Mariana Fernandez Mora

Introduction

Sleepless

### "I will build a great, great wall on our southern border." Donald J. Trump

One night in November 2016, I found myself laying in bed without being able to sleep, sweaty hands, rolling from one side to the other, hunted by the idea that the next president the United States could be Donald Trump, a businessman and TV personality born in

New York City, but more than that a man that is

not shy in his position and prejudice against

certain racial groups and women. It wasn't really surprising that during his campaign one of the main pledges was to build a wall along the frontier between Mexico and the US, although it sounded crazy and unrealistic, this project represented everything he's campaign stood for, and used the prejudice and fear of millions of US Americans against each

His proposal of a continuous wall along the Mexico-US border came at a time when generalized fear out of uncertain, unpredictable and confusing times started to grow around the world. Climate change, terrorism, and the consequent migration waves have brought our societies into a sense of rapid change and instability which translated into a state of weariness.

We are in constant wait for the next big event that will shake our lives.

Immigration, as it happens, is one of the phenomena that create more instability in the general minds, the idea of foreign unknown people, cultures, habits, invading the safe known territory that is called home, seems like an imminent threat and source of conflict. Yet it is immigrants that have lift economies, built countries and that contribute to richer and more diverse societies.

It is impossible to imagine the modern world

without immigration, most American countries were built by immigrants, European travelers that settled in the newly found continent. I am myself an immigrant and the product of migration. As a Mexican, my racial identity has been formed by several waves of migration that have shaped the country I was born into, so I became curious about it and a few months ago and took a DNA test hoping to find out where my genes came from. The result although not surprising in its diversity, made me wonder about the way I identified myself and how others identified me. I'he results showed that 1 am 60% Native American mixed with Spanish, 20% Irish, Scottish and Welsh, 18% Central European and a mysterious 2% Nigerian, diversity is in my culture and in my

Growing up in Mexico City, one of the biggest and most diverse in the world, I was constantly in contact with people from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds, and even though as a society and as a country we do have severe problems of discrimination and inequality, somehow diversity is seen as the norm, because it is virtually impossible to track and classify each other by race, culture or religion. The history of the Americas is one of a constant influx of migrants from all over the world, Europe, Asia, Africa, and this is reflected in every aspect of our culture and DNA.

As a Mexican, but also as a migrant, the idea of this wall came to be a big statement that emphasized the notion of Mexico being a second grade nation, a country of outsiders even when at home. A wall as it happens implied that there were an inside and an outside and everything within was worth protecting against the dangers of the out, disregarding and devaluating the richness that everything on the outside has.

As time passed and more and more statements were issued, Trump became president and demanded that Mexico pay the costs of the construction of The Wall, he banned for a period of time any Muslim tourists or new coming migrants after the Paris attacks and solidified his position against immigration, as a way of restoring old time "American greatness".

In a country like mine, shaped by countless incoming and outgoing migration waves, I couldn't help but wonder what kind of impact this would have, more than the construction itself and the politics around it, the idea of a plan like this, reminded me of the reductive way in which Mexicans are perceived, and how this shapes not only the national identity but also the individual ones.

This invisible structure became a reality in the minds of millions of people, not only Mexicans or US Americans, but around the world, the idea of a project like this resurrected the fears and memories of the Berlin Wall, the Israel-Palestine conflict, and even reminded of the Great Wall of China. And not only because of the nature of the building, but because it addressed topics of discrimination, exclusion, violence, immigration, and borders, freedom of movement, all topics that are too well known in a time were more and more people are being forced

to abandon their home countries or chose to do

so, in the pursuit for a better life, a better

But even though the project was not built yet, the wall seemed to take shape, not by means of construction but out of the collective perception of it, I started to wonder how a smilingly imaginary object had such a power over us, and how could we address it and challenge it as an idea, as an invisible object with very visible consequences.

future, and new beginnings.

About the invisible

Cortazar, Hopscotch, 1963.

