The Border and Its Bodies

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In June 2015, 28-year-old María Concepción Ibarra Pérez of Oaxaca desperately wanted to return to North Carolina to be reunited with her 10-year-old son (Echavarri 2015). First, she had to get over the 30-foot-high wall that separates the United States from México in the community of Ambos Nogales. She paid a smuggler to use the ladder he had placed against the wall on the Mexican side, but once at the top, she had no assistance to descend the northern face of the wall. María fell to the ground, fracturing her leg in multiple places. After emergency treatment in the United States, the U.S. Border Patrol deported her back to Nogales, Sonora.

In January 2012, we (Ruth Van Dyke and Randall McGuire) crossed the same border to do volunteer humanitarian aid work. It was a routine crossing that we had made weekly for several months as members of No More Deaths/No Más Muertes, a Unitarian-Universalist-sponsored group that places water in the desert for migrants and that assists deportees in Nogales, Sonora. At the end of the day, Randall discovered that he had forgotten his passport in Tucson. Bereft of any proof of his citizenship, Randall presented the ICE agent at the border gate with his driver’s license and a heartfelt apology for forgetting his documents. After a few taps on the computer keyboard, we passed through the turnstile into the United States.

This volume focuses on the lives—and deaths—of undocumented Mexican and Central American migrants and rural residents along the U.S.-México border. The increasingly militarized U.S.-México border is
an intensely physical place, affecting the bodies of all who encounter it. The materialized border makes state power explicit and creates spaces of enclosure and violence, rupture and transgression. Through the physical border across Ambos Nogales, the U.S. state perpetrates violence against those whom it wishes to keep out of the country—like María Concepción Ibarra Pérez—and facilitates the passage of those whom the state privileges to enter. Walls, however, are simultaneously “barrier and face” (Baker 1993); they can enable agency that the builders did not imagine and can communicate meanings that they did not intend. Crossers continually create new ways to violate the state-sanctioned purposes of walls, and interactions with walls can subvert and even undermine the builder’s intentions. Such transgressions are all the more powerful because of the symbolic loads walls bear.

As humanitarian aid workers in Ambos Nogales, we have been witness to countless interactions between the border’s material infrastructure, the agents of the state, and the bodies of those who cross. As archaeologists, we are mindful of the wall’s materiality, and the ways in which it is bound up not only with bodies but also with neoliberalist ideologies. In this chapter, we deploy our archaeological tools to analyze the Ambos Nogales border.

We draw inspiration from phenomenological archaeology, which focuses on sensory, experiential interactions between human bodies and the physical world (see, e.g., De Certeau 1984; Tilley 1994). We also draw from current archaeological theory, which sees materials not simply as inert, passive substances, but as participants in larger, complicated, interactive entities involving humans and nonhumans (see, e.g., De León 2015; Hodder 2012; Olsen 2010). Deleuze and Guattari (2007 [1980]; see also DeLanda 2006, 2016) describe humans and nonhumans coming together as assemblages created by contingent, continually shifting relations.

In this chapter, we describe an assemblage composed of interactions among three entities: the neoliberal state, the border wall, and the people who traverse the border, giving particular attention to the sensory, bodily experiences of those who cross illegally. We begin with a discussion of the increasing presence of walls at the boundaries of neoliberal nation-states. A global economy with a free flow of goods and information paradoxically requires the control and exclusion of those the state deems to be “unruly” people, lacking the rights of citizenship. Next, we move...
to a detailed description of the Ambos Nogales border wall, with its complicated history, collaborative agents, and official passageways. Then, we focus on the crossing points in Ambos Nogales and their interactions with the bodies of border crossers. We contrast the experiences of self-governing, or state-sanctioned, crossers with those of unruly, or undesirable, crossers. These contrasts demonstrate that the wall does not act as an impermeable barrier; rather, the wall is a violent extension of state power that terrorizes but does not prevent unruly crossers. We conclude our chapter with an illustration of how the Ambos Nogales border wall has itself facilitated resistance to U.S. state policies.

**THE NEOLIBERAL PARADOX OF A MILITARIZED BORDER**

The neoliberal state is the first component of our three-part assemblage. The militarized fortification that divides Nogales, Sonora, from Nogales, Arizona, is part of a worldwide wall-building movement (Brown 2010; McAtackney and McGuire 2019; Rice-Oxley 2013). In the neoliberal era, many nations are raising barricades of barbed wire, steel, brick, and concrete against terrorists, smugglers, and undocumented migrants. These walls express modern political systems’ increasing interest in controlling the movements of human bodies (Kotef 2015). Paradoxically, wall building is expanding in a twenty-first-century world that claims to tear down barriers and break down differences. Neoliberal policies and global media have increased the cross-border flow of goods, capital, culture, ideas, and people to unprecedented levels, but these same forces have simultaneously initiated new kinds of exclusions, privileges, and limitations, further marginalizing the poor and the colonized.

In the neoliberal world, where nation-states no longer exclusively define global political relations, national border walls target nonstate, transnational actors rather than international enemies (Brown 2010; Jones 2012). Thus, Israel materializes its fear of the enemy within by building hundreds of miles of walls and highways to separate Palestinians from Jews and to appropriate land for the Jewish state (Weizman 2010). The United States fortifies its border with México to stop drug smuggling and the entry of undocumented migrants (Dear 2013; Dorsey and Díaz-Barriga 2010; McGuire 2013). Bulgaria, Spain, Greece, South Africa,
Morocco, India, Uzbekistan, Hungary, and Saudi Arabia erect border walls to keep out refugees from neighboring countries in turmoil (Rice-Oxley 2013; Taylor 2015).

