

PSYCHES AND CITIES OF HOSPITALITY IN  
AN ERA OF FORCED MIGRATION:  
THE SHADOWS OF SLAVERY AND CONQUEST  
ON THE “IMMIGRATION” DEBATE

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The borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons, and are often defended beyond reason or necessity.

—Edward Said<sup>1</sup>

THE BORDER WORK OF DEPTH AND LIBERATION  
PSYCHOLOGIES

As students of depth psychologies, we learn to question what is on the other side of walls, knowing that we are apt to surround ourselves with what is comfortable and familiar. We are tutored to see through our certainties and accustomed metaphors to the ideas and commitments that forge them.<sup>2</sup> Depth psychologies ask us to forsake inhabiting a frozen center, cut off from relations to what and

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who is different from us. They teach us to move to the edges where we can greet what has been repressed and marginalized by a too-narrow ego-consciousness. Attention to unbidden thoughts, images, dreams, emotions, and bodily feelings is at the core of depth psychological methods, which all seek to establish dialogue with what is customarily extruded or passively ignored.<sup>3</sup> This border work has been largely imagined as intrapsychic and interpersonal processes that are facilitated by the atmosphere of trust within psychotherapeutic practices and their multiple methods of welcoming psyche through free association, movement, bodywork, dreams, active imagination, and conversation that is released from the bounds of conventional discourse. The ghosts of psychic life have most often been seen as resulting from familial difficulties, traumatic and otherwise, as well as issuing from struggles with the archetypal dominants of human existence.

Euro-American depth psychologies are being bridged with psychologies of liberation that have arisen in the Southern hemisphere and also in the United States at the margins through both cultural work and community psychology.<sup>4</sup> These approaches understand individual psychological suffering, and human misery more generally, in the context of social, political, and economic arrangements that generate and normalize such misery. In particular, they address collective trauma, imposed by a wide range of injustices. In the small group and community approaches nourished by various psychologies of liberation, border work is done at the interface of psyche and culture. It is intrapsychic and interpersonal, occurring both within and at the borders between. It turns to history to critically understand present misconstruals.

These psychologies have been my teachers, as I stand in witness to a devastating humanitarian crisis that is misrepresented as a debate on immigration and national security.

Perhaps the problem might be better understood as a humanitarian crisis. Can the mass migration and displacement of people from their homelands at a rate of 800,000 people a year be understood as anything else? Unknown numbers of people have died trekking through the extreme conditions of the Arizona and New Mexico deserts. Towns are being depopulated and ways of life lost in rural Mexico. Fathers feel forced to leave their families in their best attempt to provide for their kids. Everyday, boatloads

of people arrive on our shores after miserable journeys at sea in deplorable conditions. As a humanitarian crisis, the solution could involve the UN or the Organization of American States. But these bodies do not have roles in the immigration frame, so they have no place in the “immigration debate.” Framing this as just an “immigration problem” prevents us from penetrating deeper into the issue.<sup>5</sup>

In moving more deeply into the issue, I travel paths I have learned from the intersections of depth and liberation psychologies. This humanitarian crisis of unprecedented levels of forced migration requires us to move downward through the deep intrapsychic level until we emerge into the familial, community, cultural, and collective. We must also proceed downward from the level of the global to national politics, to city government, to community and neighborhood sites of reconciliation, all the while holding tight to how psyche shows up in these regions. When there is an impasse at one level of organization, such as national politics, it can help to shift work to another level, in this case, to that of the city, town, and community. It is not that one abandons the levels above (national and global), or those below (interpersonal, familial, and intrapsychic). Rather one works to understand their interpenetration. Would we be building a wall between our neighbors and us—between Mexico and the United States—if we did not live within psychic walls? Do not these psychic divisions reinscribe social, economic, and ethnic divides? Does not border crossing in one domain work to undermine the pernicious stability of walls in interrelated domains? Can the opening and sustaining of dialogue at the borders of our experience help to create sacred sites of reconciliation where walls now stand?

#### WALLS BEGET WALLS

Standing on the San Diego side of the triple wall that is being constructed between the United States and Mexico, you see a vast collection of land-moving equipment; half the bright yellow Caterpillar equipment familiar to us from the toy trucks of childhood, the other half bearing drab-colored U.S. army camouflage. The presence of this partnership between a private corporation and the military is predictable, given the explosion of transnational corporations' collusion with national government policies and the armies that police them.

This border area with our southernmost neighbor is the most highly militarized border on earth between a nation and a peaceful neighbor nation. To see the wall going up is a heartache. What a legacy!<sup>6</sup>

At the border near Tijuana, the National Guard is busy filling in deep canyons in order to stretch the wall across the uneven terrain. These actions displace tons of earth that then drain into nearby estuaries choking off their life. To accomplish this, the United States Department of Homeland Security—a misbegotten progeny of our government’s misguided response to 9/11—has been given the authority to breach all environmental protections carefully crafted over decades to protect the fragile wetlands and ecology near Tijuana/San Diego.<sup>7</sup> The wall extends into the Pacific Ocean, as though having the God-given right to part the sea into separate national domains (see Fig. 1).