"But what is memory if not the language of feeling, a dictionary of faces and days and smells which repeat themselves like the verbs and adjectives in a speech, sneaking in behind the thing itself, into the pure present, making us sad or teaching us vicariously..." Julio

When talking about The Wall we can't avoid the fact that it's something that is not there yet, it doesn't have a shape, it hasn't been built, nevertheless we refer to it as if it was, and more important, we discuss it and create scenarios for it's happening to be. We give it shape in the common understanding of its concept and meaning.

Often in daily life, we refer to things that we cannot see or give a unified shape to, like love, time, pain, space. And not because we can't give them shape or form it means that they are not real or that they cease to exist.

Space, for example, can have significantly different interpretations, the word itself can refer us to multiple meanings depending on the context that it is used, and if we reduce it to a specific field of study like is architecture, we also find ourselves wondering about the extent to which space exists, and therefore all the things contained or present in it.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, Space can be defined as:

The dimensions of height, depth, and width

within which all things exist and move. 'the work gives the sense of a journey in space It can also be a continuous area or expanse which

is free, available, or unoccupied. 'a table took up much of the space'

Or the freedom to live, think, and develop in a way that suits one. 'a person needing her own space'

Let's say space is the territory that we exist

in, the geographical boundaries measured by height depth and width, our context, the physical environment that contains us. Without space we wouldn't exist, our bodies are understood in reference to everything that surrounds us and we are able to acknowledge ourselves because of what we see, in reference to it. We understand that we are ourselves and not others because of the constant interactions with things and people that are not us, defining and creating a kind of edge that establishes those boundaries, reinforcing what is "us" and what is "other".

When building, architecture serves as a reflection of our culture and time, helps us shape and understand the space we inhabit, it serves as a testimonial for the events around

And because we are bounded to our cultural and individual perspectives on the understanding of space and the world in general, our interpretations and the way in which we shape our world is too. As human beings we have learned to modify our surroundings trough building, this gave us protection from the natural elements and shelter from animals and other human groups. And as societies grew, so did the need for building, towns became cities and cities unified to form

Architecture became not only a way to conque

space but a way of expression for the people that dwells in it, and therefore a way to read the events that made it happen. When walking around in human settlements whether they belong to the modern world or not, we can read the built space as a guide to the ideals/ideas that shaped it, and to the communities that thought them. Cities, as well as towns and villages, can be read as the text of the cultures that inhabit them, the bigger they are, the more complex the interactions and the text become, and so do the messages embedded in them.

As individuals as well as communities we depend on the interactions that happen within them to redefine what shapes us, and so do our built environments. Cities, as well as people, base their development on the constant reshaping of their identities.

And as time goes by and experiences, memories, and sentiment are bound to certain spaces, they acquire an increased value that goes beyond any idea of shelter or functionality, they start to hold a bigger meaning as they become containers for our accumulated human experiences.

It is at this point that we start to understand them less as just buildings or sites and more as

# A sense of place

The idea of Place was described by the American-Chinese geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, as "locations in which people have long memories reaching back beyond the indelible impressions of their own individual childhoods to the lores of bygone generations"2.

Places are a more significant way to refer to sites in space where our memories, experiences, and emotions exist, and therefore they become meaningful in our lives, but it is only after time has passed, and with distance that we can fully become aware of their value and meaning, their sense of place.

Time is a really important element in the creation of place because it is through repeated experience that we are able to go further the material and create a deep emotional value that goes beyond the location or their function. Therefore we can only fully appreciate them once time has passed and trough memory we look back realizing their intangible worth.

When talking about a sense of place Tuan makes a clear statement, only human beings can have a Sense of Place. It is through our senses that we begin to establish deeper emotional and mnemonic references attached to them, we can have a sense of place without attempting any explicit explanation. We can know a place subconsciously trough touch and remembered fragrances, without having an image attached to it, and with time these connections acquire a profound and deeper

When talking about places, Tuan also mentions what he calls "public symbols," places that attach their meaning to the eye, whereas a sense

of place or "fields of care" are known only after prolonged experience. The first ones command attention and even awe, while the second evokes memory, so then, most places are both "public symbols" as well as "fields of care" in different degrees.