These walls regulate, order, and discipline bodies, ensuring that “desirable” or “legitimate” people can permeate them with ease, while undesirables can pass only with great difficulty, if at all. The effectiveness of the walls depends on more than the physical barrier itself. Walls require the constant presence of collaborators, including armed agents, vehicles, helicopters, surveillance devices, drones, and airplanes. Together, this collective impedes motion through surveillance and the threat of force or violence (Netz 2004:xi). Without watchers on the walls, human bodies could freely transgress the barriers, and it is freedom of movement that constitutes the true political stakes.

As Hannah Arendt (2005:129) writes, freedom of movement is “the substance and meaning of all things political.” Neoliberal ideology equates citizenship with freedom of movement and regulates mobility based on nationality, race, class, and gender (Kotef 2015).

Nation-states allow people to have freedom of movement, but with constraints and caveats. For movement to be an empowerment (a freedom) that comes from the state, the person in motion must have property and citizenship. Privileged people in motion are considered self-governing; they carry their passports and return to their homes. Ungoverned movement by unruly people, by contrast, threatens the state and must be controlled or prevented. Unruly people include colonized subjects, the poor, refugees, the displaced, gypsies, travelers, and migrant workers; the state tends to characterize these groups as vagabonds, drifters, intruders, thieves, and criminals (Kotef 2015:9). When unruly bodies “illegally” cross the border, they demonstrate their inability to self-govern, reifying their position in the eyes of the state as unworthy.

Freedom of movement, or the lack thereof, defines subject positions and identity categories in the neoliberal world, privileging some and stigmatizing others. Nation-states create material borders to guarantee the freedom of movement of the privileged (and the mobility of commodities and capital) while simultaneously thwarting the movement of the stigmatized. Thus, the bodily experience for the privileged crossers is comfortable, routine, and efficient, while for the unruly crossers it is transgressive, physically challenging, dangerous, and erratic. The
material border can inconvenience the privileged, but it can kill the stigmatized.

THE U.S.-MÉXICO BORDER WALL IN AMBOS NOGALES

The border wall is the second part of our three-part assemblage—it is the materialized space where nation-states confront bodies. The border wall through Ambos Nogales came to be through a complex historical process spanning 135 years. As archaeologists, we are drawn to the story of the border’s changing materiality as it has shifted from a symbol and facilitator of community cohesion and economic benefit to one of state-sanctioned intimidation and terrorization.

The U.S.-México border west of El Paso, Texas, consists of straight lines drawn through rugged terrain. Ironically, this artificially constructed borderline created Ambos Nogales (both Nogales) in 1883, at the point where the first railroad connected the United States with México. Here, railroad surveyors platted the twin towns of Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora, to face each other across the line. It took 46 years before this growing depot and trading town was cleaved by a continuous barrier in the form of a two-meter-high chain-link fence erected in 1929. Between 1929 and 1994, there were elaborations and improvements to the fence, but for the most part, the relatively permeable, neighborly chain-link barrier defined the border and symbolized Ambos Nogales’s neighborly relationship (McGuire 2013).

During the chain-link-fence period, across most of the twentieth century, Ambos Nogales existed as a space of cultural hybridity where two national cultures met to create transnational interactions (see McGuire 2015 for a detailed description). Residents on both sides of the border enjoyed ties of family, friendship, and business. City officials in both communities often acted as if Ambos Nogales were one city. The two municipalities shared a common sewage treatment plant. Police of either nationality, if in hot pursuit, would chase a suspect across the border. Arizona firefighters passed hoses through the border and drove their trucks into México to extinguish fires. Celebrations transcended the border with parades of bands and floats passing through the main gate. For the commemoration of the Mexican national holiday of Cinco de Mayo,
the cities took down a section of the border fence and replaced it with a platform for the coronation and throne of the queen of the celebration.

The economies of both cities depended on the border. In the 1950s, Nogales became the foremost port of entry for fruit and vegetables from México (Heyman 2004:223). Civic leaders on both sides had profound binational and bicultural knowledge, orientations, and social networks (Arreola and Curtis 1993:211). Merchants on the American side attracted Mexican shoppers with American goods of better quality and a lower price than in México. Merchants on the Mexican side attracted American day-trippers who would walk across the line to eat, drink, and buy craft items. In the early 1990s, Americans began to cross the border to buy prescription drugs and obtain dental work, both substantially cheaper in México. In 1997, more than 700,000 American tourists visited Nogales, Sonora (Arreola 2004:48). The populations of both Nogaleses soared, and the city developed a reputation in the United States as being the border town the most open to and coupled to México (Heyman 2004:223; Ingram et al. 1995:46-49).

This all changed dramatically when, concurrent with the implementation of NAFTA in 1994, the United States adopted a “policy of deterrence” to stop unruly bodies (undocumented migrants and drug smugglers) from crossing the border. The idea was to build walls through border cities, thus forcing would-be unruly crossers into the desert where they would risk dehydration and death, and where the Border Patrol could more easily capture them (De León 2015; Haddal 2010:3; Henderson 2011; Hernández 2010). And so, the U.S. government removed the all-too-permeable chain-link fence through Ambos Nogales, replacing it with a three-to-five-meter-high wall constructed of military surplus landing mats topped with an angled steel anti-climb guard (López 1997; Regan 2011) (Figure 1.1). In 1997, following complaints about the ugliness of this new wall dividing the center of the city, the federal government replaced a short section of the landing-mat wall with a “decorative wall” section made of washed concrete, with two rows of (barred and plexiglass) windows, topped by a metal anti-climb barricade (López 1997) (Figure 1.1).

Following the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. government ramped up efforts to “increase border security” by adding multiple human, animal, and technological layers to the border wall. Militarization increased exponentially
with the formation of ICE in 2002. The number of Border Patrol agents in the Tucson Sector of southern Arizona grew 15-fold. Border Patrol agents donned bulletproof vests and, rather than pistols, began to carry automatic weapons. The patrol expanded to include a fully militarized SWAT team. Active patrols included sniffer, or detection, dogs. The government installed vehicle barriers and surveillance equipment, including sensors, floodlights, trip wires, cameras, mobile observation towers, radar, blimps, P-3 Orion surveillance aircraft, helicopters, and predator drones (Ortega 2013). Not surprisingly, incidences of violent confrontations with crossers (self-governed as well as unruly) began to escalate.

