

Building Connections, Building Obstacles: The Material Rhetorics of Connection and  
Disconnection at two US Border Parks

Carolina Nieto Ruiz

A dissertation  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2022

Reading Committee:

Christine Harold, Chair

Leah Ceccarelli

Leilani Nishime

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Communication

©Copyright 2022

Carolina Nieto Ruiz

University of Washington

**Abstract**

Building Connections, Building Obstacles: The Material Rhetorics of Connection and  
Disconnection at two US Border Parks

Carolina Nieto Ruiz

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Christine Harold, Chair

Department of Communication

This dissertation analyzes and compares parks at each of the two US borders—Peace Arch Park at the US-Canada border and Friendship Park at the US-Mexico border. I argue that the material elements in each park actively construct a specific kind of border which seems to be working against the binational collaboration they were meant to represent, and that these elements perpetuate the unfair treatment of visitors at the southern park. To demonstrate this, I connect border rhetoric, material in situ rhetoric, and rhetorical field methods. In the first chapter I analyze the material, embodied, and ephemeral rhetoric of the parks to see how each of the borders enhance a binational togetherness/separation tension. In the second chapter, I use the concept of wild rhetoric and deep ambivalence, to analyze how borders in relation to nonhumans create new obstacles for communities trying to collaborate to solve urgent problems such as environmental crises. Finally, in the third chapter I introduce the concepts of *re-placing* and *pre-placing* as tactics of rhetorical cartography, to analyze how visitors at each park responded to the access restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, from Spring 2020 to Spring 2021.

## Contents

Introduction.....	1
Research Exigence .....	5
Literature Review .....	8
Rhetorical Border Studies.....	10
Material Rhetoric in situ .....	16
Rhetorical Field Methods .....	21
Dissertation Cartography.....	25
CHAPTER ONE .....	28
Public Feelings in Places of Tension Between Binational Togetherness and Binational Separation .....	28
Material Rhetoric.....	29
The Material Rhetoric of Peace Arch Park.....	32
The Material Rhetoric of Friendship Park.....	36
Embodied Rhetoric.....	41
Embodied Rhetoric at Peace Arch Park .....	43
Embodied Rhetoric at Friendship Park.....	45
Ephemeral Rhetoric.....	49
Ephemeral Rhetoric at Peace Arch Park.....	52
Ephemeral Rhetoric at Friendship Park.....	53
Chapter Conclusion.....	57
CHAPTER TWO .....	59
Permeabilities at the Borderlines .....	59
Nonhumans in Peace Arch Park.....	64
The Salish Sea and the Border.....	65
The Lawned Border .....	71
Nonhumans at Friendship Park .....	76
California Ground Squirrels .....	78
Tijuana’s Sewage.....	85
Chapter Conclusion.....	91

CHAPTER THREE .....	94
Re-placing and Pre-placing Tactics at the Parks during the COVID-19 Pandemic .....	94
Re-placing Tactics at Peace Arch Park .....	105
Re-placing and Pre-placing Tactics at Friendship Park .....	116
Re-placing Friendship Park .....	118
Pre-Placing Tactics at Friendship Park.....	125
Chapter Conclusion.....	136
CONCLUSION.....	140
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	156

## Introduction

In this dissertation, as a comparative case, I examine two public parks created as boundary points between the United States and its neighbors. The first is Peace Arch Park on the US-Canada border, and the second is Friendship Park on the US-Mexico border. I will explore each park in detail throughout this dissertation, but by way of introduction, I offer here a snapshot of each of the two parks that allows us to see some notable differences between the parks and what they demonstrate about the US relationship with its neighbors to the north and to the south.

*Sunday, March 7, 2019: Peace Arch Park*

*I arrived at the parking lot in Blaine, Washington around noon. The ranger taking care of the US side was nearby so I asked him how to get to the Arch. He welcomed me and pointed west. He told me to walk in that direction and not to cross the street to the north; he said something like “Canadians don’t like us to cross there, [but] we don’t care.” I started walking across the pretty lawn that blurred the border and unified this park. The park was not busy. Within the park there were different areas: playgrounds, picnic spaces, and small gardens, all on the lawn. Some families were with their children at the playgrounds and a small group was having a picnic at one of the tables. Some people were walking around in the park, and others were running. The more eastern areas of the park felt like a neighborhood park with a residential area just across the street. Closer to the Peace Arch, two parallel rows of cars were waiting to cross through the Canadian and US land ports and were moving slowly—they even had to stop for several minutes. People got out of their cars and walked freely within the park as time allowed. Because the exact border is not noticeable on the lawn, most of them had to look for the markers designating the border or the sign with the name of country they were driving to,*

*and they took pictures there. As I reside in the United States on a visa, I was carrying all my documents with me, just in case. While I was within the park, without going to the ports, I could walk in and out of Canada and the US—no one asked me anything and no one stopped me.*<sup>1</sup>



Peace Arch Park in Blaine, WA (US) and Surrey, B. C. (Canada).

*Sunday, April 28, 2019: Friendship Park*

*It was around 10:00 am. I took a cab from downtown Tijuana to Playas, where Friendship Park is located. The ride was a thirty-minute trip along the twenty-foot-high rusty border fence that artificially divides San Diego and Tijuana; California and Baja California; the US and Mexico; and Anglo America from Latin America. It was windy in Playas.*

*Friendship Park is a circle cut in half by a fence; I counted thirty steps in its diameter. It is within a plaza complex made of concrete that also serves as a walkway to the beach. Within this area people from the community had painted the fence, changing the rust into colors. The plaza was busy with vendors selling snacks, people walking to and from the beach, and a band*

---

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all photos used in this paper were taken by the author.

*singing. The fence within this circle is also backed with metal mesh to keep people from passing things between the fence pickets. The half circle of Friendship Park was also busy. People were standing along the fence within the circle. They were facing the fence, and from some feet back it seemed that they were talking to the fence. From up closer I could see some shadows behind the fence, and through the mesh holes I could see in fragments the bodies of the visitors on the San Diego side of the park. This US side of the park is enclosed with a secondary fence and managed by border agents. Visitors can be on the US side only on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.—if the border patrol allows.*

*As I walked along the fence on the Tijuana side, I could see a woman in her sixties sitting and talking to her son; a man in his fifties talking to another man, maybe a brother, maybe a friend; two boys talking to their dad; and a woman from Central America talking to an attorney about getting refugee status. The mother asked the son to sneak the tip of his finger through the mesh fence. She touched his pinkie with hers. On the Tijuana side, around 1 p.m., people started to gather in the circle and set up chairs, speakers, and booths with food. At 1:30, a religious celebration started with the participation of both sides of the park. They took advantage of the fact that the speaker sound can travel easily through the fence. The celebration ended at 2:00 p.m. People on the San Diego side of the park left and people on the Tijuana side ate the free food and shared time together.*



The plaza at Friendship Park, Tijuana side. April 2019.

The similarities and differences between these parks make them particularly appealing for a comparative study of the ways built environments and public spaces might be read as rhetorical texts that physically manifest broader political values and international relations. Both are ostensibly public spaces. Both are on the Pacific Coast. Both parks claim to be “binational,” with borders crossing through their center. As such, both are half in the US territory, and half in the neighboring country, a configuration presumably intended as a material reminder of the camaraderie between the countries. Intentions aside, the experience of humans visiting the border at each park are dramatically different. These different experiences are, in large part, effects of the material rhetorics of the spaces themselves. Visitors to the US-Canada park have described it as, “great,” “pretty,” and “gorgeous.”<sup>2</sup> In contrast, people have commented that visiting Friendship Park on the San Diego side is like a “prison visit,” that it is “sad,” “bittersweet,” and

---

<sup>2</sup> *Trip Advisor* reviews for “Peace Arch Park.”

“heartbreaking.”<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, the San Diegan activist organization Friends of Friendship Park has been working for a decade to improve the conditions at Friendship Park, with Peace Arch Park as their model.

### Research Exigence

The scenes that I have just presented in this introduction demonstrate two very different material conditions at these border parks and show how these conditions are not only symptoms of the border situation, but how they are also actively consequential for their visitors.

On the one hand, the conditions in the two parks are symptomatic of how the United States sees its neighbors. When we look at the two scenes, we can see that there are two different kinds of treatment of the people visiting each binational park. In the northern park, people can move freely along an extensive lawn and cross the border without even noticing, and people from either country are allowed to gather there. In contrast, the southern park has a double fence that does not allow any cross-border movement and makes it hard for binational families to gather there. The United States has been militarizing only the southern border—not the northern. For the United States, segregating itself not only from its unwanted neighbor, Mexico, but from all its Latin America neighbors seems to be a pressing need, and just as pressing is the need the country feels about maintaining its close ties with Canada. The different conditions at each park are symptomatic of these priorities.

On the other hand, these parks are not just symptoms, they also have consequences that reproduce and perpetuate the inequity for their visitors. The material conditions in Peace Arch Park invite us as visitors to explore the border by moving through it. However, the material

---

<sup>3</sup> David Bacon, “The Sadness of the Border Wall,” *Contexts* 16, no. 1 (February 1, 2017): 48–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504217696064>; Jack Jenkins, “The Most Heartbreaking Place in America is Called ‘Friendship Park,’” *Think Progress*, November 3, 2014, <https://thinkprogress.org/the-most-heartbreaking-place-in-america-is-called-friendship-park-ed0effeaac3a/>

conditions at Friendship Park cause pain. Many binational families whose members cannot enter and exit the United States rely on weekend gatherings at Friendship Park for face-to-face encounters. This heartbreaking situation has moved people such as the activists in the Friends of Friendship Park organization to advocate for change. For more than a decade they have been fervently looking for ways to alleviate this situation for binational families at Friendship Park.

The two different parks are, then, rhetorical microcosms of the unequal values and assumptions that the United States has about its two neighbors. These assumptions shape the materiality of the built environment of the parks and, at the same time, continue to reproduce those inequities. As rhetorical scholars, we can use these parks to analyze these inequities and then we can also show how they have been perpetuated. Unfortunately, if we see this in a wider global picture, this microcosm is not only present in the US context. Each national border is materially and discursively different, but they are all essentially divisions that nation-states have created, defended, and perpetuated by means of war, culture, and diplomacy. The wall between the US and Mexican border, although not fully finished, is hardly unique on the contemporary world stage. We can see the same thing, for example, in the West Bank Wall in Israel; South Africa's walling out of Zimbabwe; Saudi Arabia's wall against Yemen, India's wall-building to keep out Pakistan, the wall between Bangladesh and Burma, and Uzbekistan's fencing out of Kyrgyzstan. We can see this also between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, Botswana and Zimbabwe, and China and North Korea—and on and on. Humans build these walls with a specific intention. The purported aim is to deter poor people, workers, and asylum seekers as well as the smuggling of drugs, weapons and other contraband or, taxable goods, the kidnapping or enslaving of youth, and the importation of terror, ethnic or religious mixing, other political movements, and to keep out enemies.

The US-Mexico border has been an example of this increased securitization/militarization and what political scientist Wendy Brown calls the “wallification” of borders. These physical walls have essentially created “gated communities” in border cities in both the southern US and northern Mexico. Inhabitants on both sides live the consequences of that material segregation daily<sup>4</sup> The border fence cut the landscape and communities, blinding and disconnecting them of the collaborative possibilities and accountability with what and who is on the other side. We need to revise and understand better the material consequences these walls and other types of securitized borders have for human communities, families, and many other beings as well. Of particular interest in this project is how these material assemblages generate unethical consequences for the landscapes and communities they straddle. These borders themselves are rhetorical agents, participating in the deaths of countless people who dare to cross them.

Immigration is perhaps the central global challenge of this new century, and it will undoubtedly keep rising as the gap between rich and poor countries increases, as the exploitation of the human labor and natural resources of poor nations continues, and as climate change forces many of us to leave our home territories in search of work, shelter, food, water, and safety.<sup>5</sup> Architect Ronald Rael rightly points out that any border constructed as a space of conflict, segregation, and division has to be changed as mobility is increasing in the world.<sup>6</sup> By comparing these two border spaces of binational gathering I hope that this project will allow readers to re-think which kind of material border we would rather cross. How dangerous do we want that crossing to be? If we can meet people we love at international spaces on the borders,

---

<sup>4</sup> Wendy Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Oli Brown, “Migration and Climate Change,” ed. Ilse Pinto-Dobering, IOM Migration Research Series. (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Ronald Rael, *Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the US-Mexico Boundary* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017).

what do we want that encounter to be like? Fingertips touching through a fence? A freely-given hug in an open greenspace? In other words, which border assemblages are acceptable, which are safe and ethical, and which ones should be changed and how? By acknowledging and understanding the agency that both humans and nonhumans have in public spaces at borders, we can imagine border assemblages that create a fairer and more ethical spaces, taking into account the reciprocal connections among humans and nonhumans, and enlarging our capacity to care for and inhabit our world.

Throughout this dissertation I will be arguing that material elements in each park actively construct a specific kind of border. The built environment of the northern park blurs the physical borderline and allows playful binational gatherings, allowing the experience of a supposedly open border that encourages collaboration. In contrast, the built environment of the southern border, with its fence and visiting restrictions on the US side, prompts the experience of a border that keeps both countries separated, excludes people from Latin America, and hence punishes them by not allowing them to see their families. These material differences at each border perpetuate different and unfair treatment to the visitors in the southern park. In the following section I introduce scholarship on the rhetoric of borders and of place. This work has helped me to develop my own analysis, which I hope will contribute to this important conversation.

### Literature Review

Border, borderline, and borderland are intrinsically related concepts, but I do not use them as synonyms. I use *border* a geopolitical social construct that identifies boundary demarcation the territory over which the nation-state can assert and defend its claim of jurisdiction and control. Even when borders exist in a physical space, they have become rhetorical entities that exist everywhere, in our public discourse, in our cultural representations,

and in our collective imaginations. These constructs permeate many levels of the everyday life shaping people's understanding of an Us who share a national identity, and foreigners and immigrants as Others, even in communities that are far away from the national boundaries.<sup>7</sup> I want to focus our attention on the actual materiality of borders. The geographers Clark Blaise and Russell Brown claims that a border includes but is not limited to both borderline and borderland.<sup>8</sup> With *borderline* I refer to the actual material line drawn over the landscape to divide two nations, and I am highlighting its physicality. These lines in the world are meant to divide the landscape into nations. In some places people have made these divisions more visible than others, marked them more explicitly than others, made them more dangerous than others, rendered them more artificial than others. With *borderland* I refer to the actual material territory where social, cultural, and natural commonalities are shared and developed. While borderlines help us to understand the materially divisive power of borders, borderlands help us to understand how borders serve as bridges among nations.

Social constructionists have shown how discourse constructs nationhood, reinforced by the rhetorical force of laws, trade, and international agreements as well as the paraphernalia of national ideology and belonging; nationalist discourse, “official” language, national history, monuments, citizenship, visas, flags, anthems, passports, and money.<sup>9</sup> Social constructionism allows us to see the arbitrariness of the creation of nations as a concept and how rhetorical artifacts shape and reinforce national identities. This perspective mainly focuses on uncovering how nations and other social constructs are human-created concepts designed to maintain certain territories as belonging

---

<sup>7</sup> Kent A Ono, “Borders That Travel: Maters of the Figural Border,” in *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*, ed. D. Robert DeChaine (The University of Alabama Press, 2012), <http://muse.jhu.edu/book/17281>.

<sup>8</sup> Clark Blaise and Russell Brown. *The Border as Fiction*. Borderlands Monograph Series ; #4. Orono, Me.]: Borderlands, 1990.

<sup>9</sup> Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (UK: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 81–123.

to one group of people through the exclusion of others. This perspective resonates with the way scholars in rhetoric have been contributing to border studies. Rhetorical studies of the border have tended to focus on the way that the southern border of the United States has been socially constructed through public discourse and how this construction has shaped cultural values and public attitudes, especially against immigrants from Latin America. Rhetoricians have studied the US-Mexico border to deepen our understanding of how borders have been rhetorically constructed and how this construction has shaped the ways immigrants are racialized and people of various ethnicities are treated. Rhetorical border studies, in general, have provided a symbolic and performative perspective to study borders. In this dissertation I bring material rhetoric to the existing border rhetoric to enlarge the understanding of borders.

### *Rhetorical Border Studies*

I have identified two threads in rhetorical studies that analyze borders, both of which show an intricate relation among the rhetorical construction of the US-Mexico border, the identity of immigrants, and the identity of the United States as a nation.

#### Rhetorical Border Studies Focused on Representation

The first thread analyzes the way the border has been constructed in verbal and visual representations in popular media outlets, journal archives, and discourses around immigration legislation. Lisa Flores, for example, analyses journalism archives from 1920s and 1930s and argues that the way the US-Mexico border has been symbolically constructed has shifted depending on the US's need for Mexican workers. During the 1920s, Mexicans were portrayed as desirable, ideal immigrant workers. They were discursively characterized as docile, obedient, and loyal to their Mexican nationality; in other words, they were cast as a controllable population

that could be used as cheap labor and that would not stay in the US for a long period of time. However, by the early 1930s, the need for Mexican workers decreased in the United States and US citizens started noticing the marked Mexican body in spaces that it had not previously occupied. The media started presenting them as criminals, illegal aliens, and diseases carriers. According to Flores, Mexican immigration was rhetorically a dangerous threat to the nation and the status of the southern border shifted to “vulnerable”—not strong enough to contain the danger. This shift also promoted rhetorical acts to create clearer borders between the US and Mexico and the enforcement of immigration regulations.<sup>10</sup> Karma Chavez points out that the US government has discursively portrayed the border as permeable, and therefore vulnerable to entry by terrorists, undocumented immigrants, and drug smugglers, thus constructing this border as the “greatest source for insecurity in the national imaginary.”<sup>11</sup>

This discourse on permeability became the justification for securitization. By analyzing the securitization processes of the US-Mexico border since the mid-to late 1980s and the text of the *Secure Border Initiative Monthly*, Chavez argues that the discourse of the “securitization of the border” has been disguising the militarization that the US government has undertaken along its southern border.<sup>12</sup> David Cisneros analyzes news coverage of the US-Mexico border to show how videos of immigrants crossing the border without authorization were framed in a manner visually similar to the coverage of toxic waste spills, and particularly to the crisis at Love Canal in the 1970s. This visual similarity constructs immigrant as “pollutants” and the border as

---

<sup>10</sup> Lisa A. Flores, “Constructing Rhetorical Borders: Peons, Illegal Aliens, and Competing Narratives of Immigration,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20, no. 4 (2003): 362–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0739318032000142025>.

<sup>11</sup> Karma Chávez, “Border Interventions: The Need to Shift from a Rhetoric of Security to a Rhetoric of Militarization,” in *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*, ed. D. Robert DeChaine (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012), 49. <http://muse.jhu.edu/book/17281>.

<sup>12</sup> Chávez, “Border Interventions.”

“porous.” This metaphor of pollution creates the impression that immigration is a stream of contamination seeping through holes in the border.<sup>13</sup>

Kent Ono and John Sloop have analyzed visual and written rhetoric around California’s Proposition 187 in 1994 that limited educational and wellness rights to undocumented immigrants.<sup>14</sup> They show how this rhetoric alters how the image of the border is constructed. For example, discourses around this proposition portrayed immigration as “invaders,” a fundamental threat to the character of the nation that would create a national “underclass” that would bring disease and infect the nation. This construction of immigration from the south helped to construct the border as immobile, ahistorical, porous, and “perpetually threaten[ed] by those who cross it.”<sup>15</sup> In other words, in this framing, the border is imagined as “a vulnerable place in danger of being violated.”<sup>16</sup> This discourse reifies immigration as a problem exacerbated by weak borders, and solvable only by strengthening and protecting them.<sup>17</sup>

This first thread provides a way to understand how discursive and visual representation of immigrants, the southern border, and nationhood are interrelated as well as how they have shaped cultural values and public attitudes and inspired individual and collective actions against people across the southern border. In particular, this thread offers a critical perspective on how the rhetorical construction of dangerous foreigners penetrating a vulnerable border have impacted the immigrants’ wellbeing, and justified an increasing militarization of the border.

---

<sup>13</sup> J. David Cisneros, “Contaminated Communities: The Metaphor of ‘Immigrant as Pollutant’ in Media Representations of Immigration,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 11, no. 4 (2008): 583. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rap.0.0068>.

<sup>14</sup> Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, *Shifting Borders: Rhetoric, Immigration, and California’s Proposition 187, Mapping Racisms* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> Ono and Sloop, 50.

<sup>16</sup> Ono and Sloop, 50–51.

<sup>17</sup> Ono and Sloop, 75.

This thread opened the conversation in rhetoric to interrogate the symbolic rhetorical constructions of borders and immigrants and the unfair consequences of these constructions as they have become entangled with body politics and citizenship. As useful as this line of scholarship has been in terms of demonstrating the rhetorical work of borders, they leave an important aspect of border rhetoric uninterrogated. Specifically, this border rhetoric scholarship overlooks the *material* aspect of borders. With this dissertation project I hope to contribute to the scholarly conversation about border rhetoric by filling this gap. By attending to the more complicated, material aspects of borders, I hope to offer an approach that understands borders in a more complex way. Border materiality is important to address as it also perpetuates oppressive power relations associated with the narrative of sovereignty. The humans and nonhumans at the borders actively participate in creating certain kinds of borders. In addition to the way they are represented, borders have the power to facilitate or *complicate* not only international mobility, but also healthy relations in the borderlands, and to shape public attitudes about people on both sides.

#### Rhetorical Border Studies Focused on Performance

A second thread in the rhetorical studies of borders understands the border as rhetorically reactivated through everyday performative. These performative actions are not necessarily located close to the physical border but can be spread throughout the country. Like the previous thread, these studies are focused on the US-Mexico border. For example, Kent Ono uses the term *figural border* to refer to the idea of a border that has permeated the US society. He analyzes expressions of anti-immigration sentiment in places far from the southern border to demonstrate how the figural border *travels* throughout the whole country. He claims that people enact citizenship by surveilling, disciplining, and controlling marked brown Latinx bodies, reactivating

this figural border into those social spaces where these oppressed bodies live, work, and move.<sup>18</sup> Dustin Bradley Goltz and Kimberlee Pérez, through personal narrative and self-reflection, analyze the way they are complicit in performing, “interanimating,” or “doing” the US-Mexico border in their everyday life as faculty in Phoenix, Arizona. Goltz and Pérez argue that their bodies reproduce and potentially re-articulate borders and bordering discourses through the performativity of their white privilege. This performativity establishes social-cultural boundaries between those who constitute an “us” (non-immigrants) and those who constitute a “them” (immigrants).<sup>19</sup> Sara Baugh-Harris and Bernadette Calafell argue that the US-Mexico border is immaterial and moves through different aspects of social relations. They argue that this psychological and cultural border is intersected by and complicit with race, gender, sexuality and class power relations. However, at the same time, they propose resisting this border by generating a different border performativity: one that instead of separation can be a space of creation, coalitions, and ambiguity that can reject a forced binary understanding of us and others.<sup>20</sup>

This thread of scholarship helps us to understand how, in addition to representation, social performance is also an important aspect of the border. Scholars working on this thread demonstrate how people in their everyday lives rhetorically perform actions and attitudes that are “bordering”—segregating, marginalizing and even killing—Latinx habitants, including US citizens, in the United States. In short, this thread shows how the border is constructed not only

---

<sup>18</sup> Kent A Ono, “Borders That Travel: Matters of the Figural Border”

<sup>19</sup> Dustin Bradley Goltz and Kimberlee Pérez, “Borders without Bodies: Affect, Proximity, and Utopian Imaginaries through Lines in the Sand,” in *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*, ed. D. Robert DeChaine (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012), <http://muse.jhu.edu/book/17281>. 163-178.

<sup>20</sup> Sara Baugh-Harris and Bernadette Calafell, “The Tolerance for ambiguity in the American Dream” in *This Bridge We Call Communication: Anzaldúan Approaches to Theory, Method, and Praxis*, eds. Leandra Hinojosa Hernández and Robert Gutierrez-Perez (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2019), 213–26.

through discourse, but also through performative actions. If a Butlerian performativity is a temporal process that operates through the reiteration of norms that differentiate who is Us and who are Others, then this framing, the border is a constant *doing* that permeates social life and differentiates, separates, and oppresses certain marked bodies.<sup>21</sup> Thus, this thread in rhetoric encourages us to acknowledge our own bordering performance, and to take responsibility for it. This line of scholarship has productively demonstrated the rhetorical force of borders in everyday life but, like the first, it also leaves an important aspect of border rhetoric uninterrogated. Although it is helpful to understand the performative nature of border rhetorics, this thread also overlooks the actual bordering actions at the geographical border, nor does it take into account how nonhumans “border” too. I believe it is important to bring to the conversation an analysis of these material bordering practices. The way different material objects are assembled at the US northern border and at the southern border allow US citizens different ways to perform their border. In addition, as I mentioned, nonhumans are present at the border too. For example, on the southern border, a twenty-foot high fence that is under 24-hour surveillance on the San Diego side of the border materially impacts human and nonhuman relations and mobility. The fence violently obstructs human and animal mobility and actively separates families. It shapes attitudes about the “Other” side of the same bioregion, erasing the possibility of finding commonalities through a shared ecosystem. The fence shapes the understanding of the border as a dichotomized place with a “good”/ “right” side and a “bad”/ “wrong” side. Finally, the fence actively funnels immigrants to the desert, the conditions of which have killed an estimated ten thousand of those humans in movement since 1994. Focusing on the materiality of the border offers rhetorical scholars an opportunity to widen our understanding of borders with a

---

<sup>21</sup> Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (Florence: Routledge, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203828274>.

critical perspective by taking into account human and nonhuman agency and its consequences. Discourses certainly shape our conceptions of ourselves and others, but so, too, do the objects designed to divide us.

### *Material Rhetoric in situ*

I have a particular interest in understanding how humans and nonhumans at specific places (border parks) can construct different kinds of borders which are symbols of national values and can actively affect their visitors. This approach encourages us to take into account the material rhetoric of each park, which includes both the human and nonhuman bodies that interact in situ.

Beginning in the 1990s, some scholars started to recognize the rhetorical dimension in material substance itself. This turn in rhetorical studies has increased our understanding of how material realities, cultural practices, and physical bodies shape, persuade, and make the audience “see” something they have not seen before.<sup>22</sup> Monuments, memorials, museums, quilts, and archives have been particularly appealing for rhetoricians working on the rhetoric of material artifacts.<sup>23</sup>

Justine Wells et al. state that Michel McGee’s 1982 essay “A Materialist’s Conception of Rhetoric” and the collection *Rhetorical Bodies* edited by Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley in

---

<sup>22</sup> Jack Selzer, “Habeas Corpus : An Introduction,” in *Rhetorical Bodies*, ed. Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 9.

<sup>23</sup> Examples of this kind of work include: Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010); Carole Blair, “Contemporary US Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric’s Materiality,” in *Rhetorical Bodies*, ed. Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999) 16-51; Victoria J. Gallagher and Margaret LaWare, “The Power of Agency: Urban Communication and the Rhetoric of Public Art,” in *The Urban Communication Reader*, ed. Gene Burd, Susan Drucker, and Gary Gumpert (New Jersey: Hampton Press, 2007), 161–72; Kenneth Zagacki and Victoria Gallagher, “Rhetoric and Materiality in the Museum Park at the North Carolina Museum of Art.” *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95 (2). p: 171–91.

1999 are seminal rhetorical studies on materiality.<sup>24</sup> For McGee, rhetoric is an ongoing relational practice that articulates “speaker/speech/audience/ change,” and it can occur at different levels of abstraction.<sup>25</sup> Selzer claims that “material realities often (if not always) contain a rhetorical dimension that deserves attention: language is not the only medium or material that speaks.”<sup>26</sup> Selzer collection contains an essay by Carole Blair in which she studies the rhetorical character of five memorials, separating her analysis from the intentionality and symbolicity regime that had traditionally driven rhetorical criticism, to seek what the artifacts are actually doing; that is to say, their “consequence.”<sup>27</sup>

Everyday object places and practices were important for this shift. As Greg Dickinson notes, “[i]t is in the interstices of the everyday, it is in the littlest actions of our daily lives, that we most thoroughly materialize ourselves and our bodies.”<sup>28</sup> Material rhetoric has allowed us to bring to rhetoric the “voices” that had previously been marginalized in the rhetorical canon: the voices of nonhuman things. Scholars have been inquiring how we can understand the rhetoricity of nonhuman things, independently of human intentions and control, and how nonhuman things can have active rhetorical connections with other things. Laurie Gries argues that even when humans produce things with certain intention, “once unleashed,” these things “have the agency to perform and become in whatever arises from an entanglement of human and nonhuman

---

<sup>24</sup> Justine Wells et al., “Introduction: Rhetorics’ Ecologies,” in *Tracing Rhetoric and Material Life: Ecological Approaches*, ed. Bridie Mcgreavy et al., Palgrave Studies in Media and Environmental Communication, (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 17.

<sup>25</sup> Michael McGee, “A Materialist’s Conception of Rhetoric,” in *Rhetoric, Materiality, & Politics* ed. Barbara Biesecker and John Lucaites (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> Jack Selzer, “Habeas Corpus,” in *Rhetorical Bodies*, ed. Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 2.

<sup>27</sup> Carole Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric’s Materiality,” in *Rhetorical Bodies*, ed. Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999) page 16-57).

<sup>28</sup> Greg Dickinson, “Joe’s Rhetoric: Finding Authenticity at Starbucks,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (September 1, 2002): 6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02773940209391238>.

entities and other environmental factors.”<sup>29</sup> In other words, she explains how nonhumans have the agency to change and to change humans and other nonhumans. These inquiries into nonhuman rhetoricity have also increased scholars’ interest in the everyday life. For example, the collection of essays, *Rhetoric Through Everyday Things*, foregrounds approaches concerned with the rhetoricity of mundane things that intra-act with us all the time,<sup>30</sup> such as bicycles, keyboard layouts, trash, books, and computer glitches. Animals have also been included in this rhetorical examination of nonhumans. For example, Debra Hawhee analyses the role of non-human animals in premodern and modern theoretical and instructional texts in the West and show how these animals often function to activate sensation, whether through their movement or producing noise. The texts the animal’s “responsive movements and energy, and their role as partners to humans in sensing and feeling.”<sup>31</sup> She argues that these texts let us see how nonhuman animals exceed verbal language, and fill the world with sensory material, and are part of the constitutive living flow of transactional rhetorical energy. Thus nonhuman animals are brought in to rhetorical texts to bring “rhetoric to its—or the—senses.”<sup>32</sup> Natasha’s Seegert analyzes coyotes that are used as rodent pest control in Chicago.<sup>33</sup> She points out that when coyotes traverse the unfixed landscape of the city, they “do not discipline themselves according to the Cartesian grid of the linear city or Aristotle’s system of rhetoric.”<sup>34</sup> Coyotes do not follow the linear patterns of the asphalt and painted lines, nor do they remain in one lane of traffic. Seegert demonstrates that

---

<sup>29</sup> Laurie E. Gries, *Still Life with Rhetoric: A New Materialist Approach for Visual Rhetorics* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2015), 68.

<sup>30</sup> Scot Barnett and Casey Boyle, eds., *Rhetoric, Through Everyday Things*, 2nd ed. (Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 2016).

<sup>31</sup> Debra Hawhee, “Rhetoric’s Sensorium,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101, no. 1 (February 2015): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2015.995925>.

<sup>32</sup> Hawhee, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Natasha Seegert, “Play of Sniffication: Coyotes Sing in the Margins,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 47, no. 2 (2014): 158–78. <https://doi.org/10.5325/philrhet.47.2.0158>.

<sup>34</sup> Seegert, 161.

the way coyotes transit through Chicago and the signals they produce and sniff destabilizes human-centric structures such as the concept of a marginalized being and the divide between wild/domestic and urban/rural. Instead, they move across concrete barriers and reveal the permeability of anthropogenic boundaries.<sup>35</sup>

Humans bodies are similar but they are not the same, and we cannot share the experience of another human whose body has been shaped by many other experiences. However, we can interpret and imagine others' experience through a shared language, and we can try to have empathy and accountability in this listening and interpreting process. It is similar with nonhumans. We cannot experience their experience, but we can try use the common ground of their humanly-perceptible material qualities and energies and our perception and reason to do our best to understand how they relate to human and other nonhuman material bodies. This exercise can be a powerful tool in understanding the damage and also healing that “unleashed” nonhumans can do at the border to humans and nonhumans, and therefore move us a little step forward to move beyond an anthropocentric understanding.

Public places, such as parks and borders, are complex spaces made up the materiality of human and nonhuman entities: climate, plants, soil, garbage cans, playgrounds, benches, animals, metal, rocks, concrete, and visitors, among others. Memory objects as well as every day, mundane material artifacts in a place invite us as material rhetoric scholars to keep developing a material “understanding of public rhetoric by showing how physical things participate in constituting narratives of past and future, affective practices such as mourning and celebration, and individual and communal identities” in places.<sup>36</sup> For example, Greg Dickinson and Giorgia Aiello use a visual-material analysis to show how “through a combination of colors,

---

<sup>35</sup> Seegert, 166.

