BORDERLANDS

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Since 2004, a group of allies sympathetic to the plight of unauthorized migrants crossing the US-Mexico border have organized the Migrant Trail—a seven-day, memorial walk that takes place between Sasabe, Sonora and Tucson, Arizona and commemorates migrants who have died in the Sonoran Desert. Taking an ethnoheritage perspective this study explores the ways in which the Migrant Trail and its participants have mobilized cultural heritage resources to advocate for the rights of migrants, forge a community of allies, and encourage collective introspection through acts of remembrance that condemn state violence, humanize migrants, and present migrants as individuals who are deserving of human rights. In tracing this process, this study demonstrates the role that mobilized heritage may play in creating spaces and communities that are capable of remembering injustices, advocating for social change, and opening up the possibility for the afflicted to pursue justice in the present and future.

WALKING THE MIGRANT TRAIL: MOBILIZING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND COMMEMORATING CLANDESTINE MIGRATION IN THE ARIZONA-SONORA BORDERLANDS

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS iv
FIGURES vii
INTRODUCTION 1
Story from the Field 1
Introduction to the Study 3
A Micro-History of the Migrant Trail 4
Genesis 7
A Landscape of Movement 10
Participant Demographics & Inclusivity 12
Organizing with Intention 15
Forging a Route 16
Establishing Style 18
Symbols 19
Privilege 19
Bearing Witness: 22
Growing A Network of Support 23
Methods 24
Data Collection and Analysis 24
Ethnoheritage 25
Review of Theoretical Concepts 30
Characteristics of Heritage 30
Border Militarization & Cultural Responses in the Arizona-Sonora Borderlands 33
Prevention Through Deterrence & Structural Violence 34
Immigrant Advocacy & Cultural Repertoires in the Arizona-Sonora Borderlands 38
Dominant Narratives & Definitions of Citizenship 40
Chapter Summaries 46
CHAPTER ONE 50
Mobilizing Extant Heritage in Ritual Space: Ceremonies, Symbols, and Stories Shared throughout the Migrant Trail 50
Introduction 50

The Migrant Trail as Rite of Passage 53
Part One: Leaving the Everyday (Day 1).......... 55
Memorial Day Weekend 55
Day One, Monday Morning.......... 58
Press Conference 59
Crosses as Symbols for the Dead 60
Prayer Ties as Symbols of and Offerings to the Deceased.......... 62
Southbound Caravan 64
Day One, Monday Afternoon.......... 65
Part Two: The Liminal Phase (Days 1-4).......... 66
Funeral Procession: A Coffin for Men, Women, and Children.......... 68
Opening the Ritual Space.......... 70
Days Two-Four, The Liminoid.......... 72
Entering Wilderness.......... 72
Day Four, Ritual Climax & Denouement 73
Leaving Wilderness 74
Re-entering the Everyday (Days 4-7) 75
Sharing Stories 75
David's Story 77
Shannon's Story: 78
Linda's Story.......... 79
Part Three: Reaggregation (Day 7).......... 81
A Private Goodbye 81
A Public Homecoming, finishing what they started.......... 83
Outcomes of Participation 83
A Community & Network of Allies 84
Solidarity with Migrant and their Families.......... 85
Belonging, Humanity, and Hospitality 85
Coming to Terms with Privilege and Personal Limitations 86
CHAPTER TWO 89
A Walk's Rhetorical Edge: The Collective Mobilization of Cultural Repertoires and the Re-imagining of Public Discourses Regarding Clandestine Migration.......... 89
Introduction 89

Rhetorical Appeals, Resonance, and Framing Devices 91
Protest Marches 94
Catholic and (Catholic-) Indigenous Pilgrimages 96
Walking as Embodied and Emplaced Rhetorical Maneuver 99
Crossing Thresholds 100
Landscape as Frame 102
Appeals that Humanize, Mourn, and Recognize Migrants 103
Honoring Life, Wooden Crosses and ¡Presente! 103
Prayer Ties and Offerings for the Dead 106
Sites of Contention 109
Red Dots and Shrines 109
Breaking Circles 112
Re-Imagined Endings 114
Foot Washing Ceremony 116
Conclusion 118
CHAPTER THREE 120
In Search of New Aesthetics: Coyolxauhqui, Nepantleras, and the Production of Heritage as it Pertains to Clandestine Migration in the US-Mexico Borderlands 120
Journey to Nepantla and the Coyolxauhqui State through Conocimiento 120
Heritage that Heals/Building Relationships with the Past through Conocimiento 125
Putting Coyolxauhqui Together/Tracing the Multisite Production of Heritage through Ethnoheritage and Conocimiento in Museum Spaces 128
Ethnographer in Nepantla 130
Gateways to Nepantla: Museums, Temples, Forums 132
State of Exception/ Estado de Excepción, Migrant Hands, Earthen Floors, Glass Enclosures and Civic Imaginaries 134
The Beast/La Bestia by Beatriz Cortez, Imagine Yourself the Pinball 138
The Migrant Quilt Project 142
The Migrant Trail 143
The Coyolxauhqui Imperative/Collective Healing 145
CONCLUSION 149
Summary 149
Future Pathways 151
REFERENCES CITED 156

FIGURES

Figure 1. Migrant Trail participants walk west towards a Border Patrol checkpoint on Highway 86. (Photography by Magda E. Mankel) 5

Figure 2. Symbolic coffins for migrant children, women, and men that are used by The Migrant Trail during the procession from the Catholic church in Sasabe, Sonora to the US-Mexico border wall. (Photography by Magda E. Mankel) 65

Figure 3. The US-Mexico Border Wall point of view from Sasabe, Sonora looking into Sasabe, Arizona. (photograph by Magda E. Mankel) 102

Figure 4. White, wooden, crosses and a stick wrapped in prayer ties are key symbols used in the Migrant Trail to represent deceased migrants and recognize the lives they lived. (Photograph by Magda E. Mankel) 104

Figure 5. Migrant Trail Participants carrying crosses and prayer ties as they walk through the Buenos Aires national Wildlife Refuge in 2019. (Photograph by Magda E. Mankel). 107

Figure 6. Plastic water jugs as exhibited in State of Exception at the Shelia C. Johnson Design Center, Parson's School of Design, New York, New York (Photograph by Magda E. Mankel). 137

Figure 7. The Beast as exhibited at the Adele H. Stamp Student Union Gallery, University of Maryland, College Park (Photograph by Magda E. Mankel) 139

Figure 8. Prayer ties and crosses used in the Migrant Trail (Photography by Magda E. Mankel). 144

INTRODUCTION

The US-Mexico borderlands are a pensive place where the relationship between past, present, and future are constantly reworked. The myths, legends, folklore, and cultural practices of many peoples have long imbued the Sonoran Desert with a sacred beauty and testified to its long history as a migratory corridor for humans and other living organisms. These ways of knowing the Sonoran Desert now juxtapose and intersect a relatively new and growing cacophony of voices and actions that communicate different interpretations and narratives about a global shift in human migration patterns, international boundaries, and the characters of immigrants who arrive to (un/welcoming) nation-states such as the United States (US). Calls for border security and exclusion of the "illegal other" ring out in contrast to voices calling for a porous boundary between "neighbors". Border walls are a reality, a technology, and a metaphor that separates one group from another. As liminal zones, the borderlands are a place of becoming; a place where identities are forged and the boundaries of belonging established. So, although border walls physically delineate the nation's territorial periphery and appear to sit at the edge of the familiar, they are actually the seams that anchor the nation-state to a global tapestry alongside other territories and peoples. In this way the borderlands are quite central. To visit the borderlands is not to visit the edge, it is to visit a threshold leading to other nations, peoples, and possibilities.

Story from the Field

I came to know about hostile terrain and what it feels like to bear witness back in 2012 when I attended the Undocumented Migration Project's (UMP) ethno-

archaeological field school. Back then, I did not have the words to describe this experience. I now know that what I came in close contact with was hostile terrain; a geographic and lived reality, a third space that targets migrants through somatic trauma and displacement while also excluding those in a privileged position from suffering the same discomfort. It is, thus, a space where one's positionality as an individual determines whether one ever truly experiences the hostility of this state sanctioned zone of terror.

The closest I ever got to this was in 2012, when myself and two other UMP field school students, Josephine and Erica, went on a ride-along with some volunteers from the Samaritan organization. An hour into the ride, the driver received a call from fellow volunteers saying they had found a teenage, male, migrant in need of medical attention. Turning the car around, we drove onto Batamote Road which was hard packed with gravel and light brown sand.

When we arrived, three other Samaritans and Carlos from El Salvador were there. His shoes were torn from the bottom and the top. The black T-Shirt and black American Apparel jeans he wore were sun bleached and turning brown. He looked pallid and gaunt from dehydration and days of walking. I will stop there, the point is he was in need of medical attention and legal aid which he eventually received in Tucson, Arizona. A few weeks later, we learned he had received both. How he got there, I cannot say because I do not know.

As we prepared to leave, Carlos expressed deep concern for two other migrants, a woman and man, that the now scattered group had left behind. A few days later, UMP students would find the woman's remains. Her name was Maricela and she had perished in the desert. In her passing she left behind a family in Ecuador (De León 2015). Maricela

would eventually be returned home and buried by her family. A rare occurrence for many who die in the desert. After leaving Carlos with capable and compassionate people, myself and the two other students were asked to get in the back of a pick-up truck with a camper. There was concern that we would somehow become legally implicated in aiding and abetting, a federal offense, if we were seen by Border Patrol. So, we were driven away. We sat inside the camper with the windows open because it was all we could do to circulate the air and keep cool on a day where the temperature was above 100 degrees. Looking out Carlos and the humanitarians shrank from sight. They all waved at us and we left.

As we moved, the truck kicked up dirt and we were soon enveloped in a cloud of dust. My eyes were hot and dry. And I could feel the dust on my teeth. Breathing became difficult. The road was incredibly bumpy and rocky, so we moved at a slow pace which made the scenario all the more agonizing. I held Josephine's hand because she was sitting next to me. I suppose we needed consolation, but I also think I wanted to make sure we did not fall out of the truck. I did not want us to be swallowed up by the vastness.

One long straight road surrounded by pale green trees and grasses, the passing world is all I looked at for what seemed to be three quarters of an hour. It ushered in a subtle trance. A hypnotic numbness. The trance was broken when the rocky road intersected with the black asphalt road to Arivaca. All of a sudden, we were back in civilization. We had left the hostile terrain behind because we could. The reason given, it was unsafe for us as undergraduate students and women, only just barely adults. We were exempt and I felt terrible for it.

Introduction to the Study

In the following sections and chapters I share the ethnographic and ethnoheritage research I conducted in southern Arizona between 2016 and 2020 as I worked with an immigrant advocacy community known as the Migrant Trail- a multicultural and multifaith group that has organized an annual, 75-mile walk from Sasabe, Sonora to Tucson, Arizona since 2004. Using ethnographic methods, such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and thick description, I weave together the perspectives of those individuals who have planned and participated in the Migrant Trail. Throughout this dissertation I focus on the ways in which the Migrant Trail—as a community of allies and public performance— has worked to remember the lives and deaths of migrants who crossed the US-Mexico border through unauthorized ports of entry. In an effort to protect identities, I use pseudonyms throughout. At the core of this study are the following questions. First, how do participants of the Migrant Trail mobilize heritage resources? Second, to what end are mobilized heritage resources used to shift the relationship between "citizens" and "non-citizens" and other identity categories that delineate belonging? Third, how might the insights from the Migrant Trail and immigrant advocacy in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands inform other contexts where local communities and nations are experiencing the influx of migrants traveling through unauthorized and/or clandestine means?

A Micro-History of the Migrant Trail

Every year since 2004, a group of immigrant rights advocates has chosen to organize a 75-mile, memorial walk that takes place between Sasabe, Sonora and Tucson, Arizona. The purpose of the Migrant Trail (sometimes referred to as the walk) is to bear witness to the consequences that border enforcement strategies have incurred and

commemorate the lives of immigrants who have died in their attempt to cross the U.S.-Mexico border through clandestine means. An image of the Migrant Trail is provided in Figure 1 and display participants approaching a Border Patrol checkpoint on Highway 86.

Figure 1. Migrant Trail participants walk west towards a Border Patrol checkpoint on Highway 86. (Photography by Magda E. Mankel)

Like other immigrant advocacy groups in southern Arizona, organizers and participants of the Migrant Trail seek to raise consciousness about deaths at the border by quantifying the number of deaths in the desert. Since 2004, the Migrant Trail has allowed immigrant rights advocates to perform a 75-mile pilgrimage from Sasabe, Sonora to Tucson, Arizona in an effort to raise consciousness about the deaths of migrants in the Sonoran Desert. But unlike other groups, the Migrant Trail relies heavily on the region’s heritage traditions, the labor of women of color who are themselves from the borderlands and are long-time allies of the immigrant rights movement, and a long historical perspective that situates the contemporary migration patterns and border militarization in a broader history of settler colonialism.

More importantly, the group is grounded by the principles of bearing witness and civil initiative which were respectively established by the immigrant rights movement of the early 2000s and their predecessors, the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s (Fife et al. 2011; Van Ham 2009). On the one hand, bearing witness refers to a loosely understood concept coined and claimed by a variety of humanitarian aid groups in southern Arizona. At its root, however, bearing witness refers to the embodied act of showing up, being present for those who are in a disadvantaged position, and recognizing inequalities while also recognizing one's own privilege and relation to structures of inequality. If enacted to its end, it is a radical act of solidarity that creates a bond based on the valuing of human rights and dignity for all, regardless of citizenship status. On the other hand, civil initiative was coined by the Sanctuary Movement in the 1980s and defines the notion that the power of the US nation-state lays in its citizenry and, as such, it is up to citizens to hold their state accountable when they witness state institutions causing harm to others (Fife et al. 2011). Resting on the constitutional freedoms granted to citizens, civil initiative serves to simultaneously uphold and subvert the state power that both empowers and disciplines. But more importantly, the Migrant Trail (as a community, rite of passage, event, and public protest) illuminates the ways in which grassroots groups mobilize the cultural repertoires and heritage resources rooted in their own ancestry, national patrimony, global alliances, and the particularities of the borderlands and its folklife.

What follows is a recounting of the Migrant Trail's early years as it was first envisioned in the early 2000s by a small group of migrant rights and border justice advocates based in Tucson, Arizona. The original organizers included Joseph, Tommy,

and Hillary. Soon after, Celeste and Manuela joined the group. Although I spoke with Joseph, Tommy, Celeste, and Manuela I was unable to contact Hillary.

Genesis

Joseph is credited with being the individual who originally envisioned the Migrant Trail and started recruiting others to take on the project. When I spoke with Joseph, he shared that he spearheaded the idea after experiencing extreme frustration with the government and the lack of media coverage. The original intention behind the Migrant Trail was to demonstrate "an individual act of solidarity with migrants. And to raise awareness to whatever degree possible." In those early years Joseph thought that a demonstration would be enough to get the attention of policy makers and make enough of an impact that legislators would be moved to change the policies that created these deadly circumstances. As he put it, he hoped it "would do something, it would take off and raise awareness about that of people crossing the desert. Things were just beginning to get really bad."

In the early 2,000s Pima County, Arizona witnessed a record number of deaths during its summer months. At that time and to this day, the Pima County Coroner's Office in Tucson, Arizona processed the majority of undocumented border crossers remains. For Joseph, the seeds of organizing a protest march were planted back in the mid-1990s when he worked for the International Environmental Alliance and the Southwest Toxic Watch in El Paso, Texas. There, Joseph coordinated actions against a nuclear waste dump along the El Paso, U.S. and Juarez, Mexico border. In 1998 a group of students from the University of El Paso decided to walk 80 miles from El Paso to Sierra Blanca, Texas in four days during the month of August. The march ended up being

one of the most powerful demonstrations throughout the entire campaign against the nuclear waste dump as it received significant media attention and turned out to be a bi-national demonstration when partners in Mexico joined the Migrant Trail. Their efforts were a success as the nuclear waste dump was canceled in October of that year.

Another significant aspect of Joseph's work in El Paso is that he experienced the early stages of Prevention Through Deterrence (PTD) border enforcement strategies as Operation Hold the Line was implemented in El Paso in 1993. Joseph recalled his encounter with the closed border as follows: "The first year I was in El Paso people crossed the border easily under the bridge. Doing the cat and mouse, back and forth. That was normal … I crossed into Juarez that day because I worked in Juarez a lot. I remember crossing the bridge that day and looking down and there was a silence, nobody, no activity, no border patrol lining the bridge." Such experiences stayed with Joseph and they sprouted into new ideas when he moved to Tucson, Arizona around 1998.

It was not until 2004 that Joseph assembled a "critical mass" and found two other organizers, Tommy and Hillary who themselves had connections to Borderlinks- a nonprofits that leads border delegations for student and church groups seeking an immersive, educational, and human-rights based introduction to the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. According to Joseph, the group realized early on that this "might be a lonely act". As he stated, they would have to "make an individual commitment that if it doesn't take off and it's only the three of us then we have to be clear that we are individually willing to do it." Together, they approached Humane Borders, the recently formed No More Deaths, and other organizations who provided humanitarian aid and other services to migrants. Early on, the group was introduced to Celeste whom they successfully

recruited. Joseph noted that "Celeste was a real crucial person. She became part of it and so we had a committee, started meeting. Celeste does the work of several people. She knows so much and did a lot of work that first year." As a seasoned organizer with experience in planning actions for immigrant labor rights and indigenous rights, Celeste brought logistical foresight and helped them broaden their network of support. Celeste is credited with making the Migrant Trail into what it is today. She has walked nearly every year that the walk has taken place and she is the only founding member that continues to walk to this day. For Celeste, walking is a vow that will come to an end only when the deaths stop.

With this core team in place, the group formed an organizing committee and met regularly (once a week for months) to plan the Migrant Trail. Planning the walk was a very intentional endeavor that required identifying a route, finding places to camp, scouting the route, securing basic necessities, such as food and water, and identifying a core message to garner community support and encourage media coverage. When they were first envisioning the Migrant Trail, the founders were thinking of it as a onetime action. Joseph stated: "There was no way I was going to commit to it and do that every year. In a way it would have been easier to say it was a one-time thing." Although Joseph, Tommy, and Hillary have not walked the Migrant Trail in years, the walk has continued due to the efforts of Celeste, the organizing committee, and the participants, both seasoned and new, who sign up to Migrant Trail each year. With no institutional sponsors, the Migrant Trail is completely dependent on donations made by grassroots organization, donations made by participants, and the sliding-scale registration fees which begins at $60 and goes up to $250 with options for scholarships.

A Landscape of Movement

Sitting in the passenger seat of her truck, I listened to Manuela talk about her involvement with the Migrant Trail. Manuela is a very seasoned activist and organizer who was mentored by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta during the Chicano Movement and later became one of several founders of the Sanctuary Movement in Tucson. Today, Manuela is a lawyer as well as a community organizer who continues to do work with the group Keep Families Together. Sitting in her truck, Manuela began the conversation by saying:

> "You know, people didn't used to die in our desert. And, you know, people have just come and gone for various reasons. And in various patterns. Way before any of these borders existed. The Tohono O'odham have the tradition of following the rains from north to south. And sacred ceremonies are held in places where now there's an international line down the middle... And I think it's fair to say that all people who live in the great Sonoran Desert view the desert as a very special place and move back and forth."

The Arizona-Sonora borderlands seem to have always been a landscape of movement. From the inside looking out, Tucson, Arizona feels like a hub of energy and activism within the loosely defined border justice movement. Located 60 miles north of the US-Mexico border, Tucson is an "Old Pueblo" with big city amenities that make it an ideal meeting ground for border justice activists based in Ambos Nogales (Arizona and Sonora), Ajo, Arivaca, Agua Prieta, Douglas, Green Valley, Phoenix, and other places, to pool together and strategize responses to the ever-evolving immigration policies, border policies, and discourses on belonging. The perspective shared by Manuela positions the

borderlands as a place of resilience and transformation; a place where residents and passersby alike are called to come to terms with their own identities as they transgress the territorial boundaries of multiple nations and experience a landscape whose strata preserves a multitude of meanings.

Manuela's statement also positions the Migrant Trail as a descendent or offshoot of the original Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s. The original sanctuary movement was an effort that began with the combined efforts of the Presbyterian Church and Catholic Dioceses in Tucson, Arizona, the Tucson Ecumenical Council (TEC), and El Concilio Manzo. Individuals, such as John Fife (Pastor at Southside Presbyterian Church, Ramon Quinones (Catholic Priest from Nogales, Sonora), and John Corbett (a Quaker and sheepherder living in Arizona) are credited with providing the ethical and faith-based rhetoric while also establishing what they saw as a "new underground railroad"- a network of houses and churches that was modeled after the Abolition Movement and enabled Central American refugees to avoid capture and deportation as they ventured to their destinations in North America (Fife et al. 2011, 258; Van Ham 2009; 2011). To this day, the principles, concepts, imagery, values, and network first established by the Sanctuary Movement can still be gleaned in the Migrant Trail. Not only have some of the founders of the Sanctuary Movement participated in the Migrant Trail, but the rhetoric and values created by that Sanctuary Movement are also present. The two I highlight here include: (1) the values of civil initiative, and (2) the referencing of religious texts that support hospitality and kindness towards travelers, strangers, and those who are othered.

Although the desert continues to be a place of healing and sanctity for many, it is now also a place transformed into a graveyard and hostile terrain by Prevention Through

Detterence strategies and the presence of militarizing forces, such as Border Patrol agents and surveillance technologies. This narrative of danger, dark highways, and death is something which Manuela stated began in July 1980 when a group of 27 El Salvadoran refugees clandestinely crossed the US-Mexico border through Organ Pipe National Monument on a day when temperatures reached 120 degrees (Lissoway 2006; Piekielek 2009). Unprepared for the demands of the Sonoran Desert, thirteen died and those that survived were brought to Tucson and Phoenix where they would be denied the right to file for asylum. These events as well as the denial of asylum to Central Americans by the US government were to be the catalysts that led to the founding of the Sanctuary Movement. Manuela recounted that "this was the first time that any people died in the desert due to policies". Although there is a deep history of border agents and officers killing border dwellers for the sake of border enforcement (Hernandez 2010), Manuela's reference to "policies" points to the beginning of prevention through deterrence policies and the "weaponization" of the Sonoran Desert (Miller 2019; Boyce, Chambers, and Launius 2019; Wheatley 2020).

Participant Demographics & Inclusivity

Each year, approximately 50-60 people participate in the Migrant Trail from Sasabe, Sonora to Tucson, Arizona. Other participants that are not included in this count are those who delivered meals or signed up as sponsors. The levels of experience amongst these participants varies from those who have walked every year since 2004 to those who are first-time walkers. It should also be mentioned that modes of participation also vary for there are those who sign up to walk while others primarily participate by driving the support vehicles. Although unauthorized migrants are the direct benefactors

of the Migrant Trail, they do not participate in the walk. Logistically, it would be impossible for unauthorized immigrants to participate because the Migrant Trail crosses the U.S.-Mexico border at a designated port of entry and passes through a border checkpoint.

Between 2016-19, the average age was forty-seven. Never did the average age sink below 45 or go above 49. In terms of sex, sixty-four percent (90 individuals) of the 140 participants were women or female identifying whereas only thirty-five percent (50 individuals) were men or male identifying. Although participants are not asked their race or ethnicity and there are no figures, I did observe that the majority of participants were white Americans and more specifically white Americans in their forties or older. Nationality is also something that is not asked at registration and no exact numbers are available. However, based on the addresses provided I can say that an overwhelming majority (132) of participants resided in the US. Others listed addresses in Canada (4) and Mexico (4). Based on my experience, I can say that the majority of participants are in fact US citizens. However, I also came across several expatriates. For example, one woman was from Germany originally, one man was from Palestine, and another man was from Colombia. Moreover, I also met several participants originally from Latin American countries who migrated to and became permanent residents or citizens of the US or Canada. This is not an exhaustive description, but it illustrates that there was some diversity in terms of nationality and citizenship within the group.

The motivation for walking amongst participants varies as they walk for a variety of reasons, but the majority walk because they want to learn about what is happening on the borderlands, their religious faith motivates them to do so, they have friends and

family who have crossed the desert, or they are angry and want to express their frustrations against the government's attitude towards immigrants and national borders. The Migrant Trail is an ethnically diverse group; however, the majority of participants are white women (Russo 2014).

From the beginning, the founders attempted to make the Migrant Trail as inclusive as possible by allowing people of all abilities, faiths, ages, ethnic backgrounds, and other forms of identification, to join the Migrant Trail. According to Celeste, the walk has become more diverse as more people of color have started participating. Moreover, she noted that on the first year of the walk "there were only two or three of us who were people of color. So that's something that we did have to talk about in the first couple of years. Like we need more people of color." According to Celeste, the increased number of ethnic minorities happened organically as the walk became better known and no organizations initiatives were taken to increase this diversity.

The fact that the Migrant Trail's demographic skews towards a large number of white, female, participants who are not from the borderlands was a topic of conversation within the group. For example, this has sparked group discussions and conversations (*encuentros)* where individuals unpack their sense of privilege (Wheatley 2020). Although there are many forms of privilege that may stem from one's own racial, ethnic, linguistic, economic, nationality, religious, gender, or sexual identification and situated context, the discussions had within the group mostly centered on the privileges that come with one's nation of origin, citizenship status, and race. Many participants of the Migrant Trail are privileged in some way or another. I myself have the privileges of being a bilingual, college educated, Latinx woman who is also a U.S. citizen and has the means

to take off an entire week off of work and other responsibilities. I can leave my everyday life, enter the Migrant Trail, and then re-enter my everyday life without much interruption and without causing instability. Although I identify as Latina, my story and life circumstances are incredibly different from those faced by the Latina/o/x migrants entering the US through clandestine avenues.

Organizing with Intention

When the founders of the Migrant Trail first started organizing in 2004, they did so with a clear intention—to bear witness to the many migrant deaths occurring in the Sonoran Desert as a result of PTD strategies. What was less clear to the organizers were the logistical matters, such as securing a safe route, establishing a style and form for the walk, securing a steady supply of food and water, and publicizing the event. Although these elements fell into place, some have changed and evolved more than others. For example, the route from Sasabe to Tucson has remained the same while other elements, such as the presence of migrant artifacts and the expressive protest actions performed by participants, have changed, and evolved over time.