The city, for example, is a public national symbol as well as a field of care, and so is the neighborhood, they are attached to the experiences and feelings of the people that live it daily but still remain as places of public interest. They represent small worlds, centers of power and meaning relative to their context. Monuments, artworks, buildings, and cities are places because they organize space into centers of meaning, they become centers of value and significance given trough repeated human experience over time.

like a piece of art put on a pedestal, they become the center of the space around it, not the other way around. In the same way, as art does, architecture becomes a way into which human feeling is made visible, they become the "embodiment of life and culture"3. It is in this way that built elements in space

can become the holders of greater significance

Buildings, for example, become small worlds, and

than the one its function gives them, they become the accumulation of sentiment and meaning, holders of hope and dreams, but also pain and suffering, they become history itself and the testimony of it. For Mexicans as well as for large part of South America and the world for that matters, the U.S. border with Mexico is a lot more than just a frontier between two countries, it is a place of great political, cultural and human

significance. It establishes the position of a

political, economic and military power like the

United States over immigration policies and its

superiority over the neighbors of the South, but

it also sustains the idea of the American dream

and everything that comes with it. Artists, as well as politicians and activists, have addressed its heavily charged meaning and history for decades, questioning it's being and the violence around it, but I believe that for many others the border wall becomes a place of greater significance not because of it's symbolic historical or political value, but because it concentrates a big emotional charge

any concrete structure.

that comes from personal stories, forming a

collective memory that gets materialized beyond

A few years ago thanks to the work of my father as a journalist, I came across the story of the migrant mothers, women from Central America looking and marching for their lost children who disappeared in their quest for the North American border. Every year they gather and start a journey parting from the Mexico-Guatemala frontier, tracing the way their relatives might have taken on their way to the US, and reminding everyone who comes across them the names and faces of their loved ones.

For them the frontier represents way more than just a border, it is a place of hope, hope that their children might be alive, and it gives a sense of purpose and perseverance.

This yearly pilgrimage is a way to seek justice, to shine light on a problematic that has been largely ignored by the Mexican government, to search for clues, but moreover, to keep the memory of their loved ones alive. Without a grave, the hope is still alive, but there is no resolution, the grieving process cannot be concluded and in some cases, it cannot even be started. Once they reach the US frontier, the border itself becomes a kind of unintentional the memory of their children is still alive.

And Mexicans are not the only ones in the pursuit of the American Dream, every year thousands of people mainly from Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras, cross the Mexican border and start a journey that for many will end in kidnapping, extortion, human trafficking, organ theft or rape.

Like the story of the Migrant Mothers, there are many more accounts that talk about the tragedy of those who never made it across the border, but also million stories more of those who did. The story of migration doesn't end in the frontier, it reaches over it, and the story of The Wall doesn't start with a building nor it ends with

The Wall is more than an abstract concept, represents the accumulation of personal and collective histories, the dreams and hopes of the many, the pain and suffering of others. And in order to understand what this object means and what it represents, is important to understand its history.

### A little bit of history

"Beyond myself, somewhere, I wait for my arrival." Octavio Paz, Collected Poems, 1987.

It is almost impossible to think about The Wall without thinking about the frontier itself, and of course its history. Before the modern border lines were settled, a big part of what we know now as the United States used to belong to the Empire of New Spain, until in 1821 Mexico won its independence.

The first border line was traced between 1849 and 1855 shortly after the end of the U.S.-Mexican war, where Mexico lost a big part of its territory, leaving Texas as one of the last states to be annexed to the US.

Later on after the last Spanish colonies were gone, Texas remained as part of the newly founded country of Mexico, but after new Anglo Americans outgrew the Mexican population, Texas too was declared independent and annexed to the United States of America.