<sup>36</sup> Wells et al., “Introduction: Rhetorics’ Ecologies,” 17.

shapes, arrangements[,] smells and sounds,” four Starbucks stores in Seattle invite visitors to experience a sense of locality and community.<sup>37</sup> Aiello analyzes the changes in *Ex Manifattura Tabacchi*, a neighborhood in Bologna. She brings a new understanding of the old material traces in the streets as marks of this previously marginalized, poor area that make it a leading site of cultural production and an appealing destination for high-end tourism today.<sup>38</sup>

Parks, on the one hand, are enclosed outdoor places for public aesthetic and recreational enjoyment.<sup>39</sup> As we experience parks, we put ourselves in emerging intimate relations with other visitors and with the built environment flora, fauna and weather in situ. On the other hand, Carlos Tarin lets us see that borders are sites of emergent assemblages of a complex distribution of material agents and entities, partly natural (landscapes, bodies of water, deserts, forests, mountains, flora, fauna), partly built (fences, entry points, monuments, cities, highways), partly discursive (sovereignty, histories, security, territory, national identity, citizenship), and partly ideological (nationals, foreigners, us, Others).<sup>40</sup> Material approaches to rhetoric can help us to understand how different elements are connected at border parks, and how they generate emerging assemblages of different kinds of borders, and to imagine how more ethical borders are possible. One way that rhetorical scholars are taking to study the material rhetoric that happens in such places is through rhetorical field methods.

---

<sup>37</sup> Giorgia Aiello and Greg Dickinson, “Beyond Authenticity: A Visual-Material Analysis of Locality in the Global Redesign of Starbucks Stores,” *Visual Communication* 13, no. 3 (August 2014): 303–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357214530054>.

<sup>38</sup> Giorgia Aiello, “From Wound to Enclave: The Visual-Material Performance of Urban Renewal in Bologna’s Manifattura Delle Arti,” *Western Journal of Communication* 75, no. 4 (2011): 341–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2011.586971>.

<sup>39</sup> James Stevens Curl, and Susan Wilson. “park,” in *A Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture*. (Oxford University Press, 2015). <https://www-oxfordreference-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780199674985.001.0001/acref-9780199674985-e-5845>.

<sup>40</sup> Carlos Tarin, “Fronteras Toxicas: Towards a Borderland Ecological Consciousnes,” in *This Bridge We Call Communication: Anzaldúan Approaches to Theory, Method, and Praxis*, ed. Leandra Hinojosa Hernández and Robert Gutierrez-Perez (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2019), 31–51.

### *Rhetorical Field Methods*

In the previous subsection I mentioned that the study of objects of public memory were germinal in the study of material rhetoric. Wells et al. also point out that as rhetorical scholars, when they started studying these material artefacts in specific locations they started to “step away from their desks for on-site research.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, there has been an evolution of “in situ” methodologies in rhetorical field work in the past three decades at the nexus of the objects, places, and bodies of engaged rhetorical practice.<sup>42</sup> A foundational moment in rhetorical criticism's in situ turn was Carole Blair's insistence that “being there” matters. To exhort rhetoricians to consider the importance of proximity to the artifact when studying material artifacts in public spaces, she points out that “because of the physical journey, the place, and the presence of other museum goers, the materiality of the experience also differentiates it from the act of seeing reproductions.”<sup>43</sup>

Rhetorical field methods allow scholars to be attentive to at least some of the multitude of rhetorical relations happening among material elements in situ. Wells et al. claim that this attention can be at “least partially cultivated through intimate, sensorial involvement with objects, realm, places and bodies.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, scholars in rhetoric who engage with materiality in a specific location benefit from using field methods. Field methods allow us to observe rhetoric-in-action, and obtain embodied experiences that cannot be obtained otherwise; they also allow us to grasp the complexities of the places we are simultaneously enmeshed with and studying.

---

<sup>41</sup> Wells et al., “Introduction: Rhetorics’ Ecologies,” 17.

<sup>42</sup> Wells et al., 5.

<sup>43</sup> Carole Blair, “Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places,” *Western Journal of Communication* 65, no. 3 (2001): 275. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570310109374706>.

<sup>44</sup> Wells et al., “Introduction: Rhetorics’ Ecologies,” 20.

Middleton, Senda-Cook, and Endres acknowledge that rhetoric scholars have already incorporated fieldwork in their research to “critique embodied, often mundane, forms of rhetoric.”<sup>45</sup> They believe that rhetorical field methods allow rhetoricians to engage with live, in situ rhetoric through a combination of careful textual analysis—characteristic of rhetorical criticism—and the stimulating insights they uncover by in-situ research that combines ethnography and performance studies.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, the authors argue that field methods help rhetorical critics to think in a deeper way about the marginal, embodied, and material forces of rhetoric and locate these forces in the experience of bodies in time, place, and history. Rhetorical field methods also allow us to explore rhetorics beyond texts or textual fragments, “through a combination of material contexts, social relationships, identities, consciousness and interrelated rhetorical acts, that produce meaning and that are co-constructed between rhetor, audience and a particular context.”<sup>47</sup> In addition, fields method allow us to recognize the physical, spatial embodied and sensorial dimension of the studied “live” texts and consider rhetoric’s effectiveness in term of affect and pleasure alongside its rational persuasive influence, focusing our attention on everyday rhetorical acts, underrepresented communities, and voices that are usually not considered in traditional rhetorical criticism.

In their 2016 collection, *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*, McKinnon et al. also draw attention to the value of field methods as tools for rhetorical scholarship. Field methods are those that researchers may use in order to collect and analyze data and ultimately answer their research questions. Examples include interviews, focus groups, observation,

---

<sup>45</sup> Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, “Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions,” *Western Journal of Communication* 75, no. 4 (2011): 387. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2011.586969>.

<sup>46</sup> Middleton, Senda-Cook, and Endres, 17.

<sup>47</sup> Middleton, Senda-Cook, and Endres, 161.

personal narratives, ethnographies, autoethnographies, oral history interviews, performances, thematic analyses, iterative analyses, grounded theory, and many other forms of data collection and analysis, such as field notes, personal reflections, transcripts, and ephemera. The specific researcher's choice of method should be guided by one's research questions and goals.

McKinnon et al. claim that the intersection of rhetoric and field methods allows scholars to understand the field as the “nexus where rhetoric is produced, where it is enacted, where it circulates, and consequently where it is audienced.”<sup>48</sup> Thus, the field actively invites rhetoricians to attend to the ways rhetoric “moves, articulates, and shapes the material realities of people's lives in the everyday” life, among humans and their environment.<sup>49</sup>

Combining rhetorical field methods and material rhetoric perspectives, Senda-Cook, Middleton, and Endres demonstrate that material changes in the built environment of a place can bring new meanings to the place and invite new rhetorical practices. The authors studied the Gifford Park neighborhood in midtown Omaha, where neighbors have repurposed buildings and abandoned lots, changing them into spaces for new rhetorical practices of community gatherings such as community gardens and a community center. In this case, neighbors enacted material changes, creating spaces for new rhetorical practices “to reclaim and restore community value to [this] neighborhood”—a neighborhood that many in Omaha had considered dangerous.<sup>50</sup> The places that I am analyzing in this dissertation are public parks, which for many people are everyday places, at borders. This combination brings multiple levels of complexity as humans and nonhumans relate on each site.

---

<sup>48</sup> Sara L. McKinnon et al., eds., *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*, 1st ed. (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2016), 4.

<sup>49</sup> Sara L. McKinnon et al, 4.

<sup>50</sup> Senda-Cook, Middleton, and Endres, 104.

Candice Rai also uses rhetorical field methods to study “how the contradictory uses of democratic rhetoric materialize in everyday life.”<sup>51</sup> By analyzing different agents in a gentrifying neighborhood in Chicago, Rai tracks democratic engagement around affordable housing developments, community policing initiatives, and other contested public spaces. She uses “multisite, mixed-method, rhetorical ethnography that engages in interviews, (participant) observation and rhetorical archival, visual, new media and internet analysis.”<sup>52</sup> She presents *rhetorical ethnography* as a field method with a theoretical disposition “towards studying rhetorical phenomena and yielding rhetorical knowledge that can only be captured through the sustained presence of the researcher.”<sup>53</sup> Rai’s approach allows us to study how material rhetorics and ideologies interact in everyday life, capturing the vernacular, multiple, and conflicting perspectives and experiences that occur in a field site.

Rhetorical field methods require the researcher to inhabit the places of rhetorical production and make the most of their embodied presence, as well as other extra linguistic qualities of persuasion—beyond rhetorical intentions, truthfulness, or symbolic content—such as nonhuman rhetorical forces and affects. Kathleen Stewart points out that curiosity, speculation, and sensorial awareness can be powerful tools for getting a glimpse of the complexity and messiness of the changing worlds in which we dwell.<sup>54</sup> Those affective responses can allow us to track the rhetoricity happening between the members of a place and to understand the emergent assemblages among them. The fieldwork tools used in this dissertation will help us to

---

<sup>51</sup> Candice Rai, *Democracy’s Lot: Rhetoric, Publics, and the Places of Invention*, 2nd ed. (Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 2016), 3.

<sup>52</sup> Rai, *Democracy’s Lot*, 26.

<sup>53</sup> Rai, *Democracy’s Lot*, 21.

<sup>54</sup> Kathleen Stewart. *Ordinary Affects*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

understand how the relations between humans and nonhumans in Peace Arch Park and the Friendship Park invite us to see a particular kind of border.

The artifacts that I will analyze are the two parks themselves. For a bold perspective on these parks, I used rhetorical field methods that engaged with the interviews, participant observations, and visual and textual analyses. In March and April 2019, I visited both Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park, and in March 2021, I visited Peace Arch Park again. During these field visits I did in site informal interviews with park visitors, wrote extensive field notes of my experience of being there and my interactions with the visitors, and created an archive of pictures and videos. From April 2020 to June 2020, I attended ten weekly, hour-long virtual public meetings led by activists that work to improve Friendship Park. I also attended three online press conferences about a 2021 campaign to advocate for these improvements. In June 2021, I attended two huge events that traditionally occur annually in each park, but because of the COVID-related restrictions, they took place through Zoom. At all of these virtual events, I made participatory observations and took extensive field notes. In addition, from September 2018 to November 2021, I collected and analyzed news articles, images, photos, social media content, and websites that give a sense of the material situation of each park.

#### Dissertation Cartography

My main argument will unfold through three argumentative moves driven by three sets of concepts. Each set brings a different lens to both Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park and shows different rhetorical aspects of the parks. These different aspects give a robust understanding of the rhetorical dynamics of the US border as told through the two parks.

In Chapter One, informed by Endres and Senda-Cook's work on the rhetoric of place in protest, I analyze the material, embodied, and ephemeral rhetoric at each park to argue that the

experience of visiting each park invites us to experience the tension of binational togetherness and separation.<sup>55</sup> Through the analysis of these concepts, in each park we can see that the tensions produce different responses in the visitors. In the northern park this tension invites a public feeling of joyful playfulness, but in the southern park it may produce a mixed feeling of gratefulness and frustration.

Humans tend to dismiss nonhumans: we do not pay enough attention to the fact that borders are harmful for them, too. In Chapter Two, I draw on Nathaniel Rivers' concepts of deep ambivalence and wildness to analyze the permeable relationship that the border has with two nonhumans at each park. The nonhumans permeating the borders that I analyze are the Salish Sea and the grass lawn at Peace Arch Park, and the California ground squirrels and Tijuana's sewage at Friendship Park. Through this analysis I argue that the material borders at the sites that I am analyzing create both opportunities as well as obstacles for humans and nonhumans, and that collaboration is required to solve urgent problems at the borderlands.

In Chapter Three, I analyze both parks in a time of crisis. In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, access through the border and to the parks was restricted. Binational couples and families that could not cross the US-Canada border turned to Peace Arch Park for their gatherings. Friendship Park access was completely restricted and activists turned to virtual gatherings to keep advocating for a better park. I show that visitors to Peace Arch Park responded to the border closure with a re-placing tactic that allowed them to recuperate part of what they lost in the closure. In contrast, the Friendship Park activists had to use both a re-placing tactic and a pre-placing tactic to recover their ability to work together and keep the community engaged in imagining a better future for the southern park.

---

<sup>55</sup> Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook, "Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 3 (August 1, 2011): 257–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2011.585167>.

At the beginning of this introduction, I started with two scenes that provide a glimpse of each park. In the following chapters, we are going to go deep into all these different concepts and ways of understanding—all that is at stake. This dissertation will give a deeper understanding of how visitors at the southern border and at the northern border experience these radically different sets of material conditions, and what is caused by those conditions. I will be analyzing the damage caused by the material conditions in these places and the work of the activists who are trying to mitigate that damage.

## CHAPTER ONE

### **Public Feelings in Places of Tension Between Binational Togetherness and Binational Separation**

Public parks are often part of urban spaces. As Roger Caves defines it, a park is an area of land for the public to enjoy; that has facilities for rest or recreation; and is owned or managed by a city, county, state, federal government. Visitors can “gather, engage in physical activities, find solitude, and enjoy nature and the outdoors.”<sup>56</sup> Its use can be limited to certain times or days. It is usually an open space that allows us to have recreational outdoor experiences within a bounded space. We learn to interact recreationally and share space with other humans, but also with other things like plants, benches, fountains, insects, maybe dogs, and also weather. All of these interactions invite us to *feel* a park and *feel about* a park in a certain way. This chapter asks: how does a binational public park at a borderline feel? How is it inviting us to interact with other visitors, or its built environment? How is it inviting us to feel about the borderline?

Both the Friendship Park at the border between the US and Mexico and the Peace Arch Park at the border between the US and Canada invite us to inhabit a tension between binational togetherness and binational separation. They are both urban public parks at borderlines. This means that both are spaces where publics coming from two countries can gather there, and use it as another public park. The Peach Arch Park and Friendship Park are places of both public memory and everyday public life. Both surround monuments that invite us to remember the peace and agreement between two countries after binational wars, and both are public places of quotidian recreation. However, even though they are a continuous piece of land, and are intended

---

<sup>56</sup> Roger W. Caves, *Encyclopedia of the City* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/detail.action?docID=182222>.

as symbols of friendship, they each occupy the territories of two sovereign countries and they keep the borderline present. This complex process of allowing people to connect and gather in co-presence in the same space—while also reenacting binational division—implies tension between a sense of togetherness and separation. Because this tension may be experienced by visitors in both countries, I will refer to this as *binational togetherness/separation tension*. This tension requires the active interaction among humans and nonhumans at each park. Nevertheless, the nonhuman elements that dwell at each park are different and therefore the way that visitors interact with them are different too.

In this chapter I use rhetorical field methods to argue that the experience of visiting each park invites us to experience the tension of binational togetherness/separation. But this tension manifests differently in each park, orienting visitors to have different responses to each space. While in the northern park this tension invites a public feeling of joyful playfulness, the southern park invites mixed feelings of gratefulness and frustration. To show this, I engage rhetorical field methods, and analyze the live experience of each park. Informed by Daniel Endres and Senda-Cook's work on the rhetoric of place, I focus on three rhetorical intertwined dimensions that sum up how we experience a place: material rhetoric, embodied rhetoric, and ephemeral rhetoric.<sup>57</sup> These three rhetorics available in places are intrinsically connected and therefore hard to separate. However, in the following pages I will try to zoom in on each to show how they are working in the binational parks.

### Material Rhetoric

Public places have physical elements and qualities made up of complex material entanglements: location, plants, soil, garbage cans, playgrounds, benches, animals, metal, rocks,

---

<sup>57</sup> Endres and Senda-Cook, "Location Matters"

concrete, humans. Blair points out how materiality “construct[s] communal space, prescribes pathways, and summons attention, acting on the whole person of the audience.”<sup>58</sup> The mere presence of these separate elements are in an arrangement with each other and have the agency to shape human movements, understanding, and feelings of places. Some of these material elements can also be the symbolic substance, holding meaning for a community. In addition, some of them can have consequential and symbolic force intentionally invented and arranged according to social contracts, but they also provoke unintentional consequences and interpretations--just as speech does. Gries and political theorist Jane Bennett have helped to popularize the claim that material things have a power and agency of their own which is often independent of human influence altogether. This power allow things to change and shape the world as they relate to others things. Bennett shows how nonhuman things are active players in the world and in public life as they have predictable and unpredictable forces and powers that enhance or weaken other things power. For example, when water relates to iron, water rusts iron and changes its composition, color, porosity, strength. If the iron is used to support a structure the water can rust and change the structure, water can make the structure break. We cannot know and control all the changes that things powers are creating, but at the very least we can notice how things around us affect our bodies.<sup>59</sup> Gries argues that even when humans produce things with a certain intention, “once unleashed,” these thing’s “have the agency to perform and become in whatever arises from an entanglement of human and nonhuman entities and other environmental factors.”<sup>60</sup> For example, benches are made with a certain size, height, and location so people can sit, and they persuade people’s bodies to sit on them instead of the ground. But, they also have unintended

---

<sup>58</sup> Blair, “Contemporary US Memorial Sites”. 48.

<sup>59</sup> Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Duke University Press Books, 2009).

<sup>60</sup> Gries, *Still Life with Rhetoric*. 68.

outcomes. Benches can be used to hide something, to stand in them, to be resting places for cats and birds, to hold spray paint with a graffiti tag.

As I briefly mentioned in the introduction, Dickinson and Aiello use a visual-material analysis to show how through a combination of visual, tactile, auditive and olfactory elements, four Starbucks stores in Seattle invite visitors to experience a sense of locality and community.<sup>61</sup> The stores invite visitors to experience this sense of locality through a multimodal combination of cues that point to the texture and provenance of the natural, raw textures of woods, slates, metals, leathers, textiles; and by making explicit from where in the Seattle area the recycled wooden furniture comes. In addition, the locations of these main stores also had meaningful connectivity with the local urban context. The stores invite costumers to covey the meaning of community through material and symbolic means. The coffee shops had communal tables able to seat five to ten customers that might not know each other, and signs displaying messages encouraging store patrons to interact with the baristas and with each other to build and maintain a community. The messages invited use of available board games and the reservation of spaces for gatherings and performances.<sup>62</sup> A similar analysis of the two binational border parks can likewise enlarge our understanding of how things around us shape a place and persuade us to behave, feel, or understand that place in certain way. Next, I will use the concept of material rhetoric to analyze and compare the ways in which nonhuman material elements of Friendship Park and Peace Arch Park evoke the tension of binational togetherness/separation.

---

<sup>61</sup> Aiello and Dickinson.

<sup>62</sup> Aiello and Dickinson.

### *The Material Rhetoric of Peace Arch Park*

The persuasive nature of the material elements of Peace Arch Park construct a tension between togetherness and separation. Togetherness is manifested in its lush natural surroundings, while separation mostly relies on material elements carrying symbolic meaning linked with national sovereignty discourse. The edges of the Peace Arch Park are visible and seem to be holding one recreational park without different national sides. The borderline is invisible in a way that belies the fact that it has a border running through it. The coast marks the west edge of the park and bushes mark the east and northeast. The picnic benches, playgrounds, two shelters with kitchens, restroom facilities, and gardens are spread along both sides of the park. The grass lawn covers both sides of the park pleasantly and homogeneously, creating a sense of green unity, sharing the Pacific Northwest landscape.



Peace Arch Park in Blaine, WA (US) and Surrey, B. C. (Canada).

The lawn allows for the visitors' paths to intentionally or inadvertently connect across the nearly invisible borderline that the grass also blurs. The grass gives us a park, a place to play pretend that we are in a borderless utopia, where movement is intuitive, where borders allow us to coincide. The grass invites us to feel that the US and Canada literally have common ground, where visitors from both countries and people in transition from one country to another are able to get together freely. Thus, the park has a cohesive layout, including: edges that contain it but which also merge both national sides of the park with the same Salish coast, balanced common recreational elements on both sides, a homogeneous and clear lawn, and a sense of amplitude where the borderline is nearly invisible, and US and Canada are ostensibly together.

The Peace Arch Park is also tied to national sovereignty discourse and holds elements that symbolically and consequentially can materialize the sense of binational separation.<sup>63</sup> For example, the only paved road in the park directs vehicles and people to Canada's entry point at the northern edge of the park and to the United States' at the southern edge of the park. The material presence of those ports reminds us that our movements are surveilled by the government of two different nations where we might or might not belong. They also remind us that the countries are separated, and this separation has the agency to stop the movement of our bodies going through the immigration protocols of each nation (driving through gates, inquiries from border agents, physical searches, electronic searches, etc.). If visitors are only exploring the park and are not going to enter to a different country than the one they came from they do not have to go through these protocols. In other words, the park is an in between zone, visitors from US can walk to the Canada side of the park without going through the port but they cannot leave through the northern edge of the park.

---

<sup>63</sup> Blair, "Contemporary US Memorial Sites as"

Other material elements in the park hold symbolic images to show the nations' proximity while maintaining difference. In the landscaping close to the Peach Arch flowers beds are arranged to resemble each nation's flags. These are appealing for visitors, and it is a common spot for them to take pictures and selfies, creating visual sharable evidence that they have crossed into the other country. We definitely feel that the nations are close and connected as we can walk about 700 feet from one flag to another, the flags are the same size and they are facing each other. However, the flags are also indexical symbols of two separate nations.

The third material element that marks the national separation are the five three-foot tall marble landmarks that mark the location of the invisible borderline. They are spread out in a line and not very visible unless visitors are close to them. They are located on the west and east edges of the park and on the side of the paved roads. These landmarks compete with the unity of the grass lawn to make visible the separation between the countries.

While the landmarks are not very noticeable to mark the borderline, the Peace Arch monument is. The arch materiality becomes what Roland Barthes calls a visual *punctum*<sup>64</sup> in the landscape as it stands high and white over the short grass. The arch visually calls human attention in contrast to other elements in the park. The arch has become the main attraction of the park, with visitors creating photographic evidence with it. Symbolically and consequentially it suggests tensions between binational separation and togetherness. This monument is a white 67-foot tall neo-classical triumphal arch with one arched passageway in its the center. The Peace Arch holds the weight of separation as it marks the presence of the borderline, marking the points where the borderline should be, giving visitors some kind of certainty that if we cross underneath it, we will be able to cross the borderline despite protocols. It holds in its upper part

---

<sup>64</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (Hill and Wang, 1982).

the US's and Canada's fabric flags on its opposite sides, ratifying that there is a borderline underneath it and recalling discourses of nationalism and sovereignty.

The arch performs “fluid tension between symbolicity and materiality.”<sup>65</sup> Since 1920, the function of the arch has been commemorating both the dedication of the Pacific Highway —the precursor to Interstate 5 in 1915— and 100 years of peace between the two neighbor countries. Now it symbolizes the ongoing peaceful borderland relationship between the US and Canada. It is a symbol of binational cooperation and togetherness. This is shown in the Arch's two anglophone declarations. “Brethren Dwelling Together In Unity” and “Children of a Common Mother.” As a code of universalism at the time, the phrases use the patriarchal metaphor of brothers to talk about the two families that are connected but independent nations, claiming an idyllic international relation and absence of conflict that the US and Canada have maintained since 1818. The Arch shape, that brings these brothers together, mimics the 19th century European neoclassical style, imitating imperial Roman arches standing on city entrances, and follows a westernized urban tradition of the 19th century. Declarations on the Arch are also situated in the Christian tradition, as the first phrase resonates with Psalm 133 of the Christian Bible in English translation: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for *brethren* to  *dwell together in unity!*”<sup>66</sup> The Peace Arch is a material symbol of togetherness for the Caucasian Christian male identity that has been hegemonic in both nations. The Arch marks the limits of national sovereignty while at the same time appealing to a racial, religious, and gender commonality to justify togetherness; and its image has been widely distributed in social media, Google images, and Wikipedia. While the Peace Arch Park manifests tension between togetherness and separation, it emphasizes connection (via the lawn, shared coastline, etc.).

---

<sup>65</sup> Endres and Senda-Cook, “Location Matters.”

<sup>66</sup> Ps. 133:1

Although Friendship Park at the US's border with Mexico displays this same tension, as I will demonstrate, it ultimately emphasizes separation more than togetherness.

### *The Material Rhetoric of Friendship Park*

Material rhetoric allows us to focus on how material elements shape our behavior and what intentional and unintentional consequences they provoke. The materiality of Friendship Park also involves visitors in a binational togetherness/separation tension. However, unlike the Peace Arch Park, which leans more on the side of togetherness, the rhetorical force at work in Friendship Park materially accentuates the separation side of this tension.

The current US-Mexico border was established in 1849. During the early 1890s the government of both countries placed 258 monuments along the borderline. The first one, Monument 1, is on the west bank of the Rio Grande River in the border between El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. The last one, Monument 258, dwells at the border furthest Western point, between San Diego and Tijuana along a beach area, where California meets Baja California on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Monument 258 is a 9-foot tall marble pinnacle that marks the borderline along the US-Mexico Border. Since 1892, it has been explicitly reminding visitors where the borderline between the two countries lies. The presence and function of this material landmark is enhanced by the following inscription: "Initial point of Boundary between the United States and Mexico. Established by the joint commission October A.D. 1849 Agreeably to the Treaty dated at the City of Guadalupe Hidalgo." The landmark and the inscription recall the international legal and political apparatuses that delineated this artificial borderline under the discourse of national sovereignty that keep the nations separated.

In August 1971, the governments of Mexico and the United States dedicated an acre of circular land to symbolize and allow binational camaraderie and friendship around Monument 258 and called it Friendship Park. It was founded and designed to unite the people of Mexico and the United States.<sup>67</sup> The park is a unified circular space marked on the ground. Half of the circle is in each country; the circular shape of the whole gives a sense of a unity or togetherness among both sides, both countries. As in Peace Arch Park, both sides share the same view and presence of the beach and the vast Pacific Ocean which does not care about the human-centric borderlines. This unifies the landscape of the borderland, giving a sense of material contiguity despite being divided in two parts, each supposedly “belonging” to a separate nation.

Since the beginning of its existence, Friendship Park became a place where people from both nations were officially allowed to have gatherings along the US-Mexico border. When then First Lady Pat Nixon inaugurated the Park in 1971 she said: “I hope it won’t be a fence too long here...May there never be a wall between these two great nations, only friendship.”<sup>68</sup>

However, when this circular acre of land was designated a park in 1971 the borderline was marked with parallel cattle wires. In 1994, through the Gatekeeper Operation the US government replaced the wires of Tijuana city with metal sheets, but used a chain link fence that still allowed transnational encounters to continue happening at Friendship Park. This chain link fence allowed the agency to stop people moving from each side to the other, but also prevented people having binational gatherings from physically mixing together or hugging each other.<sup>69</sup> In

---

<sup>67</sup> “Build That Park!,” Mysite, accessed August 10, 2020, <https://www.buildthatpark.org>.

<sup>68</sup> Yanan Wang, “At One Border Park, Separated Immigrant Families Hug across a Steel Divide,” *Washington Post*, May 1, 2016, sec. National, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/for-families-divided-by-a-mesh-fence-a-rare-chance-to-embrace/2016/05/01/d0fdcf08-0b07-11e6-a6b6-2e6de3695b0e\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/for-families-divided-by-a-mesh-fence-a-rare-chance-to-embrace/2016/05/01/d0fdcf08-0b07-11e6-a6b6-2e6de3695b0e_story.html).

<sup>69</sup> David Bacon, “The Sadness of the Border Wall,” *Contexts* 16, no. 1 (February 1, 2017): 48–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504217696064>.

2009, the US government replaced the border fence with an 18-foot wall of vertical metal columns, and replaced the chain link fence on the Friendship Park plaza with a metallic mesh fence with the “contours of Chex cereal.”<sup>70</sup> This mesh fence has only half-inch square holes that prevent people smuggling things through it, but also constricts visitors’ vision and haptic relations. It is hard to see through to the other side: if you are close you might see fragmented bodies, but if you back away far enough to see the whole body, you see them as shadows. Haptic relations are limited to touching each other with the fingertips or crossing a pinkie. In addition, the 2009 fence left the historical pyramidal landmark, Monument 258, completely on the Tijuana side. In 2009, the US government also with 20 feet tall metal columns, built a secondary fence behind the first, on the US side. This strong fence is a recalcitrant affirmation of the separation between both countries that is present within this binational park.



---

<sup>70</sup> Cindy Carcamo, “This Border Fence Has Become a Magnet for Family Reunions. Just Don’t Try to Hug,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 16, 2016, <https://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-hugs-at-the-border-20160901-snap-story.html>.

The plaza at Friendship Park, Tijuana side. April 2019.

Lastly, another material quality that persuades visitors of the binational separation at the park is that each national side has different surroundings. On the Tijuana side the park is within a busy urban recreational space; on the San Diego side the park is within an estuary park. Tijuana's side has become a recreational plaza within a wide walkway going to the beach. It is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and the access is easy by car and public transportation from Tijuana's downtown. This wide walkway includes some green areas, benches, and workout equipment. All of the fence along the walkway is decorated with constantly changing colorful murals. Some allude to the culture of the borderland. Others are made out of a collection of hundreds of colorful messages of hope and strength for the immigrant, and names of visitors have wanted to leave a residue of their presence at the borderline. This side of the park has even become a tourist attraction.

The San Diego side is within a bigger state park that has an estuary ecosystem. You can only arrive by car during some weeks of the dry season. Otherwise, access to this side of the Friendship Park demands human bodies to arrive with their vehicles to a parking lot and then to hike through the Border State Park for around 30-40 minutes. During the storm season in late fall and early winter sometimes the trail floods, bringing Tijuana sewage into the state park and making it more difficult—sometimes impossible—for people to arrive to Friendship Park circle. In 2009 when the border fence was changed and the secondary fence placed, the border patrol closed access to the San Diego side of the park, but the binational organization Friends of Friendship Park advocated to reopen it.<sup>71</sup> Since 2011, the San Diego side of the park is open only

---

<sup>71</sup> Seth David Clark, "Open Wound, Open Table: A Theological Exploration of Holy Communion as Practiced by The Border Church/La Iglesia Fronteriza" (Columbia Theological Seminary, 2020).

Saturday's and Sunday's 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m and, only if the surrounding area is not flood during the storm season, and only if the border patrol agents consider it safe to be open.

People having international exchanges through the park, especially binational family reunifications, have expressed how grateful they are that the park exists, but also how frustrating it is to be blocked by the fence, surveilled by the border patrol, and restricted to visiting the San Diego side during narrowly scheduled times. This tension of togetherness/separation in the materiality of the built environment, invites visitors to feel this mix of contradictory feelings in the park—feelings that have pushed some members of the community to organize and work “to create a future in which the public will have unrestricted access” to Friendship Park on either side.<sup>72</sup> They have started to circulate building plans for a new, bigger park without a fence, inspired by the materiality of Peace Arch Park.

Through this section I have shown how analyzing material rhetoric allows us to understand how nonhuman elements construct the experience of public places. In the case of the Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park, both are public places containing borderlines. Both were established as a symbol of camaraderie and friendship. By analyzing the material rhetoric in contrast to each other we can see that the material elements of each park shape them with a binational togetherness/separation tension, but also, we can see the nuance that this tension has in each park. While the material rhetoric of Peach Arch Park highlights binationality, Friendship Park highlights separation. However, the experience of the place is also shaped by a special kind of material element: the bodies of the humans that visit them. As visitors, our bodies interact with the nonhuman elements in the park; they affect us, and the interactions of human and nonhuman in the park also shape our experience of the place. In the following section I will

---

<sup>72</sup> “Friendshipark | Our Proposal,” friendshipark, accessed April 21, 2019, <https://www.friendshipark.org/proposal>.

analyze the embodied rhetoric of these parks, focusing on how bodies may interact with and shape each park and the ways these interactions can enlarge our understanding of the tension between binational togetherness/separation that is going on.

### Embodied Rhetoric

The interaction between bodies and the places they inhabit leads to reciprocal change: human bodies physically and affectively change the place, and the place has material and affective consequences for bodies, shaping their behaviors and inviting them to share what Jenny Rice calls a “public feeling.”<sup>73</sup> It is a mutually constitutive and fluid relationship that constantly shapes human and nonhuman materialities. Human bodies are material elements in place too, and the material presence of bodies in place is rhetorically powerful for other humans. Phaedra Pezzullo claims that the presence of human bodies in a place indicates the significance of someone literally coexisting with another human and with nonhuman bodies in physical contiguity.<sup>74</sup> For example, she points out that when bodies congregate at a place in order to advocate it shapes that place into a site of protest, as the emplacement of these bodies “promises the opportunity to shape perceptions, and lives.”<sup>75</sup>

The presence of bodies affects the feelings, or pathos, of a place, shaping its experience and its materiality; and the place shapes the sensorium of the body and therefore the public feelings about a space. Here I am using Ann Cvetkovich’s approach to feeling, as the

---

<sup>73</sup> Jenny Rice, *Distant Publics: Development Rhetoric and the Subject of Crisis*, 1 edition (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

<sup>74</sup> Phaedra Carmen Pezzullo, *Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Pollution, Travel, and Environmental Justice, Rhetoric, Culture, and Social Critique* (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, University of Alabama Press, 2009).