What is interesting about the evolution of the Migrant Trail is that it went from a "one and done" event (Joseph) to a repeated action, an annual event, and, finally, into an ongoing tradition born from the "rock solid commitment" (Joseph) of organizers, advocates, and allies. For many, it is enough to complete the Migrant Trail once. For others, a couple of trips are due. And for a smaller contingent, a walk every year until the deaths stop is to be in order. Often referred to as a *caminata* (pilgrimage or holy walk), the Migrant Trail has continued to nurture community while enveloping participants in a transformational experience much like a rite of passage. In the following sections, I

elaborate upon the organizational, logistical, and symbolic elements that have structured the Migrant Trail and propelled it into the present.

Forging a Route

Both the route and style of the Migrant Trail were influenced by the walk's intention and mission, the natural environment, the limitations of the human body, and a desire to resonate with public audiences through public protest actions and the media. When the founders first set out to map the Trail's route, they recognized that in order to bear witness and make an impact on the viewing public, the route would have to traverse the same lands trafficked by migrants and their *coyotes* (human smugglers). Back then, the areas near Sasabe and Arivaca were the most active in terms of migrant apprehensions by Border Patrol. Moreover, thousands of remains were recovered by the Pima County Coroner's Office in that sector (S. Martinez 2009a; D. E. Martinez et al. 2014).

In the first year, and the first year only, the organizers decided to bear witness to migrant crossings and death by starting in Altar, Sonora which at the time was a major staging area for migrants who were preparing themselves to cross the desert . In Altar, they began at the Catholic Church, and visited a nearby migrant shelter. In 2016 one of two Franciscan Friars participating in the walk noted the irony of the name "Altar." He said "An altar is where sacrifices are made… They are going there and then coming to the desert where they sacrifice so much to get through." Today, the areas near Sasabe and Arivaca are much less active as the traffic has moved further west into more hostile terrains (De León 2015; Nevins 2002; Nevins and Aizeki 2008).

In addition to highlighting the violent outcomes of border militarization, the route also positions participants in a unique natural environment. As such walkers are emplace in a polysemic landscape that is seriated by both geology and layers of cultural meaning. As I will demonstrate in chapters one and two, tapping into the layered meanings of this landscape is a key strategy used by participants to build and sustain community despite differences. As a background or stage, the natural environment also allows participants to frame the walk as an arduous endeavor that requires them to make some sacrifices. In framing the act as an embodied and physically demanding task, participants demonstrate that acts of solidarity and bearing witness will require and are of greater importance than the temporary physical and emotional discomforts they face on the trail. In other words, the framing of landscape drives home point that bearing witness, being an ally, and being an advocate is not always a comfortable endeavor and that deeper understanding comes to those who are willing to make some sacrifices, and face discomfort for the sake of another.

Other important factors that influenced the route included access to campsites, water, and roadways for bringing in supplies or making emergency evacuations. Securing these resources was made possible through two main strategies. First, the Migrant Trail relied heavily on a uniquely American style of camping. By positioning themselves as respectful users of primitive campsites who adhere to BANWR's regulations, the walkers have been able to use the refuge without any incidents. Driving by a Migrant Trail campsite, one would see tents, shade canopies, makeshift furnishings, and tented, primitive toilets that limit the environmental impacts of having 60+ individuals use a campsite. Second, the organizers really on a network of support composed of local

church congregation and immigrant advocacy groups in southern Arizona. This network sponsors the Migrant Trail by providing meals and water. For example, Human Border supplies drinking water each day while other organizations bring lunch and dinner.

Establishing Style

The style of the walk was largely influenced by Celeste who made two main contributions. First, she played a major role in breaking down the route into manageable pieces by proposing that the route be clocked to ensure a steady pace, that the mileage be broken down by day and in relation to the campsites, that they have water and snack stations spread out throughout the walk, and that they use what she called the "leapfrog" method to "jump" support vehicles from one rest stop to the next. According to Celeste, the "leapfrog" style came from her prior experience working with a coalition of migrant farm workers in Florida that was dedicated to educating consumers about the issues of farm labor exploitation. During her time with this coalition she helped organize a 232-mile march for farm worker's rights from Fort Myers to Orlando, Florida. The second way that Celeste influenced the style of the walk was by inviting indigenous individuals to participate in the walk. Again, she drew upon her organizational experience and relied on the relationships she had fostered when she worked with the Indigenous Alliance without Borders. Through those connections, she extended an invitation to walk, to perform ceremonies, to offer blessings, or to be present in whatever form they felt appropriate. Reflecting on her work with an O'odham colleague, Celeste said:

> "We'd be out on the nation's lands and he said to me one day, he said 'You know, these sacred lands have been desecrated with the blood of our

brothers and sisters.' And that was a long time ago, but it has framed for me where we are. These really are sacred lands."

Symbols

Each year, walkers commemorate and honor all migrants and refugees who have died along the US-Mexico border due to discriminatory immigration policies and militarized border enforcement tactics. In seeking to bear witness to the individuals who died in the remote desert environments of northern Sonora and southern Arizona, participants are given the opportunity to carry white, wooden crossed that are made by The Coalition of Human Rights (*Derechos Humanos*) to symbolize each person whose remains were recovered by the Pima County Medical Examiner's Office. Given the vastness of the desert and the limited resources available to offer humanitarian assistance or recover human remains, it is speculated that the number of migrant deaths is much higher than reported. In addition to using white crosses to quantify the number of annually recorded dead, organizers also rely on prayer ties. These prayer ties are usually made by a long-time participant, Rosa, or by the organizing committee who fill them with medicines, such as tobacco, sage, and copal. Unlike the crosses which are meant to be ambiguous and neutral, the prayer ties that Rosa offers are rooted in her Yoeme traditions and Catholic beliefs which are expressed in the walk's opening and closing ceremony. Together these symbols work together to guide the participants in their daily meditations while also providing visible ques and communications to public onlookers.

Privilege

When I saw discussions about privilege arise, they were largely facilitated by the day's activities as participants are required to cross international boundaries and are encouraged to reflect on their experiences through casual conversation during the team reflections which take place every evening. For instance, the privileges of citizenship status are driven home to some participants when they safely cross the US-Mexico border and border checkpoint with no troubles. Race is also a concept that participants are positioned to grapple with. Race is made evident when one considers who it is that border enforcement policies impact. During the walk's orientation presentations, it is made clear that the majority of migrants who cross and die are Latinos or indigenous peoples of Mexico, and other Central and South American countries. It also made clear the fact that Latinx youth are killed by Border Patrol agents regardless of the youth's citizenship status.

Religious affiliations are another identifier that is often present amongst participants. At least a quarter of participants heard about the walk through their church or religious organization. For example, there is a large presence of Mennonites due to the Mennonite Central Committee's commitment to supporting delegations to the border and providing their constituents with access to immersive and educational experiences in the borderlands. On several occasions throughout the walk and throughout my interviews, individuals brought up the topic of white privilege in America. Some sought to mobilize it as allies.

Lastly, there is a clear demographic difference between participants who are from states located in the interior of the US and those participants who reside in the border states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Participants residing in border

states make up the minority of participants. In the past, this has created some tensions as those who know the area are put in the position to educate or inform visitors. Speaking on the topic, Celeste paints a broader picture by considering that there is also a racial difference as the border dwellers who participate tend to be people of color and those who visit are overwhelmingly white. Celeste stated: "I think white people have trouble like […] they expect the few brown people that are there to bring in which creates a really weird dynamic…". Although I have never felt like a tour guide or felt so overwhelmed that I could not be present in the walk's activities, I did find myself answering many questions about the environment, flora, fauna, history, and culture of the region because I was a local and visitors assumed, I would know such things. The reality was that I did not have an answer for everything. Overall, however, the fact that the majority of participants are not from the borderlands is seen as a positive attribute by the organizers and most participants. As many see it, the fact that individuals are willing to travel to the borderlands to learn more says something positive about their character and level of commitment to learning. To have them come down and then return home is seen as a move towards change; as something that creates stronger connections between the communities bearing the brunt of border enforcement policies and communities in other parts of the nation who are removed from these realities.

It should be noted, however, that this diversity in participation is not without conflict. Conflict is mitigated by having a conflict resolution teamwork with individuals who might not be seeing eye to eye. Although the rules for behavior and comportment are detailed in the very thorough participant packet, conflict and deviations occur. In cases

when an individual is disruptive, inappropriate, and/or endangers the group, they are asked to leave and removed from the walk.

Bearing Witness:

Since its inception, the Migrant Trail was intended to create a space where participants could bear witness to deaths in the desert and raise public consciousness about the violent militarization of the US-Mexico border. To be clear, the Migrant Trail was never and is not intended to be a simulation of the border crossing experience. walkers are not playing at being migrants. Nor are they recreating the perilous journeys faced by migrants. In other words, it is not a tourist attraction or thrilling activity like other Migrant Walks that have been created for touristic purposes (Hasian, Maldonado, and Ono 2015; Sarat 2013; Schmidt 2012; Underiner 2011).

"To bear witness" is a common yet incredibly layered phrase used amongst border justice advocates. As I have come to observe, to bear witness is to show up respectfully for the dead and those experiencing an injustice or trauma, to sit in one's own discomfort, to recognize one's own privileges, to mobilize one's privileges for the amplification of the marginalized, to listen to and amplify the stories of others, to sincerely recognize and empathize with the those suffering, and to join others in their pursuit of justice and healing. Bearing witness is both a personal and collective action— it is something we do privately in the recesses of our own minds as well as something that is shared and exchanged in community, however delineated.

When I spoke with Celeste and Manuela about their history with the Migrant Trail, Celeste chose to reflect on her experience working with the Pima County Medical Examiner's Office. For Celeste, to bear witness "is when you're the amplifier… or

creating a space to amplify someone else's voice." She went on to say: "I feel like a true social change happens through bearing witness where you are creating a space for those voices to be heard…. We're trying to do that in a sense… We're wanting to create a space where people can if they want to share poems, or pictures, or like stories…" The space that Celeste identifies as the byproduct of bearing witness rings similar to the concept of public forums- democratic spaces where persons inhabiting that space participate in dialogues and deliberation with the intention of working through an issue, reaching consensus, or pursuing justice (Cameron 1971; Sandell and Nightingale 2012; Silverman 2010).

Growing A Network of Support

With each passing year, the walk's network of support has grown organically through word of mouth, friendships, and family relationships. Few resources are devoted to growing the event, although a Facebook event is created every year and emails are sent to past participants. For example, Noah was recruited by a fellow Quaker to drive his four-wheel truck as a support vehicle. For more than a decade, Rob has used his truck to carry water, medical equipment for the health team, and cleaning supplies for the environmental team. If you get on Rob's good side, he might share some of the thick cut beef jerky he carries with him or he might let you coax him into singing a cowboy tune or two on his guitar. Running in the same Quaker community as Rob, Noah heard about the walk and offered to drive his fifteen-passenger van. His van serves as the "sag wagon" and carries the trailer with a week's supply of breakfast foods, snacks, and kitchen equipment. Somewhat of a quiet poet, Noah noted that the Migrant Trail is something he has incorporated into his "circle around the sun"; it's an event that is permanently

“penciled onto his calendar”. For some women, the Migrant Trail has been a constant that sits in contrast to their changing lives. One woman whom I’ll call Heather, once shared that her participation began when she was in her twenties and didn’t have any children. When I spoke with her, Heather was on the trail with her teenage daughter. For Heather, the Migrant Trail was something that she felt compelled to share with her daughter before she went off to university. Although rare, children, and teenagers have walked the Migrant Trail with their parents, grandparents, or other family relation. And so, the network grows.

Methods

Data Collection and Analysis

Between 2016 and 2020, I conducted ethnographic research with the Migrant Trail, its participants, and its organizers. This entailed participant observation with the group as I walked the trail for four consecutive years and then participated in the virtual walk in 2020 which was planned as a response to the COVID19 pandemic. When I walked between 2016 and 2019, I did what most ethnographers do; I took pictures, jotted down field notes, and interviewed fellow participants. In 2018 and 2019, I carried out 32 semi-structured interviews with the long-time participants, first-time walkers, and organizers of the walk. Overall, these interviews focused on each participant’s personal experiences, participation, and sense of community. Interviews were conducted in person during the Migrant Trail, or they were conducted through the telephone after the walk was over. Of these interviews, more than half were with women and the vast majority of all interview were with US citizens since they composed the majority of the walk’s participants. My intention for adopting this approach was to further explore and

understand how participants of the walk are mobilizing their relationships to heritage resources to make claims and support arguments that humanize migrants and disagree with exclusionary discourses that portray migrants unfavorably. Upon gathering the data, I transcribed my field notes and interviews using NVivo coding software. Once transcribed, I read the transcriptions and coded them for themes such as: heritage mobilization, organizational history, ancestry, rite of passage, of embodied experience, walk's genesis, funds of knowledge, place making, and so on. I also allowed for themes to emerge and coded them as they came up. Some the themes that emerged included: disruptions, resiliency, thresholds, and liminality. Once the transcripts were coded for themes, I began the process of integrating key quotes and concepts into the content chapters.

Ethnoheritage

As an Anthropologist trained in the American tradition and with research interests that straddle the spheres of cultural anthropology and archaeology, I adopted an "ethnoheritage" approach in order to explore the relationships between the Migrant Trail, cultural heritage resources, and broader social discourses regarding border enforcement policies, immigrant rights and social belonging. Ethnoheritage as defined by Lafrenz Samuels (2018, 5–7) is a burgeoning field of interest and methodological approach rooted in the four-field approach present within the American anthropological tradition. Theoretically and methodologically, ethnoheritage beckons researchers to approach heritage from the "bottom up" while also "studying up" (Nader 1972); to trace emerging processes (Rabinow et al. 2008); to take an "improvisational" (Malkki 2007), creative,

and interpretive approach to field work (Geertz 1973); and to explore the "rhetorical" and "persuasive" edge of heritage (Carrithers 2009; Lafrenz Samuels 2015).

Although ethnoheritage is kin to "archaeological ethnography" (Hamilakis 2011; Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009; Meskell 2005; 2007), "ethnographic archaeologies" (Castañeda and Matthews 2008; Mortensen and Hollowell 2009), and "ethnographies of archaeology" (Edgeworth 2006), it differentiates itself in some ways from these predecessors by emphasizing heritage-driven social change and its relationship to the many publics that compose the public sphere. What this has resulted in is a call on heritage scholars to not only expand the ethnographic toolkit which has traditionally emphasized reflexivity, participant observation, and thick description, but to also theorize how interpretations of the past relate to contemporary social discourses that fall within, between, and beyond heritage itself.

I have taken this to mean that ethnographers of heritage are now called upon to situate the perspectives we document and the interpretations we make as ethnographic researchers within a broader social milieu that sits in conversation with other publics swirling about in the public sphere. This last connection made to the "public sphere" (Fraser 1992), as understood in democratic societies, is absolutely critical for it opens up the possibility to further understand how it is that heritage practices and processes come to communicate with various publics and ultimately effect social change in the world. In this case, the commemorative practices of the Migrant Trail serve as a lynchpin between heritage production processes and social discourses on immigration, national identities, and transnational responsibilities and rights. This is the lens that I apply to the Migrant Trail.

In my experience with the Migrant Trail, taking an ethnographic heritage approach was beneficial for it not only allowed me to explore how heritage is mobilized, but also allowed me to explore the inner world or enclave produced by participants and ceremonial practices that form a community for the duration of the walk itself. Exploring the inner world of the walk itself was crucial for it allowed me to tie my observations to social movement scholarship that takes a cultural approach to the study of collective action and its impacts on the public sphere (K. Chavez 2011; Leza 2019). This application is best exemplified in chapters one and two. Additionally, the ability for ethnoheritage to recognize the multisited production and expressions of heritage opened up the possibility of exploring a new clandestine migration heritage as produced and mobilized in sites and spaces outside of the Migrant Trail. I use this characteristic of ethnoheritage in chapter three as I explore how different creative scholars and artists have represented of clandestine migration in museum spaces.

More importantly, the ethnoheritage approach suited my research interests because I was working with a multicultural and interfaith social movement community whose primary reason for being was to organize a bi-national protest march that had its participants traveling and performing a variety of mourning rituals involving a diverse assemblage of cultural heritage objects and practices. The use of ethnography, participatory research and qualitative research methods is also growing within social movement studies conducted by cultural sociologists (Juris and Khasnabish 2015) and scholars of rhetoric (Endres, Middleton, and Hess 2016; McKinnon et al. 2016) who are interested in social movement culture, meaning-making, logics, and internal power dynamics.

One challenge I faced was gaining access to a community that only comes together once a year and remains in contact via conference calls, emails, and the occasional social media post. The difficulty of gaining access to transient communities and events is well addressed by scholars of pilgrimage. In his ethnographic study of the pilgrimage to Magdalena de Kino taken by the O'odham people, Schermerhorn (2019) stresses the unique nature of ethnographers that move with their traveling informants. Using Nancy Frey's (1998) work with travelers to Santiago de Compostela in Spain and James Clifford's (1997) reflections on informants as travelers, Schermerhorn offers a remedy. They advise ethnographers to focus on the journey rather than the destination and to build a flexible yet persistent sense of rapport with informants. I extend this logic to ethnoheritage research that focuses on heritage practices and emerging processes that have people and things moving through space while also renegotiating their connections to the past, present, and future. One must consider whether the focus is placed on the people, objects, written texts, or all of the above (Sørensen and Carman 2009).

A second challenge I faced included keeping my eye on the "deliberative trajectory" of the clandestine migration debate through the lens of heritage (Lafrenz Samuels 2018). Although I positioned heritage as a resource with a rhetorical edge and explored its persuasive capabilities, I found that the word "heritage" was more of an analytical term that I applied rather than a term frequently used by participants. This is to say that although participants of the Migrant Trail sometimes used the term "heritage" they more often than not used embodied actions, ancestry, stories, and other terms, such as "tradition" and "ceremony", to form a relationship between the past and the contemporary circumstances and contexts we found ourselves in. And because I was not

analyzing media representations of the Migrant Trail, such as newspaper articles, it also became crucial that I follow how deliberations regarding clandestine migrations and citizen-led advocacy evolved throughout the walk itself. As such, I investigated how a nexus between past, present, and future is formed through embodied action, casual conversation, and symbolic expressions. Because heritage was expressed but not necessarily stated in the speech of participants, I found it important to record instances of "*in situ"* rhetoric as it is produced on the spot. I also found this approach to rhetoric to be useful and also observed that it served to draw a thicker connection between ethnography and rhetorical approaches to heritage. Nestled within the umbrella of qualitative research, rhetorical methods or rhetorical inquiries are valuable because they are understood as "a mode of textual analysis that attends to persuasive features of texts" (Endres, Middleton, and Hess 2016, 512).

A third and final challenge I faced was that I found myself participating more than observing. Allowing oneself this participatory freedom in the field is championed by Conquergood (1991, 187) who offers a performance paradigm to ethnography that positions ethnographers as "co-performers" who are tasked with making and reading "profoundly deliberative" cultural performances and discourses that reside within and go beyond verbal and written texts. To participate is to let oneself dwell in the places, time, historical context, and other elements that shape our experiences and the experiences of our informants. A more eloquent phrase for the flexibility that field work requires is offered by Cerwonka and Malkki (2007, 20) who note that ethnography is "improvisation"; it "entails constantly adjusting one's tactics and making judgments based on particular contexts that one can never fully anticipate." In summary, I found that

my understanding of the Migrant Trail and its community depended greatly on my ability to jump from text to text, pursue, and contextualize heritage processes in a manner that retooled my understanding of reflexivity, participant observation, and thick description.

Review of Theoretical Concepts

At the core of this literature review is an interest in surveying the literature pertaining to cultural heritage and applying its theoretical and methodological orientation to the study of clandestine migration, state-led border militarization, and immigrant advocacy in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands and beyond. By adopting this perspective, I demonstrate the ways in which a heritage perspective can further draw attention to the ways in which grassroots communities are commemorating migrant deaths, advocating for immigration reform, redefining communal solidarities, and shifting definitions of belonging. This is a necessary undertaking as clandestine migration in the US-Mexico borderlands, and other borders around the world, continue to raise questions about the de/construction of national identities, violent immigration policies, and international human rights for migrants. In reviewing this literature, I also illustrate how communities, such as the Migrant Trail, mobilize cultural heritage to produce new rhetorics and narratives that contest state violence and injustices through embodied, symbolic, and rhetorically charged actions that counter the status quo and make appeals to other publics. In the following sections I introduce the core concepts, theoretical frameworks, and methodological orientations that will provide the scaffolding for the following content chapters.

Characteristics of Heritage

In this section I provide a brief overview of cultural heritage literature with an emphasis on heritage scholarship that takes a bottom-up or ethnographic perspective and investigates how grassroots communities mobilize heritage and/or interrogate dominant heritage discourses through discourses and expressions of their own. In reviewing the heritage literature, I demonstrate the importance of viewing cultural heritage as an important in/tangible tool that may be mobilized by communities to adapt to and produce social change that is oriented towards the public good and informs the public sphere be offering alternative discourses on contemporary issues and collective crises.

Within the heritage literature, heritage is recognized as a key cultural resource or tool that communities may mobilize to come to terms with past and contemporary injustices. Cultural heritage is understood as a cultural resource and tool that both reflects and brings about change in the world. Incredibly plastic, cultural heritage is a great many things capable of many outcomes that are both good and bad; discriminatory and inclusionary; unjust and just. It is also characterized in a variety of ways depending on whose one asks as well as the local, national, global, and transnational context in which it exists. As Ashworth and Graham (2005, 7) state, heritage is "that part of the past which we select in the present for contemporary purposes, whether they be economic, or cultural, and choose to bequeath to the future."

Within heritage studies, heritage has long been regarded as a valuable cultural tool that reflects contemporary social change and is capable of mobilizing change in the world. As (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 2004) notes, heritage is a metacultural tool that both reflects social change and is used for managing social change. These thoughts are also echoed by fellow folklorist, (2012, 502), who notes that "the major use of heritage is

to mobilize people and resources, to reform discourses, and to transform practices […] heritage is about change […] all heritage is change." As such, heritage is an important object of study for those interested in understanding how communities adapt to and bring about social change. For it is by analyzing the relationship that contemporary communities have to the past that heritage scholars may shed light on the ways that groups negotiate their identities, allegiances, and desires for the future.

Since the early 2000s, however, heritage literature has shifted the conversation from what heritage "is" to what it "does" in the world (Lafrenz Samuels 2019). Increasingly so, heritage scholarship and research is concerned with what heritage accomplishes in the world and how grassroots communities as well as state institutions mobilize it to make claims and inform discourses swirling about the public sphere. So, although it is important to consult early models of heritage making— Tunbridge and Ashworth's (1996, 7–8) industrial analogy focused on deliberate selection, interpretation and consumption, as well as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's (1995, 369)audience-oriented "process of exhibition" come to mind—it is now also necessary to consider how communities are also mobilizing extant and newly formed heritage. To this point, I have grounded my work in conversation with heritage research that: takes an ethnographic approach (Castañeda and Matthews 2008; Edgeworth 2006; Hamilakis 2011; Meskell 2005; Mortensen and Hollowell 2009; Lafrenz Samuels 2018; 2019), investigates the production of new heritage (Rico 2014; Meskell 2002) explores heritage places and trails as sites of political action (Benton 2010; Harrison 2010; Harrison and Open University 2010; Robertson 2012; Smith 2006; West 2010), considers new heritage in relation to adaptation and resilience (Rico 2014; 2015), and positions heritage as a capacity building

tool and rhetorical strategy capable of resolving resolutions to conflicts and therapeutic outlets for afflicted communities (Hodder 2010; Lafrenz Samuels 2015; Little and Shackel 2014; Lafrenz Samuels and Rico 2015; Meskell and Scheermeyer 2008).

For my purposes, I define cultural heritage as an inherently dissonant resource that includes tangible things and intangible expressions that communities inherit from the past, selectively value in the present, mobilize to meet contemporary needs, and bestow onto future generations. But more than this, it is important to think of heritage as an abstract inheritance that anchors us to places and informs our sense of self and our sense of belonging within a community. Understanding the tangible and intangible manifestations of cultural heritage as a resource capable of social change is one key step in investigation how grassroots communities, such as the Migrant Trail, mobilize such resources to negotiate power and identity during times of social disruption.

Border Militarization & Cultural Responses in the Arizona-Sonora Borderlands

Although I do not provide a complete summary of the historical and political events that molded the US-Mexico borderlands into the contested and political space it is today, I follow the lead of scholars who take a macro-approach and position these delineations of space and land within a longer history of producing world systems and global markets through the establishment and expansion of territories, empires, and nation-states (Anzaldúa 1999; Hernandez 2010; Kearney 1991; 1995; Tsuda et al. 2015; Vélez-Ibañez and Heyman 2017). I also support the notion that since its inception and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo following the Spanish American War in 1848, the US-Mexico borderlands have been a space of contradictions, tensions,

paradoxes, and conflicts of power between the nation-state and its inhabitants (Alvarez 1995, 447).

Taking a coloniality approach to the violence witnessed in the US-Mexico borderlands, some border scholars have moved towards a "coloniality of power" framework (Hernández 2018; Quijano 2000; 2007). The contemporary inequalities, conflicts, suffering and other characteristics of structural violence that we see in the US-Mexico borderlands today are a continuation of a settler colonial past rooted first in the Spanish Empire, then the English Empire, and finally the United States. This framework works to situate contemporary border violence in a deep historic web, expands world-systems beyond the center/ periphery dichotomy by emphasizing the liminal, and situates the US-Mexico border in conversation with a history of colonialism in the Americas. The coloniality of power perspective used by some scholars is incredibly useful for it takes a *longue durée* approach to geographically situated forms of violence. More specifically, it demonstrates a continuation of the colonial situation and struggles for power long after formal colonial administrations were dismantled. Under this lens, the contemporary injustices and instances of structural violence we witness along the Arizona-Sonora border may be understood as a socio-political phenomenon contextualized in a broader history of colonialism within the Americas.