Our United States’ “Berlin Wall” has affinity with other such walls. Standing on the parched earth looking south toward Tijuana across the wall, for a moment you might think you are in Israel or the Palestinian occupied territories. The same kind of bright yellow equipment constructed the Israeli separation wall that is strangling the Palestinian settlements and refugee camps. Caterpillar is the same



Fig 1: U.S./Mexico Wall at the Pacific Ocean, Tijuana/SanDiego

company that actually created machinery to specifically demolish houses in Palestine. This demolition is a terrorizing response to whole communities where only a few are responsible for violence.<sup>8</sup> The day I first saw these machines, my stomach turned. You think of comparable equipment building homes and workplaces. Instead, precisely such equipment is being used to efficiently shatter houses, homes where families have enjoyed holidays and weddings, where they have cradled their children and mourned their loved ones, while under occupation.

Walls beget walls. The U.S./Mexico wall has echoes in the increased militarization of Mexico’s southern border with Guatemala—a region where Central American refugees flee lives of untenable poverty and lack of hope for a better future for their families. As you drive in southern Mexico, you are stopped multiple times by police, who look inside the car to see if you look like a refugee. What is this “look?” Tired, poor, dirty, frightened, dark-skinned, indigenous? These internal checkpoints echo northward as well—in Denver and Chicago, Raleigh and Charlotte—places deep within the U.S., where we too have established unpredictable, spontaneous, and moving internal checkpoints that suddenly upset the lives of poor people on their way to work, while picking up their children at school, or sitting in an evening classroom studying English after working two shifts.

Throughout history, cities surrounded themselves with walls to prevent military seizures and occupation by foreign forces. These new walls have a different meaning. The siege that is being protected against is not military; it is not occupation by foreign rulers. It is a siege of people with unfulfilled hunger and desires, of peoples displaced by forces larger than themselves.

Recently in San Diego, I spoke with a Border Patrol spokesperson, now an employee of the Department of Homeland Security. He said that he hosts many governmental delegations from around the world that are interested in learning how to create the kind of wall we are busily constructing: the kind with thousands of ground sensors so that the carefulness of your steps do not matter; the kind with satellite surveillance so you cannot hide; the kind with infrared sensors so that your very body heat betrays you; the kind that is said to require a workforce of 28,000 border agents. Thai government officials came recently to the Border Patrol office in the San Diego sector to see what they could learn. European Union (EU) ministry representatives also

came to consult on the building of walls in North Africa to stem the tide of African migration due to genocides, the AIDS epidemic, corrupt and violent governments, and starvation.<sup>9</sup> In an age of unprecedented forced migrations, Americans are getting quite a worldwide reputation for wall building. We have made a huge investment in our southern border: 7.3 billion dollars since 1993.<sup>10</sup>

How initially ironic it sounds linking such walls with freedom: an age of walls is part of an age of “free” trade. But then it begins to make sense. Walls do not impede the passing of computer parts, assembled electronics, toxic waste, or people of means and power. They do not even stop the passage of poor and desperate people. Since the beginning of the construction of the U.S./Mexico wall in 1994, which coincided with the passage of NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, the flow of migration has not stopped; migratory routes have shifted into the Arizona desert. Walls also beget subterranean tunnels, perilous alternate pathways, subjugation, and fear; walls call for expensive “experts” to guide migrants across the border, drug traffickers who are no strangers to brutality. Over 4000 people have died in the desert trying to cross into the United States in the last twelve years. They died from extremes of heat, cold, and violence. Before 1994 there were so few deaths that there were not even yearly records kept.

So if the wall does not keep out poor migrants—newly re-labeled “potential terrorists” — what does it do? American border policies aim to create a world of low wages and high profits, says Maria Jimenez,<sup>11</sup> a border activist in Texas. The wall and border surveillance achieve two goals. On the one hand, the poor who are immobilized in their country of origin become willing laborers in assembly plants, working for extremely low wages. On the other hand, those who do succeed in crossing, without legal residence, are then available to work at the lowest wages with the fewest benefits and rights.

Walls not only reproduce themselves between nations in an era of massive displacement of impoverished people due to genocide, civil war, and transnational capitalism’s lifting of protective tariffs and environmental regulations. Such walls also snake through our communities, dividing children into poor and affluent schools, separating neighborhoods into those beset by violence and drugs and those walled off by private security. These walls reinforce daily divisions between neighbors with different skin colors, mother tongues, and

economic levels. Walls in our social environments insidiously construct psychic walls, and fill psychic space with exclusionary thinking, fear of difference, and polarized divisions. In a tragic circle, such psychological wall-making begets further distance, ensuring stereotyping, and yet more divisions. Walls give some psyches a sense of superiority, entitlement, privilege, and pride, while crushing others with fear, self-doubt, angry frustration, fatalism, and pernicious feelings of inferiority.<sup>12</sup> If followed backwards, in America all such walls pass back into history, to the separation of families on the slave block, to children drinking at separate water fountains. They snake back to the multiple divides of reservations where the displaced and dispossessed survivors of America’s mass genocide of those indigenous to the land were corralled.

The present immigration debate sadly does not even put before citizens whether or not a wall should be built on our 1,950-mile-long border. On a national, governmental level, the wall is under way and will be funded for completion. May we begin to imagine a day when our children and grandchildren gather at what used to be the site of the wall and learn how greed erupted, creating an open wound at our southern border; *una herida abierta*, where Gloria Anzaldúa says, “the Third World grates against the First and bleeds.”<sup>13</sup> May they learn how corporate and national rights were asserted before and against human rights to shelter, food, education, and healthcare.