From then on, slowly the Mexican elites that

remained were bought or pushed out by the new and growing Anglo American developers, leaving behind a mixed working-class population that couldn't go back but didn't feel welcomed anymore either. On top of that, during the Porfiriato in Mexico in the 20s, many struggling working-class Mexicans found themselves with no more choice but to move to Texas, despite racism, the prospects across the border were more inviting than to struggle in the aftermath of the revolution in 1910, and more and more immigrants started to arrive, searching for better opportunities, as a fast-growing manufacturing industry started to take shape in the border state. This new kind of immigrants

were welcomed as cheaper and compliant labor. Because of this, Texas saw a rapid demographic growth fueled mainly by Mexicans, who took low paying jobs that were often temporary and put in danger their lives. And even though Anglo Americans started to appreciate the availability of cheap Mexican labor in the state, they attempted to contain them, and a systematic process of racial segregation began. Literacy tests in English were imposed on both recent immigrants and longtime residents who lacked fluency in the language. Real state regulators established "Anglo American residential districts" and barred the purchase of land by all but the most wealthy of Texan-Mexicans.

periphery of cities and towns, they found not only housing but community support. Segregation contributed to the creation of an ethnically bound and enforceable locality. Forcing people into selected spaces created segregated communities but also local subjects. As socio-cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai suggests, segregation involves the "inscription of locality onto bodies" where local subjects become "...actors who properly belong to a situated community of kin, neighbors, friends, and enemies  $^{\prime\prime}{}^4$  . And within segregation, the value of community was found.

But as Mexican neighborhoods were pushed to the

The differences between Texan-Mexicans and recent Mexican immigrants were dismissed, both groups were pushed into the same category, considered as the same, and as part of a process of containing bodies, new identities were formed and were bound to a historically specific context. A tight sense of community was formed out of necessity, segregation contained them, but trough kinship and cultural continuity similarities were embraced rather than rejected, and the Mexican-US American was born. At the same time Anglo Americans started to

welcome the large working class of Mexican immigrant population as cheap labor and advertised it to prospective industrialist through the nation, but always keeping them at distance, "The city segregated the Mexicans but employed them, loved their culture but disliked them, In essence, it needed their labor, but rejected their presence"5.

The prospect of economic growth kept the influx of migrants, yet the idea of a culturally mixed society didn't appeal to Anglo Americans, who didn't felt identified with the newcomers and saw them more as intruding strangers.

And as immigration increased, Mexican-US American groups too were threatened by a new wave of Mexican immigrants, whom they feared would take their jobs, and on the face of this threat, some tried to put distance by supporting anti-immigration laws, others started to identify themselves as Spanish or US Americans, searching for connections with the founders of the city, as a way of detaching themselves from the newcomers. This new migrants not only represented the fear of losing a job, but also the idea of a low-class citizen, the foreigner, the stranger, the other.

It is at this time that the idea of the cheap, low working class Mexican started to be formed in the common mind of the Anglo American, and for the communities with Mexican heritage, it threatened the social position that they had worked so hard to get, and at the same time it posed a reminder of the past that they had fought to leave behind, it identified them with it.

Mexican traditions and customs that were local in this area started to be seen as foreign, and as belonging to the working classes. Where once Mexican traditions were local, they began to be ewed more and more as evotic and were re by the Anglo American ones, leaving them not only as second-grade citizens but also with a racial stigma. The word Mexican turned into an adjective that referred to race, one that didn't talk about the territory someone was born into, but rather skin color and class position.

Cities in Texas like San Antonio profited from this exoticism and advertised the city as a place where to experience authentic Mexican culture in the safety of the United States, without the hassle and danger of crossing the border but with all the benefits. Mexican communities started to form a system of constructed identity, one shaped specifically for the tourist view.

"United States Tourists became fascinated with traditional Mexican culture in the late twenties and early thirties, as the Mexican government began actively pursuing the international tourist dollar and the art industry discovered Mexican indigenous art." (Miller, 2014) 261.

Anglo Americans and Europeans alike were

fascinated by the idea of experiencing an ancient civilization in a modern time. Governments from both countries encouraged this view for its economic benefit, and while in the US was promoted as a safer yet authentic version of the Mexican culture, Mexico too advertised itself as a destination where ancient cultures could be explored with all the advantages of modernity. Local inhabitants were forced to conform to this new interpretation of their culture and heritage, and from both sides, Mexican communities adapted their cultural display to please the eye and fulfill the expectations of the visitor in search for an economical reward. This not only contributed to depict the Mexican as exotic but also to alienate and objectify everything belonging to

This segregation and re-identification of Mexican culture served to solidify the bonds between communities on the US side and to alienate the Mexican ones, by enhancing, spreading and imposing by times this tourist like view.