Prevention Through Deterrence & Structural Violence

Since the mid-1990s, clandestine migration has been an established social process that transformed Arizona's Sonoran Desert into a major gateway for unauthorized migrants seeking entry into the US (Cornelius 2001; De León 2015; De León, Gokee, and Schubert 2015; Doty 2011; Dunn 2009; Masterson-Algar et al. 2016; Doreen Massey,

Jess, and Open University. 1995; Nevins 2002; Nevins and Aizeki 2008; Rubio-Goldsmith 2016; Singer 2008; Singer and Massey 1998; Spener 2010; Spener and Staudt 1998). In an effort to dissuade migrants from crossing through unauthorized means, policies shifted migrants away from urban ports of entry and towards remote, desert environments or hostile terrains (Cornelius 2001; S. Martinez 2009b; D. E. Martinez et al. 2014; Douglas Massey 2009). To reduce migrant traffic Texas implemented "Operation Hold-the-Line" in 1993 and California legislatures implemented "Operation Gatekeeper" in 1994. As urban ports closed in Texas and California, surveillance technologies and boundary building likened to "warfare" against an enemy increased along the Arizona-Sonora border (Miller 2014, 122). In 1994, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) officially initiated the Southwest Border Enforcement Strategy which enacted "prevention through deterrence"— a border enforcement strategy that relied on the harsh desert terrain to make it incredibly difficult for migrants to enter the U.S. (Sundberg and Kaserman 2007). Despite these efforts, thousands of unauthorized migrants continued to seek entry through clandestine means. Because migrants were not deterred, what resulted was an increase in migrant deaths due to hyperthermia and hypothermia which are often the results of dehydration and exposure. For example, the Pima County Medical Examiner's Office (2017) processed 2,816 human remains of "undocumented border crosses" (UBCs) between 2000 and 2017. Since 1999, approximately 3,000 migrant deaths have been reported to the Pima County Coroner's Office (B. E. Anderson 2008; D. E. Martinez et al. 2014; Parks et al. 2016; Reineke 2016; Rubio Goldsmith and Reineke 2010).

To understand the injustices, traumas, and risks faced by migrants, scholars have relied on the theoretical lenses that position migrants and residents of the borderlands within the context of structural violence (Galtung 1969; Farmer 2004), states of exception (Agamben 1998), discipline (Foucault 1995; Pylypa 1998), and strategies of subversion (De Certeau 1984). For example, De León and Gokee (2014) use Agamben's (1998) theories on state sovereignty, bare life, and states of exception to understand the impacts of prevention through deterrence on undocumented migrants. Moreover, they describe the state of exception as those instances "whereby sovereign authorities declare a state of emergency in order to suspend the legal protections afforded to individuals while simultaneously unleashing the power of the state upon them" (De León and Gokee 2015, 448). It is in this state of exception that the lives of migrants are transformed into "bare life" – "life that can be taken without apology, classified as neither homicide nor sacrifice" (Doty 2011). By transforming immigrants into bare life, it becomes easy for the state and law makers to impose policies that further strip away their humanity and their rights.

The concept of structural violence was first introduced by Norwegian Sociologist and founder of conflict and peace studies, Johan Galtung (1969). For Galtung, structural violence is characterized as a type of violence that is indirect, normalized, generally occurs out of sight, and is hard to accredit to any one actor. Galtung (1969, 173) states that structural violence is built into the social structure and demonstrates stability over time; it "is silent, it does not show- it is essentially static, it is tranquil waters." Given its stability and its invisibility, it is not something that is quick to change. A more anthropological interpretation of structural violence is provided by Paul Farmer (2001)

who calls on researchers to position contemporary cases of structural violence within deeper historical contexts and political economy. More importantly, Farmer (2001) notes that the inequalities and suffering produced by structural violence are embodied by individuals and can be seen in the risks and adverse health outcomes experienced by individuals. According to Farmer (Farmer 2004, 317), structural violence is the result of a political economic order and global "social web of exploitation" and it occurs in those contexts in which history is erased, revised or distorted. Within neoliberal economies and "competition-driven markets" inequalities of power, such as poverty, are managed rather than eradicated (2001, 312). In closing, Farmer (2001, 317-318) notes that the anthropology of structural violence requires the fighting of "amnesia" through the documentation of a "vast machinery" that is geographically broad and historically deep. As such, I argue that collective memory and commemorative expressions, such as the Migrant Trail, are an important tool for holding the amnesia prone state accountable and pursuing social justice in the present and future.

Similarly, *The Border and its Bodies,* edited by Sheridan and McGuire (2019), use the theoretical lens that structural violence affords to explore the corporeality of risk and how it becomes instilled in the bodies of undocumented migrants , while also impacting the long-time residents, and indigenous peoples of the borderlands. Under the lens of structural violence, human migration as seen in the US-Mexico borderlands, and elsewhere in the world, is positioned as a deadly, global process from the global south to the global north. To understand immigration within the neoliberal nation state, they cite Kotef (2015, 2) who argues that the border is a "state technology of citizenship" that limits, restricts, and incites movements that ultimately confine and discipline bodies as

they circulate power. Although these works provide incredibly rich insights into the migrant condition, they do not always intersect and explore the relationships between migration phenomenon, migrants, receiving communities and thoroughfare towns. What these readings make clear is that the US-Mexico borderlands are a place where structural violence is present and made apparent in immigration and border policies that result in migrant deaths and subject border residents and visitors to a militarized zone that marginalizes through hyper surveillance.

Immigrant Advocacy & Cultural Repertoires in the Arizona-Sonora Borderlands

Running alongside migrant-focused studies are studies that focus on advocates, allies, and the residents of the borderlands who have witnessed the violence faced by migrants, but also have themselves experienced some form of violence and/or disciplining actions (Arellano 2017; K. Chavez 2011; Fife et al. 2011; Piekielek 2009; Seibert 2013; Sundberg 2008; Sundberg and Kaserman 2007; Van Ham 2008; 2009; 2011). The precarious position occupied by immigrant advocates and allies is documented in ethnographic works that explore the ways in which advocates engage in commemorative actions, memory work, humanitarian aid, and protest actions on a collective basis. Of particular importance to me are the ways in which immigrant advocates and allies have mobilized cultural "repertoires" and resources, such as cultural heritage, to protest the status quo, and work towards social change in subtle and not so subtle ways, such as building community, making rhetorical appeals to other public's, and shifting narratives so that migrant are humanized in the discourses present with the public sphere (Benford and Snow 2000; della Porta and Rucht 2013; Fraser 1992;

Johnston 2009; Johnston and Klandermans 1995; Klandermans and Roggeband 2010; Strecker and Tyler 2009; Swidler 1986; D. Taylor 2003; Tarrow 2011).

Although there is plenty of literature that has documented the counter conducts and discourses by migrants and immigrant advocates in the US and southwestern borderlands, most of these studies do not take a heritage perspective as they center their inquiries through the lenses of social movement, religion, and public sphere theory, which do not completely address how the inherited past is mobilized to imagine new possibilities for the future (Asen 2001; 2004; Böss 2011; K. Chavez 2011; Cisneros 2013; 2014; De Chaine 2009; 2012; Dowling and Inda 2013; Menjivar and Abrego 2012; Voss and Bloemraad 2011). There is also a wealth of scholarship that explores the mobilization of heritage resources by civic organizations organized by Hispanic (Mexican and Mexican American) individuals in Tucson, Arizona (Otero 2010; Sheridan 2016).

Like in other places in the world, grassroots communities in southern Arizona have organized and taken it upon themselves to fight amnesia through commemorative acts of remembrance and protest that raise public consciousness and engage in memory work with the hope of remedying such injustices in the future. In other words, immigrant rights activists have demonstrated that heritage claims have their limitations but are also an important tool in a dense cultural repertoire that may be strategically mobilized to express their grievances, grow community, and transform public places into safe spaces where they may advocate for the rights of migrants or migrants may do so on their own terms if they so choose. Although the lives of migrants may be deemed inconsequential by border enforcement and immigration policies, it must be noted that these

institutionalized forms of erasure and violence are contested by allies and advocates residing in the borderlands or elsewhere in the US and abroad.

Dominant Narratives & Definitions of Citizenship

Scholars interested in undocumented migration along the U.S. Mexico border have identified two narratives that have framed undocumented migrants and the items they leave behind during their desert journey (i.e backpacks, clothing, food wrappers, hygiene products). The first narrative is a nativist frame that depicts undocumented border crossers as dirty, dangerous and threating individuals who are not only polluting the pristine natural environment of the Arizona desert but also polluting America (Sundberg and Kaserman 2007; Till et al. 2013; Sundberg 2008; Hill 2006). This perspective was circulated in local and national media sources during the height of migrant crossing in Arizona during the early 2000s (Sundberg and Kaserman 2007). In this framing the items that individual leave behind are "trash" and "garbage" that does not belong on public lands and does not belong in America. By extension, all individuals who produce such trash do not belong in America. Hill (2006) and Sundberg (2008) use Mary Douglas' theorization on purity and danger to illustrate how migrant objects are framed as "impure" and "profane" in order to establish migrants as "others" who do not belong and who should be excluded and deported from American society. Because this frame portrays undocumented migrants as dangers, polluting others it also serves to justify the inhumane conditions they undergo during the desert crossing and during deportation and detention.

The 'undocumented migrants do not belong because they trash America' frame is countered by a more compassionate narrative whereby undocumented migrants are the

victims of state sanctioned structural violence and their discarded objects are artifacts that serve as testaments to their suffering, resilience and humanity (De Leon and Gokee 2015; De León, Gokee, and Schubert 2015; De León 2015). This inclusionary narrative serves to humanize undocumented migrants by condemning immigration policies and the militarized border as state institutions that inflict violence on persons, not criminals.

Other frames are provided by grassroots organizations within southern Arizona's "border justice movement". Many of these grassroots organizations were created as a response nativism and anti-immigrant policies and are composed of immigrants and allies—"activists working for the benefit of a group to which they are outsiders" (Russo 2014, 64). The border justice movement in Tucson has primarily sought to "prevent migrant deaths and change policies of increased border militarization" (Russo 2014). Some of these groups include the Coalición de Derechos Humanos, Humane Borders, No More Deaths, The Samaritans, and Borderlinks.

The efforts and frames used by organizations that compose this border justice movement are well chronicled by Lane Van Ham's *A Common Humanity* (2011). According to Van Ham (2011, 108), "[t]he struggle to define and mobilize human sympathies is waged through symbol and imagination, for without a compelling narrative that depicts ideals worth preserving, people will not act." This is also to say that the symbols used in this movement serve as the collective's "rhetorical representation" that express the group's view on the issue and strives to get others to act. Van Ham (2011, 108) notes that the majority of the organizations that compose Tucson's border justice movement are brought together by a frame centered on Christian universalism and the belief that there is an oneness to humanity that requires an ethical behavior towards all of

our fellow man. Within this frame, no human is “illegal”. For example, the Christian Universalist frame is materialized through the use of Christian symbols at organized events. For example, the Dia de los Muertos pilgrimage hosted by the Coalición de Derechos Humanos takes place at two Catholic churches and participants are asked to carry white crosses.

Another example of this Christian frame is materialized and symbolized by the El Tiradito Shrine or the “Wishing Shrine” as listed on the National Registrar of Historic Places. Since 2000, Derechos Humanos has hosted a weekly vigil at El Tiradito to remember those who have died attempting to cross the Arizona desert. What distinguishes El Tiradito from the other Christian symbols is that it is a place where Catholic beliefs are practiced alongside folk religion. Although there are several stories that explain the creation of El Tiradito, the most popular folk belief is that the shrine was built to commemorate a man who was killed over a crime he did not commit and then buried on unconsecrated ground. This story is one of the reasons that local Tucsonans have chosen this site to commemorate migrants. In addition to being a symbol of folk religion and Catholicism, El Tiradito is also a symbol of southwest heritage, “ethnic unity and identity” and the “binational identities” claimed by the Mexican-American locals following the delineation of the U.S.-Mexico border in 1854. This ethos emerged more fully in the 1970s when the local Mexican-American community organized to protect the shrine from urban planners renewing the *barrio* in which it resides. As such, El Tiradito is a place of cultural heritage that is both a site of religion and cultural history. It is a cultural heritage resource and a powerful place that serves as a platform and a frame that conveys migrants who die in the desert as members of a binational community and as

individual's worthy of dignity. The narrative produced at El Tiradito is that "the living of the borderlands community must honor their dead, that the living of the borderlands community must honor each other without regard for national boundaries and that religious traditions provide viable means of doing both." (Van Ham 2011, 150).

Lastly, it is worth noting that advocates of immigrant rights and border justice in southern Arizona are working towards a notion of citizenship and belonging that is rooted in lived experience and most closely aligned with the concept of cultural citizenship. Literature pertaining to immigration and citizenship in transnational contexts is replete with definitions of cultural citizenship. At the core of this concept, however, is the idea that immigrants who lack citizenship or "legal" status within a host country have the ability to claim rights and space by residing in their host country or belonging to an imagined community that is manifested in a locality, such as a global city, and engaging in negotiations and struggles with the nation-state. As such, the everyday practices that allow immigrants to claim rights and space are located somewhere between a "supranational" and "subnational" understanding of citizenship. This is because Latino immigrants may exist on two planes. One plane is situated in a geographically situated place bounded within a nation-state or "translocality", while the second plane is an imagined community that is not geographically situated and forgoes national boundaries (Appadurai 1996; Appadurai 2003).

Benmayor and Flores (1997, 15) define cultural citizenship as "a broad range of activities of everyday life through which Latino and other groups claim space in society and eventually claim rights." Within this framework, culture plays a role in citizenry movements and "instances of change" which are in themselves seen as sites of

contestation, affirmation, and cultural production (Benmayor and Flores, 9). It is also in these instances of change and incorporation into U.S. society that Latinos develop "cultural forms of expression that not only keep identity and heritage alive but significantly enrich the cultural whole of the country." (Benmayor and Flores 1997, 2). Adding to this argument is Rosaldo (1997) who states that cultural expression allows individuals to claim public rights and recognition. As a whole, the cultural citizenship framework offered by Benmayor and Flores (1997) illustrates that cultural activities situated in everyday life experiences play a role in formulating change.

Offering another definition to cultural citizenship in Ong (1996, 738) who defines it as: "cultural practices and beliefs produced out of negotiating the often ambivalent and contested relations with the state and its hegemonic forms that establish the criteria of belonging within a national population and territory." Ong (1996, 738) critiques the definition of cultural citizenship provided by Benmayor and Flores (1997) Rosaldo (1997) because it "gives the erroneous impression that cultural citizenship can be unilaterally constructed and that immigrants or minority groups can escape the cultural inscription of state power and other forms of regulation that define the different modalities of belonging." Ong (1996, 738) views cultural citizenship as "dialogically determined by the state and its subjects."

Similarly, Oboler (2006b) argues that citizenship is not a legal status but a category that is determined by lived experience. Citizenship in itself acknowledges the existence of a self-governing community that has established rules for living together and is capable of negotiating these rules for the benefit of all. Citizenship is defined as "a process that is inclusive and ongoing and one that is neither imposed not dictated by the

state alone. Rather it is a lived experience, grounded in the negotiated participation of all groups, of all sectors and individuals within the community." (Oboler 2006b, 5). Citizenship is often conceptualized in "juridicial" and legal terms whereby citizenship and the rights associated with this category are given and also taken away. The alternative to this logic, is thinking of citizenship as a lived experienced defined through struggle and political mobility. In this thinking, citizenship is a form of imagined community "an active process of claiming rights" and not about passive acquisition (Oboler 2006b, 13). As such, when citizenship is defined what is really at stake is determining what binds people together into a "self-conscious community" (Oboler 2006b, 8).

These thoughts are echoed to some extent by Del Castillo (2002, 13) who states that "social citizenship" is "an expression of social rights" practiced by unauthorized immigrants. In practicing social citizenship, immigrants defy the state and challenge standards of civil society, nationhood, and national borders. Immigrants also gain social citizenship through the deployment of "survival strategies" that "involve the use of established cultural norms, resources, and institutions, but may also involve informal networks of social service and resources." (Del Castillo 2002, 13).

I provide these definitions of citizenship to illustrate that culture, and by extension cultural heritage, help immigrants establish belonging by claiming rights and space. Moreover, culture may serve to shape the frames and narratives that immigrant groups use to establish their belonging. Sociological literature concerning social movements and collective actions frameworks clearly illustrates a connection between movements and culture whereby culture shapes the frames that movements adopt (Snow, Soule, and

Kriesi 2004; Tan and Snow 2015; Benford and Snow 2000). If the claims to rights and space that undocumented immigrants and their allies are claiming are nestled within the "social movement" umbrella, then associating the sociological literature on collective action frameworks and culture to such actions is not a far stretch.

As Benford and Snow (2000) state, "[t]he cultural material most relevant to movement framing processes include the extant stock of meanings, beliefs, ideologies, practices, values, myths, narratives, and the like." This is to say that those who partake in social movements both consume "existing cultural meanings" and produce "new meaning" (Tarrow 1992; Tarrow 1994).

What is evident from the immigrant advocacy literature of southern Arizona, is that cultural resources, such as heritage, are playing an important role in transmitting knowledge through place based and embodied experiences that connect allies with migrants and the violent phenomenon that is clandestine migration. Throughout this dissertation, these concepts will appear throughout the three content chapters. In the following section I provide a brief synopsis of these chapters.

Chapter Summaries

In the first chapter I focus on the private side of the Migrant Trail and explore the ways in which ceremonies and other heritage expressions are mobilized to create an enclave- an insulated group of individuals- and to bestow the walk with the same characteristics common to rites of passage. The term "enclave" in this instance is derived from social movement and collective action literature which defines the space as a "haven" or space dedicated to forming group solidarities. (K. Chavez 2011; Fantasia and Hirsch 1995; Hart 1996). As such, it is separate to the use of enclave within immigration

literature regarding immigrant settlement patterns (Brettell 2003; Portes and Rumbaut 2014; Singer 2008).

By focusing on the inner world of the Migrant Trail, I explore the ways in which some participants share their sense of personal, ethnic, national, transnational, or global heritage with the rest of the group in a deliberative manner. In sharing their perspectives, participants are given the opportunity to reflect on their relation to each other, to migrants, and to the structural inequalities to which they are bearing witness. As such, I demonstrate that the mobilization of extant heritage practices is a valuable tool in working through contemporary social phenomena like migration, exploring avenues for collective change, and re-working categories of belonging.

In chapter two I situate the Migrant Trail as a public performance which a rich cultural repertoire that gives the group and the event a powerful rhetorical edge that resonates with some, transmits knowledge, and elicits responses from public onlookers who may agree or disagree with the group's perspective. By positioning the walk as a public performance, I examine how its symbols and performances appeal to public audiences. I do so by illustrating how the intangible heritage practices, historical ties to landscape, and new heritage expressions serve to emplace and recognize migration and migrant deaths as subjects worthy of collective memory. I also explore how such heritage expressions foster discussions amongst citizens and other individuals willing to mobilize their privilege in a matter that keeps the state institutions accountable for any violence and injustices committed against fellow human beings.

In the third chapter I adopt Gloria Anzaldúa's (2015) theorizations on liminality and collective healing to understand the production of new heritage as a multi-sited and

disjointed act that may be gathered for analysis by ethnoheritage scholars. I illustrate how clandestine migration is being placed in museum spaces by artists, creatives, and anthropologists seeking to raise consciousness and strike a dialogue between audiences and the material culture they put on display. In the first example, I briefly discuss how the material culture (artifacts) discarded by migrants in the Sonoran Desert were displayed at the *State of Exception* exhibit at the Parson's School of Design in New York. In the second example, I discuss an artwork titled *La Bestia/ The Beast* (The Pinball Machine) by El Salvador born Artist and Professor Beatriz Cortez. Lastly, I discuss the work of the Migrant Quilt Project which transforms the discarded clothing of migrants into quilted tapestries which are then displayed to commemorate those individuals who have died in the desert. By gathering these examples of a new clandestine migration heritage, I apply what Gloria Anzaldúa (2015) has termed the Coyolxauhqui imperative to heritage studies and ethnoheritage scholarship taking place in plural, democratic societies. More specifically, I illustrate the connections between clandestine migration, new heritage, the Coyolxauhqui imperative, and liminality by illustrating how museums serve as public forums and educational institutions capable of instigating, facilitating, and displaying social change.

CHAPTER ONE

Mobilizing Extant Heritage in Ritual Space: Ceremonies, Symbols, and Stories Shared throughout the Migrant Trail

Introduction

To understand how cultural heritage is mobilized through the act of walking and participating in the Migrant Trail, I review the many ways in which extant heritage traditions and objects, such as ceremonies, symbols, and stories, are invoked throughout the journey. I argue that cultural heritage is a resource that plays an important role in helping participants of the Migrant Trail work through their own sense of privilege and understandings of the injustices faced by migrants while also joining and maintaining a community of immigrant rights advocates that stands in solidarity with migrants, the dead, and the family of the deceased. To demonstrate how heritage is shared and how the Migrant Trail moves its participants from day to day, I review the ritual-like activities that take place from day one to day seven. I also focus on the inner world or private side of the Migrant Trail. Throughout this chapter I illustrate that heritage is not always overt or claimed in a loud manner, but rather expressed through acts of sharing that punctuate communal experiences throughout the walk. Such acts of sharing heritage manifest themselves as ceremonies, conversations, stories, and material objects with symbolic meanings. Together these elements work together to structure the walk and motivate its participants to embark on a transformative journey that when complete may change their understanding of self, national policies, global migration process, and one's relationship to the migrant "other".

Within heritage studies there is a burgeoning interest in understanding how un/official forms of cultural heritage are mobilized by grassroots communities working

towards social justice. There is also an interest in investigating how communities in democratic societies mobilize heritage to work towards the public good, claim rights, facilitate deliberative processes, and take actions that allow them to heal from or adapt to the political, social, and environmental disruptions and conflicts posed by the contemporary world (Little and Shackel 2014; Lafrenz Samuels 2015). Exploring how heritage is mobilized and how it persuades or moves audiences is a key step in further understanding heritage's role in deliberation (Lafrenz Samuels 2015), public judgement (Little and Shackel 2014), therapy (Meskell and Scheermeyer 2008), and justice-oriented projects in democratic societies who have or are currently experiencing social, environmental, economic, and/or political disruptions.

For Little & Shackel (2014), heritage in democratic societies allows people to work towards the common good and resolve conflict. Whether in museums, archaeological sites, or heritage parks, heritage allows individuals to engage in "identity work", dialogues, and "public judgement". According to Yankelovich (1991, 63) public judgement is important for maintaining a healthy nation-state and it is obtained in three stages which include consciousness raising, working through, and resolution. The role that heritage plays in the development of healthy states is also supported by Bruner (2005) who argues that heritage in democratic societies contributes to its health because it informs people's values, perception, and identities. Similarly, Lafrenz Samuels (2015, 4) argues that heritage has a rhetorical and persuasive edge that communities may use strategically to play a role in deliberations within democratic societies as it impacts public reasoning and directs the audience's attention towards particular issues and courses of action. Such claims are grounded and supported by earlier works on rhetorical culture

and the ability for culture to move individuals into action (Carrithers 2009; Meyer and Girke 2011; Mokrzan 2014; Strecker and Tyler 2009).

In this chapter, I focus more on the inner world and community making processes that occur within the Migrant Trail. The sharing of heritage and being in community that I discuss here is linked more closely to the "life-crises" (Turner 1969) and "vicissitudes of life" (Carrithers 2009) that participants on the Migrant Trail experience as they immerse themselves in a landscape of conflict and death, come to terms with their privilege, and mobilize a variety of cultural resources to ban together as a compassionate collective capable of bearing witness to migrant deaths and expressing their grievances against state violence against migrants. In the following chapter, I will more thoroughly explore the migrant trail as a public facing performance or "social drama" that reveals the rhetorical edge, communicative approaches, and collective crisis faced by participants and the American public at large.

Lastly, I apply Arthur van Gennep (1960) and Victor Turner's (1969) theories on rites of passage to position the ritual-like qualities of the Migrant Trail and present the walk's progression from day one to seven. The cultural impacts of ritual and rhetoric are also echoed by Girke and Pankhurst (2011) who showcase the persuasive aspects of ritual and symbols as they are mobilized by the Arbore people in Ethiopia. My reason for turning to Turner's theories on ritual are threefold. First, the Migrant Trail simply is a yearly ritual and rite of passage which offers an opportunity to maintain and make community for participants. More specifically this perspective sheds light on the production of *communitas*, experiential sharing, and personal *transformations* within a

ritual or sacred environment that suspends hierarchies and establishes a temporary equality amongst members.

Second, rites of passage are structured to have a narrative arch that moves participants through three stages— separation from social life, liminality, and re-aggregation to social life. All of these stages are experienced along the Migrant Trail. Third, Turner's views on the liminal and "mimetic" phase of ritual highlight the creative ways groups cope with and adapt to social crises. With this ritualistic milieu in place as a backdrop, the heritage work practiced by the walk's participants comes to the forefront with new vibrancy. And it is through the illuminating vibrancy of ceremonies, symbols, and stories that we may begin to see how invocations of the past are made to not only build community amongst near strangers, but also hold the amnesia prone state accountable for its wrong doings against non-citizen migrants and citizens. In summary, the rhetorical, communicative, and deliberative characteristics of cultural heritage have led me to explore the role that ceremonies, symbols, and stories shared within the Migrant Trail allow participants to form community, come to terms with their privilege, and interrogate narratives of belonging and rights as they apply to migrants.

The Migrant Trail as Rite of Passage

Victor Turner's work on ritual and rites of passage offers a rich framework for understanding the relationship between mobilized heritage and the production of community amongst participants of the Migrant Trail (Turner 1969; 1974; 1975; 1979). Like his predecessor van Gennep (1960), Turner was interested in rites of passage that were broken down into three phases- separation, liminality, and reaggregation. For van Gennep (1960), rites of passage were indications of individual or sociocultural

transitions. Building from Van Gennep's work on rites of passage, Turner delved deeper into the liminal space for it was there that he believed everyday norms and conflict were confronted and subverted through ritual and "mimetic" acts that inverted the social status of neophytes. For Turner, rituals were connected to crises and conflicts present in social life and as such offered an opportunity to understand processes of change. Influenced by the semiotic and structuralist perspectives on culture, Turner analyzed the symbolic semantics of ritual and other group expressions as metaphors and rhetorical devices capable of shedding light on the conflicts facing society and/or the individuals positioned within the social whole (Turner 1969; 1974; 1986). Moreover, Turner distinguished his scholarship by applying what he learned from traditional societies to the politics of the present.

Interconnecting the rites of passage theory to social movement communities and mobilized heritage, one could also argue that the liminal phase is also a deliberative and communicative space in which participants or neophytes come to understand each other, the social conflicts, and the community they wish to build. Like in most rites of passage, participants of the Migrant Trail are asked to temporarily separate from their everyday life, transition to the liminal, engage in the production of *communitas*, and finally re-enter or reaggregate into their everyday lives as changed individuals and members of a community.

Establishing a ritual space is crucial for it paves the way for a sense of equitable participation and the ability to share amongst participants. It is in this ritual space that participants of the Migrant Trail are placed in a space where everyone is seen to have equal status and privileges are suspended for the time being. All participants eat the same

food, they are all expected to contribute to the work that goes into setting up camp through teams, and they all have, more or less, the same camping accommodations. However, this is not to say that they all have the same embodied experience for every individual experience the physicality of the walk in very different ways.