But prevention through deterrence did not stop or even significantly slow migration. Despite the policy’s spectacular failure, American politicians (together with lobbyists for a burgeoning privatized prison system and border industrial complex [Dorsey and Díaz 2010]) continued to insist that the U.S.-México border be “sealed.” So, in 2011, Homeland

Figure 1.1 “Decorative” wall and landing-mat wall from Mexican side, 2006. The painted words read “Deport the Border Patrol” (photograph by Randall McGuire).
Security erected a newer, higher $11.6 million bollard-style border wall through Nogales (McGuire 2013). The new 7.5–10-meter-high wall is topped with a 1.6-meter-high metal sheet to discourage climbers, and it is set in a 2–3-meter-deep concrete foundation to thwart tunnels (Figure 1.2). The wall itself consists of concrete-filled steel tubes placed 10 centimeters apart so that agents in the United States can see potential crossers or climbers on the Mexican side. In July 2017, the Border Patrol attached chain-link fencing to sections of the wall so that people could not pass objects through the gaps between bollards. In November 2018, U.S. Army troops hung concertina wire on the north face of the wall.

From the perspective of people on both sides, the bollard wall makes Nogales resemble a prison. The new, imposing wall is in some ways crueler than the old landing-mat fence. The barred, see-through barrier demonstrates to both sides that they are jailed, reliant on the state to grant them movement, even as the view through the bars entices them to imagine the world on the other side.

Unruly crossers—many of whom are leaving desperate circumstances—are not deterred by a wall, nor by displays of U.S. military might. The militarized wall has merely changed where migrants and smugglers traverse the border and has increased the number of migrant deaths due to dehydration, exhaustion, exposure, violence, and injury (Haddal 2010:36). Migrants continue to travel for miles into the desert beyond the wall to cross the border. They walk for days with no gear and little water across rugged terrain, braving unspeakable hardships, subject to predation by the very people they hire to guide them, to find subsistence-level jobs waiting for them al otro lado—on the other side. Since construction of the militarized wall, about 300 migrants per year die in the southern Arizona desert (De León 2015; authors in this volume). ICE, the Border Patrol, and other U.S. agencies continue to deport the unruly bodies they can catch back to México—often in the middle of the night.

**CROSSING THE BORDER: EMBODIED ENGAGEMENTS**

We met a young man named Juan (a pseudonym) while working with No More Deaths in Nogales. Juan’s parents had carried him, as a three-year-old child, across the desert when they had clandestinely entered the United States nearly two decades earlier. Juan had lived the rest of his
life in Arizona. Sixteen years later, when a Phoenix police officer pulled the young man over for failing to signal a right turn, the officer discovered that Juan lacked legal documents. The officer arrested Juan and turned him over to the Border Patrol, which promptly deported him to Nogales, Sonora. Juan had not seen México since he was a toddler and spoke only broken Spanish. Alone in a country that he did not know, Juan desperately wanted to get back home to his family in the United

*Figure 1.2* Bollard-style wall from Mexican side, with image of José Antonio, 2017 (photograph by Randall McGuire).
States. He told us how he had first attempted the crossing by hanging on to the underside of a railroad car. Suspended under the car, his back was only inches above the rails and ties that whizzed below him. When the train stopped for an inspection several miles into Arizona, ICE agents released dogs to search beneath the railroad cars. One attacked Juan, and he showed us where the dog’s slashing teeth had ripped the skin from his ribs. The agents patched up his wounds, gave him a bottle of painkillers, and dumped Juan back in Sonora that same night.

Of course, Juan’s bodily experience was quite different from that of the self-governing bodies in cars, SUVs, pickups, and semitrailer trucks legally streaming through the Nogales ports of entry that same day. This contrast is obvious, but it is not trivial. The United States has carefully constructed the material border in Ambos Nogales to create very different experiences for bodies deemed by the state to be worthy or unworthy of freedom of movement.

The moment of inspection at international borders encompasses a space of exceptionalism, where both the state and individuals negotiate and perform sovereignty and citizenship (Andreas 2004; Chávez 2016; Heyman 2009; Jones 2009; Löfgren 1999; Salter 2008). Contrasting bodily experiences affirm how privilege, discretion, racial politics, prejudice, and theatrics shape the moment of inspection. Even for those who cross the U.S.-México border legally, the moment of inspection is fraught with obstacles. Crossing is a theatrical experience both for the government agents and for the crossers, as each plays their part (Andreas 2000). Racial politics pervades this experience and crafts both the obstacles and the theatrics of the experience (Chávez 2016:92).

At all ports of entry, crossers must present documents to pass through the gate. U.S. citizens must produce a passport or a passport card. Mexican citizens who do not plan to venture beyond Nogales, Arizona, can enter with a border crossing card. To go farther north than Nogales, they must have a passport with a visa to enter the United States. As our experience with a forgotten passport demonstrated, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents have considerable discretion in the acceptance of these documents (Heyman 2009). White, English-speaking U.S. citizens face different obstacles and must perform differently than brown, Spanish-speaking Mexican or U.S. citizens. Just as the agents could admit one of us without a passport, they can deny a Mexican citizen entry to
the United States, even if that individual has a passport and the necessary visa. The body of the person attempting a legal crossing has an impact on whether and how the agents apply their discretion (Chávez 2016). While the U.S. government does not condone racial profiling, we have observed that the browner the body, the higher the scrutiny. Inspection increases proportionally for those with darker skin or shabbier dress, or for those speaking nonstandard dialects of Spanish or indigenous languages.

Below, we provide detailed descriptions of the three gates that give legal passage between the United States and México. The history of the gates’ materialities follows the history of the border wall, with twentieth-century internationalism and friendship replaced with twenty-first-century militarization and alienation.