<sup>75</sup> Pezzullo, 9.

undifferentiated “stuff” that we feel, with its imprecise, ambiguous, sensory nature and its cognitive, intuitive, complex, and enmeshed character.<sup>76</sup> This way of understanding feeling problematizes the distinction between emotion and affect and offers a way to acknowledge the somatic and sensorial nature of feelings, which Hawhee has suggested is needed if we are to understand sensorial rhetorics.<sup>77</sup> Thus, Cvetkovich allows us to see that even when feeling is not defined as a clear or neat concept, it is definite, actual, and real; and it is individual, vernacular, and public. Rice also challenges the individualistic notion of feeling and claims that feeling is public. Rice argues that “feelings about public issues is what legitimates subjects as public subjects.”<sup>78</sup> We are public subjects when we act in relation to claims about a public situation. Public subjects are not only defined by the fact that they act in relation to a “constellation of discourses, but [we] are [also] shaped by the particular feelings [we] have about that relation.”<sup>79</sup> Thus, our key modes of public orientation in the world are rooted in feelings.<sup>80</sup> For example, she points out how “the experience of outrage becomes a warrant that proves I am indeed ‘paying attention’ to whatever public crises need to be addressed.”<sup>81</sup> Feelings are entangled in the way we publicly relate to public issues. Therefore, the way people interact, use, make sense of, and create policies about public spaces are public issues where feelings – such as the feeling of happiness, safety, belonging—are also embedded. Rice highlights the constitutive character of rhetoric and the way “our feelings about place are incredibly powerful means of orienting to that

---

<sup>76</sup> Ann Cvetkovich, *Depression: A Public Feeling* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 4, <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822391852>.

<sup>77</sup> Debra Hawhee, “Rhetoric’s Sensorium,”

<sup>78</sup> Rice, *Distant Publics*, 55.

<sup>79</sup> Rice, 49.

<sup>80</sup> Rice, 44.

<sup>81</sup> Rice, 55.

place,” to examine how discourse shapes publics feelings about a public space and therefore shapes the orientation toward that space.<sup>82</sup>

The study of embodied rhetoric allows us to enlarge our understanding of how human bodies interact with human and non humans at a place, how these interactions shape the way human feel in a place and how that feeling also shapes our relation to the place. Considering embodied rhetoric as we compare the human interactions at Peace Arch and Friendship park will help us to analyze further the rhetorical force of these spaces. While the most salient embodied rhetoric in the Peace Arch Park fills this place with a feeling of playfulness and joy, the most salient embodied rhetoric at the Friendship Park fills the place with a bittersweet feeling of gratefulness and frustration.

#### *Embodied Rhetoric at Peace Arch Park*

Visitors’ bodies can enter Friendship Park from either country’s parking lot without having to show a passport or identification. The park is open every day from 8 a.m. to dusk.<sup>83</sup> The experience of a unified, wide, grass-covered binational place invites visitors to explore movement possibilities. I noticed that it is appealing for people to walk through the park, from one national side to another. The manicured grass lawn pulls bodies into contact with other people and other elements in the park, and to feel positively in this borderless borderland utopia.<sup>84</sup>

In addition, the materiality of the park compels visitors to engage in a ludic activity, a kind of treasure hunt to find the invisible borderline through the materiality of the park. This

---

<sup>82</sup> Rice, *Distant Publics*, 57.

<sup>83</sup> “Peace Arch State Park, a Washington State Park Located near Bellingham, Blaine and Ferndale,” accessed October 21, 2019, [https://www.stateparks.com/peace\\_arch\\_state\\_park\\_in\\_washington.html](https://www.stateparks.com/peace_arch_state_park_in_washington.html).

<sup>84</sup> Hawhee, “Rhetoric’s Sensorium,” 5.

game allows us to understand that the borderline is not visible, but present and permeable inside the park, emphasizing that the nations are together but separated at the same time. People look for traces of the borderline, or symbols that they have crossed into a different country than that of their origin. The pinnacles in the Peace Arch Park mark the borderline; the flower flags mark the national property to which they belong. One woman from the United States told me that she has come to the park three times, adding that her 6 year-old daughter likes to put one hand on each side of the pinnacle and say “Look! I am in Canada and I don’t have a passport!” I saw adults next to these pinnacles hopping backward and forward, changing country on each hop. Visitors are compelled to look, approach, interact, and take pictures of their bodies in relation to those material elements. In this treasure hunt game, the treasure is the experience of having the public feeling of entering safely and ludically to a country, or of straddling two countries simultaneously.

The references to the White patriarchal Christian normative systems that characterize togetherness as a symbol of the Peace Arch Park do not seem to distract visitors who play the treasure hunt game underneath it. In this case, the material rhetoric of the arch to play the game is more persuasive than the symbolic and textual rhetoric. The public feeling of recreation and playfulness is generated through the park and at the same time orients the visitors to engage with it ludically. A review in Trip Advisor mentions “The photo [option] is for you and your friends to have one foot on either side of the border, beneath the Peace Arch that was built to commemorate the friendship between the two countries.”<sup>85</sup> The tension of binational togetherness/separation is also built up through this game, as it requires one to look for a separation in a place that otherwise seems unified. The images of smiling and joyful bodies

---

<sup>85</sup> Trip Advisor Review by a user named Mel M in November 2018. The people positively reviewing the park is still growing.

interacting with the material elements of the park in this borderline-hunting game circulate online. They are a testimony of visitors playing the game, and are at the same time a call to get to the park and engage with this embodied ludic treasure hunt. The built environment, other visitors playing, and the pictures of their bodies online invite us to become what Rice calls public subjects, and shape the feeling we have about that borderline into a playful and joyful one.<sup>86</sup> However, unlike the embodied rhetoric of the Peace Arch Park, which transform the park into a joyful and playful space, the embodied rhetoric of Friendship Park invites visitors to understand the borderline as a bittersweet place where people can meet but cannot come together.

### *Embodied Rhetoric at Friendship Park*

Embodied rhetoric of places focus on how humans' interaction with nonhumans and with other humans mutually affect the place and ourselves. As previously mentioned, the Tijuana side is within a wider open access walkway, but the San Diego side is enclosed between the primary and secondary border fences, and visitors' bodies are constantly surveilled by the patrol agents on the ground and in the surveillance tower. The only time both sides of Friendship Park are open simultaneously is on Saturday and Sunday 10:00 a.m. -2:00 p.m. During that time, dozens of visitors stand facing the fence to have conversations through it. Family reunifications are the most recurrent type of embodied binational gatherings. In most cases, family members visiting from the Tijuana side are not eligible for a visa to enter to the US, and the immigration status of family members from the San Diego may make them ineligible for reentry to the US if they get out.

---

<sup>86</sup> Rice, *Distant Publics*, 49.

Some of these bodies live in border cities, but others make the pilgrimage to Friendship Park “from as far east as New Jersey or south as Chiapas.”<sup>87</sup> The park was established as a symbol of camaraderie and friendship between Mexico and the US, but the constant presence of these family reunifications have shaped a different interpretation and feeling of the place, where Mexican immigrants can enact the right to see their loved ones.

Some families and couples have recurrent visits every week or every other week, some twice a year for special celebrations, and others have not seen each other in years—especially those living outside the US state of California and the Mexican state of Baja California. Even when they use the telephone, or social media that allows them to see each other through video, Friendship Park is the only place that allows them to be together in a way that telecommunication services cannot. The park allows them to perceive each others’ bodies in the flesh, and to feel the affect that emerges from having an embodied encounter next to each other while sharing a simultaneous sensation of the beachy ambience of the park.

Although feelings can be shared, the fence actively limits shared sensorial, corporeal engagement in these binational gatherings. The fence constricts their vision and haptic relations. The parallel straight lines of the Chex cereal fence make it hard to see, but our pinkie fingers can bend in order to reach through the space. It is hard to see people on the other side. If you are close to the fence, you see the person fragmented; if you step back far enough to see their whole body, you see them as shadows. Haptic relations are limited to touching each other with the fingertips or crossing a pinkie. In addition to visual and haptic constraints, the restricted hours and intense surveillance also shape families’ experience in a way that they have expressed as

---

<sup>87</sup> Carcamo, “This Border Fence Has Become a Magnet for Family Reunions. Just Don’t Try to Hug.”

similar to prison family visits.<sup>88</sup> The physical, material, and haptic separation feels like a punishment even to immigrants that are authorized to be in the US but cannot re-entry if they leave. The effect of the material fence affects their Brown Latinx bodies, and perpetuates public discourse in the United States —reinforced for decades by government and mass media—that describes “Mexican immigrants” as “criminals,” “illegals,” “pollutants.”<sup>89</sup>

Because it is impossible to see and touch without restrictions, visitors have expressed this experience of being materially together and separated at the same time as “bittersweet.”<sup>90</sup> They feel grateful for having a place to gather, but sad and frustrated that it is highly constrained. This bittersweet feeling typifies the tension of binational togetherness/separation, as visitors have the sense of being bodily close to each other but also materially divided by the fence. This bittersweetness is reactivated every weekend through the binational family gatherings and orientates other publics towards the park.

The frustrating bittersweetness of the park has become a public issue. In their short film documentary , *The US/Mexico Border: Meeting at Friendship Park*, Megan Clark et al. talk about this bittersweetness as a main feeling of the park and try to show it to a wider public.<sup>91</sup> It is common that media coverage of the park talks about being the place where families reunite. Reporters address both the excitement of being together and the sadness of being separated in the gatherings—but their emphasis is on the latter. The media discourse has helped to share this feeling to publics that have not come to the park. Some examples of this are articles like Jack

---

<sup>88</sup> Maribel Jimenez, “Friendship Park, Once a Symbol of Binational Camaraderie Now Keeps Families Divided |,” June 6, 2019, <http://eltecolote.org/content/en/features/friendship-park-once-a-symbol-of-binational-camaraderie-now-keeps-families-divided/>.

<sup>89</sup> Flores, “Constructing Rhetorical Borders”. Cisneros, “Contaminated Communities”.

<sup>90</sup> Megan Clark, Adrian Durazno, and Francis James, *The US/Mexico Border: Meeting at Friendship Park*, 2018.

<sup>91</sup> David Bacon, “The Sadness of the Border Wall”; Clark, Durazno, and James, *The US/Mexico Border: Meeting at Friendship Park*.

Jenkins' "The Most Heartbreaking Place in America is Called 'Friendship Park,'" Paul Lewis' "A Wall Apart: Divided Families Meet at a Single Tiny Spot on the US-Mexico Border," Jenny Hamel's "A Brief Embrace through an Opening in the Border Wall," and Yanan Wang's "At One Border Park, Separated Immigrant Families Hug across a Steel Divide."<sup>92</sup>

Some publics shaped by this bittersweet feeling in the park have been working to increase the feeling of separation through ephemeral rhetorical actions in the park, and by pushing policies to change the materiality of the place. I will talk about this activist work in the following section. These responses are evidence that help us to see how our bodies relate to other bodies in the park with a shared feeling towards the park. They are evidence that a bittersweet feeling of the Friendship Park is public and is even being disseminating to people who have not been in the park.

Embodied rhetoric helps us to focus on our and other humans' bodies and their interactions in places and understand how these interactions shape our experience of the place. By analyzing embodied rhetoric at the Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park, we can see how the human interactions in places also shape our understanding of borders. Peace Arch Park shapes US-Canada border a playful and joyful, while Friendship Park shapes the US-Mexico border as bittersweet. Material rhetoric and embodied rhetoric of places are tightly connected. Human bodies interact with nonhuman and other humans and these interactions shape the feeling of a place and the way we experience it. However, these relations are also dynamic and bounded in

---

<sup>92</sup> Jack Jenkins, "The Most Heartbreaking Place in America is Called 'Friendship Park,'" November 3, 2014, <https://thinkprogress.org/the-most-heartbreaking-place-in-america-is-called-friendship-park-ed0effeaac3a/>; Paul Lewis, "A Wall Apart: Divided Families Meet at a Single, Tiny Spot on the US-Mexico Border," *The Guardian*, March 29, 2016, sec. US news, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/mar/29/us-mexico-border-wall-trump-cruz-immigration-friendship-park>.; Jenny Hamel, "A Brief Embrace through an Opening in the Border Wall," *Design and Architecture* (Los Angeles, California: KCRW, February 6, 2018), <https://www.kcrw.com/culture/shows/design-and-architecture/a-brief-embrace-through-an-opening-in-the-border-wall>; Yanan Wang, "At One Border Park, Separated Immigrant Families Hug across a Steel Divide," *Washington Post*, May 1, 2016, sec. National, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/for-families-divided-by-a-mesh-fence-a-rare-chance-to-embrace/2016/05/01/d0fdcf08-0b07-11e6-a6b6-2e6de3695b0e\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/for-families-divided-by-a-mesh-fence-a-rare-chance-to-embrace/2016/05/01/d0fdcf08-0b07-11e6-a6b6-2e6de3695b0e_story.html).

time, and when we experience a place we also do it in a temporal way, as an event. Thus, analyzing ephemeral rhetoric is also valuable as we seek to understand how places shape our understanding of the world. In the following section I explore the concept of ephemeral rhetoric and apply it to Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park.

### Ephemeral Rhetoric

Human bodies are always dynamically moving in places. Their presence, movement, and behavior change the place where they move. Noticing that the material, symbolic, and embodied dynamics of places are changing fluidly and constantly, Endres and Senda-Cook claim that “places are always in the process of becoming.”<sup>93</sup> Hence the material rhetoric of a place is best revealed when we consider materiality as fluid, temporary, and embodied.<sup>94</sup> The built environment of a site, the presence and interaction of human and nonhuman bodies, and the meaning of the places change constantly and at different paces. We can see some of those changes in our temporary visits to the parks; other changes are revealed by tracking the evolution of the place. Ephemerality is a temporariness “in which an act or argument is time bound,” it is closely linked to embodied or lived arguments that occur within a set time frame.<sup>95</sup> Ephemeral rhetoric allows us to pay attention to the acts, events, meanings, and matter that exist temporally in a place and shape the public’s experience of that place.

Examining the ephemeral rhetoric of the parks helps us understand how material and embodied temporal practices in place are constantly changing in material, symbolic, and

---

<sup>93</sup> Endres and Senda-Cook, “Location Matters.” 262

<sup>94</sup> Endres and Senda-Cook.

<sup>95</sup> Danielle Endres, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Brian Cozen, “Not Just a Place to Park Your Car: Park(ing) as Spatial Argument,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 50, no. 3 (January 1, 2014): 127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00028533.2014.11821814>.

affective ways. Studying the ephemerality of places in protest, Endres and Senda-Cook show how social movements use place tactically: (1) building on a pre-existing meaning of a place, (2) temporarily reconstructing the meaning of a place, and (3) repeated reconstructions that result in new place meanings.<sup>96</sup> This change of meaning can occur through material and embodied rhetorical events or material and embodied traces in the place.

Endres and Senda-Cook offer an example of the study of ephemeral rhetoric through performance in their analysis of a critical mass bike ride in which participants move through streets as a collective pack of cyclists in an embodied, ephemeral, and temporal way, reconstructing the meaning of the city streets as they go. This ephemeral action creates awareness that streets are not used only by cars, and highlight the need for a better system for bicycles on the road. By performing this action repeatedly, the event and its traces can result in more permanent change—such as the creation of bike lanes—thereby creating new street meaning and usage.<sup>97</sup>

Material and embodied traces are another way to analyze ephemeral rhetoric. Ephemerality cannot be completely reproduced; it is difficult to grasp. The evidence we have of ephemeral rhetoric are often the traces of it. These traces, or ephemera,

remain after a performance, they are a kind of evidence of what has been but certainly not the thing itself. Study of these traces does not rest on epistemological foundations but is instead interested in following traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things. It is

---

<sup>96</sup> Endres and Senda-Cook, "Location Matters," 263.

<sup>97</sup> Endres and Senda-Cook, "Location Matters."

important to note that ephemera is a mode of proofing and producing arguments often worked by minoritarian culture and criticism makers.<sup>98</sup>

These traces can be materially present in the space, such as the leftovers of past buildings; or in archives, such as photographs, videos, drawings, and related objects. Traces can also be embodied, as in feelings, memories, and physiological changes. When we participate in the change of a place, the place changes us too: it can build up our muscles, memories, and evocations.<sup>99</sup> For example, Aiello analyzes the changes in a neighborhood in Bologna by bringing a new understanding of the current material rhetoric at the neighborhood, as well as the material traces that marks old times of the place and the embodied traces of her memories living there. The neighborhood used to be *Ex Manifattura Tabacchi*, a poor and marginalized neighborhood. Now it is *Manifattura delle Arti*, a leading site of cultural production and an appealing destination for high-end tourism. In her analysis, Aiello uses embodied ephemera as evidence of her experience living in this neighborhood; present day ephemeral traces of its old buildings; the materiality of the new built environment; and the embodied performances in the neighborhood to point out how the neighborhood has materially and visually changed—and how her awareness of these changes shapes her experience of the place with ambivalent feelings.<sup>100</sup>

I will now analyze one aspect of ephemeral rhetoric of Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park. For the former, I will discuss an ephemeral interaction I had with another visitor of the park who, like me, has family in another country North America. For the latter, I will discuss

---

<sup>98</sup> José Esteban Muñoz, “Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts,” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8, no. 2 (January 1, 1996): 10, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07407709608571228>.

<sup>99</sup> Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, First edition. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 2013).

<sup>100</sup> Aiello, “From Wound to Enclave”

recurrent ephemeral events by groups of activists working to reiteratively change the meaning of the place in order to ensure continual access.

*Ephemeral Rhetoric at Peace Arch Park*

Every time I visit the Peace Arch Park, I end up engaging with the borderline hunt game. The experience of this game is embodied because human bodies are performing it; it is material because the bodies' materiality relates to the materiality of the built environment; and it is ephemeral because the game is time-bound.<sup>101</sup> These embodied, material, and ephemeral rhetorics combine persuading us to shape our experience of the US northern border as a joyful, playful place where a sense of togetherness is stronger than the sense of separation. Once while playing the game, I had a particular binational interaction with another visitor that serves as but one example of how this tension between togetherness and separation works in the park.

This visitor was a White man in his 40s I will call him David. He heard me speaking Spanish and introduced himself in Spanish. I recognized almost instantaneously his anglophone accent and his fluent Spanish with Mexican variants. I introduced myself and, as this was before COVID 19, we shook hands. He was from Canada and lived in Surrey, but he had lived in Mexico for more than a decade. His wife is Mexican and his 8-year-old son (I will call Alex) is Mexican-American. Both David's wife and son live in Michoacán, Mexico. David told me that he returned to Canada because of health issues, but his family stayed because Alex is not Canadian; the child cannot have free public education in Canada and David cannot afford to pay for it. David had told his son that the temperature in Canada was way lower than in Michoacán. Alex asked his father "¿Hay una pared de hielo donde empieza Canada?" (Is there an ice wall

---

<sup>101</sup> Endres, Senda-Cook, and Cozen, "Not Just a Place to Park Your Car"

where Canada starts?) David chose the Park to take pictures of the US-Canada borderline to send them to Alex, and to show his son there were no ice walls. In fact, there is no wall at all, and “the grass is the same in both sides” as David said.

David’s photos of the invisible borderline became his ephemera of the park. My memory of my encounter with David is a trace of my experience of the park, too. In this experience David and I engaged materially with the park and temporally with each other. We were both there in the Peace Arch Park seeing—and somehow confirming—the invisibility of the borderline that allowed us to meet, talk, shake hands, and close our meeting with a hug, as many Mexicans do. However, the invisible borderline was still present. Its presence was reverberating in our different national identities (Canadian and Mexican) within the same continent of North America, in the existence of the binational border park where we were, and in our experiences as part of transnational families between Mexico-US-Canada. Ephemeral rhetoric in the Peace Arch Park allows us to see specific temporary events as meaningful to understanding the US-Canada border as a space of coming together and invite us to keep and disseminate this feeling through photographs, recalling the traces of the park in our memories. Now let us turn to the ephemeral rhetoric at work in Friendship Park, in which activists perform reiterative weekly events that both amplify the separation agency of the wall and try to alleviate the frustration that it spreads.

### *Ephemeral Rhetoric at Friendship Park*

Family reunions are embodied, ephemeral interactions happening in relation to the built environment of the park. The visitors on either side who are not having family reunions are shaped by the contagion of the bittersweet feelings of such encounters. This contagion makes it hard to take a position against the agency of the metal fence, which works as both symptom and

symbol of US immigration policies. Visitors, who do not need to have family reunions, but still are oriented by the feeling of frustration, have become advocacy groups that constitute a binational community which leverages their privilege and the agency of the park's built environment to create ways to be at the park, making it an every-weekend space of protest and solidarity with the families without interfering with precious family reunions. These activist-visitors repeatedly build on a pre-existing meaning of a place, to challenge the built environment and the visiting restrictions.<sup>102</sup> They hope that these repeated reconstructions of the embodied and material qualities of the park will result in free access for the families.

The governments of Mexico and the US established the park in 1971 as a symbol of camaraderie, solidarity, and friendship between the two nations. However, as the rules for Mexicans moving across the border have become more and more restrictive, the park has become less a place for binational camaraderie and more a place where binational families can reunify, even if it is in a limited way. Meanwhile other binational ephemeral events continue, building on the previous meaning of the place to keep it open and public.

The organization Friends of Friendship Park (FOFP) advocated to keep the park open on the San Diego side when in 2008 the secondary fence closed its access FOFP bargained with border patrol to keep the park open. They got to keep it open for a limited time on the weekends. Since then, they have been trying to change the built environment of Friendship Park to make it a "truly binational park," using Peace Arch Park as a model. FOFP maintains a weekly presence at the Park.

One of the founders of the FOFP is also a founder of the Border Church, which host a weekly binational, bilingual, nonsectarian communion service on Sundays at 1:30 p.m. with

---

<sup>102</sup> Endres and Senda-Cook, "Location Matters," 263.

people joining simultaneously on both sides. The Mexican staff of the Border Church bring speakers to the Tijuana side, and connect wire microphones to them. The speakers' amplified voices can be easily heard on both sides of the fence and through all the park. The two main leaders are two US ministers from different Christian denominations, who speak from the San Diego side. They bring microphones that are connected wirelessly to the speakers in Tijuana. That way the prayers and chants can be heard on both sides simultaneously.<sup>103</sup> The leaders also invite and bring US citizens to the San Diego side of the park in order to encourage binational conversations with Mexicans. These embodied, binational events through the fence allow people of the United States to experience an embodied narrative about Mexicans that counters the one in the media, and to create "binational friendships."<sup>104</sup> Besides praying for pro-immigration ideals and blessings, the Border Church holds a celebration at the tail end of the accessible hours on the San Diego side. This effectively prevents Border Agents from closing the Park earlier than the appointed hours, as they have done before.<sup>105</sup> Thus, on the San Diego side of Friendship Park, the presence of these White bodies—which are socialized and racialized through White supremacy as superior to any of the marked, Brown bodies talking to their families—use their agency to temporarily *sousveil* the border patrol.<sup>106</sup> The simultaneous celebration through the fence asks us to face the fence's materiality and to make a leap of imagination to think about how the celebration, and the park will be without this wall. The celebration even includes a prayer asking people simultaneously on both sides to put their hands up and on the fence to come together on both

---

<sup>103</sup> I will expand on the way the border fence allows sound to cross through in chapter 2.

<sup>104</sup> Fieldnotes on a meeting with Jhon Fanestil, member of Friends of Friendship and Border Church, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

<sup>105</sup> Clark, "Open Wound, Open Table."

<sup>106</sup> I am using *sousveil* in contrast with *surveil*. *Surveillance* implies being observed and control from an organization with higher power than the individual. *Sousveillance* is a concept from Mann et al. to name individuals observing and using some technologies to have some control over those in authority. Steve Mann, Jason Nolan, and Barry Wellman, "Sousveillance: Inventing and Using Wearable Computing Devices for Data Collection in Surveillance Environments.," *Surveillance & Society* 1, no. 3 (2003): 331–55, <https://doi.org/10.24908/ss.v1i3.3344>.

sides and ask for forgiveness and justice. This action makes the Friendship Park a space of protest. To reduce the feeling of frustration, participants amplify the recalcitrant materiality of the fence, thereby making it even more evident that the fence contradicts the pre-existing meaning of the park as a place of friendship.

On the Tijuana side, there is a team made up of the Border Church staff; members of DREAMers' Moms Tijuana, an organization for deported mothers of DACA recipients who can only see their children through the fence; and members of Deported Veterans Tijuana, who are deported veterans of the US military who cannot reenter the US. This team provides meals for the visitors and organizes festive events to build community around the visitors who are having binational conversations and volunteers of the binational garden. These meal gatherings are weekly, ephemeral, material, embodied events that try to alleviate the frustration of being restricted to fulfill the visitors' binational familial and friendship connection needs.

The members of these organizations are US citizens and Mexicans affected by the contagion of frustration from other, more vulnerable visitors' family reunions. These members are strategically using the preexisting meaning of Friendship Park as a place of friendship, collaboration, and camaraderie to move the needle of the binational togetherness/separation tension to the togetherness side. By keeping their presence and activities on both sides of the park, the organizations of activists, and the visitors that engage with them, change the park into a place of protest, building on the preexisting meaning of the Friendship Park as place of binational camaraderie. These ephemeral interactions allow the public in the place to advocate to keep the park public, especially the San Diego side that is less accessible. Participants create visual traces of these ephemeral events in the form of photos and videos, disseminating glimpses

of the interactions and creating awareness of the importance of the park within the border states and beyond.

Ephemeral rhetoric allows us to understand how transient events, as well as the material and embodied traces of the changes constantly happening in a place are interrelated in the experience of that place. The events and traces that I focus on in Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park shape the borderline where they are located. In the northern park the embodied freedom of movement and the built environment of the park promote international visitors to enjoy embodied encounters that reinforce the sense of binational togetherness, within its binational togetherness/separation tension. Friendship Park holds recurring events organized by activists as a response to the frustration feelings that accompany separation. These events call attention to the fence in order to encourage us to envision the park without it, to envision a border park, that as Peace Arch Park, still has a binational togetherness/separation tension, but enhances togetherness instead of separation.

### Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I have analyzed the ways experiences of places may be constituted by material, embodied, ephemeral rhetorics. Through my analysis, these rhetorics of a place are bound together; they hold and construct each other; and they can shape our experience of the place. Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park are places where the discourses and symbols of sovereignty and separation merge with a goal of togetherness, connection, and friendship among nations. The tension of binational togetherness/separation is performed by the materiality and symbolicity of the built environment of each park; and by the ephemeral interactions between

humans, the built environment, and other humans. However, the way this tension is activated in each park is different.

The Peace Arch Park is a privileged place where visitors have the freedom to pretend that the border exists or does not exist, according to our desire. Visitors can look for the invisible border as a game. The park is filled with a feeling of joyful playfulness. Some symbolic and material elements (grass lawn, the arch, land markers, flag flowers) give clues that this joy is only for anglophone, White, Christian visitors in the park. However, the strong sense of openness of the park grass lawn and strong ludic invitation to find the invisible border allow visitors to turn a blind eye to the identity exclusion if they want to.

In contrast, at Friendship Park the tension of binational togetherness/separation pulls the needle toward separation. This place has become the only place to have family reunifications along the US Mexico border, but instead of being a space full of joy, the fence limits visual and haptic relations between people, the time restrictions limit gatherings, and the difficult logistics of the pilgrimage to the border limits access. These constitute both symptom and perpetuation of the binational separation between US and Mexico. The park's built environment and interactions are filled with frustration. The families have expressed this frustration, media has spread the word, and binational advocacy groups working in response to this frustration have tried to change it.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Permeabilities at the Borderlines

Borders are agentive relational membranes. They are membranes because they constantly allow nonhuman bodies to pass through them. A membrane is a porous barrier that has the ability to allow some things to pass through but not others. Borders are membranes that block the crossing of some humans and nonhumans, but they are also places of flux and exchange through which certain nonhumans continuously pass.<sup>107</sup> They are relational because the relationship between the border and the passing nonhumans gives rise to unexpected situations, some of which are problematic. In this chapter, I argue that the border as an agentive relational membrane affects the parks, the human actors, and the borderlands in different ways. The border also creates new obstacles and opportunities for communities where collaboration is required to solve urgent problems at the borderlands. In addition, studying the relationship between the border and the nonhumans passing through it allows us to understand the border and the borderlands from a less human-centric and a more land-centric attunement.<sup>108</sup> By studying the nonhuman agents passing through the border we can see some nuanced effects of the human-constructed border that may be highly problematic. The nonhumans let us see how the border acts in ways that exceed policy and that may prevent problem solving, thus affecting life at the border in a profound way.

People are used to understanding borders in a narrower way, focusing on politics and human movement. However, this understanding does not allow us to see other realities that borders also create, and can even mask the problems that they are creating. Because humans tend

---

<sup>107</sup> D. R. DeChaine, "Imagined Immunities: Border Rhetorics and the Ethos of Sans Frontières," in *Interdisciplinarity and Social Justice: Revisioning Academic Accountability* (SUNY Press, 2010).

<sup>108</sup> Tiara R. Na'puti, "Oceanic Possibilities for Communication Studies," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 17, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 95–103, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1723802>.

to dismiss nonhumans, we do not pay attention to the fact that borders are harmful for them, too. Focusing on nonhumans can allow us to see these realities that we are overlooking and problems that are masked, especially those related to the damage to the life of the borderland ecosystem. The militarization of the US–Mexico border fence that we can see at Friendship Park and that goes on for miles has a negative effect on the border and on the way it affects humans. Focusing on this border’s agency to harm humans crossing the border is important, but if we keep only this human-centric perspective, we ignore other crucial problems that environmental nonhumans directly and therefore end up indirectly harming humans, too. The human-centric perspective on borders has also allowed us to accept the US–Canada border as the longest undefended border in the world and celebrate that borderland relationship as a model.<sup>109</sup> However, this human-centric understanding masks the actual harm that this northern border is doing, not only to the flora and fauna of the region, but also to indigenous communities. By focusing on nonhumans at the southern and northern borders of Friendship Park and Peace Arch Park, it is easy to see that the way humans have constructed and relate to borders in abstract and material ways is harmful for nonhumans as well as humans.

To study these material permeable relations between the border and nonhumans, I draw on Nathaniel Rivers’ concepts of *deep ambivalence* and *wildness* which allow me to explain the agency that nonhumans have in themselves and in their relationship with the border and other nonhumans of the borderland. The nonhumans permeating the borders that I will analyze are the Salish Sea and the grass lawn at Peace Arch Park and the California ground squirrels and Tijuana’s sewage at Friendship Park.

---

<sup>109</sup> Christopher Mark Radojewski, “The Rush–Bagot Agreement: Canada–US Relations in Transition,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 47, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 280–99, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2017.1370721>.

Until very recently, the field of rhetoric has been characterized by its human-centric focus. However, in the last two decades, rhetoricians have recuperated rhetorics of nonhumans. Increasingly, rhetoricians have been studying the rhetorics of animals, everyday objects, and the environment.<sup>110</sup> Nathaniel Rivers' concepts of *deep ambivalence* and *wildness*, can help us be attuned to nonhumans' rhetoric in their autonomy and in relation with others.<sup>111</sup> *Deep ambivalence* combines two seemingly contrasting theories—Graham Harman's object-oriented ontology and Jane Bennet's vital materialism—to create what Rivers calls *wild rhetoric*. The object-oriented ontological heritage of deep ambivalence allows us to see how the animate and inanimate, animal, vegetable, and mineral—prompted by humans or by nature—are autonomous and perpetually withdraw from humans and from each other: “they remain wild in never being fully known and controlled by us.”<sup>112</sup> The *vital materialism* heritage of deep ambivalence allows us to see things, agencies, and powers that happen in the relationships among things—what Rivers calls their *material-rhetorical agency*. Vital materialism is a theory developed by Jane Bennett in her influential 2010 book *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. The concept *vibrant matter* highlights how all things, including humans, are matter and have predictable and unpredictable powers in different intensities, that affect other nonhumans, enhancing or weakening their own and other's powers. The powers of nonhuman things at the very least affect us.<sup>113</sup> Hence, both humans and nonhumans are vibrant players in the world and have an active role in public life.

---

<sup>110</sup> Bridie Mcgreavy et al., *Tracing Rhetoric and Material Life: Ecological Approaches*, Palgrave Studies in Media and Environmental Communication (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018).

<sup>111</sup> Nathaniel A. Rivers, “Deep Ambivalence and Wild Objects: Toward a Strange Environmental Rhetoric,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 45, no. 5 (October 20, 2015): 420–40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2015.1086491>.

<sup>112</sup> Rivers, 424.

<sup>113</sup> Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*

According to Rivers, the nonhumans' powers and agencies have effects that are also wild and ineffable as they exceed our particular abilities as humans to describe, delimit, control, codify, predict, know, and perceive. Deep ambivalence allows us to see both the wild autonomy of things and their wild powers as they interact with other things in the places where they are. Thus, deep ambivalence can highlight both kinds of nonhuman wildness: their withdrawn strange autonomy, and their vibrant materiality in their engagement with other wild things. "This engagement can not only impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own."<sup>114</sup> Studying nonhuman rhetoric implies embracing their ineffable wild being and the ineffable assemblages that they create; assemblages where we are also affected and affecting members. Deep ambivalence allows us to move out from human-centric thinking and give space to be able to see *wild rhetoric* as inherent and present in everything.<sup>115</sup>

Rivers' concepts of *deep ambivalence* and *wildness* have helped me to analyze my encounters with the nonhumans permeating the border membrane at each park. These concepts can attune us to the nonhuman's international movement through the border and allow us to understand the way that this movement exceeds human control over their autonomy and in the way they relate with the border and with other nonhumans at the borderlands. This attuning will require us to incorporate observation, speculation, and imagination.<sup>116</sup> These concepts also give me a more complex understanding of the border beyond the usual human-centric, land-centric, and nationalistic approach. Deep ambivalence and wildness can allow us to see how the border

---

<sup>114</sup> Bennett, vii.

<sup>115</sup> Rivers, "Deep Ambivalence and Wild Objects."