Throughout the Migrant Trail extant and new forms of heritage traditions and objects, such as ceremonies and wooden crosses, participants establish a sense of equality. It is also in this "enclave" or "haven" that participants feel comfortable enough to engage in conversations and contemplation with members (Fantasia and Hirsch 1995; Hart 1996; K. Chavez 2011). As I will demonstrate, this engagement between participants or members of the enclave often involves the sharing of cultural heritage practices and historically grounded views of immigration and border injustices through ceremony, symbols, and stories. I will also continue my exploration of Turner's "liminality" and ritual space in chapter three where I bring it into conversation with Anzaldúa's work on Nepantla and the Coyolxauhqui imperative as it relates to culture change.

Part One: Leaving the Everyday (Day 1)

Memorial Day Weekend

Since it was first established in 2004, the Migrant Trail has taken place in late May on Memorial Day weekend. At this time of year, the temperature in the Sonoran Desert surpasses one hundred degrees during the day and it dips down into the sixties at night (Phillips and Comus 2000). Although scheduling the walk on Memorial Day weekend was a logistical decision, the symbolic value of such planning was not originally considered and grew over time.

For one of the founders, Joseph, it was extremely important to have the walk take place during the hottest time of the year. If the walk was to capture the audience's attention, then it had to happen at a time of year when the walk would be physically demanding and require a real commitment and sacrifice from the participants. As Joseph stated in my interview with him, "We knew it had to be during the hottest part. It wasn't going to be like we were trying to simulate the [migrant] experience, but we knew it had to be during the hottest part to symbolically draw attention. If we had done it like now [winter] it would not have had the meaning to draw attention." Logistically, it also made sense to host the walk on Memorial Day as people would have those days off from work or out of school for summer recess.

In the US, Memorial Day is a national holiday that is observed on the last Monday of May and honors all people who have died while serving in the military. It seems both ironic and appropriate that migrants be remembered on a day dedicated to remembering individuals who have died due to military conflicts between states. Although migrants are not members of the armed forces and do not die in battle, they too are the casualties of militarized states who deploy technologies of war and surveillance to guard their territorial boundaries and resources (Miller 2019). According to immigration and border scholars, the relationship between border security, immigration, and the military was solidified in the aftermath of the September eleven attacks on the World Trade Center in 2000 (Menjivar 2011; Dowling and Inda 2013; Miller 2014). The interconnections forged between the militarized border, surveillance, and immigration is also seen in popular media which often depicts immigrants as invaders with polluting bodies who pose a threat to the nation-state, the national territory, and citizens (Banks

2015; L. R. Chavez 2009; 2013; S. Hill 2006; Meierotto 2012; Sundberg and Kaserman 2007). The border imperialism experienced by migrants, residents, and citizens of the US-Mexico border is summarized succinctly by Miller (Miller 2019, 24) who states that: "It is no longer entirely accurate to think of borders as lines of dispute between states; instead they are places where states work together to pacify non state entities using special zones of exception." With this context in mind, the decision to walk the Migrant Trail on Memorial Day takes on new significance and drives home the idea that zones of exception subject migrants and border residents to state violence and war-like conditions that in the worst cases lead to death, unjust acts, and other forms of violence. Here the term zone of exception is a nod to Agamben's (1998) "state of exception" and further explored in relation to clandestine migration by De León (2015).

For some participants of the Migrant Trail, the symbolism of walking on Memorial Day goes unacknowledged or is unrelated to the walk. Still others latch onto the concept of a "memorial" and expand it to include the remembrance of anyone who has died. The significance of walking on Memorial Day is also variously interpreted by onlookers. In 2016, for example, the Migrant Trail was met by a Minute-Man type. The man had parked his truck on the side of the Sasabe highway and belted out criticisms to express his disdain for the group and accused everyone of participating in an act that he interpreted as un-American and unbecoming of US citizens. As the onlooker put it: "You're a disgrace to this country doing this on Memorial Day." Whether intentional or not, scheduling the Migrant Trail has proven to be an interesting rhetorical move as it has subverted and redefined the significance of a national holiday by choosing to center a

local issues, commemorate migrants, and acknowledge migrant deaths as a matter of national significance.

Day One, Monday Morning

Day one of the Migrant Trail is an incredibly busy day full of transitions that build anticipation. Participants begin their day at Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson. When the church has been unavailable the walk's organizers have turned to other churches. In the parking lot of Southside, a buzzing excitement lingers in the air as everyone scrambles to get their backpacks, duffels, and camping gear into the fifteen-passenger van and trailer hitch that will carry the supplies for the next seven days. Already assigned to teams during the orientation meeting the day prior, participants congregate with their fellow teammates and become further acquainted with the equipment they will use over the next few days. The Health Team loads up the medical supplies, which includes an incredible quantity of bandages and other medicalsupplies, while the Environmental Team packs the shovels, buckets, saw dust, and cleaning agents they will use to ensure we are good stewards of the land we travel through. The Logistics Team crams the luggage into the trailer while the Food Team does much the same with a week's worth of shelf stable food items. The Safety Team is usually huddled in a corner putting batteries into their walkie talkies and going over the strategy for keeping walkers safe from traffic when on the highway. Amongst that commotion there is also time for standing around in nervous anticipation and excitement. Folks lingering in the parking lot express lament or fear over having forgotten something- their favorite lip balm, a sweater, a pillow, anything that they believe would bring them comfort in the un/familiar Sonoran Desert.

At some point, the car doors slam shut as the gear is completely loaded up and participants are instructed to enter the Kiva (church hall) for the press conference. Inside the Kiva, the walkers sit down on rustic, wooden pews that ripple away from the centralized podium in a semi-circle. On this first day, walkers are also joined by reporters and "day participants" who sign up to walk for the first day only.

Press Conference

The press conference is usually attended by both the local English and Spanish language media outlets. Following a warm welcome to all participants, guest speakers are invited to the podium. The speakers are usually long-time participants of the Migrant Trail, new participants, fiscal sponsors, and organizers of nonprofits and organizations that provide humanitarian aid, legal aid, and other services to migrants in the desert, detention, or other destinations.

This press conference is seen as an opportunity to access a broader audience through media coverage. In the years I walked, all the organizers lamented over the lack of media coverage. They noted that the media interest was much greater in the first three years of the walk. Leo Chavez's (2013, 5) work on the Latino Threat Narrative notes that media "spectacles" result in the production and distribution of images and text which then play a critical role in shaping public perspectives by constructing imagined communities which then serve to include and exclude individuals from said community. But what happens to events and happening that move beyond the spectacle and become traditions by way of repetition? In the case of the Migrant Trail, the media's attention dwindled which seems to indicate that the survival of such traditions is not so much in the hands of the media as it is in the hands of its participants who show up year after year and

deliver the message through word of mouth as well as performative actions that may be captured by the media gaze. However, the media is not to be dismissed because it is an important driver of public discourses and narratives that shape the civic imaginary. The press conference comes to an end when the walkers are asked to come to the center of the room and pick up a white, wooden cross which they will protect and carry for the remainder of the walk.

Crosses as Symbols for the Dead

> "Crosses are a simple way of representing life, death, and the faith of those who are left behind. The carrying of crosses along the Walk does not endorse or promote any particular faith or religion. The Migrant Trail is an interfaith experience that is open to all representations of peace, hope, and faith" (Migrant Trail Participant Packet).

The crosses are loaned to the Migrant Trail by the *Coalition de Derechos Humanos* (The Coalition for Human Rights) whose volunteers hand make them every year in preparation for their *Día de los Muertos* Pilgrimages that takes place in November in Tucson, Arizona. First established in 2,000, the Day of the Dead pilgrimage usually starts in San Agustin Catholic Church and ends at San Xavier del Bac Catholic Church located on the Tohono O'odham reservation just south of Tucson. In 2018, the pilgrimage route shifted as it began at the Global Justice Center and ended at El Tiradito Shrine. The reason for the change was that resources and volunteers were scarce that year and the shorter, urban walk of only one and a half miles was simply more manageable.

In 2018, I participated in the making of the crosses. I arrived at the organizer's house around mid-morning and joined fellow volunteers in making the crosses. It was a slow-going Sunday morning and volunteers were welcomed with a breakfast of *menudo* (beef stomach & hominy soup), , *chorizo con huevo* (sausage and eggs), *pan dulce* (sweet bread), and *café* (coffee). Choosing to eat first, I sat down with fellow volunteers and got to know them a little before starting the cross making. As with the Migrant Trail, the meal served as an excellent opportunity to meet new people, understand their reasoning for being present, and learn about the group's efforts to commemorate the dead through the Día de los Muertos Holiday. Once we finished eating, we got to work by stapling together the wooden crosses and coating them in white paint. In the dry heat of the morning, the paint takes a quarter hour to dry. Once the crosses were dry, we grabbed black markers and consulted the list of the deceased we were given. These listed was taken from the records kept by the Pima County Medical Examiner's Office—a state institution trusted by some to provide records of deaths in the desert and identify human remains (Reineke 2016). We were then instructed to write the names of the deceased. If the names were unknown, then we wrote "*Desconocido*"" (Unknown, masculine) or "*Desconocida*" (Unknown, feminine). On the crosses we also wrote the year of death or the year the remains were recovered, and the age to each individual on the cross.

The white, wooden crosses originally made by Derechos and then loaned to the Migrant Trail are one of several mnemonic devices that help participants of both pilgrimages remember migrants. The crosses are also part of the call-and-response style chant that participants say whenever they approach a rest stop or reach the final 200 meters of that day's walk. When the walkers are not observing a silence or having

conversations with each other, they are calling out the migrant's name or *Desconocida/o* and responding with "*Presente!*" (present). The significance of saying *presente* throughout the walk is explored in further detail in chapter two. Although the term is widely used in immigrant advocacy circles in southern Arizona, it is a Spanish word that was mobilized by white allies and organizations, such as the School of the Americas Watch, seeking justice in matters concerning US involvement and state violence in Latin America (Russo 2018; D. Taylor 2020).

Prayer Ties as Symbols of and Offerings to the Deceased

> "These prayer ties have been made with love by one of the participants and honor the lives of each of our sisters and brothers who have perished in the area where we will be making our journey. Carrying prayers on a journey or ceremony by walking with prayer ties is a common Indigenous tradition of honor and respect. We wish to always have present in our hearts and minds the lives that were lost, and are missed, on the border." (Migrant Trail Participant Packet)

A day prior to the beginning of the 2018 Migrant Trail, I was invited to make prayer ties with four other participants. Meeting at Celeste's house we sat around the kitchen table and used colored cotton cloth, tobacco, copal, sage, and other ingredients to make the bundles. We were directed to sit with good intentions and think about those who died and those currently in the desert. We made a total of 208 prayer ties to represent the human remains recovered by Pima County in 2018. We also made four slightly larger ties in the colors of blue, green, yellow, and white to respectively represent the sky, earth, sun, and the migrants whose remains have yet to be found. One of the participants, Pedro,

also made a special, multi-colored bundle for Claudia Patricia Gomez Gonzalez, a twenty-year-old indigenous woman from Guatemala who was shot dead by Border Patrol Agents moments after crossing the Rio Bravo in Texas (Lakhani 2019). Pedro felt a connection to Claudia's highly publicized story as he himself is also Guatemalan immigrant who ended up with Canadian citizenship and later came to reside in the US. Although the Migrant Trail primarily focuses on commemorating those who die in the desert, it is understood that migrants are killed all along the US-Mexico border.

When I sat down to make the prayer ties, I was overwhelmed with a feeling of sadness. But once I settled into the motion of taking the cloth in one hand, filling it with medicine, and tying it off I entered a meditative state where I thought about family. There was something about the motion and the ambiance that reminded me of making *tamales* (a corn dough dish usually filled with a protein and vegetables) at Christmas time with my family. Sitting there I reflected on the concept of family and I did my best to offer a prayer of hope and the warmth created when one is surrounded by loved ones.

Later that week I sat down to interview Shannon who is an elderly, white woman that resides in Tucson and has lived in the Lakota tradition for many decades. Recently earning the right to tell stories in the Lakota tradition, she shared with me the importance of carrying and offering medicine throughout the Migrant Trail. Medicines such as tobacco are an important offering that we can give to the plant, animal, and stone nations whom we rely on for a safe passage. Shannon stated: "It's good to be generous with the tobacco and to make lots of offerings. Especially here on the Migrant Trail, it's an easy way to give back to those spirits that may still be here in the desert." When I spoke with Shannon about my experience making prayer ties, I described how it felt like making

tamales and being surrounded with the loving feeling of home and family. Shannon saw a parallel and responded with an interpretation that I had not yet realized, but that instantly made sense to me. Shannon stated: “When I give to the spirit nation it’s something nourishing to help them on their ways.” She explained that my thoughts were in fact my prayer, and that the medicine we used to fill the bundles with were offerings that would nourish those who are on their spirit journeys. More than symbols of the deceased, the prayer ties are offerings that nourish the dead and offer a physical connection between the world of the living and the world of the dead. To carry the prayer ties is, thus, a sacred act and responsibility that connects the living to the dead and allows them to walk together.

Southbound Caravan

With gear all packed, crosses in hand, and prayer ties leading the way, the group is ready to travel south to Sasabe by late Monday morning. Leaving the kiva, it feels as though the group takes a deep breath and lets out a “hoorah, we're on our way” only to realize that they must then have to get into a vehicle and take a 45-minute drive to Sasabe, Arizona. Once all 60 or so participants board any vehicle with available seats, they exit the parking lot and travel south to Sasabe, Arizona. Along the way, there is plenty of time to enjoy the landscape and make conversation. Once in Sasabe, the cars are parked near the Border Patrol Station and international port of entry on the US side. Leaving the cars behind, participants easily cross the international divide into Sasabe, Sonora. There is no Mexican border agent or customs official to greet us at the Mexican entry way. Making sure that we have our passports and documents for re-entry into the US, we cross into Mexico with little difficulty. On the other side, we are met by trucks

who shuttle us to the Sasabe Catholic Church where we are to enjoy a vegetarian lunch of corn tamales, pinto beans, and salad prepared by the church's congregation and sisters.

Day One, Monday Afternoon

Following lunch at the Sasabe Catholic Church, participants are asked to enter the church's main hall. The church hall is decorated in a plain but caring fashion. There is a large, life-like crucified Jesus on the altar. Banners decorate the hall in colorful colors. And awaiting the group on the altar's steps are three coffins in the colors pink, blue, and white which respectively symbolize the women, men, and children that have died in the desert. These coffins are picture in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Symbolic coffins for migrant children, women, and men that are used by The Migrant Trail during the procession from the Catholic church in Sasabe, Sonora to the US-Mexico border wall. (Photography by Magda E. Mankel)

On the altar is a banner that has a prayer for the migrant/ oration por el migrante embroidered on it. Translated into English it reads:

"Loving Creator, full of love and mercy, I want to ask you for my Migrant brothers and sisters. Have pity on them and protect them, as they suffer mistreatments and humiliations on their journeys, are labeled as dangerous, and marginalized for being foreigners. Make them be respected and valued for their dignity. Touch with your goodness the many that see them pass. Care for their families until they return to their homes, not with broken hearts but rather with hopes fulfilled. Let it be."

In Spanish it says:

"Creador, lleno de amor y misericordia, quiero pedirte por mis hermanos Migrantes. Ten piedad de ellos y protégelos pues sufren maltratos y humillaciones en su caminar, son señalados por la mayoría como peligrosos, y marginados por ser extranjeros. Haz que les respetemos y valoremos su dignidad. Toca con tu bondad el corazón de cuantos los vemos pasar. Cuida a sus familias hasta que regresen a sus casas, no con el corazón roto sino con sus esperanzas colmadas. Así sea"

Part Two: The Liminal Phase (Days 1-4)

According to Turner (1969;1974), the liminal phase is where a "mimetic enactment" of "life-crises" or "collective crises" takes place amongst neophytes or participants of the rite. During this phase, "[l]iminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arranged by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial." (Turner 1969, 95). Moreover, it is during this phase that the structures of everyday life are elaborated upon and challenged or subverted through ritual acts that produce equality amongst neophytes while also inverting power structures and

reversing status. It is in this phase that *communitas*- experiential sharing- is produced amongst participants. *Communitas* may also be understood as a "communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders" as well as "a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties." (Turner 1969, 96). One last characteristic of the liminal phase is that it is the stage where one may more clearly witness status inversions as the high become low and the low become high.

In applying this lens to the Migrant Trail and the mobilization of heritage throughout the journey, one sees that participants of the walk do in fact exhibit the characteristics of neophytes. For example, they develop an "intense comradeship and egalitarianism" as they (temporarily) sever connections to their everyday lives and come together to work though the "social crisis" that is human migration in a world of militarized borders and unequal power dynamics amongst nation-states and its citizens. And although the Migrant Trail is not a simulation of the migrant experience, it does require participants to undergo a status reversal and humble themselves by symbolically and physically stripping away the privileges afforded to them by their citizenship status, socio-economic class, ethnicity, and so forth. The clearest example of this is when participants are asked to voluntarily separate themselves from their passports at the border so that they may symbolically experience the walk as individual persons, rather than individuals who identify primarily as citizens or residents of a particular territory. (Passports are kept safe in a box and are collected after participants cross the US-Mexico border). Day by day these experiences and exchanges build in ritual space and progress until they come to a close on day seven.

Before describing the various ceremonies and cultural expressions that construct and occur within the liminal phase of the walk, I must address the different relationship clandestine (unauthorized) migrants have to "liminality" as they journey and reside in *el norte.* In *Shadowed Lives*, Leo R. Chavez (2012, 49) briefly reference Turner's (1974, 231–32) work on rites of passage to understand migrant crossings as a "betwixt and between" that suspends an individual between worlds. The equation of journeys north to rites of passage are also supported by Singer and Masse (1998) and many others. Important to understand is that the theory of liminality may be applied to all individuals making crossing of a geographic, social, cultural, and symbolic variety. However, the application of this theoretical lens reveals that liminality impacts subjects in different manners. This is to say that the experiences of clandestine migrants and the experiences of allies is not the same even though they experience or are subjected to the liminal. The study of migrant liminality and rite of passage is something that deserves its own analysis; however, it is something that I do not provide here.

Funeral Procession: A Coffin for Men, Women, and Children

Following the deacon's informative sermon, the walkers are given a blessing and wished a safe journey. Volunteers are then asked to pick up the coffins and participate in the procession to the border wall. The procession is led by the individuals carrying the prayer ties. The individuals carrying the symbolic coffins follow. It takes four people to carry the coffins for women and men and two people to carry the one for children. Everyone else carries their white cross and walks in silence. The coffins begin the procession and the rest of the group files out behind those carrying the coffins. We walk along the unpaved dusty streets of Sasabe towards the border wall.

Unlike the other booming sister cities of ambos Nogales, Douglas, Agua Prieta, Sasabe is a sparsely populated, rural *pueblo*. As we walk, we pass by homes with well-kept, verdant gardens, rundown buildings, and shuttered businesses. We are also greeted by curious onlookers who from their yards wave to us and make the sign of the cross on their chests. From such reactions, it is evident that the procession is regarded as a religious or sacred event. In the Catholic Religion, there is a tradition of processing the dead through town. It is a public event that allows the public to join in on the mourning process. The procession enacted by the Migrant Trail is also a public event, however, is not attended or facilitated by the local community. It is more so orchestrated by the Migrant Trail in collaboration with the Catholic Church and its constituents. Like in traditional Catholic processions, we carry coffins through the streets. But unlike most processions, we do not circle back or return to the church. Rather, we end up in another ceremonial space in sight of the border wall. What happens is that one ceremony blends into the other. Together they may be interpreted to symbolize the final stages of what it takes to leave the everyday world behind. This is to say that as we perform the procession, we not only walk away from the Sasabe Catholic Church, but we also walk away from our everyday lives and we walk towards a blessing ceremony and sacred space where we will remain for several days. By blending one symbolic act into another, there is a sense of continuity between the Catholic procession and the blessing ceremony that incorporates Indigenous and Catholic religious views.

After walking for about 800 meters, we reach the border wall and stop just south of it. We are then instructed to form a circle and place the coffins at the center. When participants arrive at the border wall, they are invited to partake in another mourning

ritual. This second mourning ritual takes the form of a smudging ceremony that is usually led by Rosa, a woman of Yoreme (Mayo) and Mexican American descent, and Catalina, who identifies as a Mexican American woman. The coffins are placed in the middle of the circle and the smudging ceremony begins with the help of other organizers.

Opening the Ritual Space

According to one of the walk's founders, the blessing ceremony has always been a part of the Migrant Trail. The ceremony as I have seen it performed includes elements of Indigenous (O'odham and Yoreme) and Catholic ceremonial elements performed in English, Spanish, and other indigenous languages. Usually, it is Rosa who performs the ceremony. But when she was unavailable to participate, Catalina stepped in to offer her blessing in 2018. In both cases, the opening ceremony offers a blessing and cleansing of the group.

The ceremony begins when participants are invited to form a circle and place the three coffins at the center of the circle. With the prayer ties held at the center, Catalina and Rosa begin by burning sage and copal powder. They then go to each person in the circle and waft the medicinal smoke onto each participant's chests, hands, feet, and the crosses they carry. In 2018, Catalina performed the ceremony by taking the 208 prayer sticks in her hands. Carefully unravelling the string of prayer ties, she asked her assistants to hold the long string of ties. She then took the sage and smudged the string of ties. Catalina then offered a prayer to the four directions and the "different spirit keepers for the East, South, West and the North". She then thanked mother earth and father sky and asked them for "help in keeping us safe and keeping us … with our intentions." Each participant was then cleansed with sage smoke that was wafted over their feet, hearts, and

the crosses they carried. When everyone had received a blessing, the prayer ties were wrapped back onto the stick and participants were instructed to line up so that they could cross back into the US

Recalling the ceremony, most participants I interviewed noted that the smudging ceremony was one of the most emotionally charged and impactful activities they participated in. This opening ceremony is also significant because it represents the coming together as a community. Catalina learned how to lead this ceremony "by being in ceremony with other indigenous communities, by reading, by learning from elders, from medicine men and medicine women." When I spoke with Catalina about the significance of the ceremony, she noted that the ceremony "lays a foundation" and sets an intention that initiates the real ceremony that will take place over the seven days we walk. Catalina stated in Spanish that the ceremony:

> "unites us more. It unites us and puts us on the same plane so that we are equal. It makes it so no one person us more important than another. It makes it so that we are all in this and all contribute equally. And that we are all welcome and belong."
>
> *"[...] yo creo que nos une más. Nos une y nos pone en un plano que todos somos iguales. Que no hay una persona más importante que otra. Que todos estamos en esto y que todos contribuimos igualmente. Y que todos somos bienvenidos y pertenecemos*."

Overall, both the opening and closing ceremonies performed by Rosa and Catalina are syncretic events that blend Indigenous and Hispanic Catholic Practices. Such practices, symbols, and expressions of culture and faith are regionally specific to the

Arizona-Sonora borderlands and other parts of the US-Mexico border (Dobyns 1976; Fontana and Schaefer 1989; Leza 2019; Schermerhorn 2019; Spicer 1980; Painter, Spicer, and Kaemlein 1986). Moreover, the ceremony illustrates that heritage practices and ritual acts of mourning play an important role in establishing a sense of community and group cohesion or democracy within the group.

Amongst the exchange and blending of traditions and perspective, the groups experiences the symbolic production of sacred space and the invisible boundaries of a community in formation. Looking at Catalina's statement, it is revealed that one important function of the opening and closing ceremonies is to make participants equal as they are emplaced in a ritual space where they are to do away with hierarchies, participate equally, and treat each other the same. Throughout the walk, it is important that participants treat each other as equals and work together to ensure a safe journey and respect each other's perspectives.

Days Two-Four, The Liminoid

"Liminality is frequently likened to death, [...] to invisibility, to darkness, [...] to the wilderness and to the eclipse of the sun or moon." (Turner 2008, 95).

Entering Wilderness

Leaving the border wall behind them, the participants walk for approximately three miles before reaching an iron gate that encloses the Buenos Aires national Wildlife Refuge (BANWR). Crossing this threshold jolts participants only slightly as they leave the hot highway asphalt and step into a gravely, dirt road. Walkers usually make it to the campsite just as the sun is about to set so priority is given to setting up one's tent and

grabbing a quick bite to eat. On day two, participants wake up in BANWR to see the expansive landscape where hills covered in short, golden-yellow grasses tickle the sky at each horizon. It is in this wilderness refuge that the process of community making, or *communitas*, is put into practice with each step taken.

Within the American imagination, wilderness is a sacred and profane place. A place that was once believed to be haunted by demons. Once tamed through manifest destiny and the erasure of Indigenous inhabitants, wilderness was presented as a pristine place near God (Cronon 1996; Sundberg and Kaserman 2007). Today, BANWR is managed by the US Department of Agriculture and works to preserve the flora, fauna, and unique grasslands ecosystem.

The reliance on wild places to produce a sense of the liminal is also a key part of the Migrant Trail. Although, the route was originally picked to coincide with the routes taken by migrants, the symbolic influence of wilderness on the walk and its participants seems to have grown over time. Being in wilderness, surrounded by nature, and seeing no one else but fellow walkers has an incredible impact. It produces a sense of near isolation that fuels connections between group members while also creating a sense of community that is separate from everyday life. I say near isolation because walkers are still connected to the outside world. Many carry cellular phones and the group receives lunch and dinner from the meal sponsors each day. However, it is in wilderness that participants have the opportunity to converse with one another as they walk side by side, meditate on the loss of human life, and, in so doing, forge a community of allies who bear witness, reflect on their privilege, and imagine ways to mobilize said privilege in the future.

Day Four, Ritual Climax & Denouement

Thursday is the longest day in terms of mileage covered because participants are expected to cover 16 miles. Anticipating the heat of the day, walkers wake at 3:30 AM and are on the line by 4:15 AM. In my experience, Thursday is the day where everything seems to happen. It is the day that the gravity of the entire experience becomes imprinted on the mind, body, and soul. Thursday is a day of transformations. Thursday, the fourth day, is a day of surprises.

I recall that during the walk of 2016 the group witnessed an asteroid light up the dark sky in a bright orange, hot pink, and yellow ombre. In 2017, Rosa beckoned the group to look ahead at the sun rising over Baboquivari Peak; a sacred mountain peak that in O'odham beliefs houses the deity I'itoi (Elder Brother). Looking ahead the group witnessed Baboquivari Peak transformed from a slumbering giant to a vigilante watchman as the sun slowly crept over the mountain's base and crown. And in 2018, I saw a Border Patrol agent stop his patrol vehicle on the highway and step out to hug one of the walk's participants, David. It turns out they were church friends and the agent recognized David.