We then focus on the third part of our assemblage: bodies. We describe what it is like to experience passage through each of these three gates as a self-governing body—a citizen of a nation-state, in possession of documents that confer freedom of movement. A phenomenological perspective focuses our attention on the interplay between the bodies of crossers and the architectural spaces through which they must pass. As the physical gates have been increasingly militarized, the experiences of self-governing crossers have become increasingly difficult and frightening. The militarized border at best inconveniences, at worst intimidates and threatens, even self-governing crossers, reminding them that the state can, at any moment, revoke or deny the freedom of movement.

Finally, we consider what happens to the bodies of unruly crossers as they attempt to traverse the border wall and evade the state’s attempts to prevent their movement. Unruly crossers risk much more than a frightening or frustrating experience. Frequently, their bodies are damaged and broken by the wall; their transgressive movements can result in injury and death.

SELF-GOVERNING CROSSING AT THE THREE POINTS OF ENTRY

The Nogales Port of Entry is one of the busiest on the U.S.-México border. In 2017, 333,941 semitrailer trucks, 649 trains, 12,891 buses, 3,866,499 personal vehicles, and 3,349,123 pedestrians passed through the port of entry (U.S. DOT 2018). In total, 11,173,859 people legally crossed from
Nogales, Sonora, to Nogales, Arizona, that year. Self-governing border crossers with documents can cross from México into the United States at one of three gates. Two of these—the Morley and DeConcini gates—are at the center of Ambos Nogales, and the third—the Mariposa Gate—is located on the west edge of town. All three of these gates are subject to the same laws and procedures for crossing into the United States, but material differences make for a different bodily experience in crossing at each location.

The Morley Gate

The Morley Gate—the smallest of the three ports of entry—accommodates only pedestrian traffic. Located where Morley Street in Nogales, Arizona, meets Calle Elias in Nogales, Sonora, this gate primarily facilitates Mexican border crossers who cross to shop on Morley Street on the U.S. side. Until the end of the twentieth century, U.S. crossers routinely used this gate on their way to bars and restaurants on Calle Elias. With the construction of the border wall and growing fears of drug violence, today significantly fewer U.S. tourists cross to visit bars and restaurants. As a result, almost all of the bars and restaurants on Elias Street have closed, and many are in ruins (McGuire 2015). But even with a marked decline in U.S. tourists, crossings at the Morley Gate still number more than 10,000 people a day.

The history of the Morley Gate, like that of the border line itself, is one of increasing militarization. In 1929, the United States built a small, Spanish Revival–style gatehouse. Between 1952 and 1996, crossers passed through a gate in the chain-link fence to be met by an INS agent under a porch attached to the gatehouse. Following construction of the landing-mat (and then the “decorative”) wall in the 1990s, crossers had to pass through a short hallway to encounter agents under the porch. In 2010–2011, the United States expanded the reception area and the porch roof that covered it. In 2012, the government fortified the gate, placing large, heavy-duty, one-way, full-height turnstiles where crossers enter from México, and where they exit into the United States. In March 2013, the United States wrapped the Morley Avenue pedestrian crossing in a metal mesh. The new fortification of the Morley Gate has made it impossible to see into México from the U.S. side.
All crossers from the Mexican side, regardless of citizenship, must interact with a space that is threatening and potentially hostile at the Morley Gate. First, they pass through the “decorative” wall and the turnstile. They then encounter U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents who check their documents and allow (or do not allow) them to enter the United States. On any given day, there may be an agent stationed there dressed in full combat gear, with a helmet, body armor, and an automatic assault rifle. Crossers may be asked to put anything they are carrying through a luggage scanner. Ultimately, if they successfully navigate the interrogation, they will be allowed to exit through the second turnstile into the United States.

The DeConcini Gate

From 1929 to 1974, the DeConcini Gate served as the main port of entry in Nogales. The history of this gate, and changes in the bodily experiences of crossers, parallels that of the Morley Gate. However, at the DeConcini Gate the differences are more extreme, as militarization has diminished and obscured mid-twentieth-century architectural statements of transnational friendship and opportunity.

In 1929, the United States built a gatehouse similar to the one at Morley Street. In 1934, it added a two-story Customs House built in Spanish Revival style. In 1963, the United States and México jointly decided to rebuild the crossing to accommodate and increase interaction, trade, and traffic. The United States spent $1.9 million on the project (Cadava 2011:367). They left the 1934 Spanish Revival Customs House standing. A Tucson architect designed a modern steel box covered in glass and green tile that extended over the roadway with the traffic passing below through inspection stations. México, by contrast, spent $12 million to make the port of entry a showcase for their country (Cadava 2011:370). The government hired one of the foremost architects in Latin America, Mario Pani, to design the project. He built two massive, white, concrete arches resembling the wings of a bird flying north. He hung a large bronze national seal of México on the north face of structure. South of the arch he placed a circle of flags with banners for every nation in the Americas. From the Mexican side, the DeConcini Gate was a celebration of international friendship, cooperation, and opportunity.
Since 1994, the United States has substantially remodeled the De-Concini Gate, expanding and fortifying it with steel doors, tire rippers, and bars, installing the original landing-mat wall and the subsequent “decorative” wall. Around 1997, the United States covered the exterior of the building with pink-painted stucco to match the “decorative” wall. The glass-and-steel box remains the core of the building, but the clean modern lines of the original building are now lost in the fortification. This remodel now obscures the great white north-flying bird on the Mexican side of the gate. Crossers from the United States into México pass through gates, bars, and walls, but at no point can they see Pani’s grand vision of internationalism. For crossers arriving from the south, the hardened U.S. gate building and wall visually overwhelm the white concrete wings of the Mexican gate.