<sup>116</sup> Jeremy G. Gordon, Katherine D. Lind, and Saul Kutnicki, "A Rhetorical Bestiary," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (May 27, 2017): 222–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2017.1309904>.

has agency and causes situations that can be problematic and, at the same time, how the border also helps and hinders the collaboration needed to solve those problematic situations.

The nonhumans that I will analyze in this chapter are first, the Salish Sea and the grass lawn at Peace Arch Park and second, the California ground squirrels and the Tijuana's sewage at Friendship Park. The Salish Sea and the squirrels are more directly prompted by nature than by humans, which I refer to as *naturogenic*, and the grass and sewage are more directly prompted by humans than by nature, which I refer to as *anthropogenic*. I definitely consider humans and nonhumans to be intrinsically related, and humans are also part of nature. However, there are some kinds of nonhuman matter and some forces that are more directly prompted by humans than others. Making this differentiation can help us see more clearly how the anthropogenic, human-centric, and land-centric border relates with other nonhumans in the environment in unexpected ways which can be harmful. The border itself is anthropogenic, as it was directly prompted by humans, and it is deeply ambivalent: it is a thing in itself and holds itself materially, but at the same time, it relates to other things in unexpected ways with unexpected consequences. Gries argues that even when humans produce things with a certain intention, "once unleashed," these things "have the agency to perform and become in whatever arises from an entanglement of human and nonhuman entities and other environmental factors."<sup>117</sup> Humans establish borders to set the boundaries of national human power and to manage the flux of people and goods through it. However, as Carlos Tarin points out, borders are incapable of creating or maintaining distinctions. Air, water, and soil among other *naturogenic* and *anthropogenic* nonhumans permeate the border "in ways that exceed language, meaning or culture" with consequences that

---

<sup>117</sup> Gries, *Still Life with Rhetoric*, 68.

go beyond our expectations.<sup>118</sup> With this in mind, humans should be much more conscious of and responsible for the nonhumans that they unleash and the consequences to other humans and nonhumans as well.

In the next section I will analyze the Salish Sea and the grass lawn at Peace Arch Park, and the California ground squirrels and Tijuana's sewage at Friendship Park. These four nonhumans constantly pass through the border. By analyzing their passage we are able to see how the border actively relates to them with consequences for the borderland, and how this relationship between the border and the nonhumans can present opportunities but can also hinder the collaboration needed to protect the borderlands on which many humans and nonhumans depend.

### Nonhumans in Peace Arch Park

Peace Arch Park is located on what has been called the longest undefended border in the world. In the park, the border itself is invisible and completely permeable within the limits of the park. In Chapter One I mentioned how visitors crossed it and engaged in a treasure hunt game trying to find it. In this section I am going to analyze the permeable relationship that the border has with two nonhumans that are visible in the park to show some of the agentive powers of the border. Both of them actively participate in the beauty and positive affect of the park. The first is the Salish Sea, which here I consider naturogenic. Even though the sea is 48 acres outside of the park land, it is part of the park's landscape. The Salish Sea is visible from any location in the park and benches are also placed in the park so visitors can contemplate it. The border in its

---

<sup>118</sup> Carlos Tarin, "Fronteras Toxicas: Towards a Borderland Ecological Consciousness," in *This Bridge We Call Communication: Anzaldúan Approaches to Theory, Method, and Praxis*, ed. Leandra Hinojosa Hernández and Robert Gutierrez-Perez (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2019), 213–26.

permeable relationship to the sea actively destabilizes the *land-centric* and fixed notion of national border. In addition, this analysis of the border-sea relationship allows us to see how the border agentively does both: it encourages binational environmental cooperation on a small scale to protect the Salish Sea, and hinders federal binational support from protecting it. The second nonhuman agent I consider is the anthropogenic grass lawn at Peace Arch Park. The border in its wild relationship to the grass becomes a *lawned border* taking over the space of the park. This extended border needs constant human care to maintain its manicured English garden aspect. The border thus actively keeps both indigenous flora and indigenous culture outside its limits.

### *The Salish Sea and the Border*

Peace Arch Park is adjacent to the shores of the Salish Sea. The grass lawn allows visitors to see the sea on the horizon from any spot at the park. Even though the 48 acres of park is only land, the Salish Sea is there visually, and thus part of the park landscape even when outside of the park's land-centric limits. The Salish Sea looks flat, horizontal, watery, peaceful, and sparkly. Most of the benches at the park face the sea so visitors can enjoy the view of the sea from the park. This body of water is an inland sea that encompasses what is called Puget Sound, the San Juan Islands, and the waters of Vancouver, BC. The borderline divides it so that, politically, the Salish Sea is governed by the US and Canada.<sup>119</sup> Just in the last decade, non-indigenous people have started to understand it as a unified body of water and in 2011 agreed to label it with its current official name, the Salish Sea.<sup>120</sup> This name is an attempt to pay tribute to the Salish Coast people who have been living in the area for more than 10,000 years, and to

---

<sup>119</sup> "About the Salish Sea," SeaDoc Society, accessed October 30, 2020, <https://www.seadocsociety.org/about-the-salish-sea>.

<sup>120</sup> "About the Salish Sea."

allow people from outside the Salish community to refer to these contiguous bodies of water as a single geographic entity.<sup>121</sup> An analysis of the Salish Sea wildness that constantly crosses the border allows us to see some of the agentive powers of the border. These powers mutually shape the border and the sea, as well as some of the struggles that organizations have faced in protecting its waters.

The Salish Sea is supposedly governed by two contiguous nations. However, in its deep ambivalence, the Salish Sea cannot be fully governable by humans in terms of its autonomy and its multiple, ongoing relations. The sea has the power to move, make sounds and waves, swell shine, and reflect light, for example. But also, it is intrinsically connected to the Pacific Ocean, the coast, the rivers that feed it, the nonhumans that live in it, the Pacific Northwest rain forest, and even all the human populations in the area. The border has the agency to mark the national division that crosses the Salish Sea. Each side of the sea is part of a different nation.

Nevertheless, the border is not a physical barrier; it allows the Salish Sea's water and marine life to flow freely. This agentive relation between the sea and the border destabilizes the *land-centric*, fixed notion of national border.

Nations are constructed with what Na'Puti calls *land-centric orientation*. They rely on a territory, from the Latin *territorium*: land. Borders also come from this *land-centric* construction and are understood through the human sense of *terra firma*.<sup>122</sup> Humans draw borders under the assumption that they can be marked as a line on the solid ground to establish the limits of nations. Thus, borders can help in managing the flux of humans and nonhumans through them. However, this stopping agency of the border does not work with the watery sea. The water in the

---

<sup>121</sup> "Coast Salish Art | Burke Museum," accessed December 29, 2019, /collections-and-research/culture/contemporary-culture/coast-salish-art.

<sup>122</sup> Na'puti, "Oceanic Possibilities for Communication Studies."

Salish Sea in its wild autonomy does not behave as firm ground and is in constant movement. In the sea, the border is completely permeable; it allows the water, marine life, and pollutants to flow within the Salish Sea. The border's does not have the power to selectively stop things that have the ability to put the marine ecosystem of either nation in danger. However, it presents opportunities for local civic environmental cooperation and engagement to protect the Salish Sea, while at the same time the border strong ties to delimitations of sovereignty hinder the possibilities of binational governmental cooperation to pursue protection of the Salish Sea life.

The Salish Sea is one of the world's largest and most biologically rich inland seas. Uncountable nonhumans regularly migrate through it, oblivious to and unimpeded by human-made borders or nation-states. These marine beings move through both nations and into and out of the shores, rivers, and ocean:

Species listed as threatened or endangered... including the Southern Resident killer whales (*Orcinus orca*), marbled murrelets (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), and some ecologically significant units or species of Pacific salmon (*Onchorynchus spp.*), traverse the boundary daily. Oceanographic processes such as freshwater inflows and wind driven surface currents exchange biota, sediments and nutrients throughout the larger ecosystem.<sup>123</sup>

Within the Salish Sea, the land-centric border membrane is completely permeable and allows the marine ecosystem to keep flowing. The border also has the agency to allow the flux of harmful conditions for this ecosystem: ocean acidification, growing anthropogenic unchecked waste and sewage, the rise in sea water temperature. I saw pieces of plastic on the shore that can

---

<sup>123</sup> "About the Salish Sea."

bring bacteria that can put in danger the shore ecosystem too. “Between 2008 and 2011, the number of marine wildlife species in the Salish Sea listed as threatened or endangered nearly doubled from 64 to 113.”<sup>124</sup> There are definitively transnational efforts to manage the Salish Sea, however they are not enough. The border does both: encourages small non-state binational environmental cooperation to protect the Salish Sea on a small scale and hinders federal binational decisions for this same enterprise.

The invisibility of the US–Canada border and the way it has been constructed as an “undefended border,” recognized internationally as a model of binational peace to be emulated, has allowed some non-state binational cooperation to move slowly forward to protect the Salish Sea.<sup>125</sup> Indigenous groups, environmental non-governmental organizations, citizen groups, and regional actors are thickening transboundary water governance. On both sides of the border, these groups are working on common problems in the water region such as oil spill prevention, fisheries, and salmon and orca protection.<sup>126</sup> According to Margit Säre, “Washington State and British Columbia NGOs and environmental groups have a good understanding of their colleagues’ work across the border and informal networks are functioning well.”<sup>127</sup> The permeability of this border allows non-state transboundary organizations to fill in the gaps in the governance of the sea. The number of non-statal organizations involved in protecting the Salish Sea has increased over time; however, this trend has not necessarily resulted in increased decision-making capacity for non-state actors. While the permeability and invisibility of the

---

<sup>124</sup> “About the Salish Sea.”

<sup>125</sup> Radojewski, “The Rush–Bagot Agreement.”

<sup>126</sup> Margit Säre, “Non-Governmental Organizations and Cross-Border Environmental Cooperation: Salish Sea and Baltic Sea Regions,” *Border Policy Research Institute Publications*, January 1, 2020, [https://cedar.wvu.edu/bpri\\_publications/118](https://cedar.wvu.edu/bpri_publications/118).

<sup>127</sup> Säre. i

border allows environmental non-statal efforts to be generated, the border is also an obstacle in protecting the sea.

The border intensifies the national sovereignty discourse and hinders state support for protecting the Salish Sea. The cross-border work that the non-state agencies have done has been with little federal oversight or encouragement from the Canada–US government. There is a lack of public or public grant programs to support this kind of non-state partnership across border. In addition, these efforts are highly susceptible to changes in politics and budget priorities. Most rely on private funding and volunteering, but “fundraising happens separately on each side of the border. The absence of public and private funding for cross-border cooperation and general policy support for transboundary and basin-wide cooperation is a major obstacle for non-profit cooperation.”<sup>128</sup> It is true that the US and Canada have had the Boundary Waters Treaty since 1909 and have been “frequently praised as a leading global example of constructive governance of transboundary waters.”<sup>129</sup> However, the treaty’s focus on sovereignty, the quantity instead of quality of water, and its inflexibility in including current environmental situations that are seen as outside the scope of the treaty make it far from successful in overcoming the obstacles created by the border in protecting the Salish Sea.<sup>130</sup> The border actively separates differing government structures and political priorities and concerns between the US and Canada. Thus, the border makes it difficult to formalize and support the engagement of local border actors in creating a better transboundary water governance.

---

<sup>128</sup> Säre, 25.

<sup>129</sup> Emma S. Norman and Karen Bakker, “Do Good Fences Make Good Neighbours? Canada–United States Transboundary Water Governance, the Boundary Waters Treaty, and Twenty-First-Century Challenges,” *Water International* 40, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 199–213, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2014.978973>.

<sup>130</sup> Norman and Bakker.

In summary, the Salish Sea and the flux of its water and marine life across the border is naturogenic—it happens without any direct human intervention. By studying the sea, its movements and its relation with the anthropogenic border, we encounter ourselves challenging our narrow, human-centric, and land-centric construction and understanding of borders. This narrow understanding allows us to only see the repercussions of the border on lands and in relation to humans, so we miss the other aspects. The Salish Sea and its inhabitants cross the border daily—they do not relate to the border as a national boundary. However, dangerous substances that threaten this sea’s ecosystem also cross the border and continue to spread through the sea. This analysis shows that the border does not only let things pass through but also, how it helps and hinders human efforts to protect Salish Sea life. The way that the US–Canada borders have been portrayed as invisible, undefended, and a model of good binational neighbors has helped non-state organizations to make transboundary efforts to stop threats to the sea, which in the end will also affect humans. Nevertheless, at the same time, our land-centric, nationalistic, and human-centric understanding of the border hinders the possibilities of these non-state efforts. The border keeps the two nations divided, prioritizing national sovereignty over ecological crises. It prevents governments from making hands-on decisions that can protect the ecological habitat on which we all depend. In this section I addressed the agentic relation between the border and the watery Salish Sea, and in the next I discuss the agentic relation between the border and the lawn. While the US–Canada border wildness can have a negative impact on the Salish Sea life, the lawn actively imposes the border on the ground such that it controls and marginalizes indigenous flora and people.

*The Lawned Border*

In its deep ambivalence, the beautiful lawn of Peace Arch Park invites us to have a peaceful and enjoyable relationship with the park and the US–Canada border. The Washington State Parks’ website declares that Peace Arch Park is “devoted to peace and serenity,” and its manicured landscape has a “calm” and “happy feel.”<sup>131</sup> The British Columbia Parks’ website remarks on its “beautiful lawns and gardens.”<sup>132</sup> I can say that the park had a positive effect on me, too. With its combination of lawns and flower gardens, the park looks like a public art landscape along the freeway. Even people inside their cars can enjoy the park’s aesthetics while waiting to cross at the ports of entry on both sides.

In its deep ambivalence, the beautiful lawn invites you to have a peaceful and enjoyable relationship with the park and the US–Canada border. In its wild autonomy, the grass permeates the border on and under the ground. On the ground, the lawn is itself a homogeneous unity making the border membrane imperceptible to humans. Under the ground, the grass roots are a complex net across the border membrane. If we pay a closer attention to the deep ambivalence of the grass, we can see that even as the grass blurs the border, it also enlarges it to the size of the park. People can be there as long as they do not go beyond the edges of the park. The park does not testify to the absence of the border but rather, it shapes the border “as a meeting place and overlapping [binational] zone.”<sup>133</sup> In other words, in the wild relationship between the lawn and the border, the border grows in size becoming a *lawned border* and actively creates a space where Canada and the US overlap. This *lawned border* also allows binational interactions and

---

<sup>131</sup> “Peace Arch Historical State Park | Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission,” accessed April 7, 2019, <https://parks.state.wa.us/562/Peace-Arch>.

<sup>132</sup> Ministry of Environment, “Peace Arch Provincial Park - BC Parks,” accessed May 12, 2019, [http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/peace\\_arch/](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/peace_arch/).

<sup>133</sup> Evelyn P. Mayer, *Narrating North American Borderlands : Thomas King, Howard F. Mosher and Jim Lynch* (Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2014), 20, <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/27285>.

the ludic, joyful encounters that I mention in Chapter One. However, there are other consequences that may not be as positive. The lawned border is actively erasing the native forest life through deforestation and control over indigenous plants, and dismissing the heritage of Native Peoples through the maintenance of an authoritarian English garden aesthetics.

The lawned border of Peace Arch Park is *anthropogenic*. Unlike the Salish Sea and the Pacific Northwest forests, this lawn needs direct and intentional human care to keep its expected aesthetic. Jennifer Atkinson points out that any garden, including Peace Arch Park, “allows the act of encounter between people and living plants... through some kind of human care, attention, and labor beyond the initial design.”<sup>134</sup> However, the enjoyment of the romantic relation between humans and plants in humanly designed gardens can disguise an ongoing living struggle between humanly seeded and accepted flora and the indigenous flora. In this case, deforestation and the intensive lawn care is noticeable. The longest undefended border in the world is not fenced as the US–Mexico border is. However, its land-centric conceptualization has compelled humans to mark its boundaries. This border has persuaded humans to erase part of the forest on the land to create a marker of it. The invisible borderline between the US and Canada is marked by an absence, a “man-made, treeless zone,” a twenty-foot- wide deforested aisle through the forests.<sup>135</sup> This absence runs “through 1349 miles of deforested land along the 5,525 mile border between the two amicable countries.”<sup>136</sup> The west end of the twenty-foot aisle is rounded by forty-eight acres of a deforested but beautified area that holds the *lawned border* of Peace Arch Park. In

---

<sup>134</sup> Jennifer Wren Atkinson, *Gardenland: Nature, Fantasy, and Everyday Practice* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018), 3.

<sup>135</sup> “Snapshot: Protecting Our Northern Border with the Slash CameraPole,” Department of Homeland Security, January 30, 2020, <https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/news/2020/01/30/snapshot-protecting-our-northern-border-slash-camerapole>.

<sup>136</sup> Julia Shipley, “Why Is There a ‘Slash’ in the Trees at the US–Canada Border?,” *Seven Days*, accessed October 19, 2020, <https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/why-is-there-a-slash-in-the-trees-at-the-us-canada-border/Content?oid=2266575>.

their deep ambivalence, when things relate with others they have the agency to help or be an obstacle to other things' powers and agency.<sup>137</sup> In this case, the bare soil of the border, absent of bigger native trees and plants, enhances the power of the grass lawn to grow, allows gardeners to take care of it, allows visitors to enjoy it, and allows the border patrol to better surveil the flux of people.<sup>138</sup>

The human intervention to create and maintain a lawn on the grounds of Peace Arch Park definitely did not end in preparing the flat deforested soil. The beautiful, manicured, lawned border reinforces the fact that humans can live in alienation from their environment, competing with it, exploiting it, resisting it, or ignoring it.<sup>139</sup> The human-seeded grass will fight for resources with the self-seeded indigenous plants usually called “weeds,” and thereby marginalize them. In addition, the pleasant lawned border of Peace Arch Park has asked for human gardening to maintain its neat aesthetic over the years. The beauty of the flora in the park requires thoughtful, systematic, and strategic human gardening so the lawn can be so visually pleasant and maintain its English style. Humans fight against the wildness of some nonhumans to achieve this goal. They “fight invaders such as crabgrass, weeds, insects [and] earth worms,” and use “defensive and offensive equipment,” with power machinery (such as mowers), chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers) and seasonal strategies (water management according to the season).<sup>140</sup> The wildness of the grass as well as that of the unwanted indigenous plants or “weeds” has to be continuously, partially controlled to keep the English style.

---

<sup>137</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.

<sup>138</sup> “Snapshot.”

<sup>139</sup> Virginia Jenkins, *The Lawn: A History of an American Obsession* (Smithsonian Institution, 2015), 185.

<sup>140</sup> Jenkins, *The Lawn*.

The *lawned border* of Peace Arch Park's carefully situated trees and shrubs and individual garden beds follows the English garden style that White people commonly grew across the United States and Canada in the nineteenth century.<sup>141</sup> Nevertheless, this gardening style has been historically problematic as it can collide with divergent ecological realities. The English garden aesthetic "imposes order on perceived ecological disarray, ascertained straightforwardly through the outward appearance of [native] plants (i.e. prickly, ugly, mundane)."<sup>142</sup> Thus, the wildness of the grass lawn partially controlled by humans actively marginalizes and destroys indigenous flora. In the lawned border, the whole park is an entire boundary that, within its hard three-dimensional edges, continuously stops the growth of indigenous flora, while at the same time, creates an idealized order of the border with a Western American-English legacy that erases the legacy of the Salish Indigenous Peoples.

By making gardens, we create our own idealized order of nature: "gardens create territories in an alternative world."<sup>143</sup> The *ideal* and *alternative* world that the lawned border is creating is an ordered White Western American-English garden. There are fifty-five Canadian First Nations and 23 tribes in the United States that call the Salish Sea home.<sup>144</sup> "The US–Canada border first crossed Coast Salish People's homelands in the mid-1800s, thereby creating a boundary that is not culturally relevant but nonetheless creates political and practical challenges for Indigenous Peoples in the Salish Sea region."<sup>145</sup> The Coast Salish People's only symbol in the lawned border is a totem pole in one corner of the Canada side that seems to often go unnoticed

---

<sup>141</sup> Thomas J. Mickey, *America's Romance with the English Garden* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2013).

<sup>142</sup> John Charles Ryan, "Towards a Corporeal Aesthetics of Plants: Ethnographies of Embodied Appreciation along the Wildflower Trail," *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 24, no. 4 (August 1, 2010): 546, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2010.489721>.

<sup>143</sup> Atkinson, *Gardenland*, 5.

<sup>144</sup> Säre, "Non-Governmental Organizations and Cross-Border Environmental Cooperation."

<sup>145</sup> Säre, 5.

and is marginalized and obscured by the pompous white neoclassic arch and the lawn design. This pole was first placed in the 1950s without a “proper ceremony,” and, as Semiahmoo First Nation member Joanne Charles recounts, it was “ripped from its base.”<sup>146</sup> Like the weeds, it was removed without respect, “consultation or notice during the provincial government’s reconstruction of the Peace Arch Visitor Centre in November 2008.”<sup>147</sup> Along with other members of the Semiahmoo First Nation, Charles, with her mother and aunt, persevered for ten years to get it back. In 2018 a replica of the totem pole was raised with a proper ceremony, but still, it is not easy to see from many points on the lawned border. In addition, the Semiahmoo Reserve is next to Peace Arch Park. The reserve is still a forest while Peace Arch Park is not anymore. The imposed English garden aesthetic of this lawned border keeps the border noticeable and prominent in contrast with the reserve’s forest. The lawned border at Peace Arch Park actively “celebrates the peaceful and amicable relations between the United States of America and [Anglophone] Canada.”<sup>148</sup> But this Western lawned border does not give proper consideration to the First Nations nor their homeland, which the border has lacerated. The lawned border actively silences the culture of Native Peoples. The park’s stated purpose is to celebrate peace, but apparently, this peace does not properly include the Coast Salish people.<sup>149</sup> Thus, the border, neatly lawned, does not decrease the neglect of Indigenous Peoples—it even seems to enhance this neglect.

Both the sea and the lawn are particularly visually appealing at Peace Arch Park. With our narrow human-centric common perception of the borders, they seem to be natural elements

---

<sup>146</sup> Carolyn Jack, “Restoration of Historic Haida Pole Sets New Path of Respect and Reconciliation,” September 21, 2018, 2018PREM0071-001825, [https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/news\\_releases\\_2017-2021/2018PREM0071-001825.htm](https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/news_releases_2017-2021/2018PREM0071-001825.htm).

<sup>147</sup> Jack.

<sup>148</sup> Guntram Herb, “Colonizing Visions,” *Indigenous Borderlands and Border Rites* (blog), January 10, 2018, <https://sites.middlebury.edu/borderrites/border-rights/colonizing-visions/>.

<sup>149</sup> Herb.

unaffected by the border and even able to blur it. However, a closer look allows us to see how both, in their own wildness, are highly related to the same border in different ways. In the previous section, I show how the naturogenic Salish Sea ecosystem suffers the consequences of the nationalistic division of the border. In contrast with the sea, I show how the grass is highly anthropogenic because it requires constant human intervention to keep its aesthetics, and instead of being affected by the border like the sea is, the grass only exists because of the border. The lawn at Peace Arch Park is properly beautiful and seems to erase the border and create a space that allows the two nations to overlap. This section allows us to see that the grass actively helps to enlarge the border while it creates natural and cultural erasures. This lawned border is the size of the whole park. It keeps deforestation tied to the way that the US–Canada border has been marked, and also diminishes the indigenous Cost Salish People that are neighbors to the park in an exaltation of the White English landscape, aesthetic, and culture. Analysis of the two nonhumans, the Salish Sea and the lawn, at Peace Arch Park helps us to see the problems that the US–Canada border is enhancing. These problems affect other nonhumans and communities that are usually overlooked due to the way this border is constructed abstractly and concretely.<sup>150</sup> In the following section I analyze the southern US border and its wild relationships with the movements of the California ground squirrels at Friendship Park and with Tijuana’s sewage. While the squirrels’ movements mask some damaging consequences of the way the US–Mexico border has been materially and conceptually constructed, the sewage passing through the border and polluting both sides is clearly a dangerous consequence of this border construction.

### Nonhumans at Friendship Park

---

<sup>150</sup> Radojewski, “The Rush–Bagot Agreement.”

It is noticeable that the US government applies different immigration policies and security strategies to the northern border and southern border. While the northern border is one of the longest undefended borders in the world, the southern is one of the most militarized ones. Rhetoricians have denounced the ways this border has been discursively constructed affecting Latin-American immigrants and their descendants even further inside the US. Their efforts are pertinent and needed.<sup>151</sup> However, analyzing the border in relation to nonhumans can illuminate the other costs of this border that are usually obscured by the unfair treatment that humans receive there.

Friendship Park at the southern border has a fence strengthening the border membrane, creating what Wendy Brown calls a *walled* border.<sup>152</sup> The fence can stop most humans and some nonhumans from crossing from one side to the other. Some other living and nonliving nonhumans still cross it continuously through land, air, and the oceanic water. In this section I will analyze the California ground squirrels and Tijuana's sewage in relation to the border. With naturogenic movements, the squirrels cross the border through the fence from the US side of Friendship Park to the Mexico side to get food and then return. The material border allows them a journey that challenges our understanding of borders and invite us to imagine a better US–Mexico back and forth border crossing for humans. However, at the same time, it masks how the border endangers other nonhuman animals that cannot pass through it.

The anthropogenic Tijuana sewage can show how the abstraction of the border as an international division has caused Tijuana and San Diego to have their own different ways of

---

<sup>151</sup> Flores, “Constructing Rhetorical Borders”; D. Robert DeChaine, ed., *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*; Chávez, “Border Interventions: The Need to Shift from a Rhetoric of Security to a Rhetoric of Militarization,” in *Border Rhetorics*.”

<sup>152</sup> Wendy Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*”

governing and managing their sewage. In addition, the border allows Tijuana's sewage to permeate San Diego, heavily polluting the Border State Park where Friendship Park is. This case shows us how the border's agency has become extremely harmful and as the border maintains binational division and sovereignty, it hinders the collaboration needed to solve environmental crisis.

### *California Ground Squirrels*



The plaza at Friendship Park, Tijuana side. April 2019.

When I think of nonhuman animals crossing the border fence at the US–Mexico border, birds come to mind. However, by being at the Tijuana side of Friendship Park I encountered ground squirrels that were also able to pass through the border. I was sitting on one of the benches at the Tijuana side of Friendship Park watching people standing in front of the fence talking though it. On the San Diego side, the border agents do not allow visitors to go where there is no mesh on the fence. Where there is no mesh, the fence is only made of columns. I saw how two squirrels sneaked between the columns. They went from the protected quiet natural area of San Diego to the busy

urban Playas neighborhood of Tijuana. They picked up some *chicharrones de harina*<sup>153</sup> that visitors presumably had unconsciously dropped on the ground. The squirrels took them, ate them, and returned through the columns to their quieter neighborhood with more plants and animals than humans and concrete.

These squirrels are native to the areas now called California in the US, and northern Baja California in Mexico. They are labeled “ground squirrels” because they dig their burrows in the ground. In this section I analyze the passing relationship between the deep ambivalences of the squirrels and the border when they cross. The deep ambivalence of the border allows the squirrels to cross, destabilizing the way humans are constructing the US–Mexico border and masking the danger that other nonhumans animals are experiencing.

Most of the material and discursive rhetoric around the border is tied to human power over territory and human stoppage.<sup>154</sup> As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, borders are made with the human intention to establish boundaries between nations and to stop and manage human and some human-related goods from moving across them. The fenced US–Mexico border reinforces this stoppage. At Friendship Park, the fence columns and the militarized San Diego side have been mostly successful stopping humans from crossing the border. However, the wild flux at the border cannot be completely controlled by humans. In a bidirectional relationship the wildness of the border fence has the agency to allow the wild squirrels to pass through it. This passing through is a double-edged sword. The border–squirrel permeable relationship disrupts our human-centric understanding of the border as division, allowing us to make a leap of imagination and understand it as a space for collaboration. However, at the same time, the squirrel–border

---

<sup>153</sup> A fried puffed snack made of wheat flour.

<sup>154</sup> Chávez, “Border Interventions.”

relationship can make us think that nonhuman animals are adapting and coping well to the materiality of the border when they are not. The border is threatening them.

Natasha's Seegert analyzes the coyotes that are used as rodent pest control in Chicago and shows how they destabilize human-centric urbanity.<sup>155</sup> Seegert defines rhetoric "as the relational force of signals interacting with the world, [which] does not dismiss human rhetoric but instead expands the conversation to include beings who surround us but are frequently silenced."<sup>156</sup> This signaling is part of the wild and ineffable connective agency of things in River's deep ambivalence. Animals have an active role in the production of those signals that humans may encounter. For many animals, rhetorical encounters occur not through visual cues, but through auditory, smell and touch ones.<sup>157</sup> Coyotes, as squirrels, are highly guided through smell. Seegert demonstrates that the way coyotes transit through Chicago and the signals they produce and sniff destabilizes human-centric structures such as the concept of a marginalized being and the divide between wild/domestic and urban/rural. The ground squirrels permeating the border membrane does a similar destabilizing job with the US–Mexico border at Friendship Park.

As "the presence of the coyote destabilizes the meaning of the urban environment,"<sup>158</sup> squirrels crossing the border at Friendship Park have a similar destabilizing relationship with the border. Like coyotes, squirrels in their own wildness do not discipline themselves with border rules or urban manners.

Instead of following the human-centric abstract and material border, the squirrels sniff and follow their own needs and squirrelly signals such as scent paths. The border allows the squirrels to pass and the squirrels have the agency to cross the border membrane walking through the

---

<sup>155</sup> Seegert, "Play of Sniffication"

<sup>156</sup> Seegert, 160.

<sup>157</sup> Seegert, 161.

<sup>158</sup> Seegert, 166.

columns without a passport or visa, without having to go to the official entry point ten miles east and line up for three hours to re-enter the US, and without having to show any ID to the border agents in charge of the San Diego side of Friendship Park on the weekends, when they allow visitors. None of the apparatuses that the US government has built to “protect” the US from unauthorized entrance has the agency to stop squirrels from entering and exiting the US or even smuggling food with them if they want. The permeability of the border allows this free entry and exit from one side to another. The wild squirrels’ movement through the border fence challenges the assumed ability of the border as a stable artifact that can stop traffic.

The squirrels do not cross because they are clueless about where they are going, but because they are sagacious and adaptive.<sup>159</sup> They follow scents to find food, to figure out which human food is edible, and to enter and leave spaces with very different qualities safely. By doing this they are actively expanding their home from their burrow to a greater area. They cross the border membrane for food as if it were it their backyard, because in fact, it is. By *homing* both sides, they are making places and trajectories to live and to belong to both sides.<sup>160</sup> To have a more pleasant eating and resting experience, they are choosing where to eat and where to rest. The squirrels do not go between two different nations but from a known space with naturogenic type of food to another known place with anthropogenic (and oily) food, from an area with soil to another with concrete, from an area with few humans to an area with many humans. This movement of the squirrels across the border to have their needs met invite us to make a leap and imagine a Friendship Park and a border with the ability to allow humans to freely move through it; to make a leap to imagine an easier two-way border crossing process; to make a leap to imagine the

---

<sup>159</sup> Diane M. Keeling, “Feral Rhetoric: Common Sense Animals and Metaphorical Beasts,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (May 27, 2017): 229–37, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2017.1309905>.

<sup>160</sup> Emily Plec, Henry Hughes, and Jackson Stalley, “The Salmon Imperative,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (May 27, 2017): 247–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2017.1309909>.

possibility of freely enjoying both sides, the Tijuana busy side and the quieter San Diego area, and making the border location a path for developing collaboration instead of division.

When we see the squirrels effectively homing both sides of the border, it seems that they are doing well. In our human-centric view the relationship between the squirrels and the border can easily make us think that all nonhuman animals are not distressed by the border. However, that is not necessarily true. The borderline crosses many animals' homes. Some squirrels have found ways to recuperate it but not all animals have the physical ability to go through the materiality of the US–Mexico border. The crossing of the squirrels masks the damage that the material border fence is actively causing to other nonhumans that cannot adapt or move through this obstacle that is wounding their habitat. In other words, the border actively interferes with the signal paths of other animals putting them in risk.

Along the border there are other animals that cannot cross the border as easily as these ground squirrels since the border fence is a wild agent actively stopping them from going from one side of their home to the other side of their home. The fence and its stronger relative, the wall that Trump administration built during his term, "degrades landscape connectivity."<sup>161</sup> This means that the materiality of the border prevents or discourages animals from accessing food, water, mates, and other critical resources. It also actively traps some wildlife, preventing them from escaping fires, floods, heat waves, or from following their seasonal migration routes. The risk to their survival is increased by the shrinking of their homes and the isolating of their populations.

---

<sup>161</sup> Robert Peters et al., "Nature Divided, Scientists United: US–Mexico Border Wall Threatens Biodiversity and Binational Conservation," *BioScience* 68, no. 10 (October 1, 2018): 740, <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biy063>.