Leaving Wilderness

At about 6:30 AM on Thursday morning, participants arrive at yet another threshold, the entranceway to BANWR where the gravel meets the road. Stopping to have breakfast and a group stretch, one gets the chance to reflect on the fact that the Walk is halfway through. This morning is also special because it is the last time that participants will be in the near isolation afforded to them by wilderness. As we transition from dirt path to asphalt highway, we begin to exit the liminal phase. Each step towards the city is a step away from the liminal and a step towards reaggregation.

Once we get on the highway, we lose the ability to talk side by side and converse. As such, conversations have to wait until we get to camp. Also gone is the comforting, crunching rhythm made by shoes on soft gravel. The tranquil and trance-like meditations will be harder to come by on a highway where one will see and hear more Border Patrol vehicles than civilian cars. Although the transformative properties of the walk are still at work, most of the community building has already taken place. By this point in the walk, the group has found a collective rhythm and they are able to walk in unison along the highway. Walking as a collective is crucial for safety and visual purposes. Once on the highway, we are in the public's eye and the walk changes slightly to become more of a public protest in communication with passersbys. This is a stark contrast to being in wilderness where we seldom encounter passersby, but have on two occasions encountered a (supportive) Border Patrol agent and BANWR Ranger. It is on the highway that the walk communicates with public audiences and influences the public sphere through rhetorical appeals of a symbolic, visual, and auditory variety. The public aspects of the Migrant Trail are analyzed in the next chapter. For now, I will continue describing the inner world of the walk.

Re-entering the Everyday (Days 4-7)

As we move slowly towards civilization, we receive cell reception, we have access to electricity, and we are able to charge our cellular telephones. The bonds forged in the near isolation afforded to us by and in wilderness begin to break down as we walk towards the city. The near isolation and the liminal vanishes at an expedited pace.

Sharing Stories

Within the Migrant Trail, stories are shared in a variety of places throughout the walk. They are shared at scheduled events, such as the Talent Show that takes place on day five of the walk, or in impromptu lectures and encuentros (conversations and encounters) amongst participants. Below I share the stories of David, Shannon, and Linda that were told in separate years at the Talent Show. In these stories, David, Shannon, and Linda describe a long-ago time where the protagonists performed deeds that happened in the past yet remain relevant to our contemporary struggles. In these stories, each storyteller's personal heritage and religious views are highlighted and shared with the audience in a manner intended to generate feelings and thoughts about our intentions for walking and the meanings we associate with walking the Migrant Trail.

The communicative and deliberative role that stories play in democratic societies is illustrated by Young (1996, 131) who argues that narratives reveal experiences and foster understanding across differences in a way that does not flatten differences, but rather acknowledges subjectivity, values, culture, and meaning. The "others" in this case include not only fellow participants who come from different backgrounds than the storytellers, but also migrants who are present in discourses but physically absent from the Migrant Trail. As the stories I will share illustrate, participants of the walk rely on storytelling to share their interpretations of the landscape and their ideological lens for justifying a hospitable and compassionate relationship towards migrants. The stories also offer a moral code or example of how (privileged) individuals may interact with the "other" in a kind, hospitable, and generous fashion. The stories below are an example of the ways that stories may foster understanding across differences. Connecting personal interpretations of family heritage to contemporary issues, these stories bestow meaning

onto the group's actions while also offering guidance or counsel for moving forward towards a just future.

David's Story

David's story was shared with the group during the talent show in 2016. David's story is guided by his Presbyterian faith and connection to migrant advocacy as he volunteers with Human Border and replenishes the water tanks, they maintain for migrants in remote desert areas all over southwestern Arizona. Reflecting on his family history, David shared a family story that was shared with him by his mother. David stated that in 1882 his grandfather and family arrived at a train station in Chicago, Illinois from Breslau, Germany which is now Poland. Arriving at the train station, the family ran out of funds to continue their journey. Not knowing any English his great grandfather was eventually able to communicate with a passing stranger. Barely understanding the language spoken to him, the stranger understood the situation, took off his hat and began gathering donations from passersby in it. After some minutes, the stranger came back and gave the family the "offerings" he had collected for them. It was this money gathered by a stranger that got the family to Grand Rapids, Michigan where they met other family members.

To connect this story to contemporary immigration journeys he shared his experience with running into a migrant man, Gregorio, in the desert while he was volunteering with Human Borders and replenishing their water stations. The migrant man he met was dehydrated and cold to the touch on a scorching hot day. After providing Gregorio with water and first aid, David called the border patrol at Gregorio's request. Exhausted and in need of medical attention, Gregorio felt that he stood a better chance of

surviving if he turned himself in and, perhaps, attempting to cross some other day. Connecting both stories, David stated:

> "And the story is that in every generation, I think *La Mano de Dios*, the Hand of God, needs to be offered to the next person. And what I was doing was no different than what somebody in a train station in Chicago had done for my family. And I feel obliged to do that. And it's in some sense a shame that that obligation isn't shared by more folks."

Shannon's Story:

Shannon also offered a story to the group during the Talent Show in 2018. Shannon identifies as a white woman who has followed Lakota traditions for the last three decades or so of her life. She shared that she has been in community with her Lakota brothers and sisters for decades and has only recently earned the right to share the ancestral stories. At the talent show, Shannon shared a Lakota creation story in which the two-leggeds (humanity) received the most sacred of all medicines, tobacco. She noted that she wanted to share this story to bring a new perspective and understanding to the significance of carrying prayer ties and offering tobacco to the Spirit Nation. In this story, Shannon unpacks the Lakota story and connects its symbolism to the use of prayer ties and tobacco by the Migrant Trail. And like David's story, Shannon outlines a moral code for interacting towards the "other".

The Lakota creation story that Shannon shared began with Creator making all the beings on earth and distributing all the medicines and gifts to them. Of the many gifts Creator shared, tobacco was the most sacred and sought after. As Shannon put it: "And so everybody was gathered together; the stone nation, the green and growing, the winged

ones, the four leggeds, the creepy crawlies, those that swim, those that fly, the two leggeds, that's us, the stone, people, and the four winds which we call the four directions. Everyone wanted the tobacco and Creator listened to their requests and told them that he had decided to give the tobacco to the two leggeds. And there were two reasons for that." The reason Creator gave it to the two-legends was because they were the most pitiful of all the living beings and because they had the capacity to use their two legs to share the tobacco. As Shannon stated: "it was their responsibility now to pass it around to all the other nations.

Shannon then explained that tobacco is one of the many medicines used to make the prayer ties and that it is good to share it along the walk. She explained that

> "when we pass the animals that have died in the street, I offer tobacco for their spirit. We put the tobacco in the ties for that same reason; to give to the spirit for their journey. And when we carry the ties, we carry their spirits with us. And some time during the year [...] we'll put these [ties] in the fire and will release the spirits and the prayers that have gone into this [prayer stick]. And the smoke from the tobacco is the prayer. So, the prayer is in here and the smoke releases that prayer. So for us as two-leggeds, the tobacco is really a gateway to the spirit world because we communicate to the other nations through the tobacco. And over time it changes your relationship with the other aspects of the stone people, the green and growing, and the spirit nation, those who have already gone."

Linda's Story

Unlike the stories told at the talent show, Linda roots her in a history of the US-Mexico borderlands. In 2016, about 20 participants sat under the shade of a mesquite tree in the early evening to listen to an impromptu lecture by Linda. Linda is a retired history professor, elder, long-time participant of the Migrant trail, and participant of the Sanctuary Movement. Her lecture highlighted the colonial, political, economic, and cultural events that shaped the US-Mexico borderlands in the last 500 years.

Linda's historical recounting began with Baboquivari. She situated us in the Sonoran Desert and its geography by drawing our attention to Baboquivari peak. She called on us in the present to relate ourselves to the most ancient in our midst, Baboquivari. In Tohono O'odham cosmology, Baboquivari is where the Creator, *I'itoi*, is said to live in a cave. Linda said, "Baboquivari is watching over us. We are a short piece in its life that has witnessed so much." Linda advised us to "listen" to the mountain because it might share with us a bit of its wisdom. Linda knew that Baboquivari shared wisdom and taught songs because of something her close friend told her. Several years back, Linda's friend had gone on the pilgrimage to Magdalena de Kino. Her friend, being a member of the Tohono O'odham tribe, began her journey at Poso Verde and walked to Magdalena with her friends and family for nearly a week in late September. The pilgrimage to Magdalena is a tradition that Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, O'odham peoples have embarked on for centuries (Dobyns 1950; Griffith 1967; Schermerhorn 2019). It was in this pilgrimage that Linda's friend learned a song from Baboquivari. She later shared this song with Linda because it was a healing song. Linda ended her thoughts on Baboquivari by letting her audience know that "If we listen, it may teach us one too."

What I take away from Linda's lecture and story, is that the Migrant Trail is a pilgrimage akin to and descended from many other pilgrimages, trails, walks, and marches taken by other people occupying this landscape. Like those that came before us and those that will come after. Although we all come from different ethnic, religious, geographic, socio-economic backgrounds, Linda offered the walkers the opportunity to shift their perspectives on the landscape and use the sacred mountain as a north star, capable of leading us towards an ancient wisdom.

Part Three: Reaggregation (Day 7)

A Private Goodbye

On Sunday morning, the ritual space that was opened on day one is closed with another smudging ceremony that is led by Rosa or Catalina on a public campsite managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The ceremony symbolizes the end of the sacred journey and offers participants an opportunity for participants to say goodbye to each other in the privacy of the group. In this way it is a parting ceremony.

In all four years that I have walked the Migrant Trail, Rosa has been there to perform the ceremony. The ceremony is performed on a carved-out hill that opens up to the desert valley to the west and blocks us from seeing the city of Tucson located to the east. As on the first day, sage is burned and wafted over the participants and their crosses. Rosa again offers a prayer using her voice and a small, hand-held drum and mallet. She then thanks "*Tatita-Dios*" ("Grandfather-God" in diminutive form) for the journey and encourages the participants to look at the valley and see how far we have walked. The view is beautiful and evocative. Always vigilant, Baboquivari's crown peeks over the surrounding mountains as if to say goodbye and see us out of their domain. I have found

myself feeling all kinds of emotions at this point. I have felt accomplishment for being strong enough to finish the walk and I have felt sorrow and grief for the loss of life. As a person who was born and raised in southern Arizona, I know that I am not saying goodbye to the desert. I'm saying goodbye to *los meurots,* the death. However, saying goodbye to this community of allies and the sacred space they create is always difficult for me.

The ceremonies led by Rosa are beautiful, sincere, and emotionally charged. However, they are not always without conflict. In years past, the ceremony has been interpreted by some participants as brujeria (witchcraft) and so participants have chosen not to participate in the ceremony as it conflicts with their personal beliefs and values (Dueck-Read 2016). And in 2018, a white, female onlooker who appeared to be in her 40s walked up to the circle mid-ceremony to berate us for waking her up and engaging in what she thought was "inappropriate behavior for a Sunday." (We started the ceremony at seven in the morning.) Shaking with anger, the woman voiced her deep disapproval of the Migrant Trail's actions. When an organizer calmly explained what we were doing, the woman critiqued our methods. For example, she disapproved of our use of crosses and stated that the only way to help immigrants was to "send them back to their country."

All the while, we stood there. Many of us held hands in solidarity. I was furious and immobilized by the level of hate I felt radiate from the onlooker. It felt incredibly uncomfortable. Comforted by the person to my left, I cried silently and stood my ground. The drumming and singing continued. After ten minutes or so, the woman left the circle and Rosa punctuated her exit with one last drumbeat. I offer this account to illustrate that the narrative communicated by the Migrant Trail is not always accepted and that the

dialogues it produces are not always cordial. Moreover, it illustrates that the Migrant Trail's message is not universally accepted in the border lands and that even the sincerest attempts at healing may result in conflict or disagreement.

A Public Homecoming, finishing what they started

The Migrant Trail ends at Kennedy Park, a city park in Tucson. As the participants arrive, they are met with music, food, loved ones, and news crews. The gathering is celebratory as it is intended to be the homecoming celebration that those who die in the desert may never receive. In addition to being greeted with a party, seven walkers are invited to participate in a foot washing ceremony performed by a Catholic priest. The foot washing ceremony is a reference to a biblical parable (John 13:1) where Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. The details of this symbolic act will be revisited and analyzed in the next chapter. Upon entering the park, the participants immediately lay down their crosses under a tree and the prayer stick is taken by Catalina or Rosa to be burned at a later day. Describing the significance of the crosses and the walk, Catalina offers the following statement. "I come to gather the grief that is here [points to her chest and heart] and I carry the grief, I carry it out…and give it to the creator to be transformed…I believe that it leaves me once we end the trail. I believe that I bring them home. I finish what they started. For example, this cross that I carry represents a young woman, 33 years old. And I think that when Sunday comes, when the walk is over, it will be like I helped her exit the desert. As if her spirit was liberated."

Outcomes of Participation

By the end of the Migrant Trail, participants will have experienced some sort of transformation on a personal, spiritual, philosophical, and/or emotional level. Emerging from the ritual space, some participants may leave the event with a sense of community with fellow participants, exposure to a network of allies, a better understanding of the privileges they possess, a more nuanced perspective of the landscape, and understanding of narrative of belonging that welcomes migrants in a hospitable manner.

A Community & Network of Allies

> "We begin as strangers and end as friends, making friendship amongst each other, learning from one another, and all of this is really a part of ceremony." (Catalina, Personal Communication).

> "*Empezamos como extraños y terminamos como amigos, haciendo amistad con otras, aprendiendo el uno del otro, y todo eso es parte de la ceremonia en realidad*." (Catalina, Personal Communication).

Being in community and forging community is, in my opinion, the second most important function of the Migrant Trail. The first function being bearing witness to death by remembering those who have died in the Sonoran Desert. As I have illustrated above, the ritual structure of the walk offers participants, many of which are near strangers, ample opportunity to forge a sense of community. It also allows long-time participants to reconnect with one another and re-engage with the issue by being physically present and learning from one another. In addition to forming a community with fellow walkers, participants also connect each other to their resources and advocacy work back in their

home communities. By sharing what is happening back home, participants can grow a network of support that may be tapped into at a later time.

Solidarity with Migrant and their Families

Community is not only forged with fellow walkers, but also with the deceased, the family of the deceased, and with other ancestors (those who have come before). The connection to migrants and their families is represented in the way that participants walk with coffins, prayer ties, and crosses in hand as they say the names of the deceased multiple times every day. To vocalize the deceased person's name and to say "¡*Presente*!" shows that the person had been here and that their death is evidence of their humanity. Thinking of migrants as people, loved ones, mothers, fathers, daughters, or sons was a sentiment echoed by many other walkers. In empathizing with immigrants and situating them as people who belong, participants of the Migrant Trail demonstrate their solidarity and set a public example for continuing this justice work elsewhere.

Belonging, Humanity, and Hospitality

Participants are also introduced to a different paradigm of social belonging rooted not only in a common humanity and human rights, but also in the understanding that the more fortunate, the privileged, those with the ability to cross international boundaries, and those with power must be hospitable to any person in a precarious situation. In the Migrant Trail, participants are asked to latch onto narratives of hospitality towards the stranger, the other, and the newcomer. The hospitality paradigm is exemplified in two main areas throughout the walk. First, it is articulated in the stories of ancestry and faith-based parables that participants share with one another. Second, it is embodied at

mealtimes when walkers are served lunch and dinner by the volunteers of local organizations. During these meals, participants personally experience hospitality as they are given food and encouraged to finish their journeys and share their experiences when they go back home. Recall that the majority of the walk's participants are white and from elsewhere in the US. With that demographic in mind, the lesson on hospitality and appeal to be hospitable to others takes on a societal and national connotation. As such, the underlying message of hospitality offered by the walk is transported to other communities by the participants. In an interview Nora, a female participant from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, we spoke about what it was like to go back home and continue to apply the walk's lessons in ones home community. Nora stated:

> "So for me [...] it doesn't end when the walk ends. You know you go home, and you try and find ways to keep living that out. Like I think everybody on the walk was probably similar in their intention [...] because it's not just something you do one time. It's something you keep in your consciousness throughout the rest of the year too."

Coming to Terms with Privilege and Personal Limitations

Discussions about privilege often arise throughout the Migrant Trail as they are facilitated through group discussion, casual conversations with one another, and the walk's route which requires participants to move through the US-Mexico border and a militarized landscape dotted with border checkpoints and deaths sites. Some of the privileges that participants must grapple with include their citizenship status, socio-economic status, race and ethnicity, age, and (physical) abilities. Throughout the walk, participants are given the opportunity to sit in the discomfort of their privilege, but also to

recognize it as a valuable tool for bearing witness and standing against structural violence. Rather than ask participants to recreate the migrant experiences, the walk's structure makes it possible for participants to take account of the special rights, advantages and immunities that differentiate them from migrants.

For example, it is during the liminal phase of the walk that participants are made to hold equal status to one another and to the migrants whose deaths they commemorate. The symbolic equality demonstrated to migrants is exemplified when participants of the walk relinquish their passports as soon as they cross the US-Mexico border. By giving up their passports or other identification, they symbolize their desire to walk as people rather than citizens or residents of a particular country. In some ways, this also illustrates that one's citizenship status does not determine their humanity or their ability to survive a desert crossing. Reflecting on his volunteer experience with Human Borders and his privilege as a white man moving through the same environment as migrants, David noted:

> "I am reminded of my entitlement when I drive a Humane Borders truck and people look at me, an older white man with a white beard and they [Border Patrol] wave me through. Sometimes they don't even ask about my citizenship."

Like migrants, participants will require food, water, rest, and the hospitality of the walk's sponsors. But unlike migrants, they will receive these resources and they will reach their destination. Their mere survival and completion of the walk in seven days is testament to the privileges they possess, and it offers a stark contrast to what migrants face. Confronted with such privilege, participants are to think about the ways that they

may mobilize their rights and advantages in a manner that welcomes and makes a space for migrants. Understanding the privileges, one possesses is not only an exercise in being honest and humble, but also an assessment of the resources one has available to be a better ally. As such, being confronted with one's privilege and understanding what such privileges affords is a step towards expressing solidarity during and after the walk.

CHAPTER TWO

A Walk's Rhetorical Edge: The Collective Mobilization of Cultural Repertoires and the Re-imagining of Public Discourses Regarding Clandestine Migration

Introduction

When the Migrant Trail was first organized in 2004, it was very much a response to the deaths of migrants and border enforcement strategies that increased border surveillance and continued to militarize the US-Mexico border in southern Arizona. Step by step and mile by mile, the participants are framed by the landscape. Looking at them from a distance they appear as dots on a trail, forming a line that traverses a vastness. Framed in public space, the walk becomes a performance and act of "public liminality" (Turner 1979) that offers an alternative story and calls on publics to soothe an ailing and imagined collective body by bearing witness— an act of solidarity building that calls on individuals to see an injustice and then let oneself be moved in such a way that one comes to own, accept, and understand one's "relationship to that injustice" (K. Rodriguez 2015). It is a matter of checking one's own privilege and realizing where one stand in relation to state structures that cause harm to some. It is also a matter of acknowledging and coming to terms with one's own limitations; the things we cannot or are unwilling to do. In the counter narrative told by the walk, migrants are commemorated, and their deaths are accepted and emplaced in a living landscape that has long been stratified with human activity both jovial and violent and everything in between. In so doing, a nexus between past, present, and future is created. Relying on ancestral ties and national claims to the land, participants succeed in situating clandestine migration as a contemporary

global phenomenon that is part of a longer history of resiliency in the face of settler colonial states and empires across the Americas.

Like any social movement community, the Migrant Trail must make rhetorically charged appeals to a variety of publics in order to successfully communicate its message and survive in the (American) civic imagination and public sphere. In this way, the Migrant Trail is an example of "heritage as persuasion"—"an innovative reworking of cultural heritage" whereby heritage becomes a "rhetoric act" (Lafrenz Samuels 2015: 4). Throughout this rhetorical act or performance, heritage is "mobilized creatively within a wide array of social, political, economic, and moral contexts where it gives persuasive force to particular standpoints, perspectives and claims" (Lafrenz Samuels 2015: 4).

In addition to making rhetorical appeals that persuade, the Migrant Trail also survives and resonates with audiences by mobilizing a "cultural repertoire"— storehouse of embodied knowledge made visible through performance— (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004; Swidler 1986; 1995; D. Taylor 2003). It also dos so by embracing a multicultural and multi faith perspective on human migration, and distilling their arguments to that of a common humanity sustained by the principles and values outlined by global justice based on human rights (Russo 2018; Van Ham 2011) and "civil initiative" (Corbett 1991; Fife et al. 2011).

To communicate these points, the group takes to the streets and to wilderness in such a way that it transforms these public spaces into `public forums where they may raise consciousness, shift discourse, and debate the contemporary issues at hand. As in the first chapter, I further support the observation that the locally particular cultural heritage of the Arizona-Sonora borderlands is playing a key role in bringing people of

diverse backgrounds together, recognizing clandestine migration narratives in the landscape, and connecting a recent history and new heritage associated with clandestine migration to a global network of movements dedicated to border and immigrant justice. The two questions guiding this chapter are as follows. First, what are the (visual, auditory, symbolic, and/or textual) rhetorical strategies and devices used by the Migrant Trail to communicate with other publics? This first question brings to the fore the need to identify how cultural repertoires containing a diverse collection of cultural tools are mobilized to meet the contemporary situation. Second, in what ways does the Migrant Trail shift the meaning of identity categories, such as citizenship, and relationship between citizens and non-citizens?

Rhetorical Appeals, Resonance, and Framing Devices

Emerging from the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge (BANWR) on day four, the trail intersects Arizona State Highway 86, and the walk is propelled forward and onward by each participant's exertion of leg power. Leaving BANWR in the early morning just past sunrise, the group is instructed to "look good" and "love the line" when we walk together on the highway. By this point in the walk, "looking good" and forming a neat line is an achievable request for the group who has established a steadily paced and equally spaced walking rhythm during their time in wilderness. It is usually members of the safety team who make sure that the group maintains a uniform line and remains safe. They also take the lead in shouting "car" whenever a vehicle approaches. From this point forward, the Migrant Trail becomes highly visible to onlookers as the trail follows a busy highway and participants stand in stark contrast to a route intended primarily for vehicle traffic. The public facing side of the Migrant Trail is something that exists throughout the

entire walk, but it is most visible on day one, and on days four through seven when the group walks on the highway before finally entering Tucson City limits. During this time, the walk is also made more accessible to the news media and reporters as the roads are easier to travel and the cellular telephone the group carries receives better service. The walk's increased visibility and emergence from wilderness is a visually startling occasion as the group of pedestrians subverts the highway's vehicular function and transforms it into a public forum; a public site of deliberation, conscience raising, and collective action (Sandell and Nightingale 2012; Silverman 2010).

Much of the event's success may be attributed to the embodied act as walking and the complex cultural repertoire that participants have at their disposal (Haydu 1999; Swidler 1986; D. Taylor 2003; Traugott 1995; V. Taylor and Van Dyke 2008). According to the performance scholar Diana Taylor (2003, 20) "repertoires" may be thought of as a "storehouse" or "treasury" that "enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing— in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral non reproducible knowledge." This perspective is supported by folklorists and social movement scholars who respectively investigate the mobilization of folk traditions and take a cultural approach to studying collective action (Abrahams 1968; Cox and Foust 2009; Enck-Wanzer 2006; Fantasia and Hirsch 1995; Frederik 2012; Garlough 2013; Gencarella 2009; Gencarella and Pezzullo 2010; Hammerback and Jensen 1994; Hart 1996; Jasper 2010; Jensen 2006; Johnston and Klandermans 1995; Pezzullo 2001; Tarrow 2011). Reflecting on the US Civil Rights Movement, for example, Tarrow (1992, 189) notes that

> “the symbols of revolt are not drawn like musty costumes from a cultural closet and arrayed before the public. Nor are new meanings unrolled out of whole cloth. The costumes of are woven from a blend of inherited and invented fibers into collective action frames in confrontation with opponents and elites.”

This observation is true for the Migrant Trail as participants mobilize extant traditions to structure the walk and make public appeals that seek social change.

Moreover, situating the walk as a performance and repertoire accomplishes three things. First, it demonstrates a connection to the past as participants and organizers of the walk draw on their own funds of knowledge, embodied knowledge, and regional knowledge of the borderlands and global systems of human movement to produce a rhetorical framework that appeals to audiences. Second, it emphasizes the ways in which these annual protest events transmit knowledge through embodied actions and by being physically present. Third, it speaks to the ways in which cultural tools and heritage practices are transmitted and taught through performance. In the case of the Migrant Trail, individuals are taught that gathering and walking together is a valid and necessary way to bear witness, reject the status quo, and embark on transformative change. This is a lesson shared not only with participants, but also with an American public sphere and many other publics and transnational communities who choose to listen.

Overall, I have found that the performance and repertoire perspective is very useful in understanding the process of establishing continuity with the past and melding extant traditions to contemporary events and discourses regarding clandestine migration. More importantly, it aligns with recent ethnoheritage methods which express the need to

trace the "deliberative trajectory" of heritage discourses that are mobilizing heritage claims within contemporary debates regarding national identity, social justice, and difficult histories (Lafrenz Samuels 2019). But rather than follow the trajectory of "heritage" (the word) as it appears in media or in the discourses of participants, I trace the expression of heritage through performance and symbols. This methodological pivot was necessary in my field work because the term "heritage" is not used in the walk's press releases or media representations. The term "heritage" was also seldom used by the individuals I interviewed. In lieu of heritage, performances, such as ceremonies, and terms, such as tradition, ancestry, and landscape, were used by participants to indicate a relationship to a past and their desire to bring it forward and motivate other publics to care about migrant deaths and the (cultural -, social -, environmental -, political -) impacts of border militarization. What remains to be explored in greater detail, however, are the ways in which contemporary social movement communities, such as the Migrant Trail, create connections between long-held traditions and contemporary pasts associated with newcomers or non-citizens. This is an important phenomenon to investigate for it sheds light on the ways cultural heritage may be mobilized to welcome newcomers, mitigate conflicts in receiving societies, and work towards the public good. This is a timely matter to investigate as more and more receiving nations in the global north are struggling to represent the experiences of migrant newcomers and clandestine migration to citizens and residents who may come from vastly different ethnic backgrounds (Holtorf, Pantazatos, and Scarre 2019).