The DeConcini Gate has a well-earned reputation as the most congested port of entry in Arizona (ADOT 2009:11). Self-governing crossers here weigh various probable inconveniences when deciding when to cross, and whether to cross on foot or by car. Crossing times can range from 5 minutes to 1.5 hours on foot, or from 15 minutes to 3 hours in a vehicle, depending on traffic and CPT staffing (Wilbur Smith Associates 2012:12).

Vehicles coming north from México first pass under Pani’s white wings and then must choose between eight lanes. Beggars, and people hawking a wide variety of goods and snacks, move among the waiting lines of cars. Once in the United States, a CPT agent with a dog moves between the cars. As it approaches the inspection kiosk, the vehicle encounters various sensors and cameras, and it passes over tire rippers placed in the pavement to prevent the vehicle from going back. In the lane to the north of the kiosk are open large metal gates and a tire ripper hidden in the pavement that agents can raise if a driver tries to run through the lane. At the kiosk, a CPT agent questions and examines the papers of the car’s occupants; sometimes a second agent will walk around the vehicle using a mirror on a long pole to examine the undercarriage. The agent may direct the driver to pull the vehicle into an inspection bay. There the agents may ask a few questions, open doors, examine luggage, or in extreme cases remove door panels, seats, and other parts of the vehicle.

Pedestrians walk around the west side of the white bird and pass through a security gate controlled by Mexican agents. Usually crossers have to queue up outside the door to the U.S. gate. The vast majority
of the people in the queue are Mexicans or Mexican Americans, with a
handful of Anglos returning from a short excursion for tourism or den-
tistry. The U.S. agents can and usually will allow crossers over 65, disabled
people, and individuals with a note from a dentist indicating they have
had dental surgery to move to the front of the line. Everyone must wait
in a covered walkway that has been recently fenced in with steel mesh to
prevent noncrossers from harassing, hawking, or begging from crossers.
The entrance to the U.S. gate building has bars, a heavy-duty, full-sized,
one-way turnstile, and a glass door covered in steel mesh. An armed CBP
agent wearing body armor stands at the glass door. He/she allows elderly
people, the disabled, and dental patients to enter through the door, and
he directs others to enter in small groups through one of the turnstiles.

Once in the building, crossers queue up again in one of six pedestrian
lanes. Each lane has a CBP agent sitting at a desk. Before getting to the
desk, the crossers encounter scanners where they will scan their docu-
ments. They then pass through a waist-high turnstile to talk to the agent,
who may ask travelers to open any packages, bags, purses, or luggage they
are carrying. If the agent decides there is any type of problem with the
documents or bags, an armed agent will take the crosser to an adjacent
room. As at the Morley Gate, there might be one or more agents dressed
in full combat gear, with a helmet, body armor, and an automatic assault
rifle, and the crossers may be asked to put anything they are carrying
through a luggage scanner.

The bodily experiences of both vehicular and pedestrian self-governing
crossers emphasize to them that movement between the two countries is
a privilege granted by the militarized U.S. state. Although self-governing
crossers are usually accorded this privilege, they must cope with consider-
able uncertainty, hassle, and in some cases fear and intimidation.

The Mariposa Gate

In 1974, México and the United States opened a second port of entry at
Mariposa on the western edge of Ambos Nogales. Unlike the Morley and
DeConcini gates, the Mariposa Gate is not on the actual borderline but
about 200 meters inside the United States. The planners designed this
port primarily for commercial traffic, but Mariposa slowly came to be the
principal gate for private vehicle traffic as well. (In its original conception,
the Mariposa Port of Entry did not include dedicated pedestrian facilities; would-be foot crossers followed a dirt path from the Mexican side to reach a portable U.S. station manned by a CBP agent.) By the early 2000s, the volume of commercial, private vehicle, and even pedestrian traffic had far exceeded the capabilities of the port. Today, Mariposa is the fourth busiest port of entry on the entire border with México.

To accommodate the flood of self-governing crossers, between 2009 and 2014 the U.S. government rebuilt the Mariposa Port of Entry at a cost of $187 million (Karaim 2014). The new construction covers 56 acres—more than double the size of the original area. At its completion in August 2014, an estimated $26 billion of goods flowed annually both ways through the port (GSA 2015). The modifications greatly increase the number of commercial trucks and private cars that the port of entry can handle, and they speed up crossing times (U.S. DOT 2018). The new port allows the facility to process up to 4,000 trucks daily (totaling 333,941 trucks in 2017), nearly three times the 1,600 a day before the project. The majority of the 3,806,449 private vehicles that crossed the border into Nogales, Arizona, in 2017 used the Mariposa Gate.

The designers of the new port embraced an aesthetic of internationalism. “Located just west of Nogales in southern Arizona, the Mariposa Land Port of Entry is a study in balancing security with a dignified welcome . . . the new Port of Entry strives to be a cultural connection—rather than a division” (Jones Studio 2016). Inspired by the poem “Border Lines” by Alberto Ríos, the architects imagined a port of entry for self-governing crossers that would connect, not separate, the two countries (Karaim 2014). They designed massive, spacious steel, glass, and concrete shelters. The architects hoped that open spaces, natural colors, and a sense of ordered progression would help relieve the tension and sense of dislocation that comes with border crossing (Karaim 2014). They engraved Ríos’s poem onto a prominent wall, set life-sized footprints at various points in the concrete, and used art installations that embrace travel and cross-border relations. The port has received several awards, including an American Institute of Architecture (AIA) Honor Award and a LEED® Gold certification by the U.S. Green Buildings Council.