The Mexican as a neighboring country became a source of exotic attraction from the distance, while as a migrant it became an intruder, that was welcomed as long as it provided cheap labor and was kept out of sight. And as numbers grew and keeping them out of the inner city became more and more difficult, Anglo Americans felt their cities were being invaded by dangerous foreigners, and Mexican Americans started to identify them as the source of their economic struggle and social segregation.

And it is within this context that the border started to be perceived as the symbol of the American dream, and the source of all that threatens it.

## The immigrant other

Perhaps it is in this context that the borderland remains as one of the true manifestations of history and culture, both

Mexican and US American, a testimony of a long history of segregation, division and migration The line separating both countries shaped more than just a frontier, it formed identities, it formed the immigrant. The Wall as an object and help us impose order or create a sense of as an idea emphasizes the history of the border security through some kind of understanding or and by default, the history of the immigrant.

Without the border, there is no frontier, no immigrant, no danger. And the idea of the dangerousness of the

immigrant, I believe lies not in the fact that they surge as a new working class of cheap labor that threatens the livelihood of the ones above them, but rather in the fact that it confronts the safety of the known, of home, with too much of the other, of the unfamiliar.

tourism arrive to a given country, the inhabitants usually complain about a sense of dilution of the authenticity of their city, town or culture, but they still welcome them because of the economic benefit. Economics then become one big important aspect of it, an expat, for example, is not an immigrant

because it is unique in its kind, and brings the

prospect of knowledge and economic growth. But

the immigrant is not a tourist or an expat it is

the notion of a lower class citizens from a lower

class country arriving to a better one, looking

A tourist is welcomed because it is a temporary

visitor, and even then when big masses of

to benefit from it with nothing to contribute. While in reality waves of migration always bring economic benefits to the countries that welcome them, cultural diversity results in accumulation of knowledge, technological improvements and the

diffusion of new ideas and perspectives.

Yet unfamiliarity in numbers can give the sense of one's identity being diluted, instead of being seen as an enrichment, the idea of the immigrant then, is seen as a treat to the familiar, to home, and in face of rapid change one can fear it and have the impression of being an outsider in ones country.

But immigrants too become fearful in the face of change, being different makes them stand out, to be obvious, to be present, to be observed, it makes their position vulnerable and at the same time, it makes them being seen as a threat. They become the misplaced, the odd ones out since the context does not explain their being.

The immigrant often denies the society that gave him birth as a way of putting distance between their past and their present, but they are also rejected in the ones they arrive to. The immigrant is in a constant search, a constant becoming, a never-ending travel. Rejected and rejecting what he has left behind and what he has come to, feared and fearful, ever melancholic for a past that wants to be forgotten and for a future that never arrives.

Fearful and feared, the immigrant is seen as the other, the stranger, the unfamiliar, by both the country he arrives to and the one he has left behind. He no longer is part of his motherland, yet he doesn't belong to its new context.

He lives in the in-between, on the road, never arriving. Looking, searching for a place to belong, somewhere to call home, and realizing it doesn't belong anywhere, it just belongs to himself.

### Chapter three

"The other does not exist: this is rational faith, the incurable belief of human reason. Identity = reality, as if in the end, everything must necessarily and absolutely be one and the same. But the other refuses to disappear: it subsists, it persists: it is the hard bone on which reason breaks its teeth. Abel Martín, with a poetic faith as human as rational faith, believed in the other, in 'the essential Heterogeneity of being" in what might be called the incurable otherness from which oneness must always suffer." Antonio Machado

The immigrant as the other becomes a way to concentrate the fears of society into one simple point, to explain them and give them direction making them easier to rationalize and therefore to eradicate or impose control over them.

This fear of the other then is usually linked to sentiments of nationalism and extremism, rapid change and a sense of instability can cause societies to search for ways to identify their fears and canalize their anxiety, and then a search for familiarity and safety leads to a rejection of anything unknown.