Protest Marches

In examining the style of walking seen along the Migrant Trail, I found that the style is derived from the funds of knowledge and cultural repertoires of participants and organizers who had prior experiences in (1) organizing justice-oriented protest marches and (2) completing Catholic, Indigenous, and Catholic-Indigenous pilgrimages. As the examples below reveal, the style of walking that the Migrant Trail stems from is rooted in past marches dedicated to environmental rights, civil rights, farm worker rights, and the sacred act of making a pilgrimage. Together these influences may not be visually apparent at first, but they play an important role in the way the walk is logistically formatted and in the emotional energy the walk creates for participants and onlookers.

First, the Migrant Trail's style may be attributed to each organizer's funds of knowledge and skills derived from organizing and participating in protest marches (Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti 2006; Vélez-Ibañez 1996). For example, one of the walk's co-founders, Joseph, noted that the idea of organizing a protest walk was directly inspired by his environmental justice work in south Texas. In recalling his work with Southwest Toxic Watch, Joseph noted that the protest march was organized by university students and that it played a critical role in getting border in El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua to join in the bi-national march that spanned 80 miles and was completed in four days.

A second influence derives from the 230-mile-long "March for Dignity, Dialogue, and a Fair Wage" in 2000 that was organized by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida. This particular march was attended and co-organized by Celeste who is also a senior participant and early co-founders of the Migrant Trail. One of the lessons that Celeste took from this experience was how to: "leap-frog" or carefully shuttle resources

on a given route, designate resting areas, pace walkers, and coordinate the daily mileage. These are key tactics that the Migrant Trail uses to keep its participants healthy, motivated, and looking good for the public eye. Situated in that space they add to a national conversation about national identity and the role that diverse immigration patterns and immigrants have played in producing a multicultural identity while also reproducing and challenging the romanticized Immigration myth.

A third source of stylistic inspiration may be traced to the experiences that participants had with the Civil Rights Movement, Chicano Movement, and United Farm Workers (UFW). Two senior participants of the walk, Linda and Manuela, state that their fight for social justice began in the Civil Rights era. For Linda, the Migrant Trail is interpreted as "this generation's way of expressing their fight for justice." Recalling her organizing roots, Linda noted that during the Civil Rights, marches and walks were about "gathering and walking to reach a place of justice." That is, a fight for recognition and equality despite ethnic, class based, and religious differences. For Linda, the Migrant Trail follows in this tradition of marches and walks because it is a walk that is taken by choice, "came out of communities", and is "in tune with their traditions and with the worlds and with the ways of life of the community."

Catholic and (Catholic-) Indigenous Pilgrimages

In addition to drawing from experiences associated with political marches, participants also rely on prior experiences with Catholic, Indigenous, and Catholic-Indigenous belief systems. Here I use the term Catholic-Indigenous to recognize the hybridized religious beliefs that weave together indigenous beliefs with Catholicism (Dobyns 1950; Griffith 1967; 1992; 1995; Jacob 2016; Schermerhorn 2019). In my time

with the Migrant Trail, I have met five individuals who related the walk to their experiences with the Pilgrimage to Magdalena de Kino in Sonora and the Camino de Santiago in Spain. In all these cases, walking was understood to be a spiritual, embodied, and transformative experience.

In both cases a manda or promise is made to the pilgrimage's patron saint or deity. For example, the Pilgrimage to Magdalena de Kino is dedicated to Saint Francis Xavier who was Father Eusebio Kino's patron saint. A *manda* may include a promise, such as walking to horseback riding to the town of Magdalena, offering pilgrims food and/or medical assistance as well shelter. The interactions between those who provide services to the pilgrims and the mobile pilgrims is a spectacular occurrence to observe as people of all generations come to create a festive environment fueled by acts of generosity, self-sacrifice, and kindness between strangers and family members.

The Magdalena Pilgrimage is primarily celebrated primarily by the many Indigenous, Mexican, and Mexican-American communities residing in Arizona, Sonora, and the Tohono O'odham Reservation. What is unique about this particular pilgrimage is that it melds together Indigenous and Catholic beliefs. One example of the cultural exchanges that occur in the Magdalena de Kino pilgrimage is in the way that the O'odham deity, I'itoi (Elder Brother or *Hermano Mayor*) is celebrated alongside and sometimes in place of Saint Francisco Xavier (Griffith 1995; Schermerhorn 2019). Interestingly, *I'itoi* is present on the Migrant Trail by way of Baboquivari for *I'itoi* is believed to live in a cave located on the sacred mountain. I recall that in 2016 Linda advised walkers to listen to Baboquivari. Surrounded by a group of participants, Linda gave an impromptu lecture regarding the history of the borderlands and shared with the

groups a story about her friend who had made the journey from Pose Verde on the Tohono O'odham Reservation to Magdalena de Kino. In this story, Baboquivari taught Linda's friend a song as she walked south. In Linda's telling, we too could learn a song from Baboquivari, but only if we listened.

For some participants there are many interconnections between politics, faith, and civic duties. Reflecting on the parallels between the Migrant Trail, his Christian faith, and civic responsibilities, David noted the following:

> I'm a person who loves to walk and walking for me is very contemplative and meditative and I have tied together the issue of migration with very basic spiritual issues that all three Abrahamic religious traditions believe; that we should welcome the stranger, welcome the person who's hungry, the person who is an immigrant in your midst. So, there is a powerful connection to my faith [...] I really think it is our civic duty to be welcoming.

Demonstrating the dynamic nature of Indigenous Catholicism, is Rosa who identifies as a Catholic and Yoreme woman. In years past, Rosa has been responsible for making the walk's prayer ties and for leading the opening and closing ceremonies. During my interview with Rosa, she noted that upon completing the walk, she would take the prayer ties to a sacred ceremony known as Sun Dance. At the Sun Dance ceremony, Rosa would dance and fast for many days and then offer the prayer ties to the sacred fire made at the end. Traditionally, Sun Dance is a grueling ceremony that presents a physical and spiritual test and is endured for one's family and community. Feeling as though she is nearing the age of retirement, Rosa noted that there were two years when she did not attend Sun Dance, but instead decided to walk 500 miles of El Camino de Santiago in

Spain. For Rosa, both Sun Dance and El Camino held equal merit in the sense that they were both sacred journeys that she made and endured in prayer for her family and community. As Rosa stated:

> "Well, you know, I walk the Camino de Santiago [...] So instead of going to the [Sun Dance] ceremony, I went and walked in Spain a couple of times [...] And I would walk it at night in the mountains, in the fog, even when I couldn't see in front of me. I was never afraid, you know, because I knew Creator was with me. God was with me, so I kept walking."

Before leaving the topic of pilgrimage and its logics, I offer one more observation. The act of walking collectively and being in pilgrimage allows individuals to enter a plea, promise, or bargain with an omnipresent, higher power. On a religious level, this plea is made with a saint or deity. If the promise or *manda* is met by the supplicant, it is understood that the saint or deity will grant them their prayer. If the supplicant fails to uphold their *manda,* the saint may retaliate. However, a secular interpretation of this dynamic brings forth the observation that pilgrimages, marches, or walks allow individuals to enter into a negotiation with an omnipresent power which I would argue include civic-society or the nation-state more abstractly. By using embodied acts of mourning to transform the landscape, walkers turn everyday places into a public forum where they converse with fellow citizens who in democratic societies theoretically and constitutionally have the power to voice their opinions and seek change in the institutions and structures that they believe no longer serve them.

Walking as Embodied and Emplaced Rhetorical Maneuver

In this section I explore the text based, symbolic, embodied, and emplaced rhetoric used by the Migrant Trail by focusing on the interplay between the embodied act of walking, symbolic material culture, and landscape. To do so, I illustrate what participants feel as they walk, what they visually state as a cohesive whole, and explore how their efforts work to shift and influence contemporary deliberations on the topics of belonging, clandestine migration, and border enforcement. By exploring how the walk's rhetoric works on participants and onlooking publics, I tease apart how the meaning of the cultural landscape and key cultural concepts of belonging, such as migrant, citizens, and border, are reworked through these communications and appeals between walkers and a broader civic body. In this exchange participants come together in performance and communicate a counter discourse which sits in contrast to discourses that portray migrants and dangerous and criminal others.

Although the media makes these appeals accessible to anyone, it is clear that the appeals made by the walk primarily target American citizens and individuals with such privileges as voting and crossing borders. This interpretation is derived from two observations. First, the majority of participants are American citizens and feel as though they need to speak to their fellow citizens. Second, the individuals I interviewed expressed the need to motivate communities back home, fellow citizens, and anyone with the power to vote, to take initiative and keep the state accountable.

Crossing Thresholds

Walking is also understood to be a tactic or weapon of the weak (Scott 1990). As such I position the Migrant Trail event as an embodied action and phenomenological experience that emplaces individuals in a given environment and allows them to know a

place through their senses. Here I rely on Low and Zuniga's (2003, 30) synthesis of spatial tactics to understand how the weapons of the weak or *tactics,* such as furtive movements and routes, subvert the weapons of the strong or *strategies*, such as classification, delineation, and division. For Low and Zuniga (2003), de Certeau (1984) concept of "lived space" offers an escape from the omnipresent net of discipline and power defined by Foucault (1995). When seen as a tactic, walking allows pedestrians to act-out, create, and manipulate public space "rather than subject to it." (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003, 32).

One way in which the Migrant Trail uses walking to subvert the power laden delineations of space is by traversing spaces, crossing multiple thresholds, and maintaining a mission and vision that is not impacted by official land designations. For example, the walk remains the same whether it is taking place on a highway, private property, or lands managed by the US Department of Agriculture. On the topic of crossing thresholds, this is achieved on days one through seven as the walk crosses four major thresholds. They include: (1) the US-Mexico border wall, (2) the fence leading into the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge (BANWR), (3) the cattle guard fence leading out of BANWR and onto the highway, and (4) the sidewalk and sign demarcating Tucson City limits. A picture of the US-Mexico border as threshold is pictured in Figure 3.

The crossing of thresholds is a significant symbolic tactic and effective communicating device that accomplishes three things. First, it demonstrates that migrant death sites and commemorative work is not limited by land designation, ownership or management. Second, cutting across these thresholds demonstrates a natural continuity in the land. Lastly, in crossing these thresholds on their own accord, participants fight back

discipline that seeks to render their bodies into “docile bodies"; bodies produced and dominated by the state through spatial strategies and architectural technologies (Foucault 1995). The most eloquent phrasing of the universal quality of walking as experienced on the walk was spoken by Linda, who is a long-time walker, retired history professor, and Chicana activist who began her fight for social justice during the Civil Rights era as she organized with the Chicano Movement and the United Farm Workers. As Linda explained it, “The expression of walking is a universal expression that everyone understands. Walking is an expression given by one community to another. From point a to point b. It is people joined by an idea.”

Figure 3. The US-Mexico Border Wall point of view from Sasabe, Sonora looking into Sasabe, Arizona. (photograph by Magda E. Mankel)

Landscape as Frame

One of the primary resources that the walk relies upon is landscape and the visual imagery that surrounds the Migrant Trail at every turn. Reflecting on the landscape,

David stated that "When we're in BANWR, I feel much more connected to the people who have passed." I interpret this to mean that the trail's route plays an integral role in affecting participants and creating a commemorative atmosphere. The framing function of landscape is seen as the walk is set against a picturesque backdrop that inspires a touristic gaze from each participant and situates the walk as performance on a natural stage. Here I draw from Hirsch (1995) who notes that landscapes can be used as a "framing device" that objectively brings people into view while also accepting said people as producers of meaning. In this way, a relationship is formed between foreground and background and then utilized to "potentially overcome everyday struggles." On the topic of meaning, we transition into speaking about cultural landscapes which are understood to "encompass both the land itself and how individuals perceive the land given their particular values and beliefs." (Ferguson and Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2006).

Appeals that Humanize, Mourn, and Recognize Migrants

The following examples illustrate that many of the symbolic tools used by the Migrant Trail serve to humanize migrants, quantify the number of deaths, and recognize human remains as individuals who once lived. What is unique about the symbols and rhetorical maneuvers I share below is that they create a nexus that allows the Walk to toggle between past, present, and future orientations.

Honoring Life, Wooden Crosses and ¡Presente!

The white wooden crosses carried by the participants are meant to represent someone who was once living and breathing. The crosses (pictured in Figure 4) represent life and transform human remains and data into a person with a name, age, and year of

death. Closely linked to the white crosses is the call and response chant. Starting at the beginning of the line and moving back, each participant of the walk reads the name on their cross. Upon reading the name, the group responds with "¡*presente*!" to indicate that the life and death of the migrant whose name was read is recognized and witnessed.

Using "¡*presente*!" as an organizing concept is something that has been adopted by other immigrant advocacy movements, such as the New Sanctuary Movement and the School of the Americas, that are operating on a transnational and global level. In their study of the memorial rituals practiced by three social movement communities dedicated to immigrant rights, Russo (2019) argues that the crosses and call and response is part of a repertoire adopted by the "white, middle-class cohorts of activists of the Global North." Using the concept of "imperial feelings" (Bacchetta, Maira, and Winant 2019), Russo (2019, 198) found that such memorial rituals allow advocates in the global north to understand "the contradictory ways in which those living in the US national security state experience policies of racism." As such, to show up and be present and to say "¡presente!" is also an embodied and reflexive act of bearing witness and showing in mind, body, and soul (D. Taylor 2020).

Figure 4. White, wooden, crosses and a stick wrapped in prayer ties are key symbols used in the Migrant Trail to represent deceased migrants and recognize the lives they lived. (Photograph by Magda E. Mankel)

Although the use of the term "*presente*" by white allies may raise concern, it is not an example of what Jane Hill (1998) calls "mock Spanish"— a racist and hate

oriented use of a word. Within the context of the Migrant Trail, the use of the Spanish word "*presente*" may be viewed as an example of "crossing" which refers to the usage of a word or tokenization of a word by an "out-group" in a manner that subverts racial divisions by acknowledging and normalizing diversity and exchange in a given (urban) space (Hill 1998; 686). In the case of the Migrant Trail, the term "*presente*" may be viewed as a token that represents diversity. I would also argue that favoring the word Spanish centers the afflicted whose primary language may be Spanish. The exception, however, are Indigenous Latin Americans whose primary language may not be Spanish. This is all to say that the term "*presente*" is not neutral and is laden in the racial and ethnic politics present throughout the Americas.

Something missing from previous analyses on crosses and memorial commemoration is that some individuals developed a kin-like connection to the individual whose cross they carry and whose name they speak. During the walk, I revisited this idea and it struck me that we may be acting as a surrogate family or companions to the migrants we seek to carry from the desert's periphery to the city's core. I recall one participant, Tina, who carried the cross of a 23-year-old woman which happened to be her sister's age. Tina noted that the age alone allowed her to "feel closer" and empathize more deeply. Another participant shared that carrying the cross felt like "walking with someone". The act of walking with crosses and saying "¡Presente!" has also made several participants feel as though they were visiting a "graveyard" or "cemetery". These sentiments indicate that the crosses not only serve as mnemonic devices but also play a role in changing the meanings that participants bestow onto the landscape. The reality is that many of the recovered bodies are not repatriated home

because families cannot cover the costs of transporting the body or the recovered remains are never identified. As such, many families do not reunite. In fact, the systematic disappearance of people in the desert has led No More Deaths and other immigrant rights advocates to reframe their rhetoric and call attention to "los desaparecidos" or the "the disappeared" by using this term. In using this terminology, immigrant advocacy groups not only use the language of family members looking for their missing loved ones, but also connect deaths in the desert to the ways militaristic regimes in the Americas make individuals disappear by employing state violence (Derechos Humanos and No More Deaths 2021). Like the crosses, the prayer ties illustrate the ability of the Migrant Trail to mix and accept different traditions for honoring and mourning the dead. In accepting a variety of multivocal symbols into the walk, a multicultural expression of collective memory is performed and articulated.

Prayer Ties and Offerings for the Dead

Like the wooden crosses, the prayer ties quantify the number of migrant deaths for the given year. But unlike the white wooden crosses which recognize life, the bundles recognize death and the spirit journeys that migrants are believed to be on. While the crosses may represent the lives that once were and the lives that continue in memory, the prayer bundles (pictured in Figure 5) serve as a solemn reminder that migrants now exist on another plane of existence; they are in the afterlife. Prayer ties are also one of the most powerful and complex symbols, material entities, and expressions of collective mourning that resonate with local communities, especially indigenous communities.

Figure 5. Migrant Trail Participants carrying crosses and prayer ties as they walk through the Buenos Aires national Wildlife Refuge in 2019. (Photograph by Magda E. Mankel).

The ability for prayer ties to move audiences and to resonate with local communities is illustrated by Dueck (2016) who shares a story about indigenous individuals who visited the walk during its highway stage. The first visitor was an indigenous man who approached the group early in the morning of the last day. Recounting these events Dueck (2016, 141) wrote:

> "During a stretch of silent walking, he drew near to us and offered food and drink. With an attitude of appreciation, he shared his brown bag-filled lunch [...] In accepting this gift, we received an offering and a compelling message of support. He would go without lunch so that we could find sustenance for our walk."

In Dueck's (2016; 141) story, the second group of visitors included a Tohono O'odham family who entrusted the walkers "with an offering of remembrance, a prayer

stick with one carefully-crafted red tobacco bundle to honor the life of a young man whose remains they had found on their ancestral land." Within O'odham tradition, record keeping through the use of sticks, specifically calendar sticks, is a common practice (Darling and Lewis 2014; Fontana and Schaefer 1989; Schermerhorn 2019). To understand these events and their significance, one must be familiar with the traditions of Indigenous practices and pilgrimage traditions, such as the Magdalena Pilgrimage, present in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands. As I explained in a previous section, pilgrimages in this region emphasize self-sacrifice as well as generosity and hospitality between strangers.

Throughout the walk, the stick covered in prayer ties is treated like a living entity and holy relic. It is never to touch the ground and it is to be carried with respect and love. When people carry the prayer stick they usually do so by holding it by the hilt and raising it above the shoulder, like a torch, or cradled in one's arms like a baby. Like a torch in a dark space, the prayer stick leads the walk onward. It once occurred to me that when the bearer of the prayer stick holds the prayer stick high, they take on the stance of the Statue of Liberty, the Mother of Exiles, and an American symbol of immigration. In making this connection I do not mean to minimize the indigenous identity of the prayer ties. Rather, I highlight the melding of symbols in public space. Additionally, this would not be the first time that the Statue of Liberty is transformed by Immigrant Rights Advocates. As a national mother figure, Lady Liberty is often invoked at immigrant rights rallies and protest events, such as the "Lights for Liberty" movement which began in 2019 in response to jailing of refugee children and separation of families (Chenoweth 2019). More recently, the Great Colossus was connected to clandestine migration in the Many

Voices One Nation exhibit housed at the National Museum of American History in Washington, DC. In this case, an image of the Statue of Liberty appears on a black, button down shirt, once worn and carried by a migrant in the Sonoran Desert (De León 2017).

Sites of Contention

Up until now, I have illustrated ways in which the walk's symbols and overall repertoire resonate with and move audiences who share the group's beliefs and values. However, this is not always the case for there are many times when the walkers are met with symbolic gestures of disapproval and verbal attacks from bystanders. In the next two sections, I illustrate two instances where the participants of the walk experienced negative feedback and disagreement from other publics who sought to express their disagreement. In both cases, public lands (public commons) are the setting and entitlement to said land and its use plays an important role in the claims made by the counter-protesters. In the first example, I discuss the destruction of a roadside shrine by an unknown assailant in 2019. In the second example, I share how a self-proclaimed Christian woman chose to berate the group with white supremacist vitriol and a short sit-in during the group's closing ceremony in 2018.

Red Dots and Shrines

On mile marker 38 on Highway 86 to Ajo, there sits a cross planted by Alvaro Enciso as part of a larger project he has titled *Donde Mueren los Sueños* (Where Dreams Die). As a visual artist, humanitarian aid volunteer, and retired Anthropologist, Alvaro was moved to make crosses to mark the geospatial locations of migrant death sites. The

inspiration for the cross planting came from Human Border's migrant death mapping project which represents each death site with a red dot on a map (Humane Borders 2021). In explaining the symbolism behind his crosses, Alvaro noted that "when you're alive you're standing up [vertically] and when you're dead you're laying down [horizontally]." So, unlike the white crosses which represent life and the prayer ties which represent the dead, Alvaro's crosses seem to synthesize them both and join them at the center with a red dot. However, the red dot also symbolizes a nexus where the past, present, and future meet. As I see it, the red dot symbolizes a space where the dead, the living, and future people or future orientated prayers are gathered. So far, Alvaro has planted over three hundred crosses in Pima County where the records for such sites exist thanks in part to the efforts of the county's Coroner's office and Human Borders who have used geographic information systems to record such sites.

In 2019, the walk made its usual stop at the shrine. This time, the stop was different because the cross and shrine had been uprooted and vandalized. Pieces of the old cross lay broken near the brush. This was not the first time I had seen an uprooted cross. However, it occurred to me that these shrines are sites of contention. By planting or uprooting a cross, one respectively expresses compassion or disdain towards the individual it represents. The action of planting or uprooting can also be read as a matter of territory and meaning making within the cultural landscape. On the one hand, the planting of a cross is a symbolic affirmation that migrants (whether dead or not) belong on this land and as such should be treated with human dignity and compassion. To plant and visit a cross is an act of recognition that inserts the person and their journey into collective memory. On the other hand, uprooting and vandalizing a cross makes the

statement that migrants do not belong and should not be recognized publicly or be seen on the landscape. To remove a cross, is an act of erasure.

Although Alvaro bestows his own meaning onto his crosses, this practice he started has resonated with other border dwellers. Alvaro's practice of making and planting crosses also makes sense in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands because there is a long tradition of "performative commemorations" and making "spontaneous shrines" (Griffith 1992; 1995; Santino 2009; Van Ham 2011). In his analysis of performative commemorations and the rhetoric of the Border Justice Movement, Van Ham (2011, 128) argues that such grassroots commemorations carry political connotations that simultaneously involve the public and memorialize the dead. Carried out at shrines or elsewhere, such commemorations work to "re-narrate endings" and replace negative portrayals of migrants and death with an image of solidarity and compassion that welcomes rather than rejects the newcomer or stranger (Calafell and Delgado 2004; Calafell 2007; Gencarella 2009; Gencarella and Pezzullo 2010; Pezzullo 2001). As such, the message is one of compassion and community that extends beyond the nation-state. In respecting the crosses that Alvaro emplaces, the walk also demonstrates a sense of familiarity and unity with fellow immigrant and border justice activists in southern Arizona. Moreover, the shrine-like crosses illustrate that there are many groups and individuals working to remember these events and working to heal those who grieve. It is one of many cogs in the heritage making machine.

Recently, a group of Catholic nuns of the Benedictine order coordinated by Sister Janet have also adopted the cross-planting project in Maricopa County located in southeastern Arizona. Sister Janet, who is also a long-time participant of the Migrant

Trail, is headquartered in Douglas, Arizona and works with immigrant groups in Agra Prieta, Sonora. When I visited Sister Janet in Douglas for a cross planting ceremony in 2019, I was struck by the similarities and differences between Alvaro's cross planting style and the Migrant Trail. Like Alvaro's crosses, the group of cross planters used a wooden cross that was painted with a red dot at the center. But unlike Alvaro's process which often includes a quiet hike and a moment of silence for the deceased, the cross-planting ceremony in Maricopa County was attended by more people, songs are sung, and prayers were offered. When I attended, a Yaqui medicine man led the group in the ceremony and Franciscan Friar's led the group in song. Following the ceremony, we had a small picnic of pastries and iced tea. It was similar to visiting a gravestone on Día de los Muertos and having a meal with the deceased. This is all to say that new mourning practices and knowledge is being transmitted and practiced by people in other counties and, perhaps, other contexts facing similar challenges.

Breaking Circles

Excerpt from my 2018 field notes regarding the music played by Rosa and Shannon at the closing ceremony and final goodbye. My field notes read: "Something between a lullaby and a wail. Calm and soothing yet sad and full of longing for that which is lost and disappeared. The sound of mourning on the Migrant Trail will forever stay with me."

In 2018, participants of the Walk stood in a circle awaiting Rosa's blessing and closing ceremony. It is customary to close the sacred and communal space that the walk opens up on the first day with a closing ritual on the seventh day. Most years, the ceremony is an opportunity to stand on an elevated hill and look out onto the space we

traversed over the last few days. More importantly, it is an opportunity to say goodbye to the graves we visited, the ancestors we walked with, the desert's flora and fauna, and Baboquivari. On this year, the sacred circle and ceremony was broken by a white woman who appeared to be in her 40s. Walking up to the group who was mid ceremony, she began to berate the group. She noted that it was too early to be awake and that the group had woken her up from her sleep. (We started the ceremony at seven in the morning which is well after sun-up.). She was especially offended and distraught by the fact that we would do this on a Sunday, a holy day. Ironically, she could not grasp that she herself had violated a sacred space. Her actions were just as severe as someone barging into a Catholic Church during a vigil. Shaking with anger, the woman voiced her deep disapproval of the participants and our actions. When an organizer calmly explained to her what it was that we were doing, the woman critiqued our methods. She disapproved of our use of crosses and stated that the only way to help immigrants was to "send them back to their country" or take ourselves to their countries and fix their problems because "capitalism was king." She explained her case in greater detail and had many other points to make, but I was unable to record everything she said.

The majority of those forming the circle, stood their ground and held hands in solidarity. Two of the organizers tried to explain the situation to the woman and kindly asked her to leave repeatedly. I was furious and immobilized by the level of hate I felt radiate from the onlooker. It felt incredibly uncomfortable. Comforted by the person to my left, I cried silently and stood my ground. The drumming and singing continued and worked to counter the woman's voice. A dissonance erupted. After ten minutes or so, the woman quieted down and left the circle in silence.

When the counter-protesting left the circle, Rosa punctuated the woman's exit with one last drumbeat. I offer this account to illustrate that the narrative communicated by the Migrant Trail is not always accepted and that the dialogues it produces are not always cordial. Moreover, it illustrates that the Migrant Trail's message is not universally accepted in the border lands and that even the sincerest attempts at healing may result in conflict or disagreement. Reflecting on the events at a later time, I came to realize that communities may be closed peacefully and consensually by its members or they may be terrorized into non-existence by outsiders. On this day, the former succeeded.

Re-Imagined Endings

> A vital part of bearing witness is owning and accepting and understanding your relationships to that injustice. And this might mean that we are part of the group that is doing the oppressing. It usually means we come from outside the community where the injustice is occurring. It often means we're benefiting, either directly or indirectly, from the injustice. Bearing witness means that you own, and you accept all of those messy pieces and you're standing as witness to the injustice, to the need for change. And you're committing yourself to the affected communities. (K. Rodriguez 2015).