Nonetheless, militarization at the Mariposa crossing creates bodily experiences that are similar to those experienced by self-governing crossers at the other, older gates. Commercial trucks bear right at the border
wall, while private vehicles bear left to queue up for one of 12 primary inspection booths. As at the DeConcini Gate, self-governing crossers in vehicles must navigate tire rippers, various sensors, dogs, agents with mirrors on poles, an interview by a CBP agent, and the possibility of being sent to a secondary inspection area. Delays generally range from 15 to 70 minutes, but can rise to several hours during holidays. Passage for self-governing bodies from the U.S. to the Mexican side is similarly straightforward. The entry road to México passes along the west side of the Mariposa port. Vehicles stop at one of five outbound inspection booths where CBP agents check for contraband (primarily weapons). The road then runs about 300 meters to a metal gate in the border wall. Following the Mariposa remodel, pedestrians crossing from México to the United States first pass through a barred, one-way, heavy-duty turnstile. They walk beneath a rusted metal canopy with a large video monitor playing one of the art installations, then follow a concrete sidewalk for about 200 meters to reach an open, airy, glass-and-steel pedestrian inspection building. However, the sidewalk is flanked by stone walls with anti-climb barriers, so that once bodies have passed through the turnstile, they can only proceed to the inspection building. The pedestrians queue up and pass through inspection lanes similar to those at the DeConcini Gate. Because fewer pedestrians use this crossing at the edge of town, there are rarely significant delays. When navigated successfully, the Mariposa Port of Entry offers a relatively dignified welcome to the self-governing bodies that the United States awards freedom of movement. But the gate treats unruly bodies very differently. Along the open sidewalk connecting the inspection building and the turnstile, a barred passageway runs along the west side of the road, flanked by a stone wall on the west and a steel-and-mesh wall on the east. This passageway is for the deportation of unruly crossers who have been apprehended on the U.S. side. But this is no mere walled sidewalk—the passageway is roofed by sloping bars forming an anti-climb barrier. The effect is of a cagelike tunnel, or a cattle chute built for animal bodies that must be constrained and controlled. Buses disgorge deportees at the U.S. end of the chute. ICE agents herd the unsuccessful unruly bodies through a heavy-duty, one-way turnstile. The deportees then must walk for several hundred meters, quite possibly on feet torn and blistered from days spent in the desert, down the cagelike tunnel,
before they are ejected into México via another heavy-duty, one-way turnstile.

UNRULY CROSSINGS

As the preceding example illustrates, forced ejection of unruly crossers from the United States into México maximizes the bodily discomfort and humiliation experienced by these people. Unwanted bodies are discarded through the Mariposa chute like refuse. In our close look at the materiality of the Nogales border gates, we have seen how even self-governing crossers are subjected to intimidation, inconvenience, and displays of U.S. force designed to underscore the power of the state over all bodies. In the following section, we explore what happens to the bodies of the unruly people who—despite the presence of this mighty militarized border wall complex—attempt to traverse the border.

Unruly undocumented crossers—those bodies for whom the state does not permit freedom of movement—must pierce or evade the wall and the layers of support behind it. They have numerous options, but all of them are dangerous. Some choose the risks imposed by the policy of deterrence, heading outside of Nogales into rugged rural terrain, where coyotes, usually in the employ of drug cartels, usher them through the wall and into the desert. The work of our colleague Jason De León (2015) focuses on this type of passage, so we do not replicate his work here, choosing instead to focus on the crossings of those who make the attempt within Ambos Nogales.

Some attempt to pass through one of the three official ports of entry using forged or altered documents (Chávez 2016). This type of unruly crossing minimizes the risk of bodily harm from the extreme desert environment and the violence that desert crossers frequently experience from coyotes and others. However, it increases the threat of severe legal sanctions for those who are caught. Crossing the border with no documents, or crossing outside an official entry port, are both Class II misdemeanors, but using forged documents to cross the border is a felony. If detected, these unruly bodies will be arrested and, rather than merely being detained and deported, they may serve prison time in the United States.

Many attempt to transgress the border wall within Ambos Nogales. These attempts increase particularly between May and September, when
temperatures frequently exceed 100°F and the risks of a remote desert crossing are clearly very high (Echavarri 2015). Unruly crossers who seek to move across the border wall within Ambos Nogales have many options. They can do as Juan did, hiding beneath a train or in a private or commercial vehicle as it crosses through a port of entry. They can try to go over the wall, or they can try to go under it. All of these options come with tremendous risks of bodily harm. The Juan Bosco shelter for migrants in Nogales, Sonora, reported caring for more than 200 injured migrants in the first half of 2015 (Echavarri 2015).

Crossing in vehicles as hidden human cargo is unpleasant at best, fatal at worst. Juan’s experience hanging under a train is one terrifying example. Bodies wedged into the trunk of a car or under a seat must stay silent, in cramped, uncomfortable positions, often enduring the intense desert heat, for hours at a time. There is no possibility of food, drink, or relieving bowels or bladders. These unruly crossers risk suffocation, asphyxiation from carbon monoxide poisoning, and the possibility of heatstroke. Migrants have died from these causes in the trunks of cars (Perry and Marosi 2014). Even more have been injured or killed in vehicular accidents. And, bodies who cross the border as human cargo have a high risk of detection as the vehicle passes through the port of entry. In addition to sniffer dogs, ports of entry have surveillance devices that can detect concealed compartments or hiding places created within private vehicles and the loads of commercial trucks.

Some unruly crossers use their bodies to confront the border wall directly, seeking to pass over it, under it, or through it at an unsanctioned breach. All these methods can break the crossers’ bodies, resulting in injury or death. The new bollard wall is seven to nine meters high (about the height of a two-story building) and very difficult to climb. Nonetheless, crossers still scale it, and some succeed. Young men with backpacks full of drugs have been observed scurrying over the bollard wall in broad daylight in under 30 seconds (Johnson 2014). But for most would-be immigrants, particularly those who are not muscular young men, such a feat is extremely difficult. Smugglers erect ladders on the Mexican side of the wall and charge potential unruly crossers, like María Concepción Ibarra Pérez, for the right to climb them. Once at the top of the wall, however, migrants are faced with the difficult task of descending the bollard wall without assistance on the U.S. side. Because of the height
of the wall, a slip inevitably results in bodily damage. At least three migrants have died from injuries received when they fell off the wall (Lara 2018). Many crossers have suffered multiple fractures of ankles, feet, and legs, and spinal injuries from falls (Echavarri 2015; Jusionyte 2018). The Mexican government has posted signs with an image of a person falling off the wall, with the warning “NO TE ARRIESGUES DETENTE: Saltar el muro puede causarte heridas y/o fracturas graves. No pongas tu vida en peligro” (DO NOT RISK—STOP: Jumping the wall can cause you severe wounds and/or fractures. Do not put your life in danger). This type of encounter with the border wall is very likely to result in bodily harm.