The question we must pose to ourselves is whether we will continue to be bystanders to America’s many walls or commit ourselves to their dismantling, to moving across established divides, creating transborder relationships at all levels of our existence: psychic, interpersonal, community, intercommunity, national, international, even interspecies, and between ourselves and the natural and built environments.

Chicano playwright Cabranes-Grant says, “We are each transportable borders, enacting a separation or challenging it. The border is not a distinct geographical location.”<sup>14</sup> Play director Joseph Velasco expands on this point, saying that “[b]orders are not crossed just when one crosses from one country into another—but rather, anytime one enters a new territory. Ethnicity, age, place, language, gender, and social borders are crossed everyday.”<sup>15</sup> Daily, we enact the maintenance and construction of borders and walls between others and ourselves, all the while sectioning off our intrapsychic experience in corresponding ways.

## LIMIT SITUATIONS, LIMIT ACTS

In our lives we come up against what Alvaro Vieira Pinto and Paulo Freire call “limit-situations,” situations that block our freedom, and which are often initially experienced by us as fetters and insurmountable obstacles. Refusing to accept the usual idea of “limit,” Pinto says that limit-situations can be seen, not as “impassable boundaries where possibilities end, but the real boundaries where all possibilities begin”: they are not “the frontier which separates being from nothingness, but the frontier which separates being from being more.”<sup>16</sup> We can think of the border situations within ourselves, in our communities, and our nation as limit-situations. It is these that we need to dream actively about, transgressing them first in imagination and then in reality.

The U.S.-Mexico border as a limit-situation not only creates misery, but inspires transgression and creativity. Those who embrace such limit-situations engage in what Freire calls the vocation of humanization, the call to move from being objects of a culture by which we are passively used to standing in opposition to dehumanizing processes, taking on



Fig. 2: Border Dynamics—Alberto Morackis and Guadalupe Serrano. The sculpture is the property of the University of Arizona and is a permanent exhibit on their main campus in Tucson, Arizona.

the task of creating and claiming a different future. The border as a limit-situation is a potential site of making the world anew through our relationships, and through art and activism (see Fig. 2).

Aurora Levins Morales says, “Borders are generally established in order to exercise control, and when we center our attention on the historical empowerment of the oppressed, we inevitably swim rivers, lift barbed wire and violate ‘no trespassing signs.’”<sup>17</sup> The transgression of borders requires particular kinds of selves who grasp the power to create with others, to be part of seeing through and then constructing the world anew. They are selves who search for the history of the borders they encounter, refusing to take them as necessary facts. They inquire into the history of their communities in order to know something of the present and to be able to imagine a different future. Selves-in-solidarity-with-others can imagine doorways where walls now stand.

## COMMUNITIES OF HOSPITALITY

In the Old Testament, Moses is asked by God to create six cities of refuge: three in Canaan and three in Jordan. “These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them ...” (Numbers, 35: 15). In an address to the International Parliament of Writers, the late Jacques Derrida traced the idea of “open cities” or refuge cities, those places where migrants can seek sanctuary from the pressures of persecution, immigration, and exile. In European medieval tradition, according to Derrida, the city had a certain degree of sovereignty by which it could determine its laws of hospitality. The International Parliament of Writers, including Derrida, became interested in these laws of hospitality as migrants and asylum seekers were either turned away from borders or, once inside, treated as having inferior status due to their lack of papers or legal status.

In Europe and the United States, some cities are seeking to revive the idea of sovereignty for cities around issues of hospitality. In protest against harsh national immigration and asylum policies, they are seeking to establish themselves as cities of refuge or hospitality. In the United States, over 60 cities have adopted referenda to create more hospitable conditions in their cities for migrants. In particular, they have moved not to adopt national initiatives that would require local police to be involved in the enforcement of immigration laws, and in particular not to ask about the immigration status of those who require

police assistance, medical care, or social services (unless federally mandated for particular programs).<sup>18</sup> This could be seen as a small step toward a postnational consciousness, linked to the exercise of the postcolonial imagination (see Fig. 3). At the same time, other cities have moved to greater inhospitality. Under the Counterterrorism Act, local jurisdictions can ask the Attorney General to deputize police as immigration agents. This means that many injured and sick people will not seek care in hospitals and clinics for fear of deportation. It means domestic abuse and neighborhood crime will be under-reported for fear that police will ask for papers and turn those without them over to immigration authorities. It increases an atmosphere of intimidation, harassment, punitiveness, and gross inhospitality.

As of this writing in the summer of 2007, national politics has ground to a halt on immigration reform, while the national government has augmented surveillance of immigrant communities and stepped up



Fig. 3: “Dream of Taniperla Canyon,” on the Mexican side of the U.S./Mexico Wall, Ambos Nogales, Mexico. This mural was originally painted by Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico. It was destroyed by paramilitary forces. Subcomandante Marcos called for it to be repainted throughout the world. It is a depiction of the indigenous communities in Chiapas being able to live in peace, after 500 years of assault by colonialism and neoliberalism.

workplace and home raids that result in deportations and a darkened atmosphere of intimidation and fear. At this political moment, we may be more effective in establishing a humane atmosphere in and through our cities and towns than struggling exclusively on the national front. Many U.S. and European cities are working to extend the sovereignty and autonomy of their cities and towns to enhance justice for immigrants, while interlinking with others nationally and transnationally who are also working to imagine a world without walls. Derrida suggests that new cities of refuge could reorient the politics of the nation: “If we look to the city, rather than to the state, it is because we have given up hope that the state might create a new image for the city.”<sup>19</sup>

This kind of initiative—a politics of hospitality—is an exemplar of a different political strategy, one that is more laterally than vertically oriented, one that decenters centralized power. When the politics of the nation-state loses its ethical compass, it is crucial that it be countered by a combination of initiatives from civil society at both the local and the transnational levels. When a nation goes far astray in the practice of humane conduct—attacking civilian hospitals, torturing detainees, holding people without charges and without recourse to self-defense, preemptively beginning wars—then its citizens must assert and keep alive an empathic concern for our neighbors, particularly those suffering the effect of national mispolicies. Our cities could become more like autonomous zones that differentiate themselves from national agendas driven by corporate greed, thereby recovering the ethic of hospitality that we long for, and in so doing restoring our humanity. A community that aspires to such hospitality requires psychologies that study divides and creates opportunities for meeting across them.

Recent adoption of the Kyoto Protocol by several hundred U.S. mayors has shown that cities can at serious times adopt a more visionary stance than that of the national government. At the federal level, the Bush administration rejected regulation of the greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming on two counts: it had not yet been scientifically proven that humans contribute to the greenhouse effect, and further control of manufacturers’ emissions would jeopardize their competitiveness on the world market.

Unfortunately, towns and cities that claim some sovereignty can also contribute to intensifying exclusionary walls within their legal limits. In the absence of national consensus regarding immigration

policy, many towns and cities have passed laws that commit landlords to checking the immigration status of potential occupants, that make English the official language, that punish business owners who hire workers without documents, and that sanction police assistance in matters of immigration control, contributing to forced deportations and the splitting of families. For instance, a man in Winchester, Connecticut was pulled over for not wearing a seatbelt. When it was discovered he had no driver's license, the police called immigration officials who then began deportation proceedings.<sup>20</sup>

What is at stake psychologically and ethically? Derrida argues that culture itself is hospitality; that the ethical is hospitality. If this is so, we are but a shadow of our lost humanity in the face of walls between our neighbors and us. He argues that the foreigner or the stranger puts us in question, poses a question to us. The foreigner through his or her very being poses the question: What kind of neighbor are we? The stranger's presence holds a mirror to us, showing us our own face of disregard, of scorn, of fear, of interest or ignorance, of hospitality. He stresses that the essence of hospitality is its unconditional nature. It does not ask the stranger to speak our language, to visit only on our terms, to be only the wealthy. "Absolute hospitality,"<sup>21</sup> he says,

requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.), but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names. The law of absolute hospitality commands a break with hospitality by right ....<sup>22</sup>

While political policy cannot be directly drawn from such an unconditional proposition, ought not the spirit of it be somewhere visible in the way we live our relations and craft our laws? Divided by nationality, are we not united, as Kant pointed out, by being citizens of the world?

Derrida underscores a psychological fact: we are only truly at home with ourselves when we are open to receiving the other. Is a home a home when it keeps the stranger out? The paradox he is working to unveil is that without welcoming the stranger, the host is a hostage in his own home. While the host is inside, without inviting the guest, he

is on the outside of the inside. Only the invited guest can host him into the inside of his own home.

Derrida urges us:

Let us say yes *to who or what turns up*, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any *identification* whether or not it has to do with a foreigner, an immigrant, an invited guest, or an unexpected visitor, whether or not the new arrival is the citizen of another country—a human, animal, or divine creature, a living or dead thing, male or female.<sup>23</sup>

Lest we drift toward an Anglo-Judeo-Protestant sense of righteousness, we must heed a caution regarding the language of hospitality. If we use it, as I am doing, we must hold tight to the shadow of this way of naming the situation, a shadow that introduces crucial and critical complexity. If one people invades and occupies another people's land, is it hospitality if the descendants of the original inhabitants are allowed to come back to visit or to live? If one people enjoys wealth and high educational and health standards partly from the profits gained from the exploitation of another people, is it hospitality when these benefits are shared? When people work very hard for small reward, while others profit grossly, when they are separated from their loved ones and their community, when they have risked their lives to provide for their families, when they suffer the loneliness of separation from their homeland, their families, and communities, should they be dependent on hospitality instead of enjoying the rights of refuge? As an idea, hospitality is a starting point for relationship. In time, its naïveté will need to be abandoned. From one vantage point on hospitality, a beneficent person gifts to another person who is less fortunate. From another vantage point, the one who could offer hospitality but does not, symbolically loses his own home. The one who might be hospitable needs the stranger in order to come home to him or herself, to live within his or her humanity and to reclaim his or her own shadow. Gloria Anzaldúa advises Anglos thus: "Admit that Mexico is your double, that she exists in the shadow of this country, that we are irrevocably tied to her. Gringo, accept the doppelganger in your psyche. By taking back your shadow the intracultural split will heal."<sup>24</sup> We are in need of a different set of ways of being with one another.

“BY TAKING BACK YOUR SHADOW THE INTRACULTURAL  
SPLIT WILL HEAL”

Our borders could be lived as sacred places, as places for creativity and regeneration, as sites for hybridity, where we can imagine and bring into being what is most desired. Such border-work requires explorations of shadow in our local communities, its workplaces, neighborhood community centers, its houses of worship, and our town halls. What is the American shadow that falls across the U.S./Mexico border with such a violent harshness? Is it in part the shadow caused by cultural amnesia regarding slavery, genocide, and the forced displacement of Mexicans after the U.S. conquest of Mexican land?

Last month I re-visited Maclovio Rojas, a small community outside of Tijuana, founded in 1988 by a group of visionary women from Oaxaca. They imagined a better life for their families and organized an autonomous community to promote education, healthcare, and local self-governance. Their leaders are now in hiding, following periods of imprisonment by the Mexican government. Their plan for such a community is not part of the master plan for the “free” trade zone. Standing on the hill above this *colonia’s* simple homes, I looked to the northeast and saw a glittering sea of metal roofs of 5000 tractor truck trailers, ready to load the products from the *maquiladores* and take them to market. On the southwest I saw a brand new ghetto under construction, rows of new housing for *maquiladora* workers. Here each family will be confined to a small room, next to hundreds of other families, each in their equally diminutive quarters. I did not see any playgrounds or *zocalos*, central town plazas for strolling and meeting.

These dwellings—springing up by the thousands—are called “pigeon houses”<sup>25</sup> (see Fig. 4). They are a new kind of slave quarters. Jimenez compares the Border Patrol—and the vigilantes that have grown up around it—to the slave patrols before the Civil War. She says their function is to reinforce immobility—and to bring about the conditions that, by ensuring low wages, maximize profits.<sup>26</sup> Human rights activists at the border understand workplace conditions as a contemporary extension of the hacienda plantation system, where workers were virtually indentured and were seen not as human beings worthy of care and compassion but as labor commodities. Jaime Cota, from CITTAC, a human and labor rights organization in Baja

California, Mexico, is assisting workers in defending their rights as human beings. In one case against a *maquiladore* manufacturer, Cota is representing workers who have suffered the amputation of fingers and hands by metal cutting machines. The machine sensors built to protect workers from being cut were intentionally turned off to force workers to move at a quicker pace out of fear of the amputation of fingers and hands. This graphic example shows how human lives are reduced to a mere labor commodity as the greed for profit replaces human regard. Mexico’s history of racism bleeds into that of the United States.

We know about contemporary American slave quarters: the camps for migrant agricultural workers, the city slums that breed horizontal violence among young people, our prisons ... especially our prisons. The structure of slavery has not left our bloodstream. Like a renegade gene, it keeps replicating itself, pulling in different ethnic groups to satisfy its cancerous voraciousness for profit. Africans, Irish, Italians, Chinese, Japanese, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Haitians, Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Sudanese, Mexicans. The evil triplets that Martin Luther King, Jr. warned



Fig. 4: “Pigeon houses” being built around manufacturing plants near Tijuana, Mexico.



us about—racism, militarism, and capitalism—have shown up at the U.S./Mexico border, and they are busy doing their work.

It is impossible to talk with migrants without documents without being reminded of slavery and indentured servitude. Fleeing poverty, civil war, political repression and torture, or genocide, migrants describe how they work multiple menial jobs, often below minimum wage, without workplace safeguards, environmental standards, and workers' representation through unions. While contributing their labor to the common good and part of their earnings to our social security pools, they and their children will not enjoy the benefits of these pools. They are accused of exhausting local resources for health, policing, and education. In a just world the federal government would transfer these social security contributions to the municipalities where the majority of migrants live, taking the pressure off local budgets. Migrants live in the shadows of our cities, surrendering a voice for justice out of fear of being deported and unable to support their families. As DuBois said of African-Americans before them, they are "shut out from their world by a vast veil" of racism.<sup>27</sup>

How ironic the far Right's discourse on immigration from Mexico sounds when placed in a historical context. "Intruders," "foreigners," "parasites," "illegals," "carriers of disease." The historical amnesia is shocking. California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah were the northern part of Mexico 160 years ago. Twenty-five thousand Mexicans died in an effort to retain their national lands. Upon defeat, 100,000 Mexicans became trapped within the new borders of the United States, their families separated by the forcible imposition of a new national border, many forcibly displaced from their land, others lynched and subjected to mob violence.<sup>28</sup> Mexicans say, "we did not cross the border, the border crossed us."

How do we engage the shadows of slavery and conquest? In this brief space I can only offer several formal and informal public community initiatives. These are suggestive of multiple available means of bringing history's legacy in the present into the conversation, so that it can be addressed and redressed.

#### CULTURAL AMNESIA AND THE RECOVERY OF HISTORICAL MEMORY

In the wake of apartheid and the violence, injustice, and racism that sustained it, a process of truth and reconciliation was created in South Africa that has spawned similar efforts worldwide to heal the gap between official histories and the experiences of those excluded from these histories. In 2004, the first Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in the United States was begun in Greensboro, North Carolina.<sup>29</sup> It sought to expose and heal an intercommunity wound that occurred in 1979, a symptom of a larger structure of racial injustice flowing from the times of slavery in the United States. In 1979, during a demonstration, White Klan and neo-Nazi members killed five Black members of the Communist Workers Party, and injured 10 others. Aware of the potential for violence at the rally, the police decided to be absent, colluding with the violence that erupted. As many White city officials distanced themselves from the event and never inquired into the underlying issues, these issues continued to fester and create enmity between White and Black communities. The TRC proceedings offered public space for many to come forward from various sectors of the community to give testimony regarding what happened in 1979. The commissioners hoped that increased public acknowledgment would lead to institutional reforms and citizen engagement and transformation. Recommendations that arose from the TRC included the establishment of living wages, anti-racism training, citizen review committees to ensure police accountability, and the creation of a community justice center.

There were representative present at the TRC proceedings from Tulsa, New Orleans, Selma, Rosewood, and Montgomery. Attempts at reconciliation seed other such attempts. They expose the walls that exist in communities, inquire into their history and function, address grievous wrongs that have been hidden, and begin a process of imagining and embodying multiple means of reparations for the past, reparations that create connective tissue between historically alienated communities for the future.

The Slave Reparations Movement is a similar effort under way in the United States.<sup>30</sup> The debates that have been opened through consideration of reparations for slavery address publicly not only the

246-year history of slavery in America, but also the legacy of slavery for the continuing economic servitude of many African-Americans. Historians and economists working in this area are clear that in general while Blacks work harder than Whites, they are paid less. Despite affirmative action initiatives, the economic capital base of Whites that was built on the labor of slaves—particularly through textile manufacturing, the building of the railroads, tobacco production, and the insurance industry, where slaves were treated as material property—continues to give Whites an unfair advantage. This automatic inheritance of economic privilege by Whites happens regardless of their families' length of stay in the U.S., because it is an inheritance based on skin color. Freed slaves were never given the compensation of 40 acres and a mule promised by Sherman as part of Reconstruction. The facts that they were kept out of neighborhoods that accrued value, denied mortgages, excluded from the Homestead Act of 1862, and that economically prosperous Black areas were destroyed as in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921 have led to continuing equity inequality. Historian Manning Marable and others have called for a national commission whose aims would be the erasure of racialized deficits through the provision of such things as equitable healthcare and schools for Blacks, as well as more access by Blacks to managerial roles.

Many community arts projects also seek to bring extruded aspects of history into current awareness. The Confluence Project, Maya Lin's memorials along the Columbia River to mark the meetings of Lewis and Clark's group with Native American groups is one example. Another is the Ford Foundation's Animating Democracy Projects, which included museum displays of furniture and finery of the colonial period along with the telling signs of slavery—such as shackles and whipping posts—which supported such elegance.<sup>31</sup> Community murals and art, such as the ones presented in this article, educate new generations about histories of injustices suffered and communities' dreams of a more just future.

These movements bring into dialogue aspects of American history many would prefer not to know. For Whites, not knowing or not remembering leads to a false sense of entitlement, an unquestioning acceptance of economic privilege which distorts their image of themselves, their labors, and rights. Keeping the past at bay allows privilege to continue to accrue, balancing economic gain with soul loss.

#### SITES OF RECONCILIATION

In part, the past can be metabolized and the future created differently by informal exchanges in the present between individuals from groups that have been historically divided. In most towns and cities, meetings between migrants and citizens happen only on top of economic and ethnic divides. Immigrants without documents are not free to speak of their difficult experiences on account of their fear of racism and deportation. There is a collusion of silence that keeps Whites ignorant of the challenges and heartaches borne by their fellow townspeople.

To create sites of reconciliation requires insight into the need for them and sustained effort to build bridges across separations established over a long history. The learning of each others' languages is a first step toward more personal communication. Neighborhoods, workplaces, adult education centers, and religious congregations can set up *intercambios*, where pairs of people divide the time between speaking in one mother tongue and then the other, all the while sharing the bits and pieces of daily life. Beyond language acquisition is the creation of relationships freed from the usual divisions. Knowing how unsafe migrants feel in the larger community, citizens can offer their support to community centers where migrants go for information about housing and healthcare; they can help with immigration issues; and they can assist in the learning of English.

Such intercultural meetings spawn relationships that can transcend delimited normative notions of hospitality by opening "spaces and forms of exchange that *allow* for mutual obligation, engagement, and civic participation."<sup>32</sup> Such spaces are also part of American history, echoing from the beginning of the settlement house movement of Jane Addams' Hull House days in Chicago.

#### DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY AND THE BORDER WORK OF RECONCILIATION

In contrast to ego psychology and to developmental schemas that advocate firm ego boundaries, the development of mastery and control, increasing differentiation from others, independence, and autonomy, Jungian psychology counsels us to distrust the ego and decenter ourselves to a more observant place within (the non-ego center). We

are directed to approach the borders of our experience, inviting and then engaging dialogically with what has been excluded. As we can see from the example I am foregrounding in this essay, it is where borders become unduly firm and frozen, where walls are built, that projections, disassociations, historical and cultural amnesia, ignorance, and the failure of empathic imagination thrive. Rhetoric and stereotypical thinking follow; rationalizations abound. Paradoxically, walls do not quell fears, they reinscribe them, promoting increased feelings of vulnerability and paranoia.

Jungian and archetypal psychologies direct us to a different way of being in borderlands, a way that entails engaging a multiplicity of perspectives by making sure that dialogue is practiced where monologue has prevailed. Dialogue facilitates a withdrawal of projections and stereotypes as well as the development of compassion and empathic imagination. It allows us to see what we have identified with and why. To be involved in such dis-identification is to become more aware, more able to see the other's point of view. Here psychic hospitality intersects with community hospitality: both require efforts at reconciliation with what has been cast aside into unconsciousness. Through this intersection, those privileged by race, ethnicity, and class can discover ways to counter the soul loss engendered by cultural amnesia, an amnesia about the misappropriation of the labor of poor people of color and the withholding from them of recognition, witness, and hospitality.

Work in the borderlands requires stepping out of our comfort zone, into a relationship with what is unfamiliar, allowing it to challenge what we have taken for granted. The work of individuation requires that we clarify where we live within ossifying borders. These are sites of potential creativity.<sup>33</sup> They are places where the regeneration of community, of ecology, and of the Self are one and the same. They are not only within us; they are everywhere around us.

The psychological work of individuation can be re-framed as border work, as becoming more skillful at building hybrid spaces of connection. Such border work supplements the downward movement at stake in traditional soul work with a deepening into the depth of "between" spaces. At the borders between the familiar and the unfamiliar, self and other, connective tissue needs to grow from formal and informal efforts at dialogue.

Depth psychologically-minded people are needed at the community and intercommunity levels to participate in and help host such work. They are also needed as we attempt to understand the intrapsychic defenses that are mobilized as we try to know ourselves within a wider historical and cultural context.

The theme of this issue of the journal is "American Politics and the Soul." Sadly, the issues I have raised are not limited to America; they re-appear in all communities where the rivers and rivulets of 100 million<sup>34</sup> displaced people worldwide struggle to re-establish their lives in this era of unprecedented forced migration. We will need to address the psychology of unbridled greed more effectively, studying its dynamics in colonialism and their present morph in transnational capitalism. From 1994-2004, the number of international migrants doubled; 50% of these are children. Sebastião Salgado, the Brazilian photographer committed to documenting these tragic migrations, says that they are unparalleled in human history, presenting profound challenges to our most basic notions of national, cultural, and community citizenship.<sup>35</sup> They are also challenges to the psyche, and much depends on how we respond to them as depth psychologists.

#### NOTES

1. Edward Said, quoted in C. Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 119.

2. James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).

3. Mary Watkins, "Depth Psychology and the Liberation of Being," in Roger Brooke, ed., *Pathways into the Jungian World: Phenomenology and Analytical Psychology* (London: Routledge, 2000).

4. Mary Watkins, "Seeding Liberation: A Dialogue Between Depth Psychology and Liberation Psychology," in Dennis Slattery and Lionel Corbett, eds., *Depth Psychology: Meditations in the Field* (Einsiedeln, SW: Daimon Verlag, 2000); Helene Lorenz and Mary Watkins, "Silenced Knowings, Forgotten Springs: Paths to Healing in the Wake of Colonialism," *Radical Psychology: A Journal of Psychology, Politics, and Radicalism*, <http://radpsy.york.ca> (2000); Helene Lorenz and Mary

Watkins, "Individuation, Seeing-Through, and Liberation: Depth Psychology and Culture," *Quadrant*, XXXIII; Mary Watkins and Helene Lorenz, *Toward Psychologies of Liberation* (London/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Lawrence Alschuler, *The Psychopolitics of Liberation: Political Consciousness from a Jungian Perspective* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Geoffrey Nelson and Isaac Prilleltensky, *Community Psychology: In Pursuit of Liberation and Well-Being* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

5. George Lakoff and Sam Ferguson, "The Framing of Immigration," (2006), 2-3, [www.rockridgeinstitute.org/research/rockridge/immigration](http://www.rockridgeinstitute.org/research/rockridge/immigration)

6. Over the past six years the delegations I have been part of to the U.S./Mexico border regions of San Diego/Tijuana and Douglas/Ambos Nogales (Arizona/Mexico) have been hosted by three extraordinary organizations committed to public education about the border: the American Friends Service Committee ([www.afsc.org/pacificsw/sandiego.htm](http://www.afsc.org/pacificsw/sandiego.htm)), Borderlinks ([www.borderlinks.org/](http://www.borderlinks.org/)), and Global Exchange ([www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org)).

7. Personal communication with Mike McCoy, Tijuana National Estuarine Research Preserve.

8. Israel Committee Against House Demolition, [www.icahd.org/eng](http://www.icahd.org/eng); [www.catdestroyshomes.org](http://www.catdestroyshomes.org)

9. In 2002, the European Union (EU) ministerial body decided to try to stem the tide of African migration into Europe not by building a wall on their own shore, but inside North Africa. They built a 200-mile wall in Morocco to frustrate desperate migrants. Of the 45,000 migrants crossing from Africa to Europe since 2005, at least 3000 have died in the sea. C. Rajah, "Disturbing Similarities: Migration's Common Features from Africa to Mexico," *The Quarterly Newsletter of Global Exchange*, 70 (2007): 6.

10. Christian Ramirez, American Friends Service Committee, talk to human rights delegation from Global Exchange, April 30, 2006.

11. Maria Jimenez, "The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border, Part I: Border Communities Respond to Militarization," [www.inmotionmagazine.com/mj1.html](http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/mj1.html) (1998): 25.

12. The Southern Poverty Law Center, which monitors hate crimes, is struck by the explosion of hate groups and alarming events around "immigration" issues. For instance, during a Cinco de Mayo celebration

in 2006 in a Tucson park an armed anti-immigration extremist, Roy Warden, led demonstrators proclaiming: "Listen up, Mexican invaders. We will not permit you, the ignorant, the savage, the unwashed, to overrun us, as happened in Rome . . . Land must be paid for in blood. If any invader tries to take this land from us we will wash this land and nurture our soil with oceans of their blood!" (Southern Poverty Law Center Report, 2006, 36, 2, p. 1).

13. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), p. 3.

14. Cabranes-Grant, in Joseph Velasco, Director's Notes for Bordertown and *La Barda* (The Wall), Ensemble Theater Company, March 12-13, 2004, Santa Barbara, CA.

15. Joseph Velasco, Director's Notes for Bordertown and *La Barda* (The Wall), Ensemble Theater Company, March 12-13, 2004, Santa Barbara, CA.

16. Quoted in Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1989), p. 89.

17. Aurora Levins Morales, *Medicine Stories: History, Culture, and the Politics of Integrity* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998), p. 38.

18. See [http://www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/LocalLaw/tbl\\_local\\_enfrcmnt\\_0704.pdf](http://www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/LocalLaw/tbl_local_enfrcmnt_0704.pdf)

19. Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. Mark Dooley & M. Hughes (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 6.

20. Mishkin, "Activists Lobby for Immigrants," *Yale Daily News*, 10/04/06.

21. The "guest" worker proposals before the Senate and Congress bear no relation to hospitality, despite their name. These proposals give all power to employers regarding the coming and going of employees within strict time limits set by the federal government. Workers must accept whatever work conditions they find themselves in or else they must leave the U.S. The "guest" proposals separate families, deny migrants sufficient long-term security to enable them to develop roots in their communities, and mitigate against the dignity of being able to claim basic human rights in the workplace. A child of the *bracero* program of the 1950s, the guest worker program would more aptly be named the "exploited worker" program.

22. Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 25.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

24. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, p. 384.

25. Without studying the effect of “free” trade agreements on Mexican farmers, it is difficult to understand the mass migration such housing marks. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) undermined the price of corn in Mexico. The price had been kept steady by the Mexican government as a basic welfare precaution, enabling the poorest to have food provisions. NAFTA required the Mexican government to stop their intervention in prices, while allowing the U.S. government to continue its subsidies to farmers. This resulted in a dumping of U.S. corn on the Mexican market that put thousands of small farmers out of business and contributed to the growing hunger of millions. U.S. policy through NAFTA substantially contributed to the very exodus of Mexicans many now complain about. This fact is little known or remembered when migrants are treated as illegal invaders. “Free” trade turns out to be freer for the few than for the many, disrupting local economies for the sake of unconscionable private profit by the few. Critics have argued standards for “fair” trade, to provide sufficient wages to allow people to work in their home communities.

26. Maria Jimenez, see note 11.

27. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903).

28. For some sense of the scope of racist violence, it is estimated that between 1848 and 1928 at least 597 Mexicans were lynched. William Carrigan, “The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928,” *Journal of Social History* (Winter 2003).

29. Pat Clark, “Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Seeking Truth, Working for Reconciliation,” One by One Conference, November 14, 2006, Riverdale, NY. See [www.greensborotrc.org](http://www.greensborotrc.org)

30. John Eisler, “Slave Reparations: The Final Passage,” CrabTree Pictures (2004).

31. Fred Wilson, “Mining the Museum,” Baltimore Historical Society. See “Animating democracy: The Artistic Imagination as a Force in Civic Dialogue,” 1999. <http://www.artsusa.org/animatingdemocracy/pdf/full.pdf>

32. Heidrun Friesen and Sandro Mezzadra, “Hospitality and Transnational Migration in Europe and the Mediterranean Middle East and North Africa,” (2007): 4. [http://www.iue.it/RSCAS/Research/Mediterranean/mrm2007/pdf/WS15\\_MRM2007.pdf](http://www.iue.it/RSCAS/Research/Mediterranean/mrm2007/pdf/WS15_MRM2007.pdf)

33. In the community and ecological fieldwork and research portion of the M.A./Ph.D Depth Psychology Program at Pacifica Graduate Institute, which I coordinate, we work with the idea that each of us is called to different borderlands based on our life experiences. We invite students to show up at the border(s) given to them. Through engaged fieldwork and research, students learn about the multiple viewpoints that comprise the border region, studying how it became culturally, historically, and archetypally constructed as a border, and attuning themselves to the images, dreams, metaphors, and visions maintaining and mitigating against various kinds of divisions.

34. Exhibition notes, Sebastião Salgado, “Exodus,” Center for Documentary Arts, Salt Lake City, November 2005.

35. *Ibid.*