Punctuated by a private and public closing ceremony, the final day of the Migrant Trail honors the rite of passage embarked on by its participants while also remaining connected to a public audience. On day seven, the walk comes to a close at Kennedy Park located on the southwest side of Tucson, Arizona. There are two striking points to take awayfrom the public ending at the city park. First, the walk poses an alternative and

imagined ending for migrant journeys by welcoming the walkers. Second, it serves as a public call of action that seeks to drive home the notion that transformative change depends on individuals to continue to bear witness to injustices on the border even after the walk comes to a close.

Entering the park from the Ajo Highway, the group is greeted by music, family, friends, and onlookers who watch as the walk's participants file into a grassy area near a ramada and children's play set. Near the ramada women from the Coalition of Human Rights usually set up a table and serve a meal of beef barbacoa, rice, squash, salsa, tortillas, and refreshing drinks that are all typically served at celebratory events, such as birthday parties and weddings. Walking silently, the participants walk towards a shady tree and set their crosses down at the tree's base. Participants then sit down and wait for the press conference to begin. Throughout the press conference, long-time and new participants of the walk are invited to describe their journey and share their impetus for walking in solidarity with migrants and their families. This second ending takes place in the public eye and it feels more like a formality as the sacred circle has been closed and what remains of the walk is a public facing ending that reports a finished journey. It is a stark contrast to the heartbreaking goodbye one feels at the end of Rosa's closing ceremony previously described. One also feels the ties that once held the group together are broken down further as the group gains entry back into the everyday and some individuals leave the park in a hurry because they have a plane to catch or a ride to catch. Despite each walker's fatigue and the breakdown of the group, the event maintains a solemn and celebratory tone that continues to respect the dead, the families of the deceased, and the group's accomplishment.

Foot Washing Ceremony

One important part of the final press conference is the foot washing ceremony where a Catholic priest washes the feet of twelve walkers following the press conference's opening remarks. The foot washing ceremony is a reference to a biblical parable (John 13:1) where Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. Reflecting on the last day of the walk, Catalina stated:

> "I believe that I bring them home. I finish what they started. For example, this cross that I carry represents a young woman, 33 years old. And I think that when Sunday comes, when the walk is over, it will be like I helped her exit the desert. As if her spirit was liberated."

According to the Catholic priest, the foot washing symbolizes an act of hospitality, compassion, and humility towards those who have chosen to speak a different narrative and alternative discourse that expresses new ways of being in a world where national boundaries cause harm to some and offer an incomplete representation of the transnational lives, values, and rights some communities seek to uphold. In washing the feet of the walkers, the priest thanks them for their journey and wishes them luck as they continue to share their experiences with others in their communities back home. This lesson also juxtaposes knowledge and rules of comportment outlined by US legislation which favors a punitive system that criminalizes and punishes clandestine migrants and citizens who choose to aid them. By washing their feet, the priest makes a statement of acceptance, good faith, and gratitude towards allies who have chosen to walk with those afflicted by violent state policies. Lastly, this final scene in a seven-day long performance allows the walk's participants to call on any engaged audience member to

act with the same compassion and humility they themselves embodied and demonstrated throughout the entirety of the walk. It is a call for "civil initiative" as coined by the Sanctuary Movement during the Central America Crisis experienced in the 1980s (Fife et al. 2011). It is a final reminder that participants of the walk embarked on a perspective-jarring journey intended to shift their perspectives and help them bear witness to an ongoing phenomenon. In speaking on the topic of "bearing witness" Kathryn Rodriguez (2015) notes that:

> "the act of bearing witness truly is a life changing one. You know things that are wonderfully and terribly impossible to un-know. You're standing somewhere sacred. And now you have to do something about it because bearing witness carries the responsibility of doing something with this new knowledge."

By coming into city limits, the walkers finish what the migrants could not do. In carrying their crosses, the participants bring their stories from the periphery to the center; from being forgotten to being remembered. As such the last critical interruption that the Migrant Trail offers is an ending to a long journey where migrants arrive at their destinations, are treated hospitably, and are reunited with their families. In taking this perspective, the walk succeeds in offering an alternative narrative of clandestine migration which does not situate migrants as criminals but instead recognizes them as disadvantaged and autonomous individuals navigating a global migration route as they pursue their human freedoms and rights. Although the walk is not without conflict, it is a rather successful event that has managed to meld together cultural claims to place,

regional and national identities, and the language of a US democratic society that constitutionally bestows the right to public protest and speak freely.

Conclusion

Statement by Margo Cowan, longtime participant of the Migrant Trail, immigrant advocate, and Defense Attorney for Pima Country in a documentary titled *Deserted* (Motlagh 2020):

> "At this moment when the issue is so polarized, these community-based organizations are the check and balance that we need to have in a democracy. That tells the truth as we see it through the eyes of the people that are in the desert. The people fleeing persecution. All the people that are coming and continue to come and all the contributions non-citizens make to make our country a better place [...] It is incredible magic."

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that when seeking to communicate with public audiences, and more specifically an American public, the Migrant Trail relies on a complex and diverse repertoire of cultural resources that recognize migrants and contemporary clandestine migration as a phenomenon that deserves to be recognized on the landscape and by the public sphere. Mobilizing locally particular and (tangible and intangible) heritage practices, immigrant advocates are capable of amplifying clandestine migration in a manner that is representative and legitimizing, but not appropriation. I have also demonstrated that participants of the walk are redefining citizenship and their relationship to non-citizens by setting an example and showcasing values of hospitality and compassion. As global migration patterns continue to shift and, in some regions of the world, escalate, there is a growing need to amplify clandestine journeys of migration

in a matter that does not exploit trauma or appropriate narratives. In the following chapter, I use Anzaldúa's concept of Nepantla and Coyolxauhqui imperative to illustrate how it is that a borderlands perspective may help other regions experiencing clandestine migration and conflict, work through the process of gathering the pieces and building consciousness in a matter that also works to heal and offer transformative change.

As Margo Cowan states in the quote above, it is up to community-based organizations and grassroots movements, especially those operating in the borderlands, to take responsibility and work to recognize, legitimize, and elevate the voices of clandestine migrants. To be clear, bearing witness and amplifying the migrant experience through recognition is not to be interpreted as an act of appropriation of misrepresentation. Rather, it is to be interpreted as an act of collective action rooted in collective efforts to *remember* and emplace a recent past that violent national policies and state technologies seek to *forget* and erase in states of exception. To remember is to hold the state accountable and to make it possible to record, quantify, quality, and seek justice at a later point in time. Lastly, it is a reminder that the citizens or inhabitants of unjust systems are responsible for reflecting on their place within systems of oppression. For whenever borders are concerned the concept of citizenship, belonging, and the divisions between us and them is mirrored back and subjected to deliberation.

CHAPTER THREE

In Search of New Aesthetics: Coyolxauhqui, Nepantleras, and the Production of Heritage as it Pertains to Clandestine Migration in the US-Mexico Borderlands

Journey to Nepantla and the Coyolxauhqui State through Conocimiento

Chaotic disruptions, violence, and death catapult us into the Coyolxauhqui state of dissociation and fragmentation that characterizes our times. Our collective shadow- made up of the destructive aspects, psychic wounds, and splits in our own culture, are aroused, and we are forced to confront it. In trying to make sense of what is happening, some of us come into deep awareness (conocimiento). Of political and spiritual situations and the unconscious mechanisms that abet hate, intolerance, and discord. I name this searching, inquiring, and healing consciousness conocimiento. (Anzaldúa 2015, 17–19).

In *Light in the Dark/Linda En Lo Oscuro*— Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality, Gloria E. Anzaldúa revisits and expands the theories of culture, the Chicana/o/x experience, and the US-Mexico borderlands she originally theorized in the now seminal *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. In *Light in the Dark* Anzaldúa uses Coyolxauhqui's (Ko-yol-sha-UH-kee) myth as a grounding metaphor, framework, and aesthetic to support and expand the theories first expressed in Borderlands/La Frontera. In Aztec mythology, Coyolxauhqui is the lunar goddess and eldest daughter of Coatlicue (Kwat-Lee-kway), the serpent skirted creator, destroyer, and goddess of earth. In the myth that Anzaldúa references and uses as a grounding framework, Coyolxauhqui and her siblings conspire to kill their mother upon learning that Coatlicue is pregnant with Huitzilopochtli (Wee-tsee-loh-pohch-tlee), the god of war. Sensing the plot, Huitzilopochtli rose from Coatlicue's womb armed for battle and decapitated

Coyolxauhqui. Huitzilopochtli then flung Coyolxauhqui's head into the sky and threw her body down the sacred mountain of Coatepec where it tumbled down and broke into a thousand pieces. Some say that Coyolxauhqui's head became the moon while her rebellious siblings became the stars in the sky. In Anzaldúa's (2015: 50) work, "Coyolxauhqui represents the psychic and creative process of tearing apart and pulling together (deconstructing/constructing)." According to (Keating 2015, xxi), Coyolxauhqui is the light in the dark and she represents "a complex holism— both the acknowledgement of painful fragmentation and the promise of transformative healing."

In some ways, *Light in the Dark* moves with and goes beyond what Anzaldúa originally termed the mestiza consciousness— a post-colonial, feminist, and borderlands centered iteration of a spatially informed Chicana identity and way of being that lives with contradiction, ambivalence, and the liminal. Derived from her own mestiza consciousness, spiritual activism, and life-long pursuit of social change, Light in the Dark provides insights to cultural and social shifts that expand Anzaldúa's intense meditations and investigations into the metaphysical, ways of knowing (epistemology), and ways of being (ontology) (Keating xxix-xxx). From this jumping point, Anzaldúa produces a complex and transformational ontology, epistemology, and aesthetics driven towards a desire to heal personal and collective wounds through creative processes and what she terms conocimiento. The process of healing a fractured whole goes as follows. One starts from a point of conflict, sense of disorder, and/or chaos Individuals are cast off into the Coyolxauhqui state and land in Nepantla where they exist in an in-between or liminal milieu. Here, the individual may find their way back through conocimiento— a self-driven rite of passage— that is both an inward and outward journey that leads to

transformation. For Anzaldúa (2015, 121), conocimiento propels us to other spaces or stations characterized by a desire to (re)order ongoing circumstances, to produce another story of self, to go out into the world and test this reconfiguration, and to reach a transformative resolve as one shifts into a new reality and a new self. In between each transitional stage and shift, the in-betweenness of Nepantla is present.

In reading Anzaldúa's work, the overlap with van Gennep (van Gennep 1960) and Turner (Turner 1969; 1979) is unmistakable for the theory of Nepantla is situated on equal footing with these Anthropological predecessors. For example, they all explore collective crises, contemplate liminality, and explore the embodied sacredness of rites of passage as well as the ritual life of the public sphere. But unlike these earlier works, Anzaldúa begins in the liminal position of Mestiza consciousness and works to characterize the transformative qualities of ritual as a mediation between one's inner and outer worlds. Moreover, Anzaldúa reframes liminality through a Mexican indigenous spirituality that bridges mind, nature, and spirit. As Anzaldúa (2015, 127) states,

> "Nepantla is the site of transformation, the place where different perspectives come into conflict and where you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, your education, and your different cultures. Nepantla is the zone between changes where you struggle to find equilibrium between the outer expression of changer and your inner relationship to it."

I would also argue that Anzaldúa centers and begins in a liminal position or third space so as to disrupt and disobey the "continuation of colonial situations" and epistemes that base existence and identity on the boundaries of territory, the nation-state, and

empire (Hernandez 2018). Reflecting on the work of border artists, Anzaldúa (2015, 49) notes that they have the capacity to change the point of reference/*cambiar el punto de referencia* by creating a culture mix, disrupting neat separations, and using the border as "the locus of resistance" where they may tear apart and rebuild. In centering the liminal, Anzaldúa de-centers national identity and situates her theory of conocimiento as not only a personal endeavor, but also as a public or collective enterprise that allows individuals and their communities to form intersectional solidarities for transformative change in a world where coloniality (colonial situations despite the absence of formal colonial administrations) persists and is exposed along national boundaries and other frontiers of conflict (Quijano 2000; 2007; Hernández 2018).

One important outcome derived from the centering of liminality or Nepantla is that it situates belonging and community making as something that may be informed by the nation-state but is ultimately exists beyond it and is not completely dependent on it. Rather, there exists an antagonistic dialectic in the production of belonging and the self. Finally, this reorientation gives those on the periphery and the subjects of coloniality a chance to re-orient belonging and dismantle oppressive delineations of land and identity that mis-align with their ancestral and lived experiences.

Although border militarization and clandestine migration is not a topic Anzaldúa explores, it is a contemporary social issue that has caused chaotic disruption and flung many into Nepantla and the Coyolxauhqui state. Dismembered yet alive, there is much to piece back together into new configurations. In centering disruption and the wounds of dismemberment I also center the other half of this process, the healing, the putting back together, the light in the dark. To center the light in the dark, I turn to the work of

Nepantleras; threshold people who have survived Nepantla (the liminal) and have created projects that serve as mediators between the social realities and implications of clandestine migration and the public sphere. Nepantleras also include those individuals and communities whose work centers the borderlands, the process of clandestine migration, and the voices and or present/ absences of migrants themselves. Throughout this chapter I more generally use the term Nepantlera/o as an analytic and analytical term that recognizes activists, allies, advocates, and scholars who are engaging in creative and imaginative work that centers migrant experiences and clandestine migration as a social process and global phenomenon with socio-cultural implications for individuals in the US and the global north more broadly. Here in the borderlands, we may be shattered and dismembered, but we are not broken or disadvantaged. On the contrary we are resilient, hopeful, and exhausted by the constant work of healing, constantly putting things back together again, and keeping hold of the strings that always already connect us to our ancestors and to future generations.

If the structural violence that exists along the US-Mexico has shrouded the borderlands in an aesthetic of darkness, death, and deviled highways, then let us also acknowledge that in the sky sits the moon and that moon beams light the earth. What remains to be explored in greater detail are the processes by which individuals and communities are gathering and reconfiguring the shattered pieces. Let us also acknowledge that there are communities, many of whom are communities of color, that are standing in confrontation to institutions that choose violence rather than peace or reconciliation. As such, this is not a narrative about heritage at risk or the hopelessness of

darkness. Rather, this is a reflection about life after death, of new heritage, and of healing work that adds new strata of meaning and significance to an existing cultural landscape.

Heritage that Heals/Building Relationships with the Past through Conocimiento

> "The Coyolxauhqui imperative is to heal and achieve integration. When fragmentations occur, you fall apart and feel as though you've been expelled from paradise. Coyolxauhqui is my symbol for the necessary process of dismemberment and fragmentation, of seeing that self or the situations you're embroiled in differently. Coyolxauhqui is also my symbol for reconstruction and reframing, one that allows for putting the pieces together in a new way. The Coyolxauhqui imperative is an ongoing process of making and unmaking. There is never any resolution, just the process of healing."

In relation to the study of cultural heritage, Anzaldúa's theories of conocimiento, Nepantla, and the Coyolxauhqui imperative— the creative process of decorticating and constructing— can be used to further understand heritage making process and the mobilization of cultural heritage by grassroots communities. These communities include those making claims, and demanding rights (Lafrenz Samuels 2019), those addressing issues of social justice as they toggle between global and local particularities seeking "therapeutic uplift" (Meskell and Scheermeyer 2008), recognition in public spaces (Hall 2001; Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003; Harrison 2010) and demanding control over their narratives after experiencing disasters and disruptions. By emphasizing the role of local and grassroots communities, I also wish to emphasize the notion that heritage is made

and mobilized by the everyday person and that it exists in vernacular discourses that disagree with, contrast, and/or support authorized heritage discourses (Smith 2006). As many have noted, heritage is an important resource that many communities utilize and wish to know further. As such, connecting heritage making and mobilization to liminality and Nepantla, I intend to shed light on the myriad ways in which heritage is consumed by publics who seek to know the (ancient, recent, and contemporary) past in order to better situate themselves in the present and imagine new possibilities for the future (Buchli, Lucas, and Cox 2001; Huyssen 2003; Mortensen and Hollowell 2009; Harrison and Schofield 2010). Acknowledging that heritage is produced by everyday people, Lafrenz Samuels (2019, 123) notes that:

> "heritage exists in everyday contexts as people— not just experts— talk about heritage, think about it, and act on it, especially in public contexts [...]. Though the idea of heritage may have originated in expert practice, it is now a phenomenon of cultural production with widespread circulation through local, national, and transnational public spheres."

Moreover, the underlying relationship between destruction and construction, death and birth, that the Coyolxauhqui imperative centers is also echoed by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1996, 249) reference to the "eleventh hour" and (Hafstein 2012, 501) who observes that although we often race the angel of history, we often lose and come to find that "destruction and preservation are surly two sides of the same coin." As such, I align my work and this chapter's framing of heritage through the Coyolxauhqui imperative to sit in a complimentary position to heritage scholars seeking to document and investigate the role that heritage plays in producing post-disaster identities by local communities. As

Rico (2014:157-161) notes, heritage scholars must contemplate how heritage "transcends a narrative of victimhood" when communities mobilize it to "construct and enhance resilience" and process "traumatic moments".

In the Arizona and Sonora borderlands, there is certainly a need to document heritage performances and contemplate the healing work that heritage is capable of accomplishing. The advocacy work for immigrant rights present in southern Arizona attests to the ways in which local communities are adapting to change and also mobilizing a change that is oriented towards a humanistic, compassionate, and hospitable relationship that recognizes clandestine migrants as individuals worthy of human dignity and human rights (Van Ham 2011; Russo 2014; Arellano 2017). The selection, interpretation, and consumption of migrant belongings (artifacts) discarded in the Sonoran Desert by migrants, stories about migrants, and other vestiges of unauthorized or clandestine migration may also be understood as new heritage— tangibles and intangible heritage associated with a recent past and contemporary efforts to adapt to disasters through resilient efforts that meld extant traditions with recent events. Although there exists many avenues for exploring the making and mobilization of heritage associated with clandestine migration, the following sections focuses on the ways in which clandestine migration has come to be represented in galleries and museums across the US that have chosen to represent clandestine migration through artistic, photographic, and archaeological representations.

As clearly as ever, heritage is a rapidly paced phenomenon that is partially driven by a desire to adapt to and to mobilize change (Graham and Howard 2008; Huyssen 2003; Smith 2006; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996). However, by reframing this process

as a process of conocimiento and the Coyolxauhqui imperative, I seek to shed light on the fact that when heritage is shared and situated in spaces where it may wield its rhetorical power, such heritage allows individuals to suspend themselves and their deliberations in Nepantla. Moreover, it characterizes the deliberative process as not only a byproduct of democratic principles, but also as a spiritual activism or journey of conocimiento.

Putting Coyolxauhqui Together/Tracing the Multisite Production of Heritage through Ethnoheritage and Conocimiento in Museum Spaces

> "Este saber, this knowledge, urges you to cast una ofrenda of images and words across the page como granos de maiz, like kernels of corn. By redeeming your most painful experiences, you transform them into something valuable, algo para 'compartir' or share with others so they, too, may be empowered. You stop in the middle of the field and, under your breath, ask the spirits- animals, plants, y tus muertos- to help you string together a bridge of words. What follows is your attempt to give back to nature, los espíritus, and others a gift wrested from the events in your life, a bridge home to the self." (Anzaldúa 2015: 117-118)

Like Anzaldúa's Coyolxauhqui imperative and the process of being in Nepantla and pursuing conocimiento, heritage is an ongoing process of cultural and social change, making and unmaking, remembering, forgetting, and assembling the selected pieces into a whole that will be interpreted and ascribed with new value and significance by those living in the present. In the following examples, I focus on the creative projects and outcomes of Nepantleras (Nepantleros, Nepantler@s, Nepantlerxs). Here the term nepantlera is used as an analytical category that I use to describe creatives and scholars

who I believe exemplify the Coyolxauhqui imperative and who have produced works capable of casting any willing audience into Nepantla— a ritual-like and liminal journey that begets personal transformations and ripples out into collective and transformative change.

In reflecting on a museum experience, Anzaldúa (2015; 61) notes that museums spaces are capable of casting us into Nepantla with the force of a remolino (whirlpool) that disorients and triggers an identity crisis whereby we, through conocimiento, shift the narratives and stories that we tell ourselves about ourselves. In the following examples I demonstrate how exhibits on clandestine migration engage audiences through strategically crafted symbolism and visual rhetoric that confronts audiences. I illustrate how they fragment the onlooker and push them into Nepantla and conocimiento where they may reflect, face discomfort, and question their sense of self in relation to the "other". Lastly, I situate the exhibition of each example as both a public forum and a liminal space or Nepantla. Here, a public forum as materialized in museum spaces and galleries is defined as an institution that serves the public through the democratization of culture, the creation of equal cultural opportunity, the confrontation of difficult social issues, and the facilitation of public judgment (Cameron 1971; Dewey 1943; Hein 2004). Similar, but distinct from the forum, Nepantla is understood as "a zone of possibility" where "you are exposed, open to other perspectives, more readily available to access knowledge derived from inner feelings, imagination states, and outer events, and to 'see through them' with a mindful, holistic awareness" (Anzaldúa 2015; 122). In the following sections, I apply the framework of Coyolxauhqui and Nepantla to cultural heritage as it is mobilized and made to express the contemporary issue of clandestine

migration and shifting global migration patterns that challenge concepts of belonging rooted in territoriality and nationhood.

Ethnographer in Nepantla

By gathering these examples, I illustrate that heritage making and mobilization is not only a multi-sited process but also one dependent on mediated interactions between publics, Nepantleras, and knowledge keepers who share, gather, and display experiences on a particular topic. The pieces I gather and analyze include: (1) *State of Exception* as exhibited at the Parson's School of Design in New York, New York in 2017, (2) *The Beast (The Pinball Machine)* by the artist Beatriz Cortez, (3) The Migrant Quilt Project and the quilts displayed on their website, and (4) the Migrant Trail as both public protest event and a physical trail. Although I only use these four examples, there are many other groups that are attempting to put the pieces together. There are artists, museum curators, scholars, and writers working in a variety of genres that are attempting to put the pieces together; to come to terms with the disruption, but also to engage in transformative change that is oriented towards justice and a more equitable future that may exist within, in between, and outside the nation-state. I have also consciously avoided focusing on projects that are militant, xenophobic, and rooted in rhetorics of hate (Sundberg and Kaserman 2007; Sundberg 2008; L. R. Chavez 2009). The analysis of each piece is different for they are each located in different spaces, are produced by different individuals, and display different objects and subjects. However, what they have in common is an interest in displaying clandestine migration to public onlookers in public institutions with educational missions. Moreover, they all share a "rhetorical edge"

geared towards giving clandestine a human face, raising awareness, and offering humanistic representations of migrants (Carrithers 2005; 2009).

In gathering these examples, I was pushed to reflect on the methods used to conduct ethnographies of heritage or "ethnoheritage" (Lafrenz Samuels 2010). I came to the realization that ethnoheritage work also requires the ethnographer to venture into Nepantla and to dwell in the non-places and liminal spaces that exist between sites. Based on this experience, I propose that this gathering of examples be seen as not only an ethnography of a heritage process, but also as an example of the Coyolxauhqui imperative at work. I also propose that ethnographers of heritage be situated as Nepantleras— threshold people that are trained and capable of occupying the in-between space and to assemble holistic images out of broken pieces and fragments guided by reflexivity, firsthand encounters, and field notes that reflect our phenomenological experiences as participant observers. Briefly speaking, ethnoheritage is understood to take place across multiple sites and utilize ethnographic methods such as thick description, reflexivity, and participant observation. Grounded in the sensibilities of North American anthropology, ethnoheritage is also situated within an interpretive approach to culture which is situated firmly in the understanding that culture is a public phenomenon (Geertz 1973). To this I add and stress that heritage scholars who adopt an ethnoheritage approach would also be wise to understand the spaces in between the multiple sites. To trace the trajectory of heritage, one must venture into the none-places, the in-between spaces, and the other sites where heritage is said to reside. To be a Nepantlera is to not only be liminal but also to connect oppositions. It requires a dual consciousness; the ability to toggle between places while also nesting comfortably within

the in-between spaces. To occupy the Coyolxauhqui state and practice the Coyolxauhqui imperative, one must be ready to reflect and make sense of one's own fragmentation and the fragmentations we see in the world. In short, ethnographers and creatives have the potential to embark on a journey of conocimiento and to put Coyolxauhqui together through creative actions, such as writing, making art, and simply expressing the process of tearing apart and then gathering what was torn apart.

Gateways to Nepantla: Museums, Temples, Forums

Increasingly so, museum scholars argue that museums are “sites of persuasion” (Dubin 2011, 998) that engage in “social work” (Silverman 2010), work towards social equality (Sandell 2002; Sandell and Nightingale 2012), and encourage their audiences to engage in dialogues, conversation and “identity work” (Rounds 2006) on an individual and collective level (G. Anderson 2012; Dickinson, Blair, and Ott 2010; MacDonald 2012; McLean 1999; Silverman 2010). The movement towards socially conscious museums is grounded in a belief that museums help create more just, equitable, and fair societies through their capacity to shape and reflect social and political relations. In offering socio-political reflections and representations of marginalized experiences, museums facilitate public debates and deliberation by engaging audiences and visitors in dialogues and conversations. As such, museums have the capacity to help members of the public work through difficult histories or contemporary issues. In this manner, museums may play a role in “conflict resolution” and public judgement within deliberative democracies, such as the US It is by raising consciousness and helping audiences “work through” and, potentially, reach some sort of “resolution” that museums may help the public resolve contemporary inequalities with historical roots (Little and Shackel 2014).

In some ways "conscious raising" is synonymous to education and may be promoted through educational programs and public outreach. The "working through" and "resolution" stages of conflict resolution ring similar to the "identity work" and "identity exploration" that individuals experience upon visiting museums. According to Rounds (2006), museum visitors perform "identity work" when they apply their own sense of order to exhibits in order to confirm, construct, maintain, or adapt their existing identity. On the other hand, museums also allow individuals to partake in "identity exploration". It is through identity work that individuals prepare for the future by trying on alternative ideas and other ways of being while in a safe space (Rounds 2006). In this way, museums are spaces of stability and change. Echoing these ideas, Anzaldúa's reflections on museum spaces and offers further insights into the identity work that individuals do in museums through conocimiento. For Anzaldúa's (2015, 49-57) museums are capable of creating a kind of borderlands, an in-between space that disorients and jars the audience into a journey of conocimiento. And if daring enough, the museum spaces help begin to break down and build up the individual's notion of self.