Rather than attempt to go over the wall, some unruly bodies choose to go under it. Fortification of the border wall in Ambos Nogales has inspired a tunnel-building frenzy, creating a clandestine rematerialization that allows drug cartels, human traffickers, and migrants to move beneath the wall (McCammack 2015). Dating from the time of community integration, networks of drainage tunnels carry water and sewage from Nogales, Sonora, to an Arizona treatment plant. For decades, fayuqueros (smugglers of goods such as small appliances) used the drains to cross the border. Today, drug smugglers have expanded the system, integrated their own tunneling with the sewers and drains. Since 1995, CBP agents and police have located 110 illicit tunnels connecting Ambos Nogales, but the actual number is, of course, unknown (Garcia 2018). The simplest tunnels are less than a meter in diameter, and crossers crawl through them on their stomachs with packages tied to a leg as they breathe humid, oxygen-depleted air. The Border Patrol has also found tunnels large enough for several people to walk upright, equipped with lighting, ventilation fans, support walls, joists, and even a rail system (Higgenbotham 2012).

Human traffickers charge would-be unruly crossers a steep fee to use the tunnel network. In the Los Angeles Times, Richard Marosi (2006) vividly describes the passage of a group of migrants through the drainage system. As with other types of unruly crossings, migrants risk bodily harm that involves, at best, unpleasantness, at worst, death. People must wade through raw sewage and beat off the rats who dwell in the drainage system. Heavy rains can unexpectedly flood the tunnels, and migrants have drowned. Criminals hide in the labyrinth, waiting to rob or rape unruly crossers. In 2007, in the two main drainage tunnels, the U.S.
government installed gates, surveillance cameras, and devices to remotely fire pepper spray at people. Use of the drainage system by unruly bodies subsided, but the Sinaloan drug cartel responded to these deterrents by simply digging new tunnels (Higgenbotham 2012). Twice, in August 2010 and in December 2015, passenger buses north of the DeConcini Gate dropped beneath the street when the pavement suddenly collapsed into clandestine tunnels (Banks 2011; Prendergast 2015).

Rather than going over it or under it, some unruly crossers continue to simply breach the wall along the U.S.-México border. These bodies are not deterred by the forbidding design of the barricade and its attendant, exponentially increased militarization. They ram the wall with vehicles, cut it with saws, or smash it with axes. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (2011) reported that in the fiscal year 2010 there were more than 4,000 breaches along the entire southern border that cost $7.2 million to repair. The CBP justified the bollard-style wall in Nogales in part by claiming that it would be more resistant to breaches. Nonetheless, breaches have continued. In June 2014, flood waters took out a 20-meter-long section of the wall just west of the Mariposa Port of Entry; the gap remained in the fence for more than a month (Hechanova 2014). In that same month, someone cut a hole the size of a garage door in the bollard-style wall east of downtown Nogales (Prendergast 2014).

Deployed by the U.S. nation-state, the Ambos Nogales border wall is the materialization of force meant to control the movements of self-governing bodies, and to prevent the movements of those whom the state deems unworthy of the privilege of freedom of movement. The wall has transformed the ways all bodies experience the two Nogales. Even for people who do not seek to cross, the high bollard fence with its parallel bars emphasizes that, as in a prison, all bodies are under close supervision and state-sanctioned control. For self-governing bodies, crossing the border has become an ordeal, as they must waste hours waiting in lines, suffer interrogation from border agents, and display fortitude in the face of an intimidating military presence. But for unruly bodies, crossing the border means risking imprisonment, injury, and death. Through this wall, the state has not succeeded in stopping the movements of the stigmatized, but it has succeeded in inflicting on them tremendous pain and suffering.
USING BODIES TO PROTEST THE WALL

In the preceding sections, we have described how the state, the wall, and the bodies of crossers come together in Ambos Nogales as three parts of an assemblage. But assemblages always transcend the sum of their parts, creating unexpected relationships. In the case of the border wall, although we have seen how it controls and impedes bodily movements, there are many ways in which the edifice simultaneously fosters transgressive acts, creativity, and resistance. In this final section of our chapter, we describe how people use their bodies to protest the wall, which paradoxically enables relationships and fosters unexpected actions.

Many people in Ambos Nogales and throughout Arizona oppose the militarized border. Protests frequently focus on the border wall as the most obvious materialization of the violence perpetrated by the state, and as a powerful symbol of separation (McGuire 2013). The original flat landing-mat wall was an ideal attractive surface for graphic statements of protest. Border Patrol agents could prevent modification of the wall’s north face, but they could not control what happened to the south face. People hung art installations, spray-painted graffiti, painted folk art, and placed placards on the Mexican side of the wall. One reason cited for replacement of the landing-mat wall with the bollard wall was that the open bars would allow U.S. agents to reach between the bars and remove things mounted on the other side. Another reason cited is that the gaps between the bars would facilitate apprehension of unruly crossers because it would allow the Border Patrol to see them as they approached the wall. The new bollard wall has accomplished those things; however, it also has created new forms of protest.

In October 2015, Mexican American artist Ana Teresa Fernández deployed the bars against the bright blue Sonoran desert sky to create an art piece that erased the bollard wall. With the help of volunteers, she coated about 15 meters of the bars in front of the Nogales municipal bus terminal with electric blue paint. The paint matched the sky behind them, and this section of the wall, as seen from México, seemed to disappear, visually reuniting the communities of Ambos Nogales (Pineda 2015).