Many species, such as bighorn sheep, are composed of populations of relatively few individuals per unit area and have large home ranges—hundreds of square miles in the bighorn’s case. Shrinking that range will lead to local population loss or declines. Smaller population sizes suffer from reduced genetic variation, which reduces their capacity for adaptation.<sup>162</sup>

For example, the fence constrains endangered Peninsular big-horn sheep from moving between California and Mexico to access water and birthing sites. There are many examples like this, not only in California but in other border states as well, such as jaguars, bison, javelinas, deer, coyotes, bears, ocelots, Sonoran pronghorns, and Mexican gray wolves. As climate change and increasingly warm, dry conditions redistribute resources and shift habitats in the borderlands, the wall will prevent some populations from tracking these changes.<sup>163</sup> The border not only affects animals that moves on the ground, but also low-flying birds and butterflies. The materiality of the border reshapes the topography of the borderland. “It’s not that birds can’t fly over it—it’s that, for one reason or another, they often won’t. Instead, stuck in smaller, sparser patches of habitat, with nowhere else to go this isolated populations can suffer.”<sup>164</sup> In addition, the fence construction brings noise, heavy machinery, and newly bulldozed areas that before offered a habitat for many critters.

In their deep ambivalence, the squirrels sagaciously and graciously make do a passage through the border to urban human-centric spaces to get food, at the same time homing both sides of Friendship Park in a way that can teach us a better way of constructing the border. The

---

<sup>162</sup> Rob Jordan, “How Would a Border Wall Affect Wildlife?,” Stanford Earth, July 24, 2018, <https://earth.stanford.edu/news/how-would-border-wall-affect-wildlife>.

<sup>163</sup> Peters et al., “Nature Divided, Scientists United.”

<sup>164</sup> Amelia Urry, “Why the Border Wall Is a Problem For Birds, Despite Their Wings,” Audubon, April 10, 2019, <https://www.audubon.org/news/why-border-wall-problem-birds-despite-their-wings>.

squirrels' relation with the border also might make us dismiss the fact that there are many animals whose wildness cannot adapt to the materiality of the border and cross it with ease. In other words, the squirrel binational movement can mask how the border disrupts the movement and signaling of critters across the wall, disturbing these populations on a large scale. Using Seegert's concept of rhetoric as a "force of signals interacting with the world," the way that the squirrels re-signal their path through the border can make us blind to how the border actively disturbs the signaling that other animals follow to survive and prevents them from re-signaling more paths.<sup>165</sup>

The materiality of the US–Canada border and its relationship with the sea and the grass has a different impact than the walled border in the south. In the sea, the border becomes watery and permeable, allowing all living being to cross as well as threatening agents. In addition, its national divisive power cannot help us to make decisions to stop those agents. In the grass, the border becomes an English lawn that marginalizes indigenous flora and culture. The materiality of the walled southern border is not as permeable, nor does it merge with the elements around it like the US–Canada border merges with the sea and the grass. In the south, the border forces humans and nonhumans to live with an imposing, strong fence in their backyards. In their wildness, the squirrels at Friendship Park found a way to go through the fence to meet their needs for food and shelter. By studying them we can learn how their sagacity and physical qualities in relation to the border allow them to use their available means to reach and take from each side of the park what they need. By doing this, they challenge the strength of the material border and the assumption that it is an impermeable division. The squirrels' binational crossing invite us to make a leap of imagination and think what a border permeable by humans would

---

<sup>165</sup> Seegert, "Play of Sniffication," 160.

look like, where, like the squirrels, humans can home both sides. But also, this analysis of the squirrels reminds us that we must be vigilant, too, of what we cannot see. By watching the squirrels crossing we cannot assume that all other animals are homing both sides as well. The wildness of the border threatens other nonhuman animals whose life is much more sensitive to changes in their home and puts their whole species at risk. As we will see in the following section, these changes are not only for a shortening of the area that they need to survive. In addition, the abstraction of the border keeps the borderland separated and detracts human from making decisions that are needed to keep the living nonhumans safe on both sides. As we may see the border is not neutral or passive. In the same way the US–Canada border hinders finding a solution to the Salish Sea pollution problem, the following section will show how the US–Mexico border has caused an environmental crisis at the borderland in its wild relation with Tijuana’s sewage, as it also is hindering binational cooperation in solving this crisis.

### *Tijuana’s Sewage*

In this section I will show the agency that the border has in the ecological crisis produced by its relationship with Tijuana’s anthropogenic sewage. The border’s power to divide nations and establish the geographical limits of national sovereignty has given rise to sewage management that negatively affects the borderland as well as obstacles to establishing binational collaboration to solve this same issue. Tijuana’s sewage contents, piping, and gathering is anthropogenic while the rain is naturogenic. However, in its deep ambivalence, the sewage wildness and its wild relations with the rain, the estuary, and the border give the sewage the agency to not only permeate the border membrane, but also to become uncontrollable and

unsafe.<sup>166</sup> With these wild relations and its material vitality, the sewage increases its potency to disperse and enter the San Diego Border State Park, polluting the soil, air, and water of the estuary. This potency, or what Jane Bennet calls “thing power,” also has the agency to flood the trail that goes to Friendship Park and to kill living beings in the estuary and the sea. The increased sewage makes the trail undrivable and unwalkable. The combination of the sewage and the floods of the wet season has persuaded the border agents to keep the San Diego side of Friendship Park closed for several weeks or even months during the wet season.

One of the Border Church leaders and activists who visits the United States side of Friendship Park weekly describes what hiking from San Diego Border Park to Friendship Park during the wet season can be like:

walking through raw sewage... walking through decades of pollution. Tijuana is a city that has had a population explosion, but its infrastructure has not kept up. Amongst the hillsides that make up the region, people do with waste what people have for eons. They pour it down the hill. A great deal of that human and animal waste combines with motor oil and God knows what else as it washes to the sea. Before it gets to the sea, it comes to us.

[...]

Unauthorized dumping in the canyons of Tijuana creates toxic sludge when the rains come and wash all kinds of chemicals, trash, and particulates down the Tijuana River to the Tijuana Estuary of Border Field State Park [before it gets to the sea]. Safety precautions and current cleanup measures are not enough to keep created life safe from

---

<sup>166</sup> “Sewage Runoff from Tijuana River Affects South County Beaches,” *NBC 7 San Diego* (blog), accessed October 7, 2020, <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/sewage-runoff-from-tijuana-affects-sd-beaches/28073/>.

this human-made mess. The nearby US community of Imperial Beach often closes its shores to swimmers and surfers because of the high chance of illness for them... It is not safe there.<sup>167</sup>

The presence of a nonhuman at a place can have the agency to dissuade us from going there, which is also a rhetorical effect. When I was planning my fieldwork, I needed to consider not only the weather conditions of the place but the safety issues. I can name all the imagined disgusting sensations that persuaded me to avoid going to the San Diego side of the park during the wet season: the smell, the trash, the color, the anxiety of feeling unsafe, of getting dirty or even sick, the image of polluted land and water and dead sea animals, the frustration of not being able to enter the park if the border agents closed it that day without notification. All these imagined situations shaped my decision about when to go to the park. However, not all the visitors have the privilege of being able to choose as I do. This situation has been the embodied experience of many people going to meet their families at Friendship Park, and it has been going on for years. People participating in binational family reunions at Friendship Park and nonhuman living beings have had to develop survival strategies to move and live through the sewage season.

The existence of the border fence at Friendship Park has allowed each nation to decide how to treat the area on each side of the park. One side is fully urbanized and the other is a natural reserve. The authorities on each side decide how to manage their trash and sewage within their national limits that the borderline marks. The result is that the sewage pollutes both sides. Certainly, the damage caused by the wildness of the sewage is more noticeable for humans on the San Diego side. The pungent unpleasant smells, sights, and overall sensations of the polluted area have the power to attract human attention when it floods the unurbanized state park in San

---

<sup>167</sup> Seth David Clark, "Open Wound, Open Table: A Theological Exploration of Holy Communion as Practiced by The Border Church/La Iglesia Fronteriza" (Columbia Theological Seminary, 2020), 119–20.

Diego where the sewage stays longer than it does in Tijuana's ground. The anthropogenic concrete ground at the urban neighborhood on Tijuana's side of the park allows the pollution to wash out to sea where it can permeate the borderline membrane of the San Diego side and the sea itself. This reminds us how the concrete under our feet in any city has the agency to blur our connection with pollution damage, as concrete allows us to wash pollution from our senses. However, that does not mean that the pollution is not there—it is still wildly vibrant. Even when we do not notice it, and its presence is sensed more easily on one side than the other, this anthropogenic sewage is dangerous on both sides of the border for any living being.

At the US–Mexico border, several environmental organizations have noticed dead sea mammals resulting from this pollution. The organizations blame the Tijuana authorities for not taking responsibility for their sewage.<sup>168</sup> However, this is a complex situation for which blaming the Tijuana authorities will not solve the issue. For decades, the border's agency to divide the land and the water between two different nations has been an obstacle to the collaboration that is needed for having and enforcing a transboundary water management agreement that works.

Kevan Q. Malone, a *Washington Post* journalist, reports:

The ongoing border sewage crisis is rooted in a longer history of US imperialism and private enterprise in the San Diego-Tijuana region... that southbound capital flows and northbound sewage flows are two parts of the same story. After a US war of expansion partitioned the Tijuana River Basin, American businesses have driven nearly a century of unmanageable growth below the line, bolstering the binational region's economy with a vast reserve of cheap labor while fueling environmental disasters.<sup>169</sup>

---

<sup>168</sup> "Sewage Runoff from Tijuana River Affects South County Beaches."

<sup>169</sup> Kevan Q. Malone, "San Diego and Tijuana's Shared Sewage Problem Has a Long History," *Washington Post*, sec. Perspective, accessed February 3, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/02/san-diego-tijuanas-shared-sewage-problem-has-long-history/>.

The imaginary division of the borderland can give humans on each side the illusion that they are separated and affords them the agency to treat the other side differently. US businesses have contributed to the sewage pollution coming from their factories in Tijuana, the *maquiladoras*.<sup>170</sup> Even though Mexico has good water laws on the books, there is little or no enforcement.<sup>171</sup> In addition, the wildness of the border in relation to the Tijuana River that carries the Tijuana sewage belies the “nationality” of the water, and therefore who has the rights and obligations over the water treatment. The water gets polluted in Mexico and the “Mexican government says the water is theirs, at least, before it crosses the border [but] once that Mexican water hits US soil, its citizenship changes, in a sense, and it becomes California water.”<sup>172</sup> This creates tension and confusion especially when there is no knowledge of what is being dumped in the sewage—therefore, the local US government, the state or federal agencies, or even private companies cannot take on the task of treating it because they cannot take on the liability if they fail to pass US water quality standards. As with many other border cities, San Diego and Tijuana have deep ties, both culturally and economically as one border region. The way that the border materially and in abstraction divides these two cities has prompted the shared problem of the Tijuana sewage crisis. This same wild and unleashed border keeps being an obstacle to transboundary collaboration, and it has a highly negative impact on the quality of life for the human and nonhuman living beings on both sides. Sadly, it is a problem that will only worsen as climate change progresses, as swifter and harder rainfalls increase the sewage and more unpredictable heat waves and drought mean not enough clean water to drink and use.

---

<sup>170</sup> Since the 1970s, large numbers of transnational companies have been shipping materials to their Mexico *maquiladoras* (twin plants), where cheap labor in the form of Mexican workers have assembled electronics and other products to be transported back across the international line for US consumption.

<sup>171</sup> MacKenzie Elmer, “New Snapshot of What’s in the Tijuana River Is as Gross as You’d Expect,” *Voice of San Diego*, November 2, 2020, <https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/science-environment/new-snapshot-of-whats-in-the-tijuana-river-is-as-gross-as-you-d-expect/>.

<sup>172</sup> Elmer.

Studying the sewage allows us to see the agency of the border in this environmental crisis at the San Diego–Tijuana borderland. However, it is not the only toxic nonhuman to consider. Carlos Tarin noticed that the landscapes of the US–Mexico borderland are “literally littered with the toxic remnants of neoliberal capitalism, industrialization and globalization.”<sup>173</sup> As he claims, border membranes are incapable of stopping the permeability of air, water, and soil. If one of those is polluted on one side, all three become polluted on both sides. The US-Mexico border has the agency to allow the sea, the air, the soil, and the anthropogenic sewage to permeate it. In addition, it has the agency to put boundaries on sovereignty and keep authorities dismissing the impact of their decisions on the other side. This nationalistic agency of borders can hinder the binational collaboration needed to solve the Tijuana sewage issue not only at this specific site, but also in many other borderlands in the world. Focusing on Tijuana’s sewage and how it passes through the border polluting both sides allow us to learn that we urgently need to make a leap in our understanding of the border and borderlands. We need to understand the borderland as undivided, where anthropogenic decisions affect humans, and nonhumans affect both sides. The sewage example allows us to see the urgency to being self-reflexive of the precarious state of environmental conditions which exist in the borderlands, and of the relational dynamics: how we have constructed the border – materially and abstractly – may keep creating harmful situations and hinder the binational collaboration needed to stop those situations.<sup>174</sup> Instead of asking how Friendship Park visitors and the whole ecosystem of the estuary are enduring the Tijuana sewage, it seems that we need to know how we can change our own relationship with the

---

<sup>173</sup> Tarin, “Fronteras Toxicas: Towards a Borderland Ecological Consciousnes,” 31.

<sup>174</sup> Tarin, 40.

border so it can become an agent that improves the collaboration necessary to ensuring that any living being must no longer be dwelling with or moving through the Tijuana sewage.<sup>175</sup>

The case of the Tijuana sewage as well as the pollution of the Salish Sea that I discussed before are microcosms of the global environmental crisis and how nationalism may impede collaborative approaches to shared transnational problems. The environmental harm in one nation has a negative impact on others, and the strict national borders enacting nationalistic sovereignty do not allow the cooperation required to reduce the environmental crisis. Ecological damage does not care about borders; it spreads as far as it can, affecting several ecosystems, even when they are within different nations. The sewage is a salient example of how humans are constantly unleashing anthropogenic wild things in the world that have powers of their own to create and to destroy. Similar to the anthropogenic Salish Sea pollution, the Tijuana sewage allows us to see that the way we construct and understand borders can make it hard for state authorities to take responsibility for decisions that affect the other side. The way we have constructed the borders north and south of the United States has had harmful consequences. Certainly, the damage done by the grass lawn at Peace Arch Park seems less deadly than the sewage at Friendship Park or the way that the fence is destroying animal populations. But they all come as a consequence of how we construct and then relate to them, and the environmental impacts can become worse if we do not change our attunement to borders all over the globe.

### Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the US borders are agentive and relational. The border is an anthropogenic nonhuman. In the abstract, it is constructed as an element that can establish

---

<sup>175</sup> Wells et al., "Introduction: Rhetorics' Ecologies,"

the limits of a nation. This can help governance as well as managing the flow of people and goods. However, each border has its own nuances in its materiality and the costs are high. Each abstract and material border that we have constructed is a wild agent that, in its autonomy and in relation with other nonhumans, has negative consequences for the environment that affects both humans and nonhumans.

I used two nonhumans related to the US–Canada border and two related to the US–Mexico border that are part of Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park, respectively, to show some of the costs of these borders. The U.S.-Canada relationship has been the basis for constructing a supposedly model border known for being the longest undefended border in the world. However, by analyzing the relations between this border and the naturogenic movements of the Salish Sea and the anthropogenic grass lawn, both of which are attractive to visitors at Peace Arch Park, we can see that the border that crosses them is not neutral. This border cannot protect the Salish Sea ecosystem from pollution and in its wild autonomy it may be an obstacle for national hands-on decisions on this shared body of water. In addition, the anthropogenic English style manicured grass lawn, has enlarged the border to the size of the park and created a border that marginalizes indigenous flora and culture.

The southern border is well known for its militarization and the strictness of the crossing procedures. I explained in Chapter One, this walled border at Friendship Park allows people to see each other while it prevents them from coming together. In addition, this walled border is hard to cross for humans and the procedures to cross at the entry point are uncomfortably strict. However, this border does not only stop the human flow, but also disturbs the quality of life of many living nonhumans in the borderland ecosystem. In this chapter I focus on how this border at the park relates to the naturogenic squirrel's movement and the anthropogenic sewage when

both cross the border. In their squirrely binational journey across the border to get human snacks, they challenge our human-centric construction of border, invite us to imagining a fenceless borderline, while their ability to home both sides of Friendship Park may also mask the way the wildness of the border is threatening other nonhuman animals that cannot cross. Finally, an analysis of Tijuana's sewage that crosses the border shows that it is similar to the pollution in the Salish Sea in the way that the border enhances sovereignty on each side.

National borders are a reality now all around the globe. But they are not neutral in the abstract and the material ways that we construct them; they have wild powers in their autonomy and in their relationships with other nonhumans. They may have high costs for human lives, as we have seen more frequently in media and in academic works. However, by analyzing the border in relation to nonhumans, we can see how they also may suffer due to the way a border is built. Borders create political tensions that can stop humans from taking responsibility in the protection of the borderlands. The elements that are worsening our environmental crisis can be tied to our impossibility of understanding that our home is bigger than the territory marked by the border. In other words, the way we have been constructing borders may have been actively aiding in the deterioration of our own home. Nonhumans must deal with the negative ecological impacts of borders that threaten them, and at the end of the day, if we lose them, humans will suffer too. I want this chapter to become a question: How are we building borders in abstract and in material ways? What is the cost, not only for humans, but also for nonhumans? Moreover, I hope this chapter helps us make a leap of imagination by asking how we can construct better borders that can reverse the damage that they have caused before.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Re-placing and Pre-placing Tactics at the Parks during the COVID-19 Pandemic

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization characterized the COVID-19 epidemic as a pandemic.<sup>176</sup> The quick spread of this coronavirus and its lethality meant that the authorities in countries, states, and cities reacted in different ways. Some had strict transit restrictions, others had looser ones, and still others were actively trying to convince the population that the coronavirus was not so serious. Border and immigration protocols changed from one day to the next during this unprecedented period as transit restrictions were imposed in an effort to stop the spread of the virus.

In the case of the US-Canada and US-Mexico borders, the countries stated exactly the same protocols as the following images from US Homeland Security show:<sup>177</sup>



At both borders “non-essential travel” including tourism and recreation were restricted. These initiatives and the restricted access to public spaces changed the patterns of interactions that visitors had with the materiality of place in both Friendship Park and Peace Arch Park place. I argue that visitors to the parks responded to these changes with re-placing and pre-placing tactics

<sup>176</sup> “WHO Characterizes COVID-19 as a Pandemic,” World Health Organization, March 11, 2020, <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>.

<sup>177</sup> “Fact Sheet: DHS Measures on the Border to Limit the Further Spread of Coronavirus,” U.S. Department of Homeland Security, March 23, 2020, <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/10/19/fact-sheet-dhs-measures-border-limit-further-spread-coronavirus>.

of rhetorical cartographies that allowed them to renegotiate their material and symbolic relation to each park.

Michel De Certeau's conceptualization of tactics versus strategies in *The Practice of Everyday Life* is helpful, here. De Certeau explains that both *strategy* and *tactic* are calculated actions when negotiating a place; however, the difference between them is related to the power and agency over a place that someone has. Strategies require power, will, and institutional ownership over a place; these privileges provide strong agency and the authority to distribute and redistribute power to other material and discursive elements in the place assemblage and to prepare and plan future changes to the place. Being able to strategize implies a "triumph of place over time" and it assumes a certain independence with respect to the variability of circumstances.<sup>178</sup>

In contrast, *tactics* are calculated actions determined by the limitations of agency over place. Tactics operate within a place already ruled by established bodies of power. Agents in a place use tactics as maneuvers that play with the possibilities that are available in a given situation. This conceptualization of *tactic* parallels Aristotle's definition of rhetoric, as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion."<sup>179</sup> While Aristotle was focused on the *inventio* of a speech, *tactic* allow us to see how rhetoric works in the *inventio* we have in relation with a place. Within this spatial *inventio*, the understanding of the place can be changed by an agent persuading others to change their relation to place, too. De Certeau provides the following example:

---

<sup>178</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 36.

<sup>179</sup> Jonathan Barnes and Aristotle, *Complete Works of Aristotle, Volume 2: The Revised Oxford Translation*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 2155, <http://muse.jhu.edu/book/64881>.

A North African living in Paris or Roubaix (France) insinuates into the system imposed on him by the construction of a low-income housing development or of the French language the ways of ‘dwelling’ (in a house or a language) peculiar to his native Kabylia. He super-imposes them and, by that combination, creates for himself a space in which he can find ways of using the constraining order of the place or of the language. Without leaving the place where he has no choice but to live and which lays down its law for him, he establishes within it a degree of plurality and creativity. By an art of being in between, he draws unexpected results from his situation.<sup>180</sup>

In this example, using the concept of *tactic* within rhetoric allows us to see how the immigrant may use the available means to shape this restraining space as his new home. In this making do process, he can persuade himself and other immigrants that, even within the French restrictions, immigrants can use their available agency to carve a home for themselves.

*Tactic* also resonates with the rhetorical concept of *kairos*. Kinneavy defines *kairos* as the “right or opportune time to do something, or right measure in doing something.”<sup>181</sup> To achieve this accuracy the rhetor needs to have a kairotic sensibility to fit in the material circumstances. In his explanation of Gorgias’ *On Kairos (Peri kairou)*, Augusto Rostagni explains that a kairotic sensibility provides the possibility of changing our discourse, which is “required by the necessity of adapting to circumstances that, in a general sense, include the states of mind of both speaker and audience, the moment, the place, and so forth.”<sup>182</sup> In this same line of thinking, Tindale

---

<sup>180</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 30.

<sup>181</sup> James Kinneavy, “Kairos in Classical and Modern Rhetorical Theory,” in *Rhetoric and Kairos: Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis*, ed. Phillip Sipiora and James S. Baumlin (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 58.

<sup>182</sup> Augusto Rostagni, “A New Chapter in the History of Rhetoric and Sophistry,” in *Rhetoric and Kairos: Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis*, ed. Phillip Sipiora and James S. Baumlin (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 28.

claims that kairotic sensibility is about the time and the place where the discourse is being delivered; different places require different tactics for a better delivery of the discourse.<sup>183</sup> De Certeau's concept of tactic allows us to see that not only is the rhetor kairotically attuned to the place where the speech is delivered, but also how the attunement to place and the response to this attunement is rhetorical and requires a kairotic sensibility. In de Certeau's example, an immigrant from Northern Africa has adapted to his new circumstances to keep performing his identity and cultural qualities within the new place. This immigrant needs to navigate what the right and appropriate action is, take the available opportunities to perform the action, and maybe share these possibilities by engaging with the other people in his building or neighborhood. Tactics in place, are then, an expression of *kairos*.

*Kairos* as well as De Certeau's concept of *tactic* also resonates with the rhetorical concept of bricoleur. Within a social approach to understanding rhetoric, Gaonkar claims that in the formation of discourse, the rhetor is no longer the seat of origin but a point of intersection. The rhetor is surrounded by a sea of fragments—bits and scraps of evidence, disembodied arguments, issues and visions—out of which is constructed his or her own fragment. Hence, the rhetor is preeminently an interpreter who attempts to make sense of his or her discursive surrounding in the manner of a bricoleur.<sup>184</sup>

This social approach to understanding rhetorical invention allows us to see a rhetor or advocate as “a person who acts by making do or improvising with the limited materials that are

---

<sup>183</sup> Christopher W. Tindale, “Introduction: Of Place and Time,” *Argumentation* 34, no. 1 (March 1, 2020): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10503-019-09492-0>.

<sup>184</sup> D.P. Gaonkar, “Performing with Fragments: Reflections on Critical Rhetoric,” in *Argument and the Postmodern Challenge: Proceedings of the Eighth SCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation*, ed. R.E. McKerrow (Armandale, VA: Speech Communication Association, n.d.), 153.

available in a particular situation.”<sup>185</sup> In de Certeau’s example, the North African immigrant grasps pieces of memories of his previous home and takes the materiality of his new situation to construct a relation with the new French living space where he is. While this ability to build and shape the relationship with a place by composing fragments requires a kairotic sensibility to know the appropriate means, this skill at bricolage also requires the navigation of power relations.

McKerrow points out that “discourse is a [...] dimension of the operation of power in its manifold relations at all levels of society, within and between institutions, groups and individuals.”<sup>186</sup> Spoken discourse and tactics in place allow individuals with restricted power to improvise the reclamation of some ownership of the place. According to de Certeau, when individuals use tactics in place they must “vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary power.”<sup>187</sup> In other words, tactics require a kairotic sensibility to create a bricolage of pieces within an institutional control frame and reclaim the power of place that people actually have. Tactics are a rhetorical way to make do using limited time, resources, and agency to pursue one’s own desires within the institutional strategies of constrictions of power and ownership that people have in a place. In de Certeau’s example, the imposed limitations in housing, language, and building rules are strategies by the French government to manage the space assigned to immigrants to live and transit within the cities. However, the way the immigrants decide to live within this regulated space is a tactic to

---

<sup>185</sup> James L. Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies*, Rhetoric & Society (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2001), 75.

<sup>186</sup> Raymie E. McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis,” *Communication Monographs* 56, no. 2 (1989): 78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758909390253>.

<sup>187</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 37.

express themselves within the possibilities of the private space of a home, and therefore reclaim ownership of the place.

We can see both *strategies* and *tactics* in the northern and southern parks that I analyze in this dissertation, especially within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Friendship Park and Peace Arch Park are both public spaces with institutional strategies ruling the interactions between visitors and the parks' built environment, and with each border. In the southern park, this is clearer as we experience the harsh material strategy of having a fence along the southern border to avoid any flux of human bodies through both sides of Friendship Park. In this park, activists have been using rhetorical tactics to try to keep both sides of the park accessible and to keep alive the possibility of a park without a fence.

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unexpected situation in late 2019 and early 2020. The authorities in charge of Friendship Park and Peace Arch Park had to employ the strategy of closing one or both sides of each park to maintain safety and security in the space during that uncertain time. Park visitors and activists had to come up with tactics to meet their need to gather and continue their advocacy work about the future of the park within the strategic restrictions set by the authorities. As a response to these restrictions, visitors used rhetorical tactics to make do in recovering access and, therefore, the relation to the park that they had had before the pandemic. In the southern park, activists had to use tactics not only to recover that relation to the built environment, but also to keep engaging with the community to imagine a fenceless park even in the midst of the pandemic and its strategic restrictions. We can better understand these tactics that were rhetorically enacted in both parks during the pandemic if we link them to the concept of rhetorical cartographies in each place.

Senda-Cook, Middleton, and Endres use the concept of *rhetorical cartographies* as a way to describe “the dynamic process of making, conceptualizing, and enacting, both materially and symbolically, the space/place in which one lives, works, or otherwise experiences daily.”<sup>188</sup>

Humans are active agents in rhetorical cartographies, as we have the agency to re-map physical places by altering the material qualities of the place, the embodied practices that people engage at the place, and our symbolic relation to them. Senda-Cook et al. argue that people in a place can “enact practices of rhetorical cartographies as a tactic for (re)creating that place and (re)negotiate power locally,” and this practice can challenge and/or support the official uses or interpretation of places.<sup>189</sup>

Studying the Gifford Park neighborhood in midtown Omaha, Nebraska, Senda-Cook et al. observed three different tactics of rhetorical cartography that the residents used over a long period in “attempting to reclaim and restore community value to a neighborhood” that many considered dangerous.<sup>190</sup> The first tactic, enacting material change, refers to changes in the built environment of the place which bring new meanings to the place and invite new practices. The second tactic is undoing boundaries between polarized topographies that constitute the lived spaces. Places have material boundaries and barriers that, in foreseen or unforeseen ways, encourage people to move through the place in a certain way or even to avoid entering a place. Rhetorical tactics can undo those boundaries. The third tactic is moving through the city. The

---

<sup>188</sup> Samantha Senda-Cook, Michael K. Middleton, and Danielle Endres, “Rhetorical Cartographies (Counter)Mapping Urban Spaces,” in *Field Rhetoric: Ethnography, Ecology and Engagement in the Places of Persuasion.*, ed. Candice Rai and Carolina Gottschalk (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2018), 99, <http://www.uapress.ua.edu/product/Field-Rhetoric,6957.aspx>.

<sup>189</sup> Senda-Cook, Middleton, and Endres, 98.

<sup>190</sup> Senda-Cook, Middleton, and Endres, 104.

authors claim that the ways people move through a place “respond to and construct the shifting boundaries that unfold” as the place undergoes material changes.<sup>191</sup>

As Senda-Cook et al. mention, the three tactics are “not exhaustive nor mutually exclusive” but offer a starting point to theorize rhetorical cartographies “as a category of embodied and emplaced rhetorical practice.”<sup>192</sup> Contributing to this discussion, I want to offer two more tactics that I noticed during my in situ and online field work at the two binational parks during March 2020 and March 2021. The tactics were prompted or intensified by a sudden material change that occurred in both places. In 2020, authorities in the US, Mexico, and Canada made decisions around COVID-19 pandemic security. Among other things, and with different degrees of strictness, authorities closed access to Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park. In response to these restrictions, visitors to the parks performed *re-placing* and *pre-placing* tactics of rhetorical cartography to reconstruct their pre-pandemic relation with the park and with the border at the park.

By *re-placing*, I refer to a tactic that tries to restore a relationship to a place when it has been lost. With this tactic people create new networks of embodied, emplaced, and material practices to restore, at least partially, what is no longer there. Many of us performed those re-placing tactics when the COVID-19 shut down our work, recreation, and gathering spaces. In many cases it meant restoring a place on the virtual stage of a screen. When we are re-placing, the restoration is never complete, but it is salutary in that allows us to encounter issues that we were not able to see before and value the way we relate to places in different ways. In the case of Peace Arch Park, when the US-Canada border was closed, people looked for a way to restore their ability to meet with their loved ones. The re-placing tactic allowed them to restore the loss

---

<sup>191</sup> Senda-Cook, Middleton, and Endres, 114.

<sup>192</sup> Senda-Cook, Middleton, and Endres, 99.

of the free border transit by transforming an area of the park with less restrictions into a gathering place. This material, embodied tactic as a way to relate with the park was a negotiation of power with the authorities' restrictions and shaped the symbolism of the park from a place to cross to a place to reunite. In the case of Friendship Park, restricted access to the US side was nothing new. But, it was the first time that access to both sides was restricted, so activists who had gathered weekly at the site switched to completely going online. This virtual re-placing tactic allowed different activist organizations to check in with each other and coordinate on some actions in relation to the COVID-19 situation. It also allowed them to keep performing their weekly collective gatherings. However, a common space for family reunions could not be replaced.

The second tactic that I present here is *pre-placing*, which means to place in advance. If to preview means to see beforehand, pre-place holds the wishes and imagined material future of the space in our minds. Thus, pre-placing as a tactic uses the available means to activate in oneself and/or others an imagined, aspirational future of a place—a place that is yet to come. If “collective imagination” is the “process of conceptualizing future events and situations engaged [in a place], either implicitly or explicitly, by multiple persons,” pre-placing is the tactic that allows people to activate their collective imagination and urge others to share this conceptualization of the future of a place.<sup>193</sup> Pre-placing is rhetorically important because, as Haley Schneider suggests, “not only ideas of the past, but ideas about the future are similarly used to justify actions, or beliefs in the present.”<sup>194</sup> People engaged in advising others on the pre-

---

<sup>193</sup> Michael Ian Borer, “From Collective Memory to Collective Imagination: Time, Place, and Urban Redevelopment,” *Symbolic Interaction* 33, no. 1 (2010): 111, <https://doi.org/10.1525/si.2010.33.1.96>.

<sup>194</sup> Haley Schneider, “Deliberative Topoi and the Pull of the Future: Bridging Disparate Visions of Dresden Elbe Valley,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 49, no. 5 (October 20, 2019): 498, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2019.1671985>.

placing tactic might use topoi as part of the *spatial imaginary*. Greg Dickinson explains that the spatial imaginary consists of “the ways imaginative texts like novels, poetry, magazine articles, nonfiction books, and especially visual texts, like photographs, films, and television programs—in short, the elements of what Victor Burgin calls *mediatic space-time*—engage, construct, and are constructed by spatiality.”<sup>195</sup> The spatial imaginary “is aesthetic, affective, socially constructed, and is interlaced with the built environment.”<sup>196</sup> Thus, the spatial imaginary of a place is intertwined with its material qualities, its embodied experience, and its symbolism, shaping the way we relate to a place. Schneider, analyzing a bridge project in Dresden, shows how the physical and imagined qualities of a place can be arranged deliberately to create a plan for the material future of that place.<sup>197</sup> Hence, physical and imagined locations and imaginative places can be used as elements of the spatial imaginary in the pre-placing tactic. Places used as spatial imaginaries shape not only our experience of a site, but also our hopes for and imagining of the future of that site. Spatial imaginaries shape our pre-placing of a site, and can, therefore, influence the future use of the site.

For example, in Queretaro, Mexico (and many other cities), bicycle activists have organized massive pop-up rides using the car lanes of the main avenues, lanes which are in better shape than the few designated for bicycles. The size of these massive rides not only makes visible the cyclist community, but also allows the cyclists to use their agency to take the streets, and pre-place the collective imaginary of an urban built environment with a cartography in which bicycle transportation has the same or more importance, power, and presence than automotive transportation. In addition, discursively, activists constantly bring up cases of other Latin

---

<sup>195</sup> Greg Dickinson, *Suburban Dreams: Imagining and Building the Good Life*, Rhetoric, Culture, and Social Critique (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2015), 43.

<sup>196</sup> Dickinson, 43.

<sup>197</sup> Schneider, “Deliberative Topoi and the Pull of the Future,” 497.

American cities, such as Mexico City and Bogota, that have programs that have improved the infrastructure for cyclists. Both megacities are topoi included in the spatial imaginary that also shape the collective imaginary of Queretaro's future, pre-placing a future image of the cyclist-friendly city that it could become.