Thinking of the museum as a socially conscious institution that contributes to public wellbeing and the health of society opens up opportunities for linking museum resources to the processes that mobilize and make cultural heritage. The notion of socially conscious museums that facilitate public dialogues is nothing new and is reflected in the work of early advocates of the modern museum, such as John Dewey and Duncan F. Cameron. Reflecting on John Dewey's work with museums, Hein (2004) notes that Dewey positioned the museum within the school where it was to serve an educational purpose and allow individuals to "reflect back on life" (Hein 2004, 420). On

the other hand, Cameron argues that museums should be less like “temples”— structures that enshrine the heritage of the bourgeois culture while excluding popular or folk culture— and more like “forums”— institutions that promote equal cultural opportunity and allow for “confrontation, experimentation, and debate” (Cameron 1971, 55). Unlike the temple, the forum is rooted in social responsibility and makes room for more diverse narratives and perspectives which challenge the status quo and allow for public judgment to occur. Guided by Nepantla and conocimiento and reflecting on the characteristics of museums as forums and temples, I would argue that it is not an either/or situation. Rather, it is possible for the sacredness of temples and the ethos, pathos, and logos of forums to co-exist in museum spaces if one accepts that they are to be treated as liminal zones capable of casting individuals into deliberation, reflection, and the Coyolxauhqui state of dissociation and fragmentation necessary to reach transformative change. In other words, it is possible to both practice spiritual activism and deliberation within museum spaces.

State of Exception/ Estado de Excepción, Migrant Hands, Earthen Floors, Glass Enclosures and Civic Imaginaries

Through the efforts of the Undocumented Migration Project, thousands of artifacts associated with clandestine migration in southern Arizona have been collected by field school students and researchers under the direction of Dr. Jason P. De León. Between February and April 2017, The Parsons School of Design in New York City exhibited the *State of Exception/ Estado de Excepción* (SOE) in the Sheila C. Johnson Design Center (SJDC). Made possible by the efforts of Radhhika Subramaniam (Director), Amanda Krugliak (Curator), Joseph Barnes (Artist), and Jason De León (Anthropologist), SOE displays photographs, audio, video clips and the discarded items

turned archaeological artifacts that migrants left behind in the Sonoran Desert of southern Arizona. SOE is a thoughtful compilation of materials and texts whose very gathering places them in the public consciousness and legitimizes the narratives of border-crossing they represent. Because SOE was exhibited at the Sheila Johnson Design Center and because its title is a reference to Giorgio Agamben's theories on states of exception as expressed in *Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998), one can discern that this exhibit frames the consequences of border enforcement policies and the materiality of border-crossing as byproducts of structural violence. The following reflects my analysis which stems in part from my own visit to the SJDC exhibit in 2017 as well as my experience as an Undocumented Migration Project Field School student in 2012.

Straddling the line between archaeology and documentary art that uses photography and other mediums to produce a social commentary, SOE exhibits clandestine migration by displaying the materialities of border-crossing as archaeological artifacts, photographs taken by migrants on disposable film cameras, documentary photography by Michael Wells, and projected video clips from the field. The items exhibited in SOE are everyday objects with long biographies and the ability to spark heated debates regarding migrant rights and public memory. In the early 2000s, for examples, items that were left behind sparked a media frenzy and anti-immigrant groups, and conservationists labeled these objects as "trash". In their text analysis of news media and government reports, geographers Sundberg and Kaserman (2007) demonstrate that media discourses position discarded, migrant material culture as a direct threat to the nation's identity and natural heritage. Citing a similar study by Hill (2006) and Douglas's (1978) theorizations on the sacred, profane, and taboo as expressed in *Purity and Danger*,

Sundberg and Kaserman (2007) show that these discourses position migrants as polluting bodies whose disregard for the nation's natural heritage excludes them from national membership. More importantly, however, SOE raises questions about the role that galleries and museums play in legitimizing the narratives, histories, and materialities of marginalized peoples. Because the materiality of border-crossing is associated with a very recent past and with a contemporary social topic, some may argue that these things are too new to be significant or to be heritage. As such, the SOE calls for a more nuanced discussion of heritage-making processes, and the political mobilization of cultural heritage within immigration discourses.

Although I could focus on many of the objects, photographs, wall of backpacks, and other items displayed in SOE exhibit, I focus on the display of five water bottles which are pictured below as Figure 6. Although it is impossible to piece together these object's exact stories, we can speculate that they were purchased by migrants in a border town, such as Altar, Sasabe or Nogales, prior to crossing (De León 2012; 2013; De León, Gokee, and Schubert 2015). The production site of the bottles could also be traced based on labels and the unique, regional names and marketing imagery, such as Baboquivari Peak, printed on the labels. Entering the desert, they were used, discarded, and abandoned until they were found by anthropologists and field school students. Once found their provenience was recorded, they were bagged, tagged, and transported to a lab for analysis before finally making their way to the exhibition site.

The five bottles exhibited at SJDC, display alterations made by migrants which are testament to the somatic traumas and corporal discomfort that they experience throughout their journeys. According to migrant logics, black water bottles are a better

camouflaged alternative to white or clear bottles because they do not reflect light and, hence, reduce the chances of being seen by Border Patrol agents. The tradeoff, however, is that black bottles absorb so much light that they heat the water to almost undrinkable temperatures. A more functional adaptation can be seen in the bottles that are wrapped in cloth which limits reflection and may help keep the water cool.

Figure 6. Plastic water jugs as exhibited in State of Exception at the Shelia C. Johnson Design Center, Parson's School of Design, New York, New York (Photograph by Magda E. Mankel).

Looking closer at the bottles on display, one may also notice that some bottles have been altered as they have been covered in cloth or handles made from desert materials have been attached with rope or cloth (De León, Gokee, and Schubert 2015). Sitting on a worn, wooden board supported by two square diner blocks, the five plastic water bottles demonstrate one of many technologies used by migrants throughout their desert journey. Displayed in this fashion, the minimal aesthetic surrounded by a dark and hostile terrain projected onto the wall, the water bottles invoke bare life. Each bottle

metamorphosizes and becomes a symbolic stand-in for the migrant who once transformed them and carried them.

By considering the object biographies or object itineraries (Hoskins 1998; Gosden and Marshall 1999; Ardren 2016), the bottles acquire nuisance. To know that these objects traveled from the Sonoran Desert to New York and that they attest to the somatic trauma that migrants come to experience in the borderlands, is enough to jolt many into Nepantla. Once there, one may begin to question one's relations to the individuals who once carried, used, and modified these objects on their journey. One is also moved away from the victim narrative as one sees, first hand, the autonomy and agency employed by each person who is navigating a global migration route (N. Rodriguez 1996). Like any living being on this planet, they needed water because water is life. That fact alone attests to and emphasizes their humanity. One also sees that in the face of hardship, the migrants who carried the bottles demonstrated ingenuity and resilience as they modified the items to meet the circumstances they met in the Sonoran Desert. Looking at the bottles, one realizes that although migrant bodies and lives are subjected to structural violence, death, and erasure, they leave a material mark. Pooling together to form a cenote (water filled sinkhole) in Nepantla, the bottles and other images on display communicate an uplifting yet somber message. The situation is not romanticized because the objects remain mundane, and the viewer does not come to learn the migrant's identity or the outcome of their journey.

The Beast/La Bestia by Beatriz Cortez, Imagine Yourself the Pinball

In 2015, *La Bestia/ The Beast* (The Pinball Machine) by El Salvador born Artist and Professor Beatriz Cortez was exhibited at Adele H. Stamp Student Union Gallery

located on the University of Maryland College Park campus. *The Pinball Machine* is part of a larger collection titled *Nomad World* which welcomes audiences into an arcade (gaming) environment that is meant to invoke the play of childhood while also situating such childhood play in the technologies of global capitalism. The pinball machine is a reflection on Cortez's own migratory experiences as she traveled from San Salvador and Los Angeles as a child (Cortez 2016). The following offers my observations for the exhibition of *Nomad World* and my experience in playing with *La Bestia/ The Beast* as pictured in Figure 7.

Figure 7. The Beast as exhibited at the Adele H. Stamp Student Union Gallery, University of Maryland, College Park (Photograph by Magda E. Mankel)

As a functioning pinball machine, *La Bestia/The Beast* lights up when you push the buttons. The lights illuminate the backdrop, and one sees that the game's original images included an archaeologist, mummies, and other images meant to invoke ancient Egypt. An ironic ode to the ways in which Anthropology observes and constructs these realities. Re-worked and transformed into art, the game takes place in the Sonoran Desert as made evident by the skulls, saguaros, mountains, crosses on a desert floor, a cartoon likeness of former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, and a cartoon-likeness of former Governor of Arizona, Janice Brewer. The lights, hand-eye coordination, and quick reflexes the game requires to play are enough to jolt you out of the present and cast you into Nepantla. The lights and darting metal ball beckon your eyes to follow until soon you are disoriented or consumed by the tiny, glass enclosed world created by *La Bestia/The Beast*.

Consumed in that world, you both participate in and omnisciently observe the game of cat and mouse that often plays out between migrants and Border Patrol agents. However, you are the one pressing the buttons and pulling the lever that sends the metal ball whirling about towards salvation or danger. In playing with the pinball machine, the player is positioned as both aggressor and ally. Pulling the triggers and toggles that may not lead the ball to where it wants to go. The pinball can be imagined to represent the migrant making the journey through the Sonoran Desert. Perhaps you imagine yourself the pinball whirling across the dashboard. Zooming about, sometimes the pinball makes it to *El Norte*, sometimes it perishes in defeat and it is game over. Sometimes, the pinball brushes against Sheriff Arpaio or Janice Brewer and the carceral technologies and legislative institutions of oppression they have come to symbolize. Locked into the game,

La Bestia/The Beast transforms the embodied act of play into a political commentary and opportunity to reflect.

Playing with the pinball machine, you venture deeper into Nepantla and begin the process of *conocimiento*. As I played and embarked on a my own journey of *conocimiento*, I was confronted by my thoughts and privileges as a person whose citizenship status exempted them from the journey represented by *La Bestia/The Beast.* I also felt haunted by this ever-looming desert. I was confronted by my own privilege as a college-educated daughter of immigrants that did not have to journey through the desert. As I played, I was thousands of miles away from home, the Sonoran Desert, yet here it was. At first, I believed it followed me, but that would be too self-centered of an interpretation. I realized that perhaps I was not the intended audience. It was one Nepantlera speaking to another. This pinball machine was on a college campus, where first-generation, Latina/o/x students from the borderlands are the minority. No, this was meant for the non-border dwellers. Through bright lights, the sounds of an arcade toy, and a nostalgia factor harkening the whimsy of childhood, *La Bestia/The Beast* was designed to swallow the player whole. *La Bestia/The Beast* was meant to lure the audience into a state of reflection and discomfort and conscious raising. Reflecting back, the player is enticed and consumed by the game much like the American Dream lures some migrants into the desert where they risk it all for the chance to realize their dreams of pursuing a better life however they define it. Despite these bleak metaphors, *La Bestia/The Beast*, and the embodied act of playing offer some hope or the ability to pull oneself back together again. Stepping away from the game, we come back to ourselves.

Perhaps the game is intended to transform the player into an ally, a co-conspirator, an accomplice, a *compañero*. The objective is to move us all out of hostile territories.

The Migrant Quilt Project

The Migrant Quilt Project is a grassroots project founded in the mid-2000s that is dedicated to commemorating the migrants who have died in the Sonoran Desert by making quilts out of the migrant clothing they find at lay-up sites— sites where migrants wait to be picked up and transported by their smugglers or connections. The group has been successful in making a quilt for every year since the year 2000. The founding of the group and the process of transforming the clothing that migrants discarded into quilts is accredited to Jody Ipsen who came up with the idea during one of her hikes in the desert. Using migrant clothing found in the Sonoran Desert, the quilt makers create a tapestry that chronicles and quantifies the number of deaths recorded in the Tucson Sector by the Pima County Medical Examiner. Oftentimes, the patchwork is made into symbols that represents death and hope. As such, skulls, butterflies, crosses, hearts, flowers, and desert flora are often used. Always present are the names of the dead which are written or stitched onto the quilt. If the name is not known, then *desconocido/a* will be written instead. Again, this terminology is reflected in the crosses and other symbols created by the Migrant Trail, Derechos Humanos, and others engaging in mourning commemorations.

Although I have never participated in making a quilt, the process seems to resemble that of collectively making prayer ties by the Migrant Trail (described in Chapter One). As such I see that there are two ways in which these quilts may cast the individuals into Nepantla. First, a quiltmaker may find their way into Nepantla when they

set out to collect the clothing, wash the clothing, and then tear into pieces to be sewn back together. Quite literally, vestiges of the migrant experiences are torn apart by immigrant advocates and then reassembled to make quilt. A second entryway into Nepantla may be found by simply viewing the quilts on display within museum contexts. A recent study by Arellano (2017) demonstrates that these quilts are shown to be rhetorical "text(tiles)" that humanize migrant lives through quilted narratives, combat the erasure of migrant deaths, and beckon its onlookers to reflect on the loss of life generated by immigration and border enforcement policies.

The Migrant Trail

Established in 2004, the Migrant Trail work to commemorate. Like the Migrant Quilt Project and the State of Exception, there is much attention given to quantifying migrant deaths through symbols and ritual objects, such as prayer ties and white, wooden crosses as pictured in Figure 8. Relying heavily on extant traditions, ceremony, and ritual practices to create a sacred space, participants of the walk are collectively ushered into a liminal space where conocimiento may take place. Through this unique combination of ceremony, walking, and being in a contested landscape, the Migrant Trail succeeds in creating a space where participants are emplaced in an equal plane and given equal access to conversations that further *conocimiento* and ease the willing participant into a liminal space cohabited by other neophytes.

Figure 8. Prayer ties and crosses used in the Migrant Trail (Photography by Magda E. Mankel).

I have found myself drifting into Nepantla during the meditative silences of the walk when the group travels through the Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge and the Ajo Highway. I recall walking on the highway and feeling close to *los muertos* as I walked below Baboquivari's gaze. I confided this thought to one of the participants, Shannon, who reassured me that it was normal. Sharing her Lakota wisdom she noted that the dead, the ancestors, and the grandfathers were walking with us (Waziyatawin. 2006). And more than that, they were guiding us because the prayer ties were at the beginning of the line and leading the way. Although different from my own notions of spirituality, Shannon's logic and world view instantly made sense to me in that moment. They were the words and reassurance I needed to realize that this was a collective experience where wisdom

was to be exchanged and shared in the in-between just as long as there was a common goal in sight.

The Coyolxauhqui Imperative/Collective Healing

> "Coyolxauhqui is both the process of emotional psychical dismemberment, splitting body/mind/spirit/ soul, and the creative work of putting all the pieces together in a new form, a partially unconscious work done in the night by the light of the moon, a labor of re-visioning and re-membering." (Anzaldúa 2015)

Through these examples, I have demonstrated a gathering process and centered the creative work that Nepantleras have conducted. Although I cannot attest to the journey taken by each project and Nepantlera/o/x, I frame each example as a creative endeavor produced by Nepantleras seeking to communicate with audiences, instigate thought, and raise consciousness in a manner that will articulate new realities of compassion, understanding, and common humanity to migrants and others on the move. I have also illustrated that heritage is produced across multiple sites through powerful and rhetorically charged communications made between researchers, artists, and audiences. I have also demonstrated that understanding the significance of such work depends on analyzing the myriad of texts, content, and rhetorical strategies used throughout such spaces.

In applying the Coyolxauhqui state to understanding the institutionalization of clandestine migration and its heritage process, I have also offered a perceptual framework or metaphor that seeks to bring in the collective spirit rather than the "industry" of heritage (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996; Smith 2006; Graham and Howard 2008). Like

proponents of a public culture and the public liminality associated with public ritual public life, there is a metasocial understanding to the social life of heritage and public culture. What my integration of Anzaldúa's concepts offer is a rethinking of where heritage exists and who it resides with and how it is collectively produced in close knit communities as well as multiplied scattered sites. Heritage is made in many sites which is why multi-site ethnography has been called upon for its study. This is to say that heritage is not regarded as an institutionalized fabrication, but rather a meditative process of selection, interpretation, and display catapulted to new extremes during times of disruption, conflict, and transition.

Most importantly, I have shown that the mobilization of new objects of heritage and long-standing heritage traditions are playing integral roles in educating public audiences about global migration processes and the violent impacts of state violence against people on the move. As such, I have argued in support of the notion that heritage has the capacity to heal and bandage old and new wounds. In the US-Mexico borderlands, the wounds span multiple generations and are rooted in the introduction of colonization, empire, and global capitalism. The legacy of splitting the land or territory for economic gain and the disciplining of bodies continues to this day and is most viscerally exposed in the somatic traumas migrants endure, the ramification of border militarization on border residents, the environmental impacts of increased human traffic, the impacts of surveillance technologies in remote areas, and the socio-cultural fallout that comes with knowing about the devastating consequences that national policies may have on the lives of fellow human beings and the environment.

To move forward will require a fundamental transformation from anyone in a position of power and privilege. A shift in perspective. Perhaps a radicalization of thought. In a sense, solutions to complex problems, such as the relationship between citizens, the state, and non-citizens, requires not only deliberation, but a jolt into Nepantla which emplaces individuals in a liminal milieu where they may pursue transformative change on a personal and collective level. In Nepantla, one may deliberate with oneself and the others around us. It is a powerful metaphor and framework for looking inward and also engaging with the issues of our time. In some way it also speaks to the power of ritual and thresholds (secular and non-secular) which require individuals and communities to clean out their repertoires and engage in the creative and imaginative work that is necessary to planning a more just future. It is about remembering and forgetting; about journey into personal and collective paths on a liminal path capable of bringing joy, sorrow, discomfort, and or a sense of transcendence and arrival onto something new. It is a self-involved and collective pursuit of positive change; change that does not center exploitation or gain, but rather a complex holism. As I have illustrated above, grassroots communities, events, and heritage institutions are playing a role in creating spaces where such transformative work may take place.

CONCLUSION

Summary

I began this dissertation with the assertion that clandestine migration and the deaths of migrants along the Arizona-Sonora border are the result of violent border policies, exclusionary US immigration policies, and shifting global migration patterns that signal a major socio-cultural disruption regarding identity and belonging within the public sphere and American civic imagination. Although these events have mobilized both opponents and proponents of migrant rights, I have focused on the ways in which a local, immigrant advocacy group—The Migrant Trail— has used a robust cultural repertoire to raise public consciousness about migrant deaths in the Sonoran Desert, grow a community of allies, and express their grievances against the impacts that border militarization and violent state policies have. Most importantly, I have illustrated that the collective action performed by the Migrant Trail is one that relies on a cultural repertoire that includes the region's extant heritage traditions, embodied actions, organizational funds of knowledge, landscape, public liminality, and a ritual rite of passage structure and framework. The ways in which these cultural expressions are mobilized by participants is explored in chapters one and two as I explore their function in both the internal (private) and external (public) sides of the Migrant Trail walk.

For example, in chapter one I argue that extant heritage traditions, symbols, such as crosses and prayer ties, and expressions, such as Catholic and Catholic-Indigenous ceremonies, are used to establish an enclave or haven in which participants may gain a sense of equal participation and learn from one another. Bringing in the concept of rite of passage as articulated by Turner (1969; 1974) and van Gennep (1960) , I illustrated how a

rites of passage structure and ritual space play a central role in establishing a sense of community and deliberation amongst participants who are working through their relationships to migrants, coming to terms with their privilege, commemorating the dead, and bearing witness to clandestine migration as a global phenomenon.

In chapter two, I explore the “rhetorical edge: of these extant heritage traditions and the new heritage symbols and expressions produced by the Migrant Trail (Carrithers 2009; Lafrenz Samuels 2015). By situating the Migrant Trail as a rhetorically charged public protest that transforms public spaces into public forums and “public liminality” (Turner 1979). I illustrate that extant and new heritage expressions become powerful communication devices that elicit positive and negative responses from public onlookers. Moreover, focusing on the relationship between public space, landscape, and the Migrant Trail, I illustrate how the walk works to critically “interrupt” and interrogate dominant narratives that portray migrants as criminals and dangerous others (Pezzullo 2001). And just as the walk critiques exclusionary discourses that marginalize migrants, the walk also offers a compassionate alternative that frames human migration as a human right and frames migrants as people who are deserving of human rights, compassion, and hospitality. By framing the relationship between citizens and non-citizen migrants in this inclusive frame, the Migrant Trail succeeds in leading by example and demonstrating what “civic initiative” looks like (Corbett 1991; Fife et al. 2011). It also successfully demonstrates how embodied performances can work to raise consciousness and encourage deliberation about the concept of belonging and public memory.

Finally, in chapter three I intersect Turner (1969) and Van Gennep’s (1960) theorization on liminality with Anzaldúa’s (2015) concept of Nepantla, *conocimiento,*

and the Coyolxauhqui imperative to argue that liminality is a valuable framework for individuals and communities to mobilize if they wish to work through a collective crisis, state of exception (Agamben 1998), and state sanctioned instances of structural violence (Farmer 2004; Galtung 1969). Turning to liminality and Nepantla is my attempt to both center inherently liminal borderlands perspectives and to emphasize that transformative change requires a ritual atmosphere that is imbued with the characteristics of rites of passage. These characteristics of rites of passage as modified and expanded by Nepantla include: the suspension or inversion of social status, a sense of communal equality amongst neophytes, an introspective journey that is tethered to a collective whole, and a healing and therapeutic process (*conocimiento)* that may be oriented towards personal and social transformation and justice. Moreover, bringing Anzaldua's borderlands scholarship in conversation to Anthropological heritage scholarship is intended to not only decolonize current frameworks through a Mestiza consciousness, but also bring home the notion that heritage resources are important cultural tools capable of bringing forth transformative and therapeutic change that heals traumas experienced across generations. Together, these chapters illustrate how heritage is both mobilized and made through collective action that are organized by grassroots communities and oriented towards social justice.

Future Pathways

On a global scale, the (autonomous) migration of individuals from the global south to the global north has resulted in the weaponization of nature— the transformation natural barriers, such as deserts and bodies of water, into hostile terrains and violent technologies of the state with the capacity to transform human lives into bare

life (Agamben 1998; Doty 2011). The weaponization of the Sonoran Desert and the Mediterranean Sea are but two examples of this phenomenon ((Miller 2019; Holtorf, Pantazatos, and Scarre 2019). When I first began researching clandestine migration in 2012, the majority of immigrants crossing the desert were Mexican nationals. Since then, the demographics have shifted and there are many more migrants arriving from Central and South American countries who are on the move due to push factors such as gang violence, unstable economic and political contexts, femicide, and natural disasters associated with climate change from Central America, specifically. It also seems unlikely that immigration policies will be modified in the near future. There is a fundamental disconnect between immigration policies which have become increasingly punitive, and the realities that migrants experience. As I write, there are new groups of asylum seekers and refugees arriving at the urban ports of entry. In the US, the transformation of the Sonoran Desert hostile terrain is a byproduct of prevention through deterrence policies and government efforts that sought to make the desert crossing so uncomfortable (and deadly) for migrants that they would be deterred from ever attempting the crossing(De León 2015). More than a legally defined category, hostile terrain is an embodied reality and third-space reality that subjects migrants to somatic trauma (De León 2012).

As the US approaches its 250th anniversary, I also wonder whether any forethought has been given to the work of reconciliation and transformative justice along the US-Mexico borderlands. I question whether land agencies and heritage institutions, such as the National Park Service, Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management, have the capacity to collaborate with grassroots organizations and organizers to incorporate the voices of migrants and residents of the borderlands in international and/or transborder

dialogues regarding the environmental and cultural impacts of bordering practices and border militarization. More specifically, is there room to grapple with the notion of hostile terrains? Is there an opportunity to reclaim these terrains? Would it be possible to re-imagine existing, authorized heritage discourses in a manner that supports communities who are centering a border reality rooted in cooperation, peace, and justice, rather than militaristic interventions, white supremacy, and xenophobia? Although these are questions left for future ruminations that begin in the present, I believe these questions may be solved with the help of anthropological inquiry and the mobilization of heritage.

Using the commemorative framework offered by the Migrant Trail as a springboard, I close this chapter by diving into a brief discussion regarding the future of clandestine migration heritage and how it may be shared in public spaces. In thinking about the impacts of clandestine migration on US national identities and the boundaries of belonging more broadly, I offer a list of attributes that center the Migrant Trail's borderlands perspective and underline the lessons learned from my participation in mobilizing extant and new heritage resources while being in community. Briefly stated, the elements that I believe played critical roles in the Migrant Trail's transformative and healing process of heritage mobilization and making include: (1) the production of ritual space through syncretic ceremonies; (2) an emphasis on the characteristics of rites of passage, such as status reversal and the establishment of equity amongst neophytes; (3) a plurality of voices and complex cultural repertoire that showcases shared values despite differences; (4) the use of a trail and the embodied act of walking to dwell in the liminal and ascribe new meaning onto landscape; (5) embodied actions that compliment and

support material and visually appealing symbols; and (6) the establishment of new traditions and community through the repetition of embodied action in designates spaces, places, and trail. I provide these attributes to highlight attributes that I believe would help communities to embark on journeys of *conocimiento*, public liminality, and restorative healing work capable of transforming our contemporary and future situations. This is a first step in defining a heritage model that stresses a holistic, gathering approach to the process of heritage mobilization and making.

Overall, this study serves as one example of the ways in which anthropological and ethnographic heritage studies sheds light on the ways mobilized communities form relationships with the past and collectively communicate alternative ways of defining belonging and being in a world where international boundaries remain liminal spaces where power is negotiated. Situating migrant deaths and clandestine migration as a sensitive matter that requires an "intersectional" and global approach to border justice, I have illustrated that there is a need to support events and new traditions that allow its participants to heal from collective traumas while also producing narratives that transcend narrative of victimhood and offer alternative pathways for the future (Kimberle Crenshaw 1991; Kimberlé Crenshaw et al. 2019). More importantly, it is necessary to reflect on the ways that these experiences are represented in public spaces where they have the potential to interact with audiences and inform the public sphere. As global migration (clandestine and otherwise) continues to shift, it is incredibly important to reflect on the ways in which national definitions of identity are being dismantled and re-imagined by mobilized communities that operate on ground zero and also remain tethered to national and international advocacy networks. By investigating the organizational style

and structure of the Migrant Trail as well as the ways its participants mobilize heritage and complex cultural repertoires, I have put forth the notion that locally particular, nationally, and globally minded communities are doing incredible work that promotes social change that is oriented towards the public good, social justice, and transformative change.

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