The bollard wall allows people to maintain day-to-day interactions that unify rather than divide their community. Families separated by the wall, whose members live on both sides of Ambos Nogales, meet at the
bars. They talk, share picnics, pass mementos to each other, hand children’s schoolwork through the openings, touch hands, and continue to maintain the social bonds that the wall has tried to disrupt (Regan 2011). Lovers cannot kiss through the four-inch gap between the bollard tubes, but they can hold hands and look into each other’s eyes.

In June 2013, three young immigrants traveled to the Nogales border wall to meet their mothers, who had been deported to México (Zemansky and Preston 2013). They were part of a movement of immigrants called “Dreamers.” The Dreamers had come as children and grown up north of the border. They had not seen their mothers for many years. They talked through the bars, held hands, hugged and cried. In July of the same year, nine Dreamers dressed in graduation gowns crossed from the United States to México, and then sought to reenter the United States at the Morley Gate. The design of the Morley Gate blocks the line of sight from the United States to México, hiding the protestors supporting the Dreamers on the Mexican side of the gate. The U.S. Border Patrol detained the Dreamers for several weeks but ultimately released them in August (Foster 2013).

Cardinal Sean O’Malley of the Boston archdiocese and a group of U.S. bishops traveled to Ambos Nogales in April 2014 (Mejia 2014). They had come as part of the Catholic Church’s “Mission for Migrants” that seeks comprehensive immigration reform in the United States. As part of the visit, the cardinal celebrated mass at the border with more than 500 people in attendance. The cardinal and bishops set up the altar on the north side of the fence, and hundreds of worshipers participated from the south side. These worshipers reached through the bars of the wall to receive communion.

The School of the Americas Watch came to Nogales November 10–12, 2017, to protest the existing wall and President Trump’s plan to build a wall along the whole border (SOA Watch 2018). They erected stages on each side of the wall. The program shifted back and forth between the two grandstands, and the participants symbolically passed objects through the bars. A Nogales, Sonora, paleta (popsicle) salesman sold his wares to gringos on the U.S. side, exchanging paletas for dollar bills through the bars (Figure 1.3).

Sadly, the gaps between the bars have also allowed U.S. agents to wreak violence on bodies in México. On October 10, 2012, 16-year-old
José Antonio Elena Rodríguez died in a hail of Border Patrol gunfire (Morin) (Figure 1.2). Mexican police found his body, shot 10 times in the back and head on Calle Internacional, a Nogales, Sonora, street that runs parallel to the border. His family said that he was walking to a convenience store where his brother works when he was killed. The Border Patrol claimed that he was part of a group videotaped throwing

Figure 1.3 School of the Americas Watch protest in November 2017. Mexican *paleta* vendor in México, selling to protestors on U.S. side of wall (photograph by Randall McGuire).
rocks at agents attempting to arrest drug smugglers on the U.S. side of the border. What clearly did happen was that one or more Border Patrol agents stepped up to the wall and fired through the four-inch gaps to kill José on a Mexican street. In September 2015, the U.S. Justice Department brought charges of second-degree murder against CBP agent Lonnie Swartz for the death of José (O’Dell 2015). In April 2018, a jury found him innocent of second-degree murder but was deadlocked on two lesser charges of voluntary or involuntary manslaughter (Morin 2018). In November of the same year, a second jury found Agent Swartz not guilty of involuntary manslaughter (Trevizo 2018). As of January 2019, Swartz still faces a civil suit brought by José’s family.

José died a couple of weeks before Día de los Muertos. On the evening of the holiday, protestors gathered at the place of his killing and transformed the border wall into a giant ofrenda for him (Woodhouse 2012). They placed candles, sugar skulls, pictures, and other offerings on its base. As protestors gathered on both sides of the border, Guadalupe Guerrero stepped up to the north face of the wall. Border Patrol agents had shot and killed her teenage son, Carlos LaMadrid, scaling the border wall in Douglas, Arizona, in 2011. Mother and son are/were U.S. citizens. She met José’s mother, Araceli Rodríguez, standing at the south face of the wall. The two bereaved mothers talked and hugged each other through the bars.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have considered the border in Ambos Nogales as a three-part assemblage involving the neoliberal state, the material wall, and the human bodies of those who attempt to move across the U.S.-México boundary. As archaeologists and scholars of the material, our attention has focused on the physical wall and its complicated history. Phenomenological perspectives have inspired us to explore the bodily experiences of those who traverse the border.

On the U.S.-México border, as in many places around the twenty-first-century world, the neoliberal state has deployed a militarized barricade, complete with attendant human, nonhuman, and technological collaborators, to forcefully monitor, control, and thwart the movements of particular kinds of bodies. The state grants freedom of movement to
the self-governing bodies of those it deems citizens, but it denies this freedom to the unruly bodies of those it considers threatening.

The Ambos Nogales border was once a place for commerce and community collaboration, as characterized by the chain-link fence and by the 1960s construction of celebratory passageways such as the DeConcini Gate. Since the 1990s, however, the neoliberal state has transformed the Ambos Nogales border into a threatening militarized zone and, at times, a killing field. Border-crossing gates are no longer places to celebrate international cooperation—they are arenas where self-governing bodies may, if they pass state-sanctioned scrutinies, be allowed to pass. Unruly bodies, by contrast, must risk injury and death in attempts to move across the border wall into the United States.

Despite the violence and suffering experienced by many along the Ambos Nogales wall, however, people are using the material fabric of the barrier to protest its existence and to continue to build community between the two Nogales. Walls not only cleave and separate—they can also join and unify people in collective action for change. As an anonymous graffiti artist painted on the remnants of the Berlin Wall, “Many small people, who in many small places do many small things, can alter the face of the world.”

REFERENCES