In the case of the parks that I analyze in this dissertation, when the COVID-19 restrictions were in place, visitors and activists at Peace Arch aimed to re-place the status quo at the border because the binational park was already adequate for holding meetings. However, at Friendship Park, even before COVID-19, the space was inadequate. There is a fence dividing the park, and access to the US side is already limited in terms of mobility and the normal restrictions of the border agents. Therefore, during the pandemic, the activists at Friendship Park had to do the double work of re-placing the park to replicate the gatherings at the park through a virtual platform and maintain the work of pre-placing the park that they have been doing for decades, through arranging an imagined aspirational place without a fence where families can be free to gather. Thus, the Friendship Park activists are simultaneously re-replacing an inadequate status quo while still endeavoring to imagine a better future space, more like Peace Arch Park. In fact, this northern park has been a recurrent example that activists at Friendship Park have used to show that the park they are pre-placing is possible.

The re-replacing and the pre-placing tactics are not necessarily sequential—they can take place simultaneously. Both add layers of complexity to the rhetorical cartographies of places and interact with other tactics in the renegotiation of the existing emplaced and embodied relations. Analyzing the responses of the visitors and activists in each park during the pandemic can help us develop a more nuanced understanding of the rhetoric of places as well as a more nuanced understanding of how time, loss, and hopes are entangled in rhetorical cartographies. Both re-

placing and pre-placing introduce new possibilities for understanding the way that interpretations of a place's past and future imaginations shape a place's present rhetorical cartographies. In the following sections I expand on how visitors and activists have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic at each park. First, I explain the restrictions the authorities imposed as safety strategies to reduce the spread of the virus at the Canadian border and Peace Arch Park, and I analyze how the re-placing tactics unfolded there. Second, I explore the restrictions that were imposed at Friendship Park, and how activists were not only re-placing but also pre-placing the rhetorical cartography of Friendship Park during the pandemic. Finally, I explain the implications of studying these two cases and what the concepts of re-placing and pre-placing can bring to rhetoric as a field.

### Re-placing Tactics at Peace Arch Park

For the last two centuries, American and Canadian citizens have been able to transit between the countries without any kind of visa. This has allowed binational families to visit each other without a complicated immigration process. Traditionally, in the last few decades, most of the visitors at the park have been people who were crossing through the border ports and decided to go out for a walk and stretch their legs while enjoying the park's lawn and garden, or people from nearby residential areas who use it as a neighborhood park. Binational families and couples have not commonly met at Peace Arch Park, however, this changed for the northern park during the pandemic.

As a response to the spread of COVID-19, US and Canada authorities closed their shared border on March 16, 2020 to all non-essential travel; both sides of the Peace Arch Park were closed as well. The "essential travel" allowed through the border did not include families

reuniting. This was an abrupt shift for binational families. Among the many things that people lost with the pandemic, families lost their access through the border and with that, their ability to see each other regularly. On May 14, 2020, both sides of the park reopened while the borders kept the same closure.<sup>198</sup> People described the ten weeks of closure and not being able to see their loved ones as “devastating.”<sup>199</sup>

The park became crowded with binational family reunions, gatherings, and weddings and in many cases, people ignored the social-distancing and mask-use protocols. The British Columbia (BC) authorities closed Canada’s side of the park again on June 18, 2020 to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. Canadian authorities placed chain-link wire fences around the outer edge of the Canadian side of the park, and traffic barricades with signs were used to warn people not to cross from the US side to the Canadian side. The media mentioned that people that used the park to gather were calling their emotional response to this reclosure “hopeless,” and “devastating.”<sup>200</sup> US immigration lawyer Len Saunders reported to the media being “shocked by the BC government’s decision to close the park” considering it “heartless.”<sup>201</sup>

---

<sup>198</sup> Kie Relyea, “Too Many Visitors Prompts B.C. to Close Its Side of Peace Arch Park at U.S.-Canada Border,” *Bellingham Herald*, June 19, 2020, sec. Coronavirus, <https://www.bellinghamherald.com/news/coronavirus/article243637672.html>.

<sup>199</sup> Jackie Dunham, “‘It’s Devastating’: Cross-Border Couples Separated for Months Due to Travel Restrictions,” *CTV News*, May 14, 2020, sec. Coronavirus, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/it-s-devastating-cross-border-couples-separated-for-months-due-to-travel-restrictions-1.4938963>; Megan Lalone, “Separated by the Border Closure, B.C. Residents Are Reuniting with Their American Loved Ones at Peace Arch Park,” *Vancouver Is Awesome*, May 26, 2020, <https://www.vancouverisawesome.com/bc-news/bc-residents-reuniting-american-loved-ones-peace-arch-park-2380256>; Tarnjit Parmar, “Abbotsford Woman Petitions Province to Reopen Peace Arch Park,” *CityNews*, accessed June 23, 2020, <https://www.citynews1130.com/2020/06/22/petition-reopen-peace-arch-park/>.

<sup>200</sup> Parmar, “Abbotsford Woman Petitions Province to Reopen Peace Arch Park.”

<sup>201</sup> Michele Brunoro and Alyse Kotyk, “Park Used to Unite Families across the Border to Close Temporarily, B.C. Government Says,” *CTV News*, June 18, 2020, <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/park-used-to-unite-families-across-the-border-to-close-temporarily-b-c-government-says-1.4990002>.



A traffic barricade site to stop people going from the central US side of the Peace Arch Park to the Canadian side, January 23, 2021.

Since June 2020, in part as a result of advocates all over Canada, authorities have been loosening some border restrictions for family members while keeping the border closed. Immediate family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents were allowed to enter Canada following strict health protocols and quarantining for fourteen days at their own expense.<sup>202</sup> Hundreds of transnational families had gathered at the east wing of the park on the American side. This wing is easily accessible to Canadians through Surrey's 0 Avenue, as it is part of the US. US protocols were less strict than the ones in Canada so in this wing there was not a chain link. This brought hundreds of people to the park each weekend, which also brought public safety concerns to the neighborhood of the park and to Surrey in general. In the following paragraphs I will analyze how the visitors performed the re-placing tactic at the park as a way to

---

<sup>202</sup> Canada Border Services, "Changes to Travel Restrictions for Immediate Family Members of Canadian Citizens and Permanent Residents," news releases, gcnews, June 8, 2020, <https://www.canada.ca/en/border-services-agency/news/2020/06/changes-to-travel-restrictions-for-immediate-family-members-of-canadian-citizens-and-permanent-residents.html>; Michelle Baran, "Canada Now Requires 3 COVID Tests and Hotel Quarantine for Entry," AFAR, January 29, 2021, <https://www.afar.com/magazine/canada-now-requires-covid-test-and-quarantine-for-entry>.

respond to the COVID-19 related border crossing and park access restrictions, and how this tactic may have shaped the rhetorical cartography of Peace Arch Park.

When the park reopened in May 2020, Peace Arch Park became the site to re-place the free flow of Canadians and US citizens through the border as well as the ability to hold family and couples reunions. The park became very busy and crowded. Journalists covered the joy of people being together after ten weeks of separation: pictures of people hugging, having barbecues, getting married. In this re-place tactic, for families separated by the closure of the border, the park changed into a temporal “oasis” where they could have happy reunions.<sup>203</sup> This re-placing tactic did not restore the whole experience of border crossing and visiting people in their homes—it only may have restored part of it. By going to the park, the visitors were “seeking a bit of normalcy.”<sup>204</sup> Being able to physically be together was the normalcy that they were trying to re-place. People on both sides had to drive to meet each other at Peace Arch Park; the gatherings were outdoors in a public place with much less intimacy than in their homes and the weather could make it inconvenient. De Certeau’s concept of tactic allows us to see how visitors rhetorically were making the most of their material situation to recuperate the physical contact with their families. Just as bricoleurs construct discourses by improvising with the materials that are available and putting pieces together, families improvised and constructed the possibility of meeting there by putting together the pieces that consisted of accessibility of the

---

<sup>203</sup> Glenda Luymes, “COVID-19: Families Reunited as Peace Arch Provincial Park Reopens,” *Vancouver Sun*, accessed June 21, 2020, <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/covid-19-families-reunited-as-peace-arch-provincial-park-reopens>; Moira Macdonald, “Separated by the Pandemic, This Cross-Border Couple Got Married at Peace Arch Park,” *The Seattle Times*, September 26, 2020, sec. Life, <https://www.seattletimes.com/life/separated-by-the-pandemic-this-cross-border-couple-got-married-at-peace-arch-park/>.

<sup>204</sup> Yvette Brend, “Meet the U.S. Park Ranger Who Welcomes Canadians at a Unique Open Section of the Border,” *CBC News*, August 8, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/ranger-rickey-rick-blank-peace-arch-parks-steward-canada-us-blaine-washington-park-1.5677625>.

park from both sides, its built environment, its open border, and the means of arriving there.<sup>205</sup> In this way, an increasing number of visitors were persuaded to engage in this practice of making do.

We can also see that this re-placing tactic of rhetorical cartography at the park is tied to what Senda-Cook et. al call the moving through tactic.<sup>206</sup> In performing this re-placing, visitors moved to the park and within the park in ways that they had not previously done. These encounters and movements to and through the park changed their symbolic relation with the park, and therefore its rhetorical cartography. The improvised re-placing tactic and the change in movement patterns to and within the park made it possible to signify and revalue the park; going from a “valued” common place to pass through before the pandemic to a “treasured” common place to reunite during the pandemic.<sup>207</sup> But while for visitors, the binational gatherings were a way to improve their life and mental health, for Canadian authorities, the huge number of people holding gatherings at Peace Arch Park was a public health threat.

As a strategy, the authorities in BC closed their side of the park in June 2021. This material change compelled some visitors to give up and stop meeting. However, hundreds of other visitors enacted a make do, improvising and adjusting the re-placing tactic that they were using. They changed the rhetorical cartography of the park again by gathering only at the US wing of the park that adjoins to 0 Avenue on Surrey that runs along the border. People

---

<sup>205</sup> Gaonkar, “Performing with Fragments: Reflections on Critical Rhetoric.”

<sup>206</sup> Senda-Cook, Middleton, and Endres, 114.

<sup>207</sup> Brend, “Meet the U.S. Park Ranger Who Welcomes Canadians at a Unique Open Section of the Border.”

throughout Canada and the United States, from as close as Washington state and as far as Texas, were using the available means within the new restrictions to reunite at the park.<sup>208</sup>

This re-placing tactic, which also became a way to negotiate the power of accessing the park and holding binational gatherings, was interpreted by the media as a “loophole.”<sup>209</sup> People from Canada were entering the US wing of the park on the wooden small bridges over the ditches at the edge of the park to access. In late January 2021, I counted around 150 people in small groups of 4–15 individuals enjoying picnics together. Further to the east on the same side, around fifty tents were pitched for more private binational encounters. The presence of the tents were evidence of how re-placing is also tied to material change tactics in the rhetorical cartography. Before COVID-19, and even before the Canadian side closed in June 2020, tents were not present at all. However, June 2020 time there were designated areas established where people could set up a tent so that more intimate binational gatherings could take place during the day while the US side of the park was open. De Certeau’s concept of tactic within a rhetorical framework allows us to see these gatherings on the US side as a kairotic way to re-place what the visitors had lost. De Certeau points out that when individuals use tactics in place, they make do by noticing and taking advantage of the *cracks* that appear in a particular situation within the surveillance of those that hold the power in a place.<sup>210</sup> In this case, the main power resides in the Canadian and US authorities that have the agency to make decisions about the park, and the

---

<sup>208</sup> Tom Banse, “Couples, Families Separated by U.S.-Canada Border Closure Find Oasis at Peace Arch Park,” March 16, 2021, <https://www.nwnewsnetwork.org/post/couples-families-separated-us-canada-border-closure-find-oasis-peace-arch-park>.

<sup>209</sup> Banse; Matt Robinson, “Officials Say Border Loophole Hangout Spot ‘concerning,’ Warn of Penalties,” *Vancouver Sun*, November 15, 2020, <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/officials-say-border-loophole-hangout-spot-concerning-warn-of-penalties>; Grace McCarthy, “B.C. Officials Scrutinize Peace Arch Park, Days before Couples Brave Snow for Valentine’s Day,” *The Northern Light*, accessed February 20, 2021, <https://www.thenorthernlight.com/stories/bc-officials-scrutinize-peace-arch-park-days-before-couples-brave-snow-for-valentines-day,16007>.

<sup>210</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 37.

visitors use the cracks in the restrictions in place, as well as the built environment of the park, with the sense of keeping open the possibility of embodied binational gatherings with their loved ones while reclaiming the power and ownership that they actually have in this public space along the border.



A group of tents at Peace Arch Park on January 23, 2021.

Visitors at Peace Arch Park were making do realizing the possibility of rhetorically restoring their binational encounters using the means available within the park's material qualities and the temporal restrictions. Although the re-placing tactic is never enough to actually substitute for the material and embodied experience that was lost, in this case, Peace Arch Park "played a big part in preserving the mental health of thousands of international families who have borne the brunt of restrictive COVID-19 regulations," and could not afford the time and/or

the money to quarantine.<sup>211</sup> Although the visitors were grateful for having the opportunity to meet at the park, they also kept contrasting their re-placing experience with their memories of how things were before the pandemic when they could gather in their homes instead of the park. In these comparisons they did not feel fulfilled. Their nostalgia may have shaped their experience in the park as being better than nothing but still holding an uncomfortable feeling.<sup>212</sup> The following quote, captured by a local newspaper, from a young woman living in BC that met her family at the park, shows this flaw in the re-placing tactic built on the nostalgia for the time when the border was open:

My family feels like we have been robbed a year of our time [...] We really hope to get that time back soon [...] I think about what the day the border will reopen will look like a lot. [...] The joy I feel, not even knowing when that comes, is not something I can express. When that day comes, I know it will feel like completion, that I have everything I need. We will be on the other side of what we have dealt with.<sup>213</sup>

This quote let us see that even when the visitors are performing a re-placing tactic at the park, it may not be enough to make up for all the missed physical engagement that was possible before. At the same time, this uncomfortable feeling of wanting things to be as before encouraged visitors, in a constitutive way, to join advocacy groups and movements inside and beyond Canada that were pushing national authorities to return to allowing a free flow through the US-Canada border. Peace Arch Park was not a place that groups used for advocating border-related issues before the pandemic. However, as the visitors started joining activists to push for

---

<sup>211</sup> Sarah Grochowski, "Peace Arch Park 'A Lifeline' for Families Separated by U.S.-Canada Border Restrictions," *Vancouver Is Awesome*, November 16, 2020, sec. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Local News, <https://www.vancouverisawesome.com/coronavirus-covid-19-local-news/peace-arch-park-a-life-line-for-families-separated-by-us-canada-border-restrictions-photos-2883879>.

<sup>212</sup> Banse, "Couples, Families Separated by U.S.-Canada Border Closure Find Oasis at Peace Arch Park."

<sup>213</sup> Grace McCarthy, "What Defines Essential? A Year with a Closed Border," *The Northern Light*, March 17, 2021, <https://www.thenorthernlight.com/stories/what-defines-essential-a-year-with-a-closed-border,16166>.

border reopening, Peace Arch Park fell within the rhetorical cartography of this kind of activism. For example, Faces of Advocacy, Families Are Essential, and COVID-19: Canadian-American Families Separated were organizations fighting to loosen border restrictions for binational families so they can reunite easily. These organizations informed and encouraged couples at Peace Arch Park to move through legal immigration processes in order to become permanent residents of Canada which will make it easier for them to be together.<sup>214</sup>

The unfulfilling feeling from the re-placing tactic at Peace Arch Park may have been also the reason that the park and its visitors were connecting to a multinational movement called #loveisnottourism and #loveisessential. Weddings of binational couples on the US side of Friendship Park were recurrent during the pandemic. One of these couples that got married in September 2020 had a handmade “just married” sign that included both hashtags.<sup>215</sup> On Facebook, more pictures of families gathering at the park are linked to that hashtag. This hashtag has relocated the node of the global Love Is Not Tourism movement to Peace Arch Park. Love Is Not Tourism’s website stated:

Love Is Not Tourism is a global grassroots movement dedicated to reuniting binational couples and families who have been forcibly separated by travel bans and border closures during the COVID-19 pandemic [. It] is about family reunification and the future of thousands of couples and families all around the world. [This movement] urges governments of all States to implement humanitarian exemptions [and to] allow the

---

<sup>214</sup> Macdonald, “Separated by the Pandemic”

<sup>215</sup> Macdonald, “Separated by the Pandemic”

unbureaucratic and safe reunion of partners in binational relationships as well as excluded family members.<sup>216</sup>

The inevitable shortcomings of re-placing may have made the visitors to this park want to join global movements pushing the authorities to open borders to family reunions. These movements may also have rearranged the rhetorical cartography of the park, from a recreational park for enjoyment to a place where people are also performing citizenship resistance and negotiating border restrictions related with the pandemic. In addition, this performance was implicated with similar movements around the world as it places the park within a bigger network of international mobility and assembly issues.

Finally, as the re-placing tactic is still a change in the rhetorical cartography of places, it makes evident the differences in the values of the community around places that were not evident before. The binational reunions seem like a good outcome for these visitors who were using the available means in a kairotic way to shape the park in order to recuperate their losses. But with any rhetorical cartographic change, this re-placing tactic was not a winning situation for everyone—it was contested. The US wing where hundreds of people were gathering in 2020 and 2021 is just across the street from Surrey, BC, and some of the Canadian residents reacted negatively to this re-placing tactic. The “regular use and enjoyment of [the neighbors’] homes and property” was challenged because of the increase traffic and the waves of visitors. The Surrey neighborhood was not designed for the number of people that were arriving.<sup>217</sup> The Canadian residents expressed their concerns about public health as their neighborhoods became

---

<sup>216</sup> “#LoveIsNotTourism - Official Website,” accessed May 9, 2021, <https://loveisnottourism.org/>.

<sup>217</sup> Tim James and Lisa Steacy, “Cross-Border Visits at Peace Arch Park Still Frustrating Surrey Residents, Politicians,” *CityNews 1130*, January 22, 2021, <https://www.citynews1130.com/2021/01/22/peace-arch-park-covid-19-cross-border-visits/>.

crowded and people populated the park without necessarily following the established safety protocols.<sup>218</sup> The neighbors saw a lack of social distancing among the visitors in the park; many were not wearing masks and people were meeting up in the park and then returning to Canada without going into quarantine.<sup>219</sup> Therefore, the Surrey BC's Liberal Members of Legislative Assembly wanted Premier Horgan to pressure Washington state's governor to close the US side of the park until it was deemed safe for non-essential cross-border travel.<sup>220</sup> This conflict around the re-placing tactic at the park allows us to see how re-placing tactics may change rhetorical cartographies of a place in unintended ways. The neighbors' response to the changes in the way the visitors related to the built environment within the context of the COVID pandemic triggered responses against this new arrangement in the park in other words, against the rhetorical cartography constituted in part by the re-placing tactic in place.

Celeste Condit defines polyvalence as a response that “occurs when audience members share understandings of the denotation of a text but disagree about the valuation of those denotations to such a degree that they produce notably different interpretations.”<sup>221</sup> In this case, the text is the binational familial reunions occurring as a consequence of the re-placing tactic in Peace Arch Park that changed the rhetorical cartography of the park. The visitors as well as the neighbors understood the binational visits as a new way to relate to the park, but the evaluations of those visits were divergent. The visitors interpreted and valued the binational reunions as the best way to use the park to re-place their loss of transit, help their mental health, and fulfill their

---

<sup>218</sup> DH Vancouver Staff, “Neighbours Disturbed by Continuing Cross-Border Meetups at Peace Arch Park,” November 10, 2020, <https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/peace-arch-park-meetups>.

<sup>219</sup> Robinson, “Officials Say Border Loophole Hangout Spot ‘concerning,’ Warn of Penalties”; James and Steacy, “Cross-Border Visits at Peace Arch Park Still Frustrating Surrey Residents, Politicians.”

<sup>220</sup> Richard Zussman, “Liberal MLAs Call on B.C., Washington State to Close Peace Arch Park amid Increase in Tents,” *Global News*, February 10, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7632194/liberal-mlas-peace-arch-park-coronavirus-loophole/>.

<sup>221</sup> Celeste Michelle Condit, “The Rhetorical Limits of Polysemy,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6, no. 2 (June 1989): 103–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295038909366739>.

affective needs, while the Surrey neighbors interpreted it as an unnecessary risk to public health and a disturbance to the peace of their neighborhood that should be stopped.

Before the pandemic, Peace Arch Park was not a place where families reunited because of the relatively porous border. In this section I have shown how, during the pandemic, binational families, friends, and couples employed a kairotic sensibility to make use of the available material means of the northern park to gather and re-place the ability to visit each other due to the border restrictions. Most people who were divided from their loved ones across the border expressed deep gratitude for the ability to be with them at Peace Arch Park.

However, because re-placing cannot restore all that is lost, families that gathered there longed for a return to the status quo. In addition, as this re-placing tactic made possible a change in the rhetorical cartography of Peace Arch Park, it also prompted conflicting discourses with polyvalent interpretations about the gatherings. The gatherings were seen by some as being beneficial to the mental health of the divided family members, and as risk to public health by others.

The material conditions at the Friendship Park are different than those at Peace Arch Park. The materiality of Friendship Park is inadequate for familial gatherings even though that is how it has been used for decades. So, when the access to the southern park was lost, the gatherings moved completely online. In the next section I analyze how, due to the inadequacy of the built environment of the park, activists at Friendship Park had the double task of performing re-placing tactics during the pandemic, while maintaining their pre-placing tactics to share the vision of a fenceless park.

#### Re-placing and Pre-placing Tactics at Friendship Park

In contrast to the free transit of American and Canadian citizens at the US-Canada border, since 1929 the US federal government has required Mexican citizens to have a visa to enter the US.<sup>222</sup> As US immigration policies around Mexican immigration have become increasingly strict, the number of binational families that cannot cross the border to meet each other freely has been increasing over the decades. Since its opening in 1970, Friendship Park has been a place where binational gatherings have taken place, even as the US has been making the fence that cuts the park in half taller and stronger and access to the US side harder. In Chapter One of this dissertation, I analyze some of the interactions between the visitors and the built environment. I also describe how access to the US side of the park is only allowed on weekends, and the border agents that surveil Friendship Park tell their agency to close it under any circumstances that they consider unsafe without having to justify their decision to visitors or notify them in advance. Since the US began building a secondary fence in 2009, families and activists became accustomed to unexpected closures on the US side of the park. Families were already used to relying on phone calls and social media to keep in touch with their loved ones on the other side of the border, and activist groups were used to rearranging things to gather only on the Mexican side in order to keep providing services to Tijuana's community at Friendship Park on the weekends.

When the pandemic was acknowledged globally, both sides of Friendship Park were officially on March 29, 2020.<sup>223</sup> For the first time, visitors had to respond to having both sides closed of the park closed. The families relied on the ordinary virtual alternatives they were

---

<sup>222</sup> John Box, "Immigration Restriction" (Digital History, 1928), 594, Digital History, [https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp\\_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=594](https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=594).

<sup>223</sup> Chris Jennewein, "California State Parks Close Parking Lots to Limit Crowds, But Remain Open," *Times of San Diego*, March 30, 2020, <https://timesofsandiego.com/life/2020/03/29/california-state-parks-close-parking-lots-to-limit-crowds-but-remain-open/>.

already used to: instant messaging and phone/video calls. The activists who were used to at least the Tijuana side being open found a way to restore the loss of park access by holding an hour-long public Zoom meetings every Sunday. Thus, through virtual space that used a combination of Zoom and Facebook, the main activist group started to perform re-placing tactics to restore at least some parts of the binational gatherings. In these weekly gatherings, family reunions could not be re-placed, but the activists could maintain their connection to the frequent park visitors. They also used the virtual space to check in with other activists working with shelters holding asylum seekers and deported people in Tijuana to try to fulfill their needs during the pandemic. The activists and the gatherings were so closely connected to Friendship Park that in this virtual gathering, the activists invoked and preserved practices that started as a response to the material inadequacy of Friendship Park as a binational park. They were not oblivious to these inadequacies, so while they looked for available means to perform the re-placing of Friendship Park during the pandemic, they also had the extra burden of making do in order to continue their ongoing pre-placing tactic of fighting for an aspirational park without a fence where families could actually come together. Into this ongoing tactical aspiration they introduced Peace Arch Park as a possible model and invited people from the community to bring their ideas and to think of other models that could be used to persuade others to envision a fenceless, better built-environment for Friendship Park.

### *Re-placing Friendship Park*

On Sundays before the pandemic, binational activists and community members gathered in the Border Church at Friendship Park. On the Tijuana side they set up microphones, speakers, chairs and food tents from 1:00 p.m. to 1:30 pm while the US community was hiking through the Border Field State Park. Then from 1:30 to 2:00, the binational gathering ceremony took place

through the fence and starting at 2:00, free meals were distributed on the Tijuana side. When the authorities closed access to both sides of the park to avoid the spread of COVID-19, the activists decide to re-place this binational weekly gathering with their available means: weekly public Zoom meetings on the same day, at the same time. The whole meeting was open to anyone that asked the Friends of Friendship Park leader for the link. The first thirty minutes of the Zoom meeting was a check-in conversation among the participants. The following thirty minutes, an online Zoom version of usual Border Church ceremony, was also transmitted live through Facebook. The participants were mainly leaders of organizations working with the shelters holding asylum seekers and deported people in Tijuana, detention centers in California, members of the Friends of Friendship Park organization, and other community members supporting their efforts.

The first thirty minutes of the Zoom meeting was called *Virtual Hike*. The leaders were re-replacing the hike that people had to make through Border Field State Park to get to Friendship Park. These weekly online gatherings brought some benefits to the community of activists that were not possible on the actual hikes: they allowed organization members and leaders to have structured meetings with one person talking at a time. So, more than a casual hike in which the hikers were talking to the person next to them, in a kairotic way, the Virtual Hike gatherings became a venue for checking on how each organization was doing during the pandemic, and on their needs. The need to distribute masks, food, soap, and hand sanitizer to the shelters in Tijuana became a high priority that had not existed before COVID. In addition, the virtual re-replacing allowed participants from different cities to gather simultaneously without having to travel.

At 1:30 p.m., after the Virtual Hike the Border Church ceremony began, the Zoom meeting was transmitted live through Facebook. Some participants left at this point or turned off

their cameras while others arrived around this time. The virtual re-placing of this celebration through Zoom allowed the binational ceremony to keep happening. The multi-denominational virtual ceremony followed the same sequential structure as the physical version: it opened with thanking and greeting, then proceeded to singing a song, reading a selection from the Christian gospel, a reflection on the reading by someone, asking for forgiveness, consecrating the bread, making some petitions and finally, closing. Every part was translated from English to Spanish or Spanish to English according to the preferred language of the person leading each part. The Zoom format allowed for a more controlled environment than the physical version where outdoor environmental distractors and the weather are always a challenge. Only one person spoke at a time, and as participants were watching on their screens in their homes, presumably there were fewer distractions than in the busy beach area of Tijuana. The Zoom chat allowed the leaders to paste the song lyrics and readings so people could follow, which was not easy to do at the physical site. Zoom also allowed all the participants to see each other's faces without being blocked by the rusty iron mesh of the fence of the park. Moreover, people from other places outside of San Diego and Tijuana could join. Some mentioned that they were joining from Houston, Mexico City, Chicago, and even from the Netherlands.

However, even though the making do of using the re-placing tactic in a virtual space brought some advantages to the binational quality of the gatherings, this tactic is never enough and there are things that may be lost in the re-placement. The sense of this loss motivated the participants to keep going to the virtual gatherings, hoping that they were a temporary fix. As we saw in the Peace Arch Park analysis, the re-placing tactic may have flaws and is never complete. The weekly re-placing tactic of having the Sunday Virtual Hike and Border Church ceremony

could not restore many of the interactions between visitors and between the visitors and the park's materiality.

These Zoom gathering could not replace one-on-one familial conversations, nor the tactile experience of the park and the sense of collectively sharing it. Before the pandemic, families meeting at the park were there having one-on-one conversations as other families and activists were arriving at the park. However, in the Zoom gatherings, they could not have these one-on-one conversations. They could join the meeting, but a Zoom gathering is not a convenient venue for talking to their family members about personal issues. For that, they had to rely on other digital communication media that allow more intimacy. For example, Veronica in Chicago and her deported husband in Tijuana were both in a collective Zoom gathering at the same time but they had to talk with the whole community and not just to each other. This couple had to look for another time and other media to talk to each other. Another flaw of the virtual re-placing tactic is related to the fact that virtual spaces cannot give us the tactile and embodied experience of the others—the sense of a simultaneously shared physical space and the power of embodied proximity that in-person gatherings have.

Virtuality cannot deliver the sensory experience of the smells, look, sound, touch, taste, nor any of the sensations and proprioception that accompany physical presence at the park. The physical qualities of the park are so important to its frequent visitors that the activists, in the replacing tactic through virtuality, seemed to be trying to evoke the shared sensation of being at the park through words, images, and embodied movements that were related to the experience of the harsh materiality of Friendship Park. For example, some of them used the fence at the park as a background picture. In the Zoom gatherings, this image worked as a link to the material space of the park and to the experience that was shared by the community of participants. Also,

participants in the meetings frequently expressed their hopes of sharing the sun and the beach together again at the park. These images and these words evoked embodied effects with a rhetorical force related to the experience of Friendship Park. They were “recalling remembered embodiments [that] allows access to the identical, political and affective ties formed” through the experience of Friendship Park.<sup>224</sup> All these means that were prompted by the making do of the re-placing tactic allowed participants who might not know each other as well to have a sense that the tactile experience of the park was shared by all of them, and they felt a sense of community. These means also allow us to see how the physical inadequacy of the materiality of Friendship Park had become deeply embedded in the embodied practices of the binational community of people that had gathered at the park.

In the virtual re-placing of the Sunday gatherings, for the participants, the name Virtual Hiking invites the participants to bring to mind the embodied experience of the hike that they had to do from the entrance of Border Field State Park in San Diego to Friendship Park. The physical hike that was necessitated was one aspect demonstrating the inadequacy of accessibility to the park. In Peace Arch Park and even on the Tijuana side of Friendship Park, you can just drive up, park, and you are at the actual park. On the US side of Friendship Park, you have to hike in, making it inconvenient and even inaccessible for people with certain mobility needs.

Another way that the activists virtually tried to re-place the inadequacy of the materiality of the park during the Border Church celebration was by incorporating embodied gestures that reenacted the way bodies responded to the tactility of the fence. At the actual park, when the ceremony leader asked for forgiveness and blessing, they asked people on both sides of the park to raise their hand and touch the fence. Without being in front of the fence but in their homes,

---

<sup>224</sup> Jennifer Lin LeMesurier, “Somatic Metaphors: Embodied Recognition of Rhetorical Opportunities,” *Rhetoric Review* 33, no. 4 (October 2, 2014): 365, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07350198.2014.946868>.

this embodied experience was translated to Zoom by asking people in the meeting to raise their hands in front of the camera so participants could see each other and themselves making the same gesture simultaneously. In addition, in the physical park they always finished the celebration by asking people to give ‘pinkie kisses’ through the fence. As mentioned in Chapter One, this gesture is the only possible “touch” exchange that can happen through the fence. During the Zoom meeting the leader also asks the participants to do a ‘pinkie kiss’ by moving their little fingers toward the camera synchronically. This embodied re-placing of the embodied experience of the fence at the park may bring “bodily memories quickly through connotations that draw on [shared] memories of embodied experience.”<sup>225</sup> The pinkie kiss in the physical park was a make do alternative to the separation of the fence. In the virtual space the participants can see each other but they cannot touch each other. The gestures, especially the pinkie kiss, in the Zoom meeting become an incomplete re-placing tactic of the material space, and one that helps to share a collective, simultaneous embodied memory of the inadequacy of Friendship Park. This gesture may create a sense of community among the people who have shared the same space before. Activists know that the border fence is inadequate to have binational gatherings and have been working to persuade the US authorities to remove it; the embodied gesture of the pinkie kiss and the recalling of the hike shows how embedded the inadequate materiality of the park is in their bodies that they need to reactivate it when they gather. The park was already a highly restricted place where people could just get their pinkies through the fence to touch their loved one before the pandemic. This inadequacy is such a deeply embedded part of the frequent visitors’ experience of being there and of the activists’ goals to change it, that in the process of

---

<sup>225</sup> LeMesurier, 365.

making do and improvising a re-placing tactic through a virtual space to recuperate a gathering place, they also brought the inadequacies with them.

The transgressive power of the visitors' embodied presence in the park could not be replaced virtually. The Border Church in-person celebration was already the activists' make do tactical response to the inadequacy of the material qualities of the park. All the bodies standing in two different countries at a common event at Friendship Park push back the built environment. For more than a decade, the event has kept alive the possibility of having a collective, common binational gathering, against a built environment that is trying to persuade people not to do so and not to think that having binational gatherings is possible. The celebration allows what Jan Fernback has dubbed *sousveillance* or "watching from below," a form of inverse surveillance in which people monitor the surveillants. Examples include citizen videos, watchdog websites, or the monitoring of authorities (corporations, the military, the government)."<sup>226</sup> The embodied presence of the US activists on Sundays at 1:30 p.m. on the US side of the park has been a tactic to make sure that the border agents were not closing access earlier than 2:00 p.m. The virtual re-placing tactic has not yet been able to provide this "shared bodies" experience that serves as a check on state power through the power of a collective material presence of bodies negotiating the importance and ownership of a physical space such as Friendship Park.

In summary, the re-placing tactic that the activists were using to recover some of the work of the in-person Sunday gathering allowed activists to gather and plan, but the weekly Sunday virtual hike and celebration through Zoom could not restore the many interactions among the visitors and between the visitors and the park's materiality. Having a face-to-face

---

<sup>226</sup> Jan Fernback, "Sousveillance: Communities of Resistance to the Surveillance Environment," *Telematics and Informatics*, The Facebook Phenomenon, 30, no. 1 (February 1, 2013): 11–21, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2012.03.003>.

conversation through the fence is impossible to replace and these conversations have been the most meaningful interaction for binational families reuniting at the park. Zoom cannot restore them nor the whole embodied sensorial experience of being at the park, nor the power of having US citizens' bodies on the US side of the park leveraging their privilege to keep that side open.

The analysis of this improvised re-placing tactic that the activists used to make do allows us to see that inadequate materiality, even when undesired, may also become deeply ingrained in our bodies. We can see how the activists, when translating the collective in-person interactions at the park into the virtual space, keep nostalgically recalling the materiality of the park even when this materiality is the very thing that they have been trying to modify for more than a decade. In the next section I explain how this desire of the activists to modify the built environment of Friendship Park is a pre-placing tactic for rhetorical cartographies. During the pandemic, the activists at Friendship Park had the burden of improvising both a re-placing tactic and a way to keep carrying out their pre-placing tactic of envisioning and of encouraging others to envision a park without a fence—a park where families separated by immigration restrictions can reunite without physical barriers.

### *Pre-Placing Tactics at Friendship Park*

During part of the COVID-19 pandemic, visitors used Peace Arch Park as a way to re-place moving through the border to hold binational gatherings. Although this park was an adequate space for holding these gatherings, and while the visitors were uncomfortable with not being able to meet in their homes, they still could make do and take advantage of the park to be with each other. In the case of Friendship Park, even before the pandemic, the space was already inadequate for holding binational gatherings. During the pandemic, some activists carried out re-

placing tactics virtually to recuperate the minimal connection that they had had in the park. However, while trying to re-place at least a fragment of the status quo virtually, activists also had the burden of maintaining their efforts to keep imagining and spreading an idea of aspirational place without a fence separating people from each other. In other words, the volunteers and members of Friends of Friendship Park before and during the pandemic have carried out a pre-placing tactic to change the materiality of Friendship Park now. The organization describes itself as follows:

Friends of Friendship Park is a group of members of the community working to create a future in which the public will have unrestricted access to this historic meeting place. The Friends dedicate themselves to the work of advocacy on behalf of the many families who depend on the park to be able to see their families and friends.<sup>227</sup>

Friends of Friendship Park has been working over the last decade to keep the US side of the park open to allow families to hold their reunions. This organization keeps a binational presence on both sides of the park, supporting the families and negotiating with border authorities when they close the US side of the park for long periods. They have also been carrying out an ongoing pre-placing tactic since the early 2000s. They have been improvising to maintain a collective imagination of a park without a fence and with unrestricted public access—what they call a “truly binational park.”<sup>228</sup>

This imagined Friendship Park without a fence is the telos of the activists’ pre-placing tactic. Conveying a clear understanding of the telos allows an audience to build a collective

---

<sup>227</sup> “Friends of Friendship Park,” friendshippark, accessed May 10, 2021, <https://www.friendshippark.org>.

<sup>228</sup> Field notes. July 28, 2021.

imagination of the rhetor's goal and connect through common emotions to that goal.<sup>229</sup> During the pandemic, the activists had to carry out the re-placing tactic to keep holding their gatherings, while at the same time, maintain the pre-placing tactic that they were using before the pandemic. I have identified two ways that Friends of Friendship Park constructed their goal with the invention of their pre-placing tactic during the pandemic. The first was to use the image of Peace Arch Park as part of the spatial imaginary of a future Friendship Park to allow their audience to imagine what a binational park without a fence could actually look like and how feasible it is in the context of the United States. The second was the BUILD THAT PARK! campaign created and led by the architect James Brown and Friends of Friendship Park to encourage a wider community to engage in brainstorming visions of the future of Friendship Park. Part of the campaign included a design contest presenting different material possibilities, and the participatory consumption of these possibilities.

Friends of Friendship Park have included the Canada-US binational Peace Arch Park as part of the spatial imaginary of the future Friendship Park as a means of persuading the wider community to envision it. Spatial imaginaries are imaginative texts that construct and are constructed by spatiality.<sup>230</sup> Physical and imagined places can be used as an element of the spatial imaginary in the pre-placing tactic. As I showed in the introduction of this chapter through the example of the cycling activists in Queretaro that pre-placed a bicycle-friendly street in Mexico City and Bogota, actual places used as topoi for the spatial imaginaries of the future of a site can shape our experience of that site by bringing the feasibility of changes in the material-built environment to the fore. Over the last decade, Friends of Friendship Park have commented

---

<sup>229</sup> Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric*.

<sup>230</sup> Dickinson, *Suburban Dreams*.

that their vision is to have a place like Peace Arch Park. In 2011 they explained that their vision for the Tijuana-San Diego Park is to create:

a space that is similar to Peace Arch Park at the border of the US and Canada. Because the Mexican and the US cultures and language differ more than the US and Canada, we look at this space as an opportunity to learn each other's diverse cultures and work together to create a flourishing border region from which both nations can benefit as a whole.<sup>231</sup>

Similarly, in 2015, Friends of Friendship Park wrote a letter to San Diego Border Patrol that said:

We appreciate that there is a space for family reunions, and we want to do nothing that would jeopardize the opportunities for people to be reunited with their loved ones. [W]e find the current infrastructure inherently frustrating[...] We can't help but dream about what Friendship Park could look like three years, five years, ten years from now. If you are open to it, we would be also interested to engage in a long-term conversation about this dream. We would be interested to travel with you to the Peace Arch Park at Vancouver, to see what lessons we can learn from how things are managed at that location and how this might inform the kind of arrangement that could be created here at Friendship Park.<sup>232</sup>

---

<sup>231</sup> Friendship Park. 2011. "Friends of Friendship Park Facebook Page." Facebook, October 6, 2011. <https://www.facebook.com/FofPark/posts/298482446834453>

<sup>232</sup> Friendship Park. 2015. "Friends of Friendship Park Facebook Page." Facebook, November 12, 2015. <https://www.facebook.com/FofPark/posts/1227035113979177>

In 2017, when Donald Trump started replacing the existing border wall with a taller one, Friends of Friendship Park asked people to sign a petition against the renovation of the fence. In urging people to sign it they said,

A better idea would be for the US federal government to invest in creating a truly binational park (like the Peace Arch Park on the US-Canada border at Vancouver), where families and friends could visit openly in an appropriately supervised setting, reducing the pain of separation that leads many people to attempt to cross the border without authorization, and promoting friendship and understanding between peoples of the United State and Mexico, on which the true security of both nations ultimately depends.<sup>233</sup>

These quotes allow us to see that Peace Arch Park has been a spatial imaginary in the rhetorical pre-placing tactic of Friendship Park's activists for more than a decade, even when the northern park's traditional rhetorical cartography had not been as a place for holding binational familial reunions.

As mentioned earlier, in the midst of the pandemic the re-placing tactic of visitors changed the rhetorical cartography of Peace Arch Park into a place where binational families and couples can gather instead of only having the traditional in-transit visits that were the case before the pandemic. This situation has also shaped Peace Arch Park in a way that is even more similar to the imagined future that Friends of Friendship Park have been pre-placing for the southern border park. Peace Arch Park became a stronger element in the spatial imaginary used in Friendship Park's pre-placing tactic. From May 2020 to March 2021, Friends of Friendship Park shared on their Facebook page links to articles about how people separated by COVID-19

---


<sup>233</sup> Friendship Park. 2017. "Friends of Friendship Park Facebook Page." Facebook, October 25, 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/FofPark/posts/1931487133533968>

restrictions were meeting in Peace Arch Park. They introduced the articles with phrases such as those below:

**Friendship Park / El Parque de la Amistad** ...  
A 2,6 mil les gusta esto · Negocio local

16 jun. 2020 · 🌐 · What a great idea! I wonder why no one has thought of this for the US-México Border????

washingtonpost.com  
There's a loophole along the closed U.S.-Canada border. Couples are getting married there.



👍 4

**Friendship Park / El Parque de la Amistad** ...  
19 de marzo · 🌐

For years we've been saying that Friendship Park could be a truly binational park. Oftentimes, people look at us like we're crazy. But here's a story of how simple it is for authorities to manage things at Peace Arch Park between Vancouver, Washington and Vancouver, British Columbia. Sure, the context is different on the US-Mexico border, but someone should be able to figure it out. Oh, yeah, we are figuring it out through our BUILD THAT PARK! campaign:  
<https://www.buildthatpark.org/>



TPR.ORG i

**Peace Arch Park In Washington Becomes Meetup Spot For People Separated By Border Closing**

Screenshots from the Friends of Friendship Park Facebook site.<sup>234</sup>

The phrases in these images not only show how Peace Arch Park has been an important piece in the spatial imaginary of the Friendship Park pre-placing tactic, but they also show how Friends of Friendship Park took advantage of the northern park situation during the pandemic to rhetorically show how a better park could be possible. For the Peace Arch Park visitors, meeting in the park was not ideal. However, the material fenced qualities of Friendship Park and the US-Mexico border shape the southern visitors' interpretation of Peace Arch Park, and they see it not as a limitation, but as an ideal situation that should be reproduced for the southern park and community.

Another way that Friends of Friendship Park pre-placed their goal of a fenceless park during 2020 was through the BUILD THAT PARK! campaign that exhorted a wider audience to sign a petition to stop President Trump's strengthening of the border fence, and to renovate Friendship Park to make it a fenceless place. Within the campaign, James Brown, a professor at San Diego State University, worked with Friends of Friendship Park to hold a contest to encourage young architects to come up with more possibilities for a fenceless park. They then exhibited the designs to encourage the audience to participate in a collective envisioning of the future of the park. The website explains the rationale for the campaign:

In response to calls to "build that wall!" [inspired by Donald Trump's use of the phrase to mobilize his followers], BUILD THAT PARK! was founded as a campaign and competition to design a truly binational park at the westernmost end of the US/Mexico

---

<sup>234</sup> Friendship Park. 2020. "Friends of Friendship Park Facebook Page." Facebook, June 20, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/FofPark/posts/3699777653371565> and Friendship Park. 2021. "Friends of Friendship Park Facebook Page." Facebook, March 19, 2021. <https://www.facebook.com/FofPark/posts/4534865163196139>

border, accessible to both Mexico and the United States, and ultimately to realize this vision through the engagement and advocacy of the peoples of both nations.<sup>235</sup>

The BUILD THAT PARK! contest included three design challenges through February and August of 2021. Each focused on a specific aspirational asset for the future of Friendship Park: an international pier, a courtyard for free speech, and a boardwalk. The jury consisted of five architects from San Diego and Tijuana. Friends of Friendship Park created and distributed an online questionnaire in English and Spanish inviting audiences that have been to the park to share their vision of the park and hopefully inform the designs. The contest was opened to the general public and advertised using Brown's own aspirational architectural plan for the future of Friendship Park. Architecture students and young architects from San Diego and Tijuana were encouraged to participate. Brown curated an exhibition with a selection of the design proposals, including those of the winners in September of 2021 at the Athenaeum Music & Arts Library in La Jolla, CA as part of a week-long event observing Friendship Park's fiftieth anniversary.<sup>236</sup> The images created by the winners were also uploaded to the BUILD THAT PARK! website to reach a wider audience.

The contest process was a pre-placing tactic that not only presented several possibilities for the future of Friendship Park, but also invited people to make a leap of imagination to envision a future for the park, brainstorm their visions, and critically participate in what a vision of the future would look like.

---

<sup>235</sup> Friends of Friendship Park, "BUILD THAT PARK!," BUILD THAT PARK!, accessed November 14, 2021, <https://www.buildthatpark.org/campaign>.

<sup>236</sup> "Opening Reception: Build That Park!; Sue Whitman; Kathleen Marshall," Athenaeum Music & Arts Library, accessed November 14, 2021, <https://www.ljathenaeum.org/events/exhibition-build-that-park>.

Brown’s design and the designs presented in the contest—like architectural planning in general—are forms of storytelling that use images and words to construct persuasive narratives about the future of places.<sup>237</sup> Dorina Pojani and Dominique Stead argue that the display of architectural planning can “persuade audiences to accept proposed explanations, embrace inspiring visions, attract and channel emotional attachments, and/or undertake recommended actions that shape the course of the future.”<sup>238</sup> In the case of the BUILD THAT PARK! campaign, none of the designs in the contest were the last word on how Friendship Park will look in the future. The power or authority to make that decision does not lie in Brown, the Friends of Friendship Park, nor the contestants. Thus, they are not in de Certeau’s realm of strategy. However, all their designs are not useless; this is a rhetorical cartography tactic that allows the Friends of Friendship Park to sustain the collective imagination of the San Diego and Tijuana community and to maintain its vision and aspirations for a binational park that people from both sides can actually enjoy as they gather, mingle, and show their affection through physical touch. The creators of the different designs were certainly trying to persuade the panel of judges to choose them as winners. However, they also were trying to persuade us, their audience, that an open border park at the border between Tijuana and San Diego is possible, feasible, and appealing. The efforts of the Friends of Friendship Park to make do with a contest in the middle of the pandemic and the contestants’ efforts to make do with their design projects are pre-placing tactics with a threefold objective: to persuade us to keep up our make do hoping, to ask for material change at the park that will especially benefit binational families who use this space to meet, and to open the possibilities of binational collaboration and cooperation.

---

<sup>237</sup> James A. Throgmorton, “Planning as Persuasive Storytelling in a Global-Scale Web of Relationships,” *Planning Theory* 2, no. 2 (July 1, 2003): 125–51, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14730952030022003>.

<sup>238</sup> Dorina Pojani and Dominic Stead, “Urban Planning and Design as Verbal and Visual Rhetoric,” *Journal of Urban Design* 20, no. 5 (October 20, 2015): 582–614, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2015.1071653>.

This pre-placing tactic also allowed a wider audience to participate in two ways: first, by brainstorming visions for the future of the park in order to inform the projects and second, by displaying the projects through an exhibit and on the BUILD THAT PARK! website. Through a questionnaire, the campaign encouraged the people who had visited Friendship Park to use the pre-placing tactic of brainstorming visions of the aspirational futures of a fenceless Friendship Park. Pojani and Stead argue that architectural planning “involves giving voice to different parties and drawing from multiple perspectives.”<sup>239</sup> The main goal behind the BUILD THAT PARK! campaign’s collective brainstorming of the aspirational future of the park was to show that the perspectives of the audience could inform the design projects. The participatory pre-placing tactic was encouraged before the competition as well as also afterwards.

After the competition, as part of the pre-placing tactic, Brown displayed a selection of the contest designs in an exhibition in San Diego and disseminated them through the BUILD THAT PARK! website. These designs, like other architectural planning designs, are “planning stories that shape readers’ attention, turning it *this way* instead of *that*.”<sup>240</sup> When spectators read architectural planning material,

the colors, lines, textures, viewpoints, focus, layout and rhythms in an image provide the basis for the viewer to infer the existence of emotions, arguments, concepts, critiques, themes, ideas and allusions, and to link the built artifact with desire and action.<sup>241</sup>

In the case of the exhibition of BUILD THAT PARK! contestant designs, the organizers did not intend for the audience to consume, agree with, and link to a certain architects’ vision.

---

<sup>239</sup> Pojani and Stead, 586.

<sup>240</sup> Throgmorton, “Planning as Persuasive Storytelling in a Global-Scale Web of Relationships,” 127.

<sup>241</sup> Pojani and Stead, “Urban Planning and Design as Verbal and Visual Rhetoric,” 582.

The exhibition and the online dissemination ask the spectators to take a more active role in order to compare, evaluate, and imagine different design possibilities, their opportunities, and their cost. This participatory and critical consumption of plans of possible futures for Friendship Park also encourages the spectators to come up with new imagined possibilities as they engage with the designs.

This encounter with the designs becomes a mutual envisioning among the designers and spectators. These designs of possible futures encourage us to engage, collaborate, and improvise in the pre-placing tactic that the Friends of Friendship Park are urging us to keep using. The designs keep us focused on the feasibility and the material possibilities of having an alternative to the current fenced park. The dissemination of the design possibilities is a pre-placing tactic that invites us to continue to envision and desire a truly binational park until it becomes the authorities' vision, and they want to and agree to build it. Thus, the BUILD THAT PARK! campaign is not simply persuasive, it is also constitutive. Not only did the desires, hopes, and visions of a wider audience shape the design projects and keep those hopes alive, but the design projects also shaped those visions in return.

This section allows us to understand how two different artifacts can work in a pre-placing tactic: first, the use of real places as topoi of spatial imaginaries and second, the creation of planning designs, even when they are not going to be used in construction. Real places as topoi of future spatial imaginaries shape our relation to a place, just as they highlight the places' shortcomings and highlight the feasibility of change. In this study, the Friends of Friendship Park use Peace Arch Park as a topos of a future spatial imaginary for Friendship Parks allowing us to think that if this material reality is possible at the US northern border, it can also be possible at the US southern border. Moreover, design projects allow us to engage in an activation and

reactivation of our imagination about a place, encouraging us to keep desiring and hoping for the better future of a place; some of our hopes even appear in the designs. In this case, the design plans encourage us to engage in pre-placing when multiple possibilities for a fenceless future for the Friendship Park are possible but for this to happen, we need to keep imagining it, sharing it, and asking for it as the Friends of Friendship Park have been doing for more than a decade.

### Chapter Conclusion

At this point, I hope it is evident that Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park are very different rhetorical spaces. Drawing upon the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic shaped both parks worked as a case study. It is a natural experiment that provides more evidence to show that the material condition of the southern border can be highly damaging. Regardless of the circumstances, the conditions at Friendship Park are behind those at Peace Arch Park. Peace Arch Park was more adequate in its status quo before the pandemic, and when it was used as a response to mobility limitations across the border, the conditions were still better than those at Friendship Park when it was functioning in its status quo. The way Friendship Park's status quo works is through a quotidian experience of segregation and division. In contrast, Peace Arch Park works as a unifier, so that when the COVID-19 pandemic prompted the closure of the northern border, people were still able to gather in the park under conditions that were better than in the southern binational park.

Peace Arch Park was completely closed for only ten weeks and then partially open for a year. During that year, people performed a re-placing tactic by using make do meetings on the open US side of the park to recuperate the possibility of gathering with their binational loved ones freely. During this time these visitors were grateful to have the US side of the park open,

but at the same time they were frustrated that they could not meet in their homes with the usual freedom they enjoyed. They pushed the Canadian authorities to reopen the border so they would not have to rely on the park. Canada reopened its border to fully vaccinated US citizens on August 9, 2021 without quarantine restrictions. The Tijuana side of Friendship park was closed March-July 2020 but the US side has been closed for two years now.

Even the best days during the pre-pandemic status quo at Friendship Park were not as nice as the binational familial picnics and gatherings at Peace Arch Park during the pandemic. On those days before the pandemic, the people in Friendship Park could only partially see each other through the fence, with no more physical contact than a pinkie kiss and only from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, and only *if* the border agents on the US side agreed to open it. In fact, to date, the US side of Friendship Park has been closed for more than 600 consecutive days, and it remains closed even though the border restrictions have been loosened. In the fall of 2021 activists gathered in Tijuana and pushed the authorities to open the US side so families could have their bittersweet reunions through the fence. They did not succeed.

During the pandemic, binational families at Peace Arch Park worked very hard at performing their re-placing tactics to recuperate their ability to reunite using the available means that the materiality of the park offers. In contrast, the southern park cannot provide any kind of binational reunion as long as one of the sides is closed. Activists have had to deal with the burden of performing two tactics simultaneously: the burden of juggling between improvising a re-placing tactic that would allow them to keep holding binational events, and of carrying out their ongoing pre-placing tactic of maintaining a collective vision and imagination of a fenceless Friendship Park where people can meet.

The re-placing tactic of Friendship Park activists had its particular nuances. The southern activists, in their re-placing attempt in a virtual space, gained the benefit of seeing each other's faces while meeting on Zoom, and they found a way to join efforts to help shelters in Tijuana. However, this virtual re-placing tactic also required them to recall some of the qualities of the space that were significant for them, even when these qualities were inadequate. Every time they met they physically replicated the unique qualities of the place, and they mimicked the embodied gestures such as the "pinkie kiss" through their virtual possibilities. This gesture comes from the inability to physically touch through the fence in any way but touching fingers. This allows us to see how inadequate spaces can become, embedding people's sense of place and community that so deeply they reproduce its inadequacy when they engage in re-placing tactics, even when they are actively trying to get rid of the fence through pre-placing tactics.

At the same time that they were improvising re-placing tactics through virtual space, they were also substituting their restricted physical presence with an online presence to maintain their ongoing pre-placing tactics. This tactic urges the Tijuana-San Diego Community and the wider public to maintain a collective vision of a future of a fenceless Friendship Park. During the pandemic, the activists used social media to disseminate comparisons between the unfair differences between the possibility and even the actuality of holding binational gatherings at Peace Arch Park, and the impossibility of doing so at Friendship Park. Friendship Park activists also managed to launch an online campaign that let people demonstrate their interest in changing the material qualities of the park in a way that could help binational families come together and, at the same time, to engage in a practice to imagine and share their imagination of a better, fenceless park. The activists organized a contest where a wider audience could brainstorm their visions and some architects were able to translate those visions into persuasive architectural

planning that was disseminated in different media. That process allowed a wider audience to keep believing in the feasibility of the activists' goals.

In this chapter, we can see how people have arranged the material available means and used their agency to advance their re-placing and pre-placing tactics. Both kinds of tactics meant claiming and using the power and agency that people have in relation to each park and with other visitors. At Peace Arch Park, people claimed the available space and its publicness to reproduce their ability to gather through a re-placing tactic that recuperated their free flow across the border during the COVID-19 pandemic. At Friendship Park, during this same time, activists were claiming space by doing the best they could to translate it into a virtual space through re-placing tactics, and using their agency, knowledge, and availability to perform pre-placing tactics in virtual and physical spaces, such as social media, the BUILD THAT PARK! website, and an art gallery.

Re-placing and pre-placing tactics bring time into the discussion of rhetorical cartographies as they respectively bring the past and future of the place in the situations that are occurring in a specific moment. On the one hand, memories, nostalgia, and the previous status quo of places feed the re-placing tactic, which tries to rebuild the loss of what was, in the past to, a present moment. On the other hand, envisioning aspirations, imagination, and qualities that are not in a place but that could be there in the future feed pre-placement tactics and shape the way people relate to any specific site.

## CONCLUSION

All the land on Earth has now been divided into countries. Helen Ting, citing Eric Hobsbawm's *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* observes "if an extraterrestrial historian landed on our planet, the modern institution of nation-states would not be understood as something evident based on common sense, despite its importance over the last two centuries of the human history on planet Earth."<sup>242</sup> Nations have already claimed ownership of the land on this planet and they depend on borders to show where the boundaries of each nation are located, or, where the sovereignty of a nation starts and where it ends. Borders are not natural nor are they neutral. They are strategic disconnections that allow us to pretend that humans and territories are separated too. This dissertation has focused on a physical fragment of two different borders to complicate and deepen our understanding of the rhetorical power of borders. At the same time this dissertation was my attempt to envision new ways of connecting where separation is in our way. In this closing section I will summarize and bring together the justification of this dissertation, offer a recapitulation of the three chapters' analysis, make explicit my contributions to the rhetoric of borders and of public places, and present some opportunities for further studies.

In the introduction I mentioned how borders themselves matter because they are symptoms, or microcosms of the relationships between disconnected neighboring countries, and, this disconnection has real consequences for humans and nonhumans along them, some of which can cause harm. In this dissertation I have analyzed and compared one specific site of each of the two US borders—Peace Arch Park at the US-Canada border and Friendship Park at the US-

---

<sup>242</sup> This is Helen Ting's rephrasing of Eric Hobsbawm's introduction to *Nations and Nationalism*. Helen Ting, "Social Construction of Nation—A Theoretical Exploration," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 14, no. 3 (August 20, 2008): 463, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537110802301418>. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1.

Mexico border. Each of these also performs this dual work of being symptomatic of binational relationships and having consequences in situ. That is, they are both effect and cause.

First, the conditions at the parks are symptoms of how the US sees its neighbors. The United States seems to perceive its northern neighbor, Canada, as having a similar (hegemonic) identity with the US and is therefore more open and welcoming. Thus, at the northern park, people entering from either side are allowed to gather inside the park where they can move freely across the lawn, and they can cross an almost imperceptible border. In contrast, the United States appears to see Mexico and the rest of Latin America as an unwanted neighbor at odds with the (hegemonic) US ideals. Thus, the southern border park has been militarized; it has a double fence that does not allow actual transit between nations nor easy ways for people to gather. Despite the existing restrictions, binational gatherings at the park are the only possible form of family reunion for many immigrants without re-entry privileges. These contrasts at the borders are emblematic of US values, in which the brown lower-status Spanish-speaking neighbor, Mexico, should be kept segregated as much as possible whereas the United States wants to keep a close connection with its seemingly more similar primarily Anglophone, White neighbor, Canada.

Second, borders are not neutral or passive. These disconnections have consequences to the humans and nonhumans around them, reproducing harmful bias and inequity. The material conditions in Peace Arch Park invite humans to experience the border by playfully moving through it. In contrast, the material conditions at Friendship Park do not allow such movement. Many binational families rely on weekend gatherings at Friendship Park for face-to-face encounters as their relatives cannot freely enter and exit the US. However, these encounters take place through a heavy mesh fence that restricts vision and reduces the possibility of physical

contact to just the touching of fingertips. This situation has prompted activists in the San Diego-Tijuana area to try to improve this material situation. In addition, both the northern and the southern US borders around the parks are causing damage to the ecosystem; the political divisions that are drawn are also obstacles to collaboration in solving those issues. For example, the pollution that moves through the Salish Sea and the sewage that flows into the San Diego estuary do not stop at the border, and the border itself makes it more difficult for binational stakeholders to come to agreement about how to stop it.

The two border parks that I analyze in this dissertation are a microcosm of the values and assumptions that are both caused by and contribute to the unequal treatment by the United States in regard to its two neighbors. These assumptions shape the material conditions at the parks and perpetuate inequalities. These two small pieces of a much longer border allow us to diagnose these inequities. And this is not exclusive to the US border—it can show up at other boundaries that divide the whole world into separate disconnected countries. Some borders are fuzzier than others, and there are even walled and militarized borders on different continents—borders where people die crossing every day. It is important to study them because by understanding their material consequences we can unveil the harm that borders have on human and nonhumans around them, and we can then make space to imagine and create better borders, and places at borders that can increase cooperation and collaboration needed to solve our collective needs. Nowadays different nations are experiencing economic, environmental, health-related, and other crises. Large numbers of communities are immigrating. We need to study borders to see how they are constructed as spaces of conflict, segregation and disconnection and start building borders that will not cause harm by their very existence, nor harm us when we must cross them. Imagine if we had to meet someone we loved at a border; what would we want that encounter to

be like—Peace Arch Park, Friendship Park, a better place that you can imagine? By acknowledging and understanding the agency that humans and nonhumans have on public spaces at borders, we can imagine creating borders that allow for fairer, more caring, more ethical spaces.

Having outlined the stakes, the main argument of this dissertation is that the material elements at each park actively take part in constructing a specific kind of border. The built environment of the northern park blurs the actual physical borderline and allows playful binational gatherings—experiences of a supposedly open border that encourage collaboration. In contrast, the built environment of the southern border, with its fence and visiting restrictions on the US side, gives rise to a border that keeps both countries separated, excludes people from Latin America, and punishes them by not allowing them to see their families. Neither park seems to be completely working towards binational collaboration as they were meant to be, and the material differences of each border accentuate and perpetuate the different and unfair treatment to the visitors at the southern park. To demonstrate this argument, I made some connections between three threads in rhetorical studies and integrate these tools in a new way to approach public parks spaces at borders.

In this dissertation I connected border rhetoric, material in situ rhetoric and rhetorical field methods. This effort allowed me to put them in conversation and, I hope, to contribute to each one. I contribute to rhetorical studies of borders by bringing into them the rhetorical force of the actual material borders. As I mentioned in the introduction, rhetorical studies of borders have been very helpful to unveil how discourses and performativity build borders in the abstract. By connecting the three rhetorical subfields, my work here brings to these studies the possibility of also focusing in the rhetorical force of the actual material border. This can enlarge our

understanding of the nuances of how material borders are related to national discourses and values, how borders have rhetorical power that affects human and nonhuman bodies, and how these bodies respond to the rhetorical forces of the material borders.

As I mentioned in the introduction, material rhetoric in situ, has been in conversation with rhetorical field methods for some time now. By connecting this ongoing conversation to border rhetoric in this dissertation, I was able to bring to the table concepts to address tensions in the rhetorical relations between built environment and publics in a specific place. I was able to contribute some new ways to explore the rhetorical permeabilities that can be there in both abstract and physical space and I was able to contribute with some concepts to include time, and our visions of past and future in the way we understand and respond to a physical place. I will expand on the contributions later in this section as they are also connected to my specific cases of study.

I worked to connect and braid together rhetorical studies of borders, material rhetoric in situ and rhetorical field methods to help me bring these lenses to different concepts. This allowed us to see that the borders at each park not only are not doing what they purport to do, that is, they are not cultivating camaraderie between neighbor nations, but they are also getting in the way of collaboration, which is more evident as our global economic, climate and health crises intensify. In the following pages I will summarize the basic ideas of each chapter and the conceptual lenses that have contributed to my main argument. In general each chapter was an attempt to understand how some visitors at the park connect to each other and how they connect with the material qualities of the park.

In the first chapter I analyzed the material, embodied, ephemeral rhetoric of each park to see how, in their own way, the borders on which these parks dwell were being constructed.

Material rhetoric focuses on the physical aspects of a place; embodied rhetoric focuses on the way visitors relate to each other and to nonhuman bodies on site; ephemeral rhetoric focuses on the acts, events, meanings, and matter that exist temporally in a place and shape the public's experience of that place. These rhetorics of place are intrinsically connected and shape each other while also they may shape our experience of the place and make visible the public feelings and shared responses to that place.

By analyzing these three kinds of connected rhetoric in this specific case of study, we can see that Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park are border places where an assembly of discourses and symbols of sovereignty and separation coalesce with the goals of togetherness, connection, and friendship among neighbor nations. Thus, there is a constant tension of binational togetherness/separation at each park. At least part of this tension is held by the materiality and symbolicity of the built environment, and the ephemeral and embodied interactions among visitors as well as between visitors and the physical environment of each park. Even when there are two parks located in the same nation (the US) that hold within themselves a binational togetherness/separation tension, the way that the tension is held in each park is different and constructs a very different border experience.

In Peace Arch Park, the material, embodied, ephemeral rhetorics allow a binational togetherness/separation tension that enhance togetherness. In this park the border has not disappeared but is blurred by a lawn. Visitors have freedom of movement across the pleasant lawn, and they have the opportunity to engage playfully in looking for the subtle marks of this otherwise invisible border. The strong sense of openness of the grass lawn of the park and of a playful invitation to find the invisible border generates a park filled with a public feeling of joy

and a sense of play that is particularly welcoming for Anglophone, White, Christian nationals of either Canada or the US.

In contrast, at Friendship Park the tension of binational togetherness/separation enhances the feeling of separation. This place has become the only place for family reunifications along the US-Mexico border, but instead of being filled with a joyful playfulness, the heavy mesh fence that crosses the park along the border and the strict visiting regulations and difficulties accessing the US side fill the space with a public feeling of frustration and bittersweetness—a feeling that has prompted activists to work together to create a better park where families can reunite in a less harsh environment.

In the second chapter, I used the concept of wild rhetoric and deep ambivalence to analyze the border as an agential membrane in relation to nonhumans that interact with permeable membrane at each park. These concepts highlight both the autonomy of each nonhuman—with their own trajectories, propensities, or tendencies—and also the way they relate to each other and how that relationship shapes the other and has consequences for other nonhumans and for humans.

Each abstract and material border that we have constructed is a wild agent that, in its autonomy and in the ramifications of its relationship with other nonhumans, has consequences for the environment that affect both humans and nonhumans. In particular, I analyzed the Salish Sea and the grass lawn at Peace Arch Park, and the California ground squirrels and Tijuana's sewage at Friendship Park. I consider humans and nonhumans to be intrinsically related, and humans are also part of nature. However, there are some kinds of nonhuman matter and some forces that are more directly influenced by humans than others. Thus, I categorized the grass and the sewage as anthropogenic, as they are more directly influenced by humans than by nature, and

I categorized the Salish Sea and the squirrels as naturogenic as they are more directly influenced by nature than by humans.

The naturogenic Salish Sea visible at Peace Arch Park maintains its movement of water and sea life through the border, but its ecosystem suffers the consequences of the nationalistic division of the border that inhibits binational collaboration to decrease pollutants and to protect sea life. The pleasant lawn grass is highly anthropogenic: it requires constant human intervention to keep its aesthetic features, and it is actively enhanced at the border. At the same time, it perpetuates natural erasures through the deforestation around the border, and cultural erasure as White English culture is glorified and the culture of the indigenous Coast Salish people that are neighbors to the park is diminished.

In Friendship Park, naturogenic squirrels have adapted to coming and going through the border fence, challenging our human-centric understanding of “border” and they help us imagine a better US-Mexico border crossing for humans. However, at the same time, their transit masks how the border endangers other nonhumans that cannot pass through it and are not coping and adapting to this crude division of the landscape. Tijuana’s sewage contents, piping, and the way it gathers is anthropogenic. When it rains, for example, the border gives the sewage the agency to permeate the border membrane and it becomes extremely unsafe. It then disperses and enters San Diego Border State Park, polluting the soil, air, and water of the estuary, killing living beings.

The US-Canada and US-Mexico borders are perceived very differently. The US-Canada relationship has been the basis for constructing a model border known as being the longest undefended border in the world, and the border in the park looks like a pleasant garden. The southern border is well known for its militarization and its strict crossing procedures. However, analysis reveals that neither border is neutral, and the naturogenic and anthropogenic relations at

both sites contribute to this lack of neutrality in ways previously undertheorized. Through the analysis in Chapter Two, we can see the ways in which nonhumans such as the sewage, squirrels, pollution of the ocean and the grass lawn are oblivious to the borders that humans understand as impermeable separation, and that this membrane can create new obstacles for communities for which collaboration is required to solve urgent problems such as environmental crisis.

Finally in Chapter Three, we saw that borders were not impermeable to COVID either, and this permeability may prompt people to use their imaginations to connect when the obstinate disconnection of borders became evident. In this third chapter, I introduced the concepts of re-placing and pre-placing as tactics of rhetorical cartography to analyze the responses of the visitors at Peace Arch Park and activists at Friendship Park to the access restrictions to each park from Spring 2020 to Spring 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. By “re-placing” I name a tactic that is an attempt to restore a relationship to a place when it has been lost. With this tactic, people create new networks of embodied, emplaced, and material practices to restore, at least partially, what is no longer there. By “pre-placing” I mean a tactic that uses the available means to activate in oneself and/or others an imagined, aspirational future of a place—a place that is yet to come. These re-placing and the pre-placing tactics are not necessarily sequential—they can take place simultaneously.

In the case of Peace Arch Park, when the US-Canada border was closed, people looked for a way to restore their ability to meet and physically connect with their loved ones. The re-placing tactic allowed them to restore the loss of the free border transit by transforming an area of the park with no restrictions into a gathering place. This material, embodied tactic offers a way to relate with the park in a negotiation of power amidst the authorities’ restrictions, reshaping the symbolism of the park from a place to cross to a place to reunite. In the case of

Friendship Park, restricted access to the US side was nothing new. However, it was the first time that access to both sides was restricted, so the activists who had gathered weekly at the site switched to completely going online. The Friendship Park activists had to do the double work of re-placing and pre-placing: as a re-placing tactic they replicated the gatherings at the park through a virtual platform where they also re-placed its inadequate status quo, using the image of the fence as the virtual background and performing gestures that had been prompted at the park by the inadequacy of the border—gestures such as putting their fingers to their cameras to recreate the pinkie kisses at the park. In addition, they were maintaining the work of pre-placing the park that they have been doing for decades, through holding forth on an imagined aspirational place without a fence where families could be free to gather. Within the pandemic restrictions, the activists were doing this pre-placing tactic in at least two ways. One was comparing the conditions at Friendship Park with those at Peace Arch Park where people were gathering. The other was holding an online competition in which designers presented projects of their visions of a Friendship Park in the future where families and people from the US and Mexico could come together. These projects were presented in an exhibition and online, inviting spectators to imagine these and other futures as well.

Besides connecting border rhetoric with rhetoric in situ and rhetorical field methods, in what follows, I make explicit some of the contributions that my case analysis is doing to the field of rhetoric. Hopefully these contributions will help to expand our understanding of the specific cases that I am analyzing, as well as rhetorical studies of borders and of places more broadly.

First, I present both border parks, Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park, with the same rhetorical commonality which is that they both create a tension arising from binational togetherness and separation. They both build this tension with nuances that shape the way they

construct a different kind of border. In this way, I also contribute the concept of binational togetherness/separation tension as a rhetorical category that is tied to the materiality of borders. This category can help rhetorical studies of borders address better how the materiality of other places at these two borders (or any other borders) are symptomatic of the relationships between the nations that the border is artificially separating. Each border has material, embodied, and ephemeral nuances in this binational togetherness/separation tension that invite us to construct a particular kind of border that scholars can point to. I hope that other rhetoric scholars working with borders can benefit by being able to see how this tension is rhetorically built at other borders, to observe the binational tensions that exist at those borders, and to see how different rhetorics help to construct those borders and evoke public feelings as they do so.

The binational togetherness/separation tension also brings the possibility of seeing tensions between opposite forces in public places. It is my hope that the work that I have done on parks along the border can help other scholars studying public places by bringing up the possibility of opposing meanings and material forces that create different tensions at a site. In addition, this material, embodied, ephemeral analysis exposes the ways these tensions are rhetorically constructed through the interaction of the built environment and the visitors at the place; it can help us observe how public feelings that compel some audiences to be in a place and other audiences to avoid it may be evoked. This analysis of these rhetorics can deepen our understanding of how the things around us shape a place and persuade us to behave, feel, or understand that place in certain way.

Second, I also add some complexity by focusing on how nonhumans actively cross the borders at or next to the parks that I analyze. Even when the built environments are different and the absence or presence of a border fence is evident, this analysis allows us to see how the border

acts in ways that exceed policy and that may hinder problem solving, thus profoundly affecting life at the border. Both borders, with their abstract and material forces, can simultaneously create problems in the surrounding environments and become an obstacle to problem-solving collaboration among the communities that the border divides.

The focus on the wild rhetoric of nonhumans can help us to see beyond our usual human-centric perspective of borders and have a wider understanding of borders and places. The wild rhetoric of borders and nonhumans that cross them can help us to see how nonhumans are restricted or unrestricted by different borders and how this movement allows us to understand borders in a more complex way. Moreover, scholars studying public places can focus on the wild rhetoric of nonhumans to see how they also make do and how they build rhetorical paths that relate to the built environment—an environment that allows humans to have a different perspective on a place and a different relationship to it.

In addition, in this focus on the wild rhetoric of nonhumans in a place, I have also offered a way of categorizing nonhumans as anthropogenic and naturogenic. Even when humans and nonhumans are intrinsically connected, the category of the naturogenic highlights the autonomy of nonhumans that are less directly affected by humans, recognizing their agency and rhetorical force despite humans intervention. The category of anthropogenic allows us to highlight human responsibility, even if partial, for some of the consequences to nonhumans at a specific site. If these consequences are harmful, it points to the need for accountability to intervene and repair the damage.

Third, analyzing how the re-placing and pre-placing tactics of rhetorical cartography were performed during the COVID-19 pandemic at each park allows us to improve our understanding of the meaning and consequences of each border park by looking at the embodied

responses of the visitors. At Peace Arch Park, visitors have constructed meaning and a connection to the place by recuperating some of their lost relationships to the border: they used the park in way it had not been used before, but could have been, by making it a place to gather. The meaning of Friendship Park was created through the re-placing tactic to recover, in part, the relationship activists had with the material site, as well as through a pre-placing tactic to change the park's built environment in the future. These two tactics can provide scholars carrying out rhetorical studies of borders with some ways of seeing how a previous state of the border and its desired future actually shape the way people build and relate to borders in their material proximity. Many people around the world live close to a border and the border is part of their everyday lives. Many cross borders, so re-placing and pre-placing can help to better understand how our relationship with the past and future shapes borders and our interactions with them. Presumably, as was the case of the border parks I analyzed, this process is more evident during times of crisis. There will be times where mobilization through borders would be a present need for many of us, and different parties will have to find ways to reclaim and imagine future borders in a different way.

The concept of the pre-placing and re-placing tactics of rhetorical cartographies can also add complexity to the study of places. Similarly, they offer a means of seeing that the past and future of places are actually enmeshed in the way we relate to them in the present. Re-placing allows us to bring nostalgia and loss to our understanding of places. Our previous relationships with places and the way we try to reproduce them informs our relationship with a place and with others. In addition, pre-placing allows us to bring our imaginations of what we want and of the future to the study of places. Both re-placing and pre-placing are concepts that can allow us to study the dynamic relations and meanings that audiences create at places that shape those

relations, and that can also stimulate and shape new relations between the visitors and the built environment. These are some of the contributions that I am hoping to make to the field of rhetoric with this dissertation, and in particular to the study of borders and places.

Naturally, for the analysis in this dissertation I necessarily narrowed my scope to focus on Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park. I had to consider the limitations of time, money, safety, and later in the project what the pandemic restrictions allowed. Because I made these tactical choices, there is more to be done if we are to appreciate fully the rhetorical force. Each park has many more elements in the built environment than those that I mentioned—there are public events and there are many nonhumans that are also part of the parks. I just selected a few of them. Focusing on them can give us a much deeper understanding of these peculiar aspects of borders. In addition to the two parks I have analyzed, there are other public spaces and monuments along the US-Canada and US-Mexico borders that could also give us some insight into how these two borders are rhetorically constructed and how those rhetorical choices shape where these places are located. For example, there were fifty-two boundary monuments erected between 1849 and 1857 along the US - Mexico border, and the fact that the border fence has left them on the Mexican side has rhetorical implications. Another example is the Haskell Library that straddles the US and Canada border, where visitors can enter from either side. Another example can be comparing the land ports facilities on the US-Mexico and the US-Canada border. For me, as a Mexican with a non-immigration visa, crossing land entry ports to enter the US is a very different experience than it is for Americans. The Tijuana-San Diego entry port looks and feels like a bunker with tall concrete walls where you cannot see outside; there are aisles that organize people in lines, armed guards, and the imminent anxiety of not being able to enter the US. More than once, the agents questioned me about why my documents said I was working and

not just studying, for example. In contrast, the US ports of entry from Canada are spaces that are much more open: so far, I have never had to explain myself when returning to US from Canada,—the officers just checked my documents asked routine questions, and then let me go ahead. This experience also tells us about the border and the relationships between the neighboring nations. I have to add here that even though the experience of entering the US, especially through the land port of entry at the southern border has never been welcoming, being able to do so is a privilege that family members reuniting at Friendship Park do not have and this dissertation is also an attempt to be one more voice to let people know this is happening.

The safety restrictions at both parks impacted the field work methods of this dissertation. COVID-19 pandemic restrictions became an important opportunity for this dissertation. This international global health crisis reveals the way borders are insufficient to stop the virus spreading. It also served as a natural experiment allowing us to see how activists and visitors in the parks were connecting to each other and relating to the built environment of each park. Chapter Three allow us to see that even in weeks where the COVID crisis hit the hardest in Peace Arch Park, its built environment allowed people to have a more pleasant border encounter experience than the best days of Friendship Park before the pandemic. In Chapter Three, I mentioned that Peace Arch Park and Friendship Park closed as part of the COVID-19 safety restrictions. Peace Arch Park and the Mexican side of Friendship Park are now open, but as I write these lines in April 2022, the US side of Friendship Park is still closed. It has now been closed for two years. Advocates hike on Sunday afternoons to the secondary fence that restricts the entrance to Friendship Park, and they have been holding rallies in San Diego to show the Border Patrol that they are still there, advocating for access to the park so that families can reunite there. The situation is even more harsh now than when I started writing this dissertation,

as there is no place where people can meet face to face along the border, even with a fence. One important lesson of the COVID era is that viruses and the environment do not care about our national borders. So simply reinforcing them, doubling down on the assumption they are adequately dividing nations seems like a fool's errand. As we are now hopefully moving out of COVID, and as we look forward to addressing the transnational crisis of climate change, we must ask what kinds of connections should we protect and what new connection patterns do we want to make? How do we want to live together as humans on this planet? This dissertation has asked about the ways that borders enable and complicate those connection efforts, and the efforts to address those crises that know no boundaries. Perhaps one important step is to rethink our relationship with borders. It is my hope that this work will contribute, even in a small way, to making new human and academic connections possible.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Atkinson, Jennifer Wren. *Gardenland: Nature, Fantasy, and Everyday Practice*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018.
- Bacon, David. "The Sadness of the Border Wall." *Contexts* 16, no. 1 (February 1, 2017): 48–55. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504217696064>.
- Banse, Tom. "Couples, Families Separated by U.S.-Canada Border Closure Find Oasis at Peace Arch Park," March 16, 2021. <https://www.nwnetwork.org/post/couples-families-separated-us-canada-border-closure-find-oasis-peace-arch-park>.
- Baran, Michelle. "Canada Now Requires 3 COVID Tests and Hotel Quarantine for Entry." *AFAR*, January 29, 2021. <https://www.afar.com/magazine/canada-now-requires-covid-test-and-quarantine-for-entry>.
- Barnett, Scot, and Casey Boyle, eds. *Rhetoric, Through Everyday Things*. 2nd ed. edition. Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 2016.
- Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press Books, 2009.
- Blair, Carole. "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric's Materiality." In *Rhetorical Bodies*, edited by Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.
- . "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places." *Western Journal of Communication* 65, no. 3 (2001): 271–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570310109374706>.
- Borer, Michael Ian. "From Collective Memory to Collective Imagination: Time, Place, and Urban Redevelopment." *Symbolic Interaction* 33, no. 1 (2010): 96–114. <https://doi.org/10.1525/si.2010.33.1.96>.

- Box, John. "Immigration Restriction." Digital History, 1928. 594. Digital History.  
[https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp\\_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=594](https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=594).
- Brend, Yvette. "Meet the U.S. Park Ranger Who Welcomes Canadians at a Unique Open Section of the Border." CBC News, August 8, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/ranger-rickey-rick-blank-peace-arch-parks-steward-canada-us-blaine-washington-park-1.5677625>.
- Brown, Wendy. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. New York : Cambridge, Mass.: Zone Books ; Distributed by the MIT Press, 2010.
- Brown, Wendy. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. New York : Cambridge, Mass.: Zone Books ; Distributed by the MIT Press, 2010.
- Brunoro, Michele, and Alyse Kotyk. "Park Used to Unite Families across the Border to Close Temporarily, B.C. Government Says." CTVNews. June 18, 2020.  
<https://bc.ctvnews.ca/park-used-to-unite-families-across-the-border-to-close-temporarily-b-c-government-says-1.4990002>.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter : On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. Routledge, 2011.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203828274>.
- Canada Border Services. "Changes to Travel Restrictions for Immediate Family Members of Canadian Citizens and Permanent Residents." News releases. gcnews, June 8, 2020.  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/border-services-agency/news/2020/06/changes-to-travel-restrictions-for-immediate-family-members-of-canadian-citizens-and-permanent-residents.html>.
- Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

- Chávez, Karma. "Border Interventions: The Need to Shift from a Rhetoric of Security to a Rhetoric of Militarization." In *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*, edited by D. Robert DeChaine. The University of Alabama Press, 2012. <http://muse.jhu.edu/book/17281>.
- Chávez, Karma. "Border Interventions: The Need to Shift from a Rhetoric of Security to a Rhetoric of Militarization." In *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*, edited by D. Robert DeChaine. The University of Alabama Press, 2012. <http://muse.jhu.edu/book/17281>.
- Cisneros, J. David. "Contaminated Communities: The Metaphor of 'Immigrant as Pollutant' in Media Representations of Immigration." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 11, no. 4 (2008): 569–601. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rap.0.0068>.
- Clark, Seth David. "Open Wound, Open Table : A Theological Exploration of Holy Communion as Practiced by The Border Church/La Iglesia Fronteriza." Columbia Theological Seminary, 2020.
- "Coast Salish Art | Burke Museum." Accessed December 29, 2019. </collections-and-research/culture/contemporary-culture/coast-salish-art>.
- Condit, Celeste Michelle. "The Rhetorical Limits of Polysemy." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6, no. 2 (June 1989): 103–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295038909366739>.
- Cresswell, Tim. "Working with Place." In *In Place: A Short Introduction*, 81–123. UK: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

DeChaine, D. R. "Imagined Immunities: Border Rhetorics and the Ethos of Sans Frontières." "

In *Interdisciplinarity and Social Justice: Revisioning Academic Accountability*. SUNY Press, 2010.

DeChaine, D. Robert, ed. *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*.

The University of Alabama Press, 2012. <http://muse.jhu.edu/book/17281>.

Department of Homeland Security. "Snapshot: Protecting Our Northern Border with the Slash

CameraPole," January 30, 2020. [https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-](https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/news/2020/01/30/snapshot-protecting-our-northern-border-slash-camerapole)

[technology/news/2020/01/30/snapshot-protecting-our-northern-border-slash-camerapole](https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/news/2020/01/30/snapshot-protecting-our-northern-border-slash-camerapole).

DH Vancouver Staff. "Neighbours Disturbed by Continuing Cross-Border Meetups at Peace

Arch Park." November 10, 2020. <https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/peace-arch-park-meetups>.

Dickinson, Greg. "Joe's Rhetoric: Finding Authenticity at Starbucks." *Rhetoric Society*

*Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (September 1, 2002): 5–27.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02773940209391238>.

Dickinson, Greg. *Suburban Dreams: Imagining and Building the Good Life. Rhetoric, Culture, and Social Critique*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2015.

Dunham, Jackie. "'It's Devastating': Cross-Border Couples Separated for Months Due to Travel

Restrictions." *Ctvnews*. May 14, 2020, sec. Coronavirus.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/it-s-devastating-cross-border-couples-separated-for-months-due-to-travel-restrictions-1.4938963>.

Elmer, MacKenzie. "New Snapshot of What's in the Tijuana River Is as Gross as You'd

Expect." *Voice of San Diego*, November 2, 2020.

<https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/science-environment/new-snapshot-of-whats-in-the-tijuana-river-is-as-gross-as-you-d-expect/>.

Environment, Ministry of. "Peace Arch Provincial Park - BC Parks." Accessed May 12, 2019.

[http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/peace\\_arch/](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/peace_arch/).

Fernback, Jan. "Sousveillance: Communities of Resistance to the Surveillance Environment."

*Telematics and Informatics, The Facebook Phenomenon*, 30, no. 1 (February 1, 2013):

11–21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2012.03.003>.

Flores, Lisa A. "Constructing Rhetorical Borders: Peons, Illegal Aliens, and Competing

Narratives of Immigration." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20, no. 4 (2003):

362–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0739318032000142025>.

Flores, Lisa A. "Constructing Rhetorical Borders: Peons, Illegal Aliens, and Competing

Narratives of Immigration." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20, no. 4 (2003):

362–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0739318032000142025>.

"Fact Sheet: DHS Measures on the Border to Limit the Further Spread of Coronavirus." U.S.

Department of Homeland Security, March 23, 2020.

<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/10/19/fact-sheet-dhs-measures-border-limit-further-spread-coronavirus>.

friendshippark. "Friends of Friendship Park." Accessed May 10, 2021.

<https://www.friendshippark.org>.

Gaonkar, D.P. "Performing with Fragments: Reflections on Critical Rhetoric." In *Argument and*

*the Postmodern Challenge: Proceedings of the Eighth SCA/AFA Conference on*

*Argumentation.*, edited by R.E. Mckerrow. Armandale, VA: Speech Communication

Association, n.d.

- Goltz, Dustin Bradley, and Kimberlee Pérez. "Borders without Bodies: Affect, Proximity, and Utopian Imaginaries through Lines in the Sand." In *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*, edited by D. Robert DeChaine. The University of Alabama Press, 2012. <http://muse.jhu.edu/book/17281>.
- Gordon, Jeremy G., Katherine D. Lind, and Saul Kutnicki. "A Rhetorical Bestiary." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (May 27, 2017): 222–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2017.1309904>.
- Gries, Laurie E. *Still Life with Rhetoric: A New Materialist Approach for Visual Rhetorics*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2015.
- Gries, Laurie E. *Still Life with Rhetoric: A New Materialist Approach for Visual Rhetorics*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2015.
- Grochowski, Sarah. "Peace Arch Park 'a Lifeline' for Families Separated by U.S.-Canada Border Restrictions." *Vancouver Is Awesome*. November 16, 2020, sec. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Local News. <https://www.vancouverisawesome.com/coronavirus-covid-19-local-news/peace-arch-park-a-life-line-for-families-separated-by-us-canada-border-restrictions-photos-2883879>.
- Herb, Guntram. "Colonizing Visions." *Indigenous Borderlands and Border Rites* (blog), January 10, 2018. <https://sites.middlebury.edu/borderrites/border-rights/colonizing-visions/>.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Jack, Carolyn. "Restoration of Historic Haida Pole Sets New Path of Respect and Reconciliation," September 21, 2018. 2018PREM0071-001825.

[https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/news\\_releases\\_2017-2021/2018PREM0071-001825.htm](https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/news_releases_2017-2021/2018PREM0071-001825.htm).

James, Tim, and Lisa Steacy. "Cross-Border Visits at Peace Arch Park Still Frustrating Surrey Residents, Politicians." *CityNews 1130*. January 22, 2021.

<https://www.citynews1130.com/2021/01/22/peace-arch-park-covid-19-cross-border-visits/>.

Jasinski, James L. *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies*. Rhetoric & Society. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2001.

Jenkins, Jack. "The Most Heartbreaking Place In America Is Called 'Friendship Park,'" November 3, 2014. <https://thinkprogress.org/the-most-heartbreaking-place-in-america-is-called-friendship-park-ed0effeaac3a/>.

Jenkins, Virginia. *The Lawn: A History of an American Obsession*. Smithsonian Institution, 2015.

Jennewein, Chris. "California State Parks Close Parking Lots to Limit Crowds, But Remain Open." *Times of San Diego*. March 30, 2020.  
<https://timesofsandiego.com/life/2020/03/29/california-state-parks-close-parking-lots-to-limit-crowds-but-remain-open/>.

Jordan, Rob. "How Would a Border Wall Affect Wildlife?" *Stanford Earth*, July 24, 2018.  
<https://earth.stanford.edu/news/how-would-border-wall-affect-wildlife>.

Keeling, Diane M. "Feral Rhetoric: Common Sense Animals and Metaphorical Beasts." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (May 27, 2017): 229–37.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2017.1309905>.

Kinneavy, James. "Kairos in Classical and Modern Rhetorical Theory." In *Rhetoric and Kairos: Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis*, edited by Phillip Sipiora and James S. Baumlin. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.

Lalone, Megan. "Separated by the Border Closure, B.C. Residents Are Reuniting with Their American Loved Ones at Peace Arch Park." *Vancouver Is Awesome*, May 26, 2020. <https://www.vancouverisawesome.com/bc-news/bc-residents-reuniting-american-loved-ones-peace-arch-park-2380256>.

LeMesurier, Jennifer Lin. "Somatic Metaphors: Embodied Recognition of Rhetorical Opportunities." *Rhetoric Review* 33, no. 4 (October 2, 2014): 362–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07350198.2014.946868>.

"#LoveIsNotTourism - Official Website." Accessed May 9, 2021. <https://loveisnottourism.org/>.

Aristotle. *Complete Works of Aristotle, Volume 2: The Revised Oxford Translation*. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. Translated by Roberts. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. <http://muse.jhu.edu/book/64881>.

Luymes, Glenda. "COVID-19: Families Reunited as Peace Arch Provincial Park Reopens." *Vancouver Sun*. Accessed June 21, 2020. <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/covid-19-families-reunited-as-peace-arch-provincial-park-reopens>.

Macdonald, Moira. "Separated by the Pandemic, This Cross-Border Couple Got Married at Peace Arch Park." *The Seattle Times*. September 26, 2020, sec. Life. <https://www.seattletimes.com/life/separated-by-the-pandemic-this-cross-border-couple-got-married-at-peace-arch-park/>.

Malone, Kevan Q. "San Diego and Tijuana's Shared Sewage Problem Has a Long History." *Washington Post*, sec. Perspective. Accessed February 3, 2021.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/02/san-diego-tijuana-shared-sewage-problem-has-long-history/>.

Mayer, Evelyn P. *Narrating North American Borderlands*: Thomas King, Howard F. Mosher and Jim Lynch. Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2014.

<https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/27285>.

McCarthy, Grace. "B.C. Officials Scrutinize Peace Arch Park, Days before Couples Brave Snow for Valentine's Day." *The Northern Light*. Accessed February 20, 2021.

<https://www.thenorthernlight.com/stories/bc-officials-scrutinize-peace-arch-park-days-before-couples-brave-snow-for-valentines-day,16007>.

———. "What Defines Essential? A Year with a Closed Border." *The Northern Light*, March 17, 2021. <https://www.thenorthernlight.com/stories/what-defines-essential-a-year-with-a-closed-border,16166>.

McGee, Michael. "A Materialist's Conception of Rhetoric." edited by Barbara Biesecker and John Lucaites. New York, US: Peter Lang, 2009.

Mcgreavy, Bridie, Justine Wells, Jr Mchendry, and Samantha Senda-Cook. *Tracing Rhetoric and Material Life: Ecological Approaches*. Palgrave Studies in Media and Environmental Communication. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018.

Mckerrow, Raymie E. "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis." *Communication Monographs* 56, no. 2 (1989): 91–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758909390253>.

McKinnon, Sara L., Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and Robert Glenn Howard, eds. *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*. Edición: 1. Penn State University Press, 2016.

Mickey, Thomas J. *America's Romance with the English Garden*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2013.

- Middleton, Michael K., Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres. "Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions." *Western Journal of Communication* 75, no. 4 (2011): 386–406. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2011.586969>.
- Na'puti, Tiara R. "Oceanic Possibilities for Communication Studies." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 17, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 95–103. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1723802>.
- NBC 7 San Diego. "Sewage Runoff from Tijuana River Affects South County Beaches." Accessed October 7, 2020. <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/sewage-runoff-from-tijuana-affects-sd-beaches/28073/>.
- Norman, Emma S., and Karen Bakker. "Do Good Fences Make Good Neighbours? Canada–United States Transboundary Water Governance, the Boundary Waters Treaty, and Twenty-First-Century Challenges." *Water International* 40, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 199–213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2014.978973>.
- Ono, Kent A. "Borders That Travel: Maters of the Figural Border." In *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*, edited by D. Robert DeChaine. The University of Alabama Press, 2012. <http://muse.jhu.edu/book/17281>.
- Ono, Kent A., and John M. Sloop. *Shifting Borders: Rhetoric, Immigration, and California's Proposition 187. Mapping Racisms*. Philadelphia [Pa.]: Temple University Press, 2002.
- Parmar, Tarnjit. "Abbotsford Woman Petitions Province to Reopen Peace Arch Park." *CityNews*. Accessed June 23, 2020. <https://www.citynews1130.com/2020/06/22/petition-reopen-peace-arch-park/>.
- "Peace Arch Historical State Park | Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission." Accessed April 7, 2019. <https://parks.state.wa.us/562/Peace-Arch>.

- Peters, Robert, William J Ripple, Christopher Wolf, Matthew Moskwik, Gerardo Carreón-Arroyo, Gerardo Ceballos, Ana Córdova, et al. "Nature Divided, Scientists United: US–Mexico Border Wall Threatens Biodiversity and Binational Conservation." *BioScience* 68, no. 10 (October 1, 2018): 740–43. <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biy063>.
- Plec, Emily, Henry Hughes, and Jackson Stalley. "The Salmon Imperative." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (May 27, 2017): 247–56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2017.1309909>.
- Pojani, Dorina, and Dominic Stead. "Urban Planning and Design as Verbal and Visual Rhetoric." *Journal of Urban Design* 20, no. 5 (October 20, 2015): 582–614. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2015.1071653>.
- Radojewski, Christopher Mark. "The Rush–Bagot Agreement: Canada–US Relations in Transition." *American Review of Canadian Studies* 47, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 280–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2017.1370721>.
- Rael, Ronald. *Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*. Oakland, CA]: University of California Press, 2017.
- Rai, Candice. *Democracy's Lot: Rhetoric, Publics, and the Places of Invention*. Edición: 2nd ed. Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 2016.
- Relyea, Kie. "Too Many Visitors Prompts B.C. to Close Its Side of Peace Arch Park at U.S.-Canada Border." *Bellingham Herald*. June 19, 2020, sec. Coronavirus. <https://www.bellinghamherald.com/news/coronavirus/article243637672.html>.

- Rivers, Nathaniel A. "Deep Ambivalence and Wild Objects: Toward a Strange Environmental Rhetoric." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 45, no. 5 (October 20, 2015): 420–40.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2015.1086491>.
- Robinson, Matt. "Officials Say Border Loophole Hangout Spot 'concerning,' Warn of Penalties." *vancouver.sun*, November 15, 2020. <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/officials-say-border-loophole-hangout-spot-concerning-warn-of-penalties>.
- Rostagni, Augusto. "A New Chapter in the History Of Rhetoric and Sophistry." In *Rhetoric and Kairos: Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis*, edited by Phillip Sipiora and James S. Baumlin. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.
- Ryan, John Charles. "Towards a Corporeal Aesthetics of Plants: Ethnographies of Embodied Appreciation along the Wildflower Trail." *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 24, no. 4 (August 1, 2010): 543–57.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2010.489721>.
- Säre, Margit. "Non-Governmental Organizations and Cross-Border Environmental Cooperation: Salish Sea and Baltic Sea Regions." *Border Policy Research Institute Publications*, January 1, 2020. [https://cedar.wvu.edu/bpri\\_publications/118](https://cedar.wvu.edu/bpri_publications/118).
- Schneider, Haley. "Deliberative Topoi and the Pull of the Future: Bridging Disparate Visions of Dresden Elbe Valley." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 49, no. 5 (October 20, 2019): 495–516.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2019.1671985>.
- SeaDoc Society. "About the Salish Sea." Accessed October 30, 2020.  
<https://www.seadocsociety.org/about-the-salish-sea>.
- Seegert, Natasha. "Play of Sniffication: Coyotes Sing in the Margins." *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 47, no. 2 (2014): 158–78. <https://doi.org/10.5325/philrhhet.47.2.0158>.

Selzer, Jack. "Habeas Corpus." In *Rhetorical Bodies*, edited by Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley.

Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.

———. "Habeas Corpus : An Introduction." In *Rhetorical Bodies*, edited by Jack Selzer and

Sharon Crowley. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.

Senda-Cook, Samantha, Michael K. Middleton, and Danielle Endres. "Rhetorical Cartographies

(Counter)Mapping Urban Spaces." In *Field Rhetoric: Ethnography, Ecology and*

*Engagement in the Places of Persuasion.*, edited by Candice Rai and Carolina Gottschalk,

95–119. Alabama, USA: University of Alabama Press, 2018.

<http://www.uapress.ua.edu/product/Field-Rhetoric,6957.aspx>.

Shiple, Julia. "Why Is There a 'Slash' in the Trees at the U.S.-Canada Border?" *Seven Days*.

Accessed October 19, 2020. [https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/why-is-there-a-slash-](https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/why-is-there-a-slash-in-the-trees-at-the-us-canada-border/Content?oid=2266575)

[in-the-trees-at-the-us-canada-border/Content?oid=2266575](https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/why-is-there-a-slash-in-the-trees-at-the-us-canada-border/Content?oid=2266575).

Tarin, Carlos. "Fronteras Toxicas: Towards a Borderland Ecological Consciousnes." In *This*

*Bridge We Call Communication: Anzaldúan Approaches to Theory, Method, and Praxis*,

edited by Leandra Hinojosa Hernández and Robert Gutierrez-Perez, 31–51. Lanham:

Lexington Books, 2019.

Tarin, Carlos. "Fronteras Toxicas: Towards a Borderland Ecological Consciousnes." In *This*

*Bridge We Call Communication: Anzaldúan Approaches to Theory, Method, and Praxis*,

edited by Leandra Hinojosa Hernández and Robert Gutierrez-Perez, 213–26. Lanham:

Lexington Books, 2019.

Throgmorton, James A. "Planning as Persuasive Storytelling in a Global-Scale Web of

Relationships." *Planning Theory* 2, no. 2 (July 1, 2003): 125–51.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/14730952030022003>.

Tindale, Christopher W. "Introduction: Of Place and Time." *Argumentation* 34, no. 1 (March 1, 2020): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10503-019-09492-0>.

Ting, Helen. "Social Construction of Nation—A Theoretical Exploration." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 14, no. 3 (August 20, 2008): 453–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537110802301418>.

Urry, Amelia. "Why the Border Wall Is a Problem For Birds, Despite Their Wings." *Audubon*, April 10, 2019. <https://www.audubon.org/news/why-border-wall-problem-birds-despite-their-wings>.

Wells, Justine, Bridie McGreavy, Samantha Senda-Cook, and George McHendry. "Introduction: Rhetorics' Ecologies." In *Tracing Rhetoric and Material Life: Ecological Approaches*, edited by Bridie McGreavy, Justine Wells, George Mchendry, and Samantha Senda-Cook. *Palgrave Studies in Media and Environmental Communication*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018.

Wells, Justine, Bridie McGreavy, Samantha Senda-Cook, and George McHendry. "Introduction: Rhetorics' Ecologies." In *Tracing Rhetoric and Material Life: Ecological Approaches*, edited by Bridie McGreavy, Justine Wells, George Mchendry, and Samantha Senda-Cook. *Palgrave Studies in Media and Environmental Communication*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018.

"WHO Characterizes COVID-19 as a Pandemic." World Health Organization, March 11, 2020. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>.

Zussman, Richard. "Liberal MLAs Call on B.C., Washington State to Close Peace Arch Park amid Increase in Tents." Global News, February 10, 2021.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7632194/liberal-mlas-peace-arch-park-coronavirus-loophole/>.