But fear is not always bad and it is very necessary for survival, we become alert and vigilant, ready to react in case of immediate threat. In human beings, feelings of fear and it sources appear and disappear at different stages of life. As we grow old we learn to distinguish between what imposes a direct threat or not, to evaluate and calculate risk, to manage feelings of anxiety and alarm, and over time we suppress unpleasant memories of past experiences with fear in order to simplify our encounters with

But what is fear? According to the Cambridge Dictionary fear is understood as:

An unpleasant emotion or thought that you have when you are frightened or worried by something dangerous, painful, or bad that is happening or might happen.

Fear is a complex feeling, and to begin to

understand it we could say that there are two parts in which we can divide it; Alarm and Anxiety. The first one is the feeling that we get when we are in presence of immediate danger and our first instinct is to run or to fight the threat. Anxiety, on the other hand, is the feeling of anticipation of danger, we feel anxious when we anticipate a danger that cannot be pinpointed immediately, yet we react and become alert, cautious and vigilant, we look for possible threats in order to predict them.

Basic and primal fears like fear of darkness, natural phenomenons, and heights are something that we can all relate to, most animals, as well as human beings, avoid dark places and heights hurricanes, earthquakes and violent storms tend to provoke fear amongst those who witness them, and all of them I believe, appeal to the biggest threat and source of fear, death.

Above all, we fear losing our lives, and therefore we fear everything that threatens

Chaos and everything unknown can become a source of threat or danger, we fear what we cannot control or predict and, we create systems to

We build mental as well as physical shelters to protect us both from the dangers of the world as well as the ones from the mind. Children's fairy tales, legends, myths, religion and philosophical systems are all ways in which we find comfort when facing phenomenons that we cannot explain or predict, we dwell in them reaching for answers, protecting ourselves from the wondering mind and its consequent anxiety.

that shelter our bodies from the outside, the house, the field, the town, the city and the nation, are all in different scales containers of organized chaos, and as such, they are a constant reminder of our own fragility. Built spaces are human boundaries placed on

earth, human-made limits in an attempt to keep

In a similar way we build structures, fortresses

harmful forces away. Garden fences, city walls, dikes, borders, radar fences are all boundaries set to protect us from threats as small as the neighbor's dog, and as big as the ocean or a neighboring country. In the same way that we create and search explanations for unpredictable or

incomprehensible phenomenons, like ghosts, storms, earthquakes or death, we build physical elements to keep tangible threats away, in direct reaction and prediction to them, and If our need for building is driven by the need to protect ourselves, then we could say that our landscapes are shaped around the things we fear.

"Every human construction -whether mental or material - is a component in a landscape of fear because it exists to contain chaos." (Tuan 1979).

Cities are a reflection of the cultures that gave them birth, built landscapes reflect our fears, and in the same way a rail on a bridge reflects our fear of falling, or the dikes along the Dutch sea the fear of water, the border walls, security controls and surveillance systems reflect our fear of the other.

In the context of the border, immigrants become the other, people from the other side, other cultures, other countries, and The Wall and its borderline become a representation, a materialization of people's fear of migration and therefore change.

A fear that finds it's roots in the expectation of the unknown and its consequent anxiety, rapid change and exposure to other cultures in one's country, can lead to a loss of a sense of familiarity, and The Other more than being a welcomed novelty starts to be perceived as

An invasive otherness in the territory of comfort and home not only makes the familiar feel estranged, but it puts in question its survival.

And even though we find strength in numbers and social organizations, and cultural diversity enriches our societies, other human beings remain our biggest source of fear. Beyond the uncontrollable and unpredictable natural elements, or the existential questions of our own being, other people, strangers, outsiders, are more frequently identified as a threat, and therefore they are feared.

Yet by acting together we have mastered our environments, we've applied systems of control and construction in order to make the world a more stable place where we feel at home.

