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Material Memories

(Re)Collecting Clandestine Crossings of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands

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Unauthorized border-crossing from Mexico into the United States is an inordinately complex process. It has been framed as an act of adaptive resistance to power (Spener 2009), as a social process structured by U.S. government policy (Cornelius 2001; Ettinger 2009), as a socioeconomic process (Cohen 2001), and as a traumatic articulation of structural violence (Heyman 2009; Nevins 2005; Singer and Massey 1998). In this chapter, we aim to reveal the multiple categories and experiences of "otherness" in this contested landscape. Interlacing first-person accounts with divergent interpretations of artifacts, we look at how memory—treated here as both cultural and individual recollection—works through the objects, bodies, and spaces of the borderlands. As we show, memory stabilizes an otherwise disorienting, transient, and threatening experience, but we also observe that memory can be blocked or co-opted and how artifacts might grant us access to otherwise silenced memories.

The U.S.-Mexico border is an "other" space in the sense of Foucault's (1986) heterotopia—an institutional countersite with various actors who have competing aims, experiences, and sociopolitical positions. Unauthorized migrants have been portrayed as irresponsible people who "trash America" and who have "transgressed a set of taken-for-granted social norms delineating appropriate and inappropriate modes of bodily comportment"

(Sundberg 2008: 878). Working in conjunction with physical border walls, such notions literally draw a line between "us" and "them" to emphasize and spatialize difference. The landscape is itself thus made "other" by the transgression of law by foreigners and their belongings.

Not only are the borderlands heterotopic but so are the border-crossing data, the traces of moving in and through the borderlands. Each artifact, story, or landscape can become a site where multiple memories coexist in a state of tension and conflict. Given that the landscape and data are heterotopic, we propose a methodology that is heterotopic as well. We should reflect on what we are studying as well as *how* we are studying it. Our method problematizes how researchers can present and analyze data to prevent the flattening of variability of border-crossing memories.

Understanding the U.S.-Mexico border as a heterotopic site can generate a more nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between data, meaning, and memory. We analyze interviews with guides, drug smugglers, migrants, and humanitarians, as well as excerpts from media. We also examine some of the discarded border-crosser artifacts we found and collected in the desert and discuss how memory works to make sense of the border-crossing process. Methodologically, this entails looking at how emic and etic memories of particular events overlap, contradict, or are manufactured within similar sites. We look at how archaeological readings of artifacts can reveal memories that interviews do not or cannot. Further, we examine how interviews tell of experiences different than those an archaeological reading would assume. Together, archaeology and ethnography can uncover various modes of memory work.

Heterotopic Memories

One lens that scholars have utilized in interpreting artifacts of violent sociopolitical contexts is the testimonial. "Testimonial objects" bear witness to a single catastrophic event that is often narrated by someone in the voice of the subaltern other and sometimes passed down within a family or community (Hirsch and Spitzer 2006). Sometimes the narrator of the testimonial object is an institution, such as a museum or other site of remembrance, in which case a firsthand witness is not present to give meaning to an object. In such instances, memory is conjured vicariously through an object and its projected collective memory (Keats 2005). The

object in its scale and singularity becomes a symbolic stand-in for an individual body in a collective catastrophic experience. The boundary between collective memory and individual meaning is unclear in this context, because testimonial objects, as "souvenirs of death-worlds," are situated between the representation of painful memories of loss and rupture on the one hand and "the valorized commemorative evocation of . . . longed-for landscapes" (Kidron 2012: 4).

Framed this way, memory becomes a representation, a constructed version of the event—or rather, an imposed meaning. Testimonial objects hold multiple temporalities and meanings, because the meanings an object held for people in the past can differ fundamentally from the meanings it holds now. Indeed, the testimonial character of the object speaks to the ways in which the relationship between object and memory change over time and from individual to community. This means that in reading a testimonial object we should juxtapose the layers of meanings held by the object.

In practice, however, a testimony does not offer significantly distinct views from differing social actors and their experiences. The testimonial function is to persuade by promoting a particular point of view (Binford 2002), whether supporting a dominant narrative or constructing a subaltern counternarrative (see Nako, this volume). Testimonial objects are used in similarly instrumental ways to argue for a specific side of the story, whether this trial is one of legal proceedings or a scholarly pursuit of justice. Testimonial readings thus generally favor the individual memory of the subaltern as something authentic that works against a constructed dominant collective narrative (see Ramblado-Minero, this volume). This is problematic insofar as it discounts the "strategic nature of memory" (Hamilakis and Labanyi 2008: 14) as a complex and active practice. Testimonies of the other can be politically and/or selfishly motivated or can knowingly or unknowingly support the status quo. As our research demonstrates, testimonies are, for example, deployed by people who vilify undocumented migrants *and* by those who valorize them.

As an alternative to the testimonial approach, we therefore offer a heterotopic framework, which emphasizes the various dimensions and nuances of recollecting border-crossing with a multitude of narrators and evidence. This also satisfies our desire to juxtapose layers of meaning, as the heterotopia "is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault 1986: 25). In

found objects we find the intersection of individual memories, originating from a single person's interior life world, and of collective memories, which arise from a larger network of cultural actors. Landscapes and artifacts are not passive containers that hold these memories. They are spaces in which memories reside—living, changing, interacting—and they are in part shaped by the physical form of the site. Memories are worked through these sites in such a way that memory and site constitute one another.

Situating Landscape, Objects, and People

We draw on data from the Undocumented Migration Project (hereafter UMP), a long-term ethnographic, archaeological, and forensic study of the social processes of unauthorized border-crossing in the area between Sonora, Mexico, and southern Arizona directed by Dr. Jason De León. The UMP aims to understand the techniques used to clandestinely cross the desert, the socioeconomic system that structures the process, and the various forms of suffering and violence experienced by the diverse array of people who undertake crossings. The project uses archaeological techniques to recover and analyze the many objects that people leave behind in the desert to gain insight into the ways that border-crossers negotiate various landscapes of the desert (fig. 9.1). The archaeological approach textures the overarching ethnographic narrative of border-crossing with material culture (De León 2012, 2013).

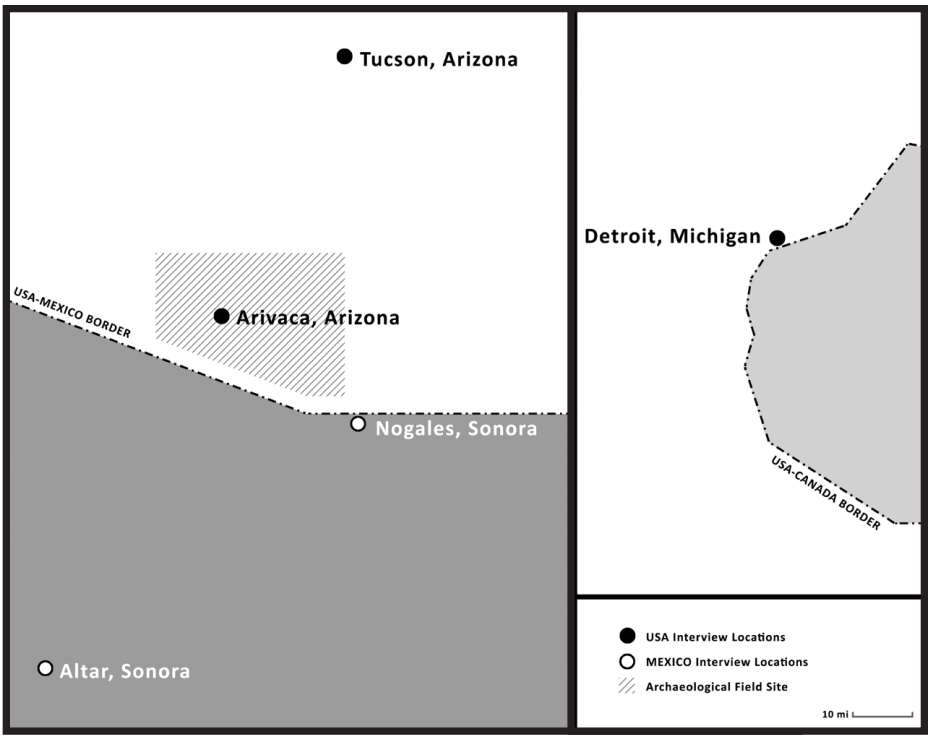
The ethnographic and archaeological data presented here were collected between 2009 and 2013 by the authors and various members of the UMP research team. In the towns of Nogales and Altar in Mexico, we conducted interviews in Spanish with 50 migrants using semistructured interview strategies either before their crossing or immediately following deportation. We also interviewed several undocumented migrants in Detroit, Michigan, in order to attend to long-term memories, and we interviewed humanitarians and artists in Arivaca and Tucson, Arizona, to examine broader cultural memory. Our archaeological data come from surveys and detailed studies of trails and migrant stations conducted in the deserts northwest of Nogales during the summers of 2009, 2010, 2012, and 2013 (map 9.1).

We posit that the Sonoran Desert borderlands are heterotopic not just because they are made of multiple conflicting and coexisting places and

Figure 9.1. A migrant station in a small wash in the Sonoran Desert. Two blankets hang from shrubbery, and clothing, backpacks, and hygiene items are scattered beneath the tree and further down the waterway by primary and secondary modes of deposition. Photo by Sam Grabowska.

times. Heterotopias are also countersites to cultural norms, because they are places where outsiders go and in this sense constitute "other spaces" (Foucault 1986). Many Mexicans and migrants refer to the United States as *"el otro lado"*—the other side—an ever-present other space that is just "over there," visible through a fence or in one's clothing tags. And yet it is also literally other, foreign, and inaccessible. Migrants are excluded from the (often publicly owned) borderlands through government policy, public discourse on citizenship and belonging, and Border Patrol tactics. On the other side, they become the other.

Foucault distinguishes between heterotopias of crisis and those of deviation—we see the Sonoran Desert as both. The desert is a heterotopia of crisis, where migrants confront a brutal natural environment in which



Map 9.1. Map of the study area, including major cities and towns discussed in the text. The shaded area contains the approximate site of the archaeological study. Photo by Sam Grabowska.

danger is amplified by government enforcement techniques and surveillance technologies (United States Customs and Border Protection 2012). Border Patrol agents are often heavily armed with assault rifles, use infrared binoculars, and create temporary dust storms by lifting up clouds of debris when they are flying helicopters low overhead suspected crossers (fig. 9.2). These strategies create a warlike environment (Dunn 1996) where border-crossers are likely to become disoriented, injured, or assaulted. The Sonoran borderlands are a heterotopia of deviation as well, because migrants simultaneously transgress lines of national sovereignty and of cultural norms. Indeed, by violating a federal law, going somewhere they should not, migrants are often constructed as "illegals" in order to stress their non-status as citizens and deviant personhood (De Genova 2013). Border-crossers must also deviate from their everyday roles or identities, carrying false identification or wearing different clothing. In this landscape of crisis and deviation, memory work is both disrupted and cohered.

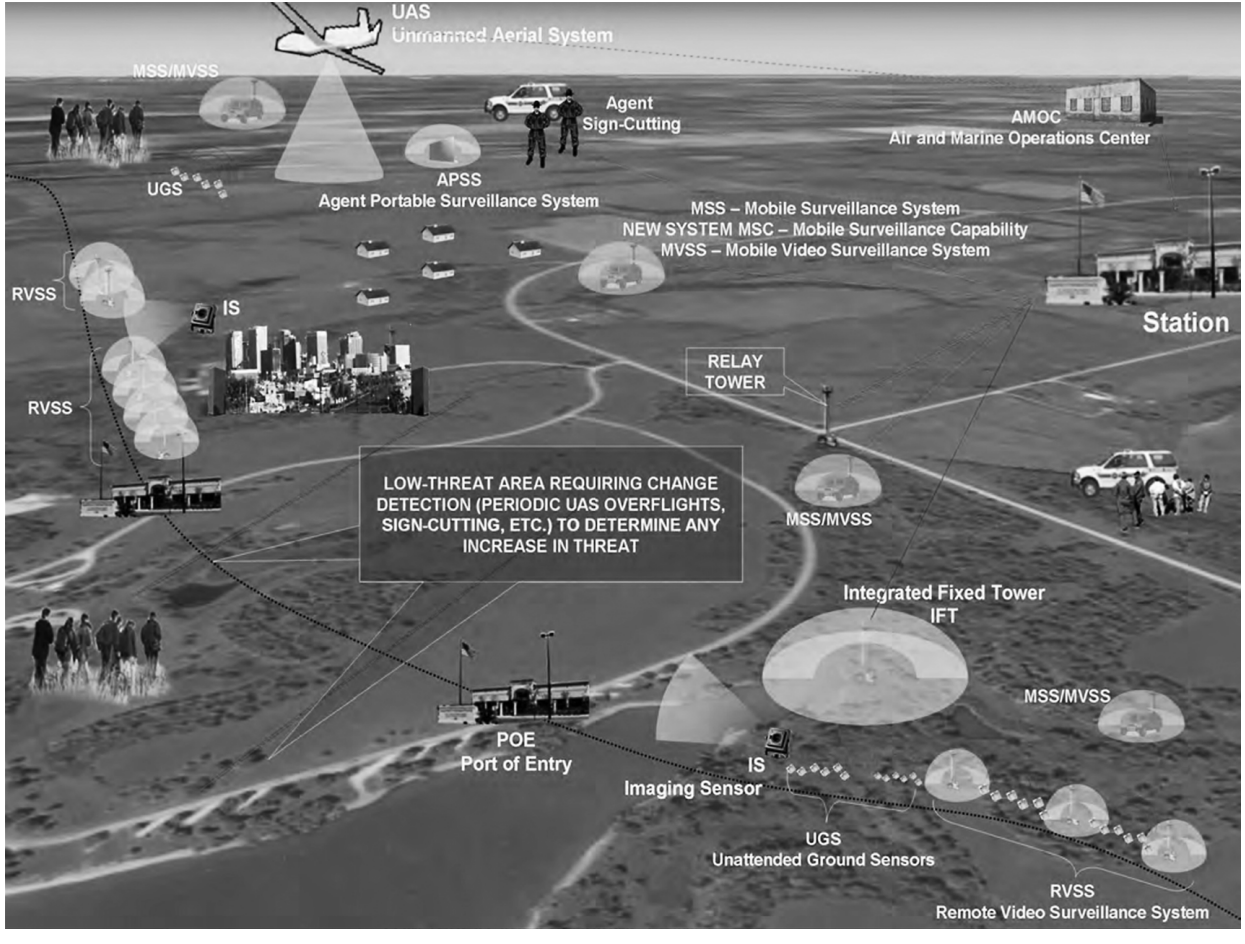


Figure 9.2. Various Border Patrol surveillance technologies and tactics deployed in the borderlands to detect and capture border-crossers, as depicted by the Department of Homeland Security. Image from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (2012).

Nature, Home, Identity

In the midst of border-crossing, migrants have frequently reported being disoriented, exhausted, and fearful in the expanse of the desert. But among these reports are also recounts of moments of grounding, jubilation, and strength. In this section, we look at excerpts from interviews and artifacts to show how memories of border-crossing contest marginalization. Memory can familiarize strange places and reground identities.

We interviewed Lisa, a 23-year-old recent mother from Puebla, at a migrant shelter in Nogales, Mexico, a week after her crossing attempt. She talked about transforming her identity from "mother" and "female" to "man" in the desert, out of necessity to take care of herself and be tough and "hard" as a man. This was only a façade, however, which held up as long as necessary, but broke down "the minute you get through everything, you just cover yourself with a sheet and cry." Despite her tough experiences, when being asked if she had any pleasant memories from the desert, Lisa immediately shifted her tone: "In the desert you just see the beautiful stars. . . . You see the moon. And my daughter's name is Luna . . . [smiling, trailing off]." Memory thus works to shift Lisa's identity from hardened (wo)man to proud mother. While she first appropriates masculine characteristics in the desert, she then stresses her maternal identity through memories of her daughter—two conflicting but simultaneously inhabited identities.

Just as Lisa evoked the stars and the moon to reground herself in an identity separate from the one she appropriated as a border-crosser, the sky also spoke to Ramiro, a 44-year-old man originally from Puebla who now lives undocumented in Detroit. Four years after his last crossing in 2009, he recalls the night desert:

> One of the memories that struck me the most was one night when we were high up in the hills. The guide saw a light in the sky and supposed it was a Border Patrol helicopter. He told us to look down so that they wouldn't see our eyes, like when you're driving at night and you see a deer's eyes or something like that from the lights of the car. Well, [laughing] I looked up and the sky was completely brilliant in the desert. Lots of stars. And in that moment I felt like a human, because looking at the stars reminded me of my childhood, when my best friend Alberto and I bought a telescope to look at the stars and used an encyclopedia to look at what each one was.

In this recollection, Ramiro takes control of an otherwise difficult situation. He transforms himself from being prey—a deer caught in the headlights—to being a human, defiant of intimidation or authority. The sky, something recognizable independent of one's geographical location, acts as a familiar space and connects to the memory of home. Through remembering, he cohabits the space of the present and the space of his childhood, recalling a moment where he is in good company and can bring reason to an unknown world. Memory works through the night sky and the stars to unify disparate places and times and give the narrator agency in an otherwise oppressive environment.

Artemio, a 30-year-old man living undocumented in Detroit since 2008, remembers the desert not as a space of adventure, of beauty, or of embodied experience. Instead, he sees the desert as a landscape of capitalism.

> You realize that this land is empty. Yeah, there are people all over, the guides and their migrants, the bandits that rob people, and the Border Patrol. But there is no humanity. Everything is pure business. For the guides you are just a product. You're just a bunch of dollars. You're not a human being. And Border Patrol, I don't have anything against them. They're just doing their job. I don't know. They probably only get paid by catching people.

In his recollection of the desert, the natural landscape is overtaken by a landscape of business characterized by a lack of humanity. But by remembering the border in this critical way, Artemio makes sense of his experience as part of a larger system he can understand. While both the *coyotes* and Border Patrol are "just doing their job," Artemio is more understanding toward the Border Patrol. Through this affinity, he aligns himself more with the American side of business than the Mexican side, suggesting a shift of identity from Mexican to American and from migrant to resident.

It is not just migrants who feel displaced through the border-crossing process and who use memory to work through landscape and objects to recall a more stable past. During an interview, a *burro* ("drug mule," someone who brings marijuana across the border) named Alfonso tells us that he did not bring anything with him as a souvenir of home. Later, after the interview, I notice the keys around his neck, so I ask him what they are for. "Oh, these?" he says, "These are from my home in the U.S." He proceeds to

gingerly thumb through his keys, naming each: this key is to his garage, this one to his friend's place, this is a key to a storage unit that contains his child's bicycle, and another key opens the front door of his house. In Nogales, Alfonso is sleeping in the cemetery until he gets word that he has merchandise to move, but in the United States he has a house where his partner is waiting for him.

A strange stillness sets in after each key is explained, the keys frozen in the palm of his hand, broken only by someone shouting Alfonso's name across the street. The purely functional necessity of the keys becomes increasingly sentimental as Alfonso's memory work transports us across places, from homelessness to a life with locked doors to safe spaces and a family. Alfonso does not see these keys as a memento; yet his memory, with or without his awareness, produces a material trace. Whenever he is in one given place, he has other places with him: the desert, his home in Detroit, the Nogales cemetery, the shelters from which he is now banned. When border-crossers conjure memories of home or past experiences, they reconnect with their previous selves. Memory, in this case, works to stabilize border-crosser identity in a maelstrom of change. Even though they may be disoriented and displaced in the desert, people can make sense of their surroundings by recalling a time when they were emplaced.

Silence, Artifacts, Bodies

While interviewees may channel their memories through landscape and objects, reading objects archaeologically can also reveal contexts that interviews cannot. Memory can often be blocked by trauma, and we frequently heard the phrase "I don't want to remember." Border-crossers also relativize their suffering by downplaying their experiences or keeping silent. After a recent border crossing attempt, one young woman in Nogales, Mexico, said that she wanted to tell us her story because she could not talk to anyone else: "I can't tell my mother because I don't want to scare her and make her worry. I can't tell my children because I have to be strong for them. I can't tell anyone who has crossed because so many people have it worse than me. I can't tell anyone who hasn't crossed because they don't understand. I tell my brother, but he tells me I just have to try again." As this illustrates, though migrants share the border-crossing experience, border-crossers themselves witness difference and otherness in each other, and this relativism influences the way memories are recollected and shared.

Mitigating the blockage of memory, objects may reveal memories that trauma has erased, including recollections of absent bodies. Items that people carry for border-crossings, such as toiletries, food, or specific pieces of clothing, are often left behind and forgotten. And yet it is such everyday items that are most prone to recording our embodied habits—from the way we walk to the institutions we have encountered in the course of our socialization. Everyday items are particularly evocative when they physically store memories related to our bodies. Body sweat is such a memory trace, which can be stored in an undergarment as "data" (Stallybrass 1993). The shirts we analyzed during our research typically retained excessive sweat stains from arduous hikes or when clothing was worn far past the point of bodily comfort. Such use wear traces can hold the memory of injury as well: rips and holes in the fabric point to a long and physically demanding journey (De Léon 2013). In addition, in the desert, where sun exposure, wind, moisture, and desiccation are severe, an artifact's wear-and-tear is often the result of the impact of the natural environment. We found many objects that were cracked and torn, their damage recalling a bodily memory and a story of duress. To put this differently, if the desert can do such damage to a material and enduring object, we can only imagine what it can do to flesh and blood. The distressed object thus can serve as a stand-in for the wearer's skin, equally vulnerable to sun, wind, and thorny flora.

For border-crossers who go missing or perish in the desert there is no voice and no last testament. This silence is intensified by the clandestine nature of border-crossing as people strive to go unnoticed and unheard. Artifacts and other traces in the landscape (such as trails), which outlast the flesh and skeletons of bodies that are quickly scavenged and scattered by coyotes or vultures, are often the only things that remain (Beck et al. in press). Discarded in the desert, they point to the ghostly presence of absent bodies in a vast border landscape (see also González-Tennant, this volume). This landscape thus takes on a spectral dimension, one that "unsettles any linear understanding of time, disturbing our sense of place and self through the arrival of haunting memories" (Hill 2013: 381).

Though artifacts can assist in recovering blocked memories, relying solely on objects to construct a narrative of an event is insufficient. There are many issues that complicate our research when it comes to the provenance and life history of artifacts. Desert artifacts are obscured by the multiple ways in which a border-crosser comes to own or wear an

Figure 9.3. Some of a young man's belongings in preparation for his first desert border crossing. They include soap and toothbrushes given to him by the Samaritans at the migrant shelter in Nogales, Mexico, some first aid cream, a small capsule of bleach to purify water, a small mirror with the photo of a soccer star on the back, and an information card on migrant rights from a Mexican aid agency. Photo by Sam Grabowska.

item. When people are deported, they are often given clothing or hygiene items by American and Mexican aid organizations (fig. 9.3). Migrants then carry these with them if they attempt to re-cross the desert. Donated clothing is, however, often not the right size for an individual or is differently gendered. Instead of viewing an object as a representation of particular characteristics of an individual (as in gender, age, nationality), an artifact may be able to tell us that the wearer was in a situation in which he or she received a hand-me-down, suggesting deportation, a shelter stay, and a re-crossing attempt. It can also highlight an economic disparity and a complicated relationship between the United States and Mexico. Often, Americans donate used clothing to the very people their government displaces. This exchange of objects between government institutions, humanitarians, religious organizations, *coyotes*, and migrants effectively obscures an object's origins.

Testimony, Deployment, Contestation

Border-crossing memories, particularly those that are traumatic or of an intense experience, are often co-opted either by the recaller (to seem more heroic, victimized, or in control of the situation) or by secondhand witnesses (people outside of the crossing experience, such as humanitarians, researchers, and militia members). One such traumatic experience is that of rape and assault, especially as perpetrated by *coyotes* and *bajadores* (bandits, often working independently from the cartel, who attack migrants groups) (Ferguson and Price 2010; O'Leary 2008), but also by smugglers (Spener 2009) and by members of the Border Patrol (Falcon 2001). Some claim that sexual assault leaves a material trace of evidence: the so-called rape tree—a bush or tree with women's undergarments hanging from the branches.

Rape tree or *trophy tree* are terms coined predominantly by those with particular political motivations, such as the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps, a group of anti-immigrant militants who patrol the desert, often heavily armed, to "protect" the border. To them, the rape trees signify sexual assault perpetrated by *coyotes* against female migrants (Wielemans 2010). Through the Minutemen's characterization of the tree, women are portrayed as modest, vulnerable, and victimized by powerful nonwhite men. Although militia members attempt to align themselves as protectors of these migrant women, they co-opt traumatic migrant memory and by doing so further polarize the gender divide and criminalize migration. As the artifact—the underwear hanging from a tree—is read as sad and barbaric, it takes on an emotional and political charge (Burgard 2009).

Although she is on the opposite end of the sociopolitical spectrum from the Minutemen, a Tucson Samaritan named Elizabeth also appropriates the narrative and potential memories of border-crossers by imbuing an object with emotional weight and meaning. When asked to comment on undergarments in the desert, she reflected that they can be beautiful because "at the beginning the women came ready to dress up. And I don't know if they were going to get dressed up for an interview, but they bring their very nice things to come to America." Through the undergarment, Elizabeth simultaneously valorizes the plight of the migrant while perpetuating the narrative of migrant-as-body-of-labor. Under the guise of intimacy and empathy, the reading of the artifact is deployed politically. Memory is effec-

tively disrupted, or at least co-opted, for political means. The artifact takes on a predominantly testimonial function, whether serving the dominant or counter-dominant cultural narrative.

In our own research, we have spoken with women who take birth control pills before entering the desert in anticipation of being raped. We have heard accounts of migrant groups being stripped bare and robbed by the *mafia* (cartel), their clothing being strewn aside. In the field, we have seen women's undergarments suspended from the branches of trees or bushes (fig. 9.4). However, while accounts of sexual violence and discarded clothing exist, our interviews do not correlate assault to this particular placement of women's underwear.

We showed images of women's underwear hanging in trees to 40 border-crossers and asked if they had seen something similar or knew what it

Figure 9.4. Women's underwear hangs from a mesquite tree in the Sonoran Desert. Photo by permission of Robert Kee.

meant. Out of those 40, only one person, an 18-year-old male, identified the underwear tree as a possible site of sexual assault. He said he had never seen anything like it in the desert, so we asked how he knew what it was: "We saw videos when we were there [U.S. federal detention center]—when they got us. They showed us some videos. The videos said these were the places of kidnappings and other things." Here we see a corroboration of the narrative of the Minutemen by that of the Border Patrol and how this begins to form and inform the memory of migrants. The underwear tree becomes a site where memory is co-opted and disseminated for political gains. Furthermore, although the serious risk of sexual assault exists, the tree becomes a myth that teaches migrant women to be fearful, perpetuating victimization rather than emancipation.

The remaining 39 responses to the images of a tree with underwear in it were all educated guesses rather than firsthand encounters. However, even these interpretations carry divergent memories of desert-crossing experiences. One newly deported male migrant looked at the photo and said: "Some people are just crazy. They got so hot and sick in the desert. They probably stripped clothes and hung them everywhere [laughs]." Another man recalls being separated from his group by Border Patrol and thusly explains the underwear hanging in the tree: "A woman was probably washing her clothes when Border Patrol came and everyone ran." Domestic and habitual tasks, like washing clothes, take place alongside the foreign activities of avoiding surveillance and hiking across difficult terrain. Again, we see how memory work, by relating to familiar objects, makes sense of unfamiliar terrain and experiences.

Through archaeological work, we can read underwear on trees not as a symbol of victimization but as a coping strategy or an attempt to express autonomy. In the field, we have located isolates of women's undergarments away from nearby migrant stations, suggesting a delineation of their own "private spaces" used to change clothing. It is also possible that the location of undergarments is not solely determined by deliberate human placement. Relying on archaeological techniques, we have documented how monsoon seasons and other environmental factors move objects through washes and sometimes into nearby bushes. In this way, while objects may stabilize memory, their life history can also be destabilized and disrupted by a variety of factors. By approaching the migrant's undergarment as a heterotopic site, we can allow for multiple memories—including those not derived from

firsthand experience—to tell us things about the border-crossing process. Even projected and inferred memories reveal related experiences as much as political agendas.

Reflections on Memory, Empathy, and Power

In this chapter, we have interlaced first-person accounts, multiple categories of otherness, and divergent interpretations of artifacts. Our triangulation of this data has shown that even in the context of trauma and stress, memory work can connect an unstable present with a more familiar past. Recalling events can moreover help to stabilize the identity or social role of the border-crosser and sometimes empower them. Otherwise fleeting, unconscious, or forgotten experiences of a crossing may be materially embedded in artifacts, preventing a total loss of memory. As such, objects in the desert can mark absence as well, almost as if in memoriam.

This indicates that memories work in four principal ways. First, trauma can erase or suppress memory, encourage a conscious attempt at oblivion, or embed itself in an artifact. Second, although trauma and suffering are prevalent in the desert, memories vary from person to person and even from one crossing attempt to another. Because of this variance, border-crossers often do not convey their personal memories or diminish the intensity of their memories on account of a perceived relativism (someone else has had it worse). Third, memories of border-crossing can be co-opted, and recollections are colored by political agendas, whether originating from a migrant, a guide, an activist, or a member of the Border Patrol. This means that memories can be imposed on objects and disseminated with the intent of persuasion. Fourth, memory can be nascent and not fully formed due to a lack of time to reflect. Many border-crossers we have interviewed were either on their way home or ready to cross again. As such, they were still transient and vulnerable, in survival mode, and often unable to ascertain what had happened or would happen.

As researchers, we have tried to get as close as possible to the unmediated experience of border-crossing. We have walked the same trails as border-crossers and have been exposed to the same elements. This sharing of the landscape appears to give us access to personal memory through experience and awareness. Indeed, as William Earle put it, "As a form of awareness, memory is wholly and intensely personal; it is always felt as

'some particular event that happened to *me*'" (cited in Lowenthal 1985: 194, emphasis in the original). Hence it is tempting to assume that we share our memories of the desert with the absent bodies whose traces we study. But no matter how many times we have entered the border landscape as researchers, we will never have the same memories, motivations, or perspectives as those who clandestinely cross. Even among people who have crossed the desert, the "desert experience" is in fact highly variable. Repeated crossing attempts and various forms of social or individual capital can affect one's preparedness for, or success in, crossing (Singer and Massey 1998). The result is highly divergent relationships between material culture and embodied experience.

What is more, while the Sonoran borderlands can be read as a heterotopia of crisis and deviation, the memory work of border-crossings does not exist outside the dominant sociopolitical structure in the United States. It remains framed and fueled by the American Dream, which includes the exploitation of the migrant body for labor. It is in this way that heterotopia's connection to institutions is subversive while also subservient and inescapable. Instead of acting against the dominant structure in a singular, revolutionary way, memory mediates the border-crosser's needs for survival, evasion, and well-being while she is transient in a foreign landscape. Anthropology, too, is institutional, recovering the artifact and memory of the other for its own ends, "peddling otherness" while further marginalizing it: "Otherness cannot be radical insofar as it is produced by ourselves [anthropologists]" (Friedman 1987: 165). Thus, even under the heterotopic rubric, issues of power and representation are prevalent and problematic. However, by viewing landscapes, objects, and narratives as heterotopic sites, we give memories from people with varying motives a chance to cohabit, demonstrating the incredible variation inherent in the border-crossing process.

As researchers, we have made a conscious choice to acknowledge and allow for variability in memory by drawing on Foucault's notion of heterotopia—that is, an institutionally bounded other space that contains multiple versions and inversions of personal, social, and political realities in physical space. Methodologically speaking, this choice prompted us not to treat objects and spaces as one-to-one corollaries of uniform memories but to recognize them as sites inhabited by multiple memories. Foucault uses a mirror as a metaphor to illustrate how a heterotopic space works,

underscoring the ways in which it connects all possible spaces, even beyond the space we occupy personally through our individual body. During our research, we transported ourselves into the other space of artifacts and stories, thus trying to temporarily be inside the chaotic process of border-crossing. In a way, we reflected the memory of the other into ourselves through an object. In doing so, we were able to imagine ourselves where we are not and to imagine an experience we have not had. We treated each object we encountered as a thing "that enables me to see myself there where I am absent" (Foucault 1986: 24), as a way to vicariously experience the position of otherness and as a conduit for empathy.

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