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ARTICLE REVIEW

Steel Walls and Picket Fences: Rematerializing the U. S. Mexican Border in Ambos Nogales

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In the article “ Steel Walls and Picket Fences: Rematerializing the U. S. Mexican Border in Ambos Nogales”, McGuire (2013) looks at the reason for the borders separating the United States and Mexico and the feelings of the Mexican in both sections of Nogales. McGuire is an authority on the thoughts and feelings of these people, as visits across the borders started from as early as 1972. He started off as a visitor to the territory and then in 2011, he visited the territory as a humanitarian aid worker and an archaeologist. His main objective was to relate the effect of the physical border on the mental and psychological nature of the natives. The article speaks to the fact that for most of the twentieth century, the cities of Nogales in Arizona and Nogales in Sonora remained under confinement of the border which place limits of the physical movement of the natives. McGuire (2013), notes that the people of Ambos Nogales remembers longingly that the border was really a white picket fence that separated the neighbors, and that it was easier to relate to than the physical border that took its place.

Consequently, during the middle of the 1990s, America destroyed the picket fence and put up a wall made of steel that served to encircle the boundary or perimeter of the cities. These boundaries were put in place to stop the illegal migration of Mexicans with their drug smuggling and human trafficking across the borders. In addition, 2011 brought on a newly-built steel wall that

stood in its place. The re-appearance of the United States - Mexican border running through Ambos Nogales came about in an effort to fortify and transgress the legal issues protecting one city from the other. The border or wall is presently one of the main noticeable instruments within the United States' armed protection of the border. McGuire (2013) adds however, that while the wall is a symbol of protection, it does not truly protect the natives. In fact, the wall merely limits the number of people who cross the border, and does not actually stop them from crossing.

In his writings, McGuire recognizes that the wall creates more problems than expected. The people of Ambos Nogales, who tried to cross the border, found new and innovative ways to go across without the detection of the border patrol. McGuire reiterates one of the reasons for the border was to smooth the progress of, and limit the organization of the people of Ambos Nogales in essence, they "rematerialize" the boundaries that separate both cities which would breach the awareness of the nation-states. As a result, the state began to restructure the border in an effort to oppose this disobedience of the natives. McGuire's (2013) study focuses on the fences or walls that keep the people from having a free flow of movement from one the state to another. During the archaeologist's visit in 1972, he became impressed with the difference between the Texas border cities to the city where he grew up. He noted that the camaraderie that existed among some of the natives and the army at the security standpoints showed that a number of those living across the borders moved on with their lives and accepted the boundaries. The ease, with which the oppressor and the oppressed related to each other, encouraged McGuire to return to Nogales many years after his first visit. He

spends most of his visits observing the territory from an archaeologist's perspective, and notes that on his initial visit to the Ambos Nogales; the border policies that existed between America and Mexico highlighted trade, internationalism, and communication. These policies were regulated by the chain - link fence that the border - patrol believed would bring some amount of order or organization within these cities. However, not all of the people of the region agree with the policy of the border that separates the two areas. Some of the natives, who McGuire spoke with, reminisced about the past with the imaginary border lines and note that the border now separates, not just cities but it also separates the positive relationship between the people. The separation adds to the division in family structure as there are those families who are divided because they live on the opposite sides of the boundaries. In essence, a number of the natives long for the picket fences that separated them, and they now find it more difficult to deal with the mental anguish of being separated from the other side of the fence. According to McGuire (2013), Mexico and the United States "materialize and rematerialize" the boundaries between the two Nogales in an effort to control the movements of the people and drugs across the border. Furthermore, the material or physical border limits and restricts the citizens of Ambos Nogales, often lead to the re-materialization of the border in order to fix this wrongdoing. The main idea behind the border lines were to prevent violence spreading from one city to another, yet McGuire notes that the boundaries in Nogales were not successful in inspiring the feeling of security among the people, but, instead caused widespread panic among the people and in turn reduced the issue of legally crossing the border.

As an archeologist, McGuire (2013), notes that he can relate to the issues that surround the physical border which exists in Nogales. He continues to point out that as a “ border crosser there is the problem of boundaries as limitations to human and their condition. The checkpoints gates and the state agents create conflict in how people adjust to confinement. His experiences, as he interacted with the natives, led McGuire to conclude that the limitations these natives face are similar to an excavation, whereby after the surface is removed, the real meaning of boundaries surfaces. In addition, McGuire (2023) emphasizes that archaeological techniques allows for the capacity to recognize the details in the chaos that usually surrounds the present material world. Consequently, the complex relationships relating to social concepts add to the psychological effect of being confined through material boundaries. The fact is that humans tend to construct new ideas and concepts, but as soon as this is done, the creations affect humans in a number of ways. McGuire’s article points to the researches of Harrison and Schofield in 2010 which reveals that the visibility of the physical wall in Berlin affects how people view their surroundings.

McGuire (2013) makes reference to other scholars and reinforces the idea that with the increase in the patrols at the border and the security that ensues, the United States still faces the dilemma of the drug smugglers and human traffickers. In essence, the more the United States attempt to fortify the borders, the Mexicans outsmart them as they find new ways to get across. The reality is that the border is an attempt to curb violence across the borders, but criminals still find ways to fight it. The people and the drugs that are smuggled out of the country, it becomes clearer that the recent

border in effective. The more borders are erected, the more fascinated people become with the need to explore the unknown. Human nature dictates that when faced with the unknown, it becomes an obsession. The people who attempt to cross the Mexican – United States border revel in the promise of a better life in the United States. However, the only recommendation to the problem is to remove the border so that the proverbial picture of fame and glory will lessen the transgression. Muckle (2013) points out that illegal migration across the border “ is a hot-button issue in the United States”. In addition, hundreds of thousands of people attempt to cross the border into Arizona every year. An estimated eighty percent get caught. Some die in the desert, and of course some go undetected. Nevertheless, the United States government tries different strategies to get the Mexicans to desist from crossing the border. In fact, many of them are shot, and their decomposing bodies are quickly removed as the border patrol waits on others to attempt to cross. The fact is that the measures that have been taken by the Americans in their effort to control the borders have proven futile. The many scholars who research on the topic point to the tragedy that is often associated with those who attempt to smuggle across the border, yet the policies remain unchanged.

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