In the past, societies understood this human world as a small environment of safety surrounded by threats. The walls of a house or around cities provided both physical and magical protection against human enemies, demons, violent weather, and disease, forces of chaos, dissolution, and death. Natural events, disease, and inexplicable human behavior were attributed to forces of evil acting against human order and with the intent of harm. Witches, monsters, spells, angry and vengeful gods, bad luck, all were external forces in which humankind explained everything that couldn't be

Walls have always been created to keep what we fear at bay, in the medieval era they were built around cities to protect them from nature and the dangers from the outside. Being open and exposed, not only to the natural elements, but also to other societies, individuals, and animals, was a risk to the population, but also the social order that was imposed within it.

Fearful forces existed outside of the city walls, in the wilderness. Witches and heretics lived in the mountains, monsters and beasts inhabited forests. People who didn't conform to the given social rules and order were cast outside the perimeter, and those who questioned or risked it from within were brutally and publicly punished, creating fear and a constant reminder of what might happen if you didn't

People feared those who imposed control, in

order to have a sense of control and comfort over what they feared. Subjects feared the outsides of the wall, but also the structures of hierarchy that sustained it. This system eventually collapsed and started turning into what we know today as institutions of incarceration, seclusion, and segregation. Authorities used to subdue crowds by deliberately creating an atmosphere of fear around the systems of law and justice, trough public punishment and execution they kept in place the hierarchy and order of authority. But like an inside-out sock, suddenly societies transitioned from surrounding themselves with walls to protect from the outside, into incarcerating that what they feared.

Around the 15th century as plagues and diseases like leper hunted the lives of the many, hospitals surged as a way to treat, but mainly to contain those who were infected away from the common citizens and especially the elites in power. Asylums were opened for the mentally diseased or for those who didn't fit into the societal order, warehouses monitored the poor and eventually, prisons were established for the

Walls became a way of secluding threats and not a perimeter to protect the inside. Instead of surrounding ourselves by walls we now surround what we fear, allowing us to live in "freedom". Nature is kept in ecological reserves and zoos, while prisons, hospitals, and ghettos contain other human beings that threaten society.

expanded, the fear of it was reduced. Our modern world is very effective against the forces of nature, and even though hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods still manage to create damage, these events are perceived as exceptional and are no longer viewed as evil. In order to control something we needed to understand it fist, so we applied knowledge into systems that would allow us to control to a certain degree, the forces that endangered us. Illness is treated with medicine, crime is fought with law and justice, and other threatening human groups have the military. But one thing systems of human control have in common, is the fact that they all rely on segregation and containment for them to work. Hospitals, schools, military bases and prisons bare an astonishing resemblance between each

As human power over nature increased and

but also the most common source of fear, and as the nature of our fears changes over time as we grow old, society's fears do so as well, we become more complex and sophisticated and so do our fears. Experiences over time shape our comprehension of fear as individuals as well as societies, cities, and nations, and it is within the city-the biggest symbol of human progress and triumph over nature-that some of the eldest fears remain. People remain the greatest threat to each other, and malevolence or evil intent is no longer attributed to nature or supernatural events, but only to humans.

Other people are our greatest source of security

To rulers as well as governments people in groups are potentially dangerous and as forces of nature, they must be controlled. Although human beings create order and society by cooperating between each other, the mere fact of concentrating in the same place allows for situations that can result in violence and unpredictable consequences, thus they must be

A common method used to discipline children is

to teach them fear, including the fear of

frightful imaginary figures as monsters, witches, and ghosts. Governments as adults do with kids, create and direct fears with the direct purpose of establishing more systems of control that will guaranty predictable behaviors in its populations. As in the medieval times, the fear of punishment from the government and at the same time of those fears created by them started shaping societies in which freedom seemed to be covered under a veil of control. We want to create a sense of security into the

unknown, so we establish systems, institutions, and strategies that help us do it. Incarceration and segregation reduce the exposure to those variables of chaos, it reduces them into a confined space where they can exist under supervised conditions. In contemporary times, the big urban metropolis highlights the fear of urban conflict, of

strangers, fear of public disorder, fear of the poor, fear of immigrants. Like in the medieval era the idea that the periphery is inhabited by threatening and frightening populations, endangering the order of security, translates both in the physical orders of cities as well as in domestic and international policies. Ghettos, favelas, and low-income neighborhoods remain in the periphery, the further from the center, the more dangerous and poor the area becomes. During periods of peace it seems that society

has a more flexible attitude towards the idea of 'we' and 'they,' it tends to minimize them, thus 'we' is no longer a web of close and unbreakable bonds nor 'they' a permanent group of outsiders. But it is under stressful situations, under the pose of treat that strong feelings of hatred fear, anxiety, and envy, can easily underline and magnify the slightest difference in culture, race or ideologies. It polarizes opinions into those of good and evil, safe or dangerous. Strangers become the enemy and then suddenly it is justified to act against them in any way possible to defend ourselves from harm, without any bad conscience or regret into the actions taken against the dangerous other.

People start to look for the safety of community and numbers, for groups to identify with in order to have a sense of familiarity and comfort, of protection. And even though this is nor per se a bad thing, it is when you are not confronted and exposed to a diversity of opinions, cultures, and points of view, that your own starts to be perceived as the only one that matters while at the same time being constantly reinforced by those around you who share it.

Diversity in opinion, race, culture, background or gender, it is as important for the individual as it is for the city town or country. Our built environments are shaped and reshaped as our societies grow, they serve as a reflection of our times. And as the world becomes more and more accessible and diverse, it is only natural that such drastic changes generate feelings of fear and anxiety which are then reflected on how we

Change is inevitable, it is part of life and it is understandable that at times we become anxious about our own fragility. But if we manage to look past the anxiousness that can overwhelm us from time to time, we will find ourselves curious for the unknown, for what inhabits the forests, for the other, other things, other lands, and we will also find richness in its discovery. It might seem that we are in the constant seek of stability and order, but we are bound to the need for experience and for that, we must accept that order is just ephemeral.

The Wall comes at a time when it generates no surprise, it seems like a natural reaction to fearful and threatening times, and for some, a good solution. Yet we must confront ourselves with the dimension of it, with its history and with the message that sends to the world. We've become numb to this kind of actions, used to hearing news of war and disaster, but as the world becomes more and more a place of humankind and not one of countries or nations, we must all take responsibility for the kind of messages we give space to, and for the way our built environments become a reflection of who we are

# The dangerous other

As much as everything we built is a reaction to our fears in seek of protection and control, there is much space for us to question this and challenge it in the way we build our world. Once we've become confronted with it, the responsibility of action lies on us, and in the way we reshape this landscapes of fear.

conflict between two countries, of the fear of one another. And they stand still challenging time and change as if their message was as absolute and unchallengeable as its structure. And as much as this is an event bound to a certain territory, the issues it addresses and

the message it sends regards every one of us and our freedom of movement and identification. As mentioned before, thanks to technological advancements our world is becoming more and more reachable, accessible and in a way, smaller. Distances have become shorter and time seems to

radar borders, as well as the newly built

prototypes in San Diego are a testament of a

But imagine this would happen in your country, we can see ourselves as equals.

1. Merriam-Webster dictionary. (2017). Space.

perspective of experience, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. P. 407, 409. 3. Tuan, Yi-Fu. (1977). Space and Place: The

4. Appadurai, Arjun. (1996). Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. P.

American Middle Class: San Antonio, 1929-1941. College Station: Texas

Local. New York: Routledge Publishers. P. 261.

Appadurai, Arjun. (1996). Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization . Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

12 Maps. Penguin Books.

United States and Mexico, 1920-1935 . Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

the birth of the prison. Vintage Books.

Mexican Americans , Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity . Berkeley: University of

Mexican Presence in San Antonio's Market Square: Capital, Tourism and die Creation of

Merriam-Webster dictionary. (2017). Space. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/spac

Participation. Sternberg Press

Landscapes Res. http://lrlr.landscapeonline.de/lrlr-2009-3.

Oxford University Press. Smith. Michael P. and Bender Thomas. (2001).

York: Routledge Publishers. Steckelberg, C. Alcantara, T. Jan. (2017,

Tuan, Yi-Fu. (1979). Landscapes of fear. New

Van Dijk, Teun A. (1998). Ideology a multidisciplinary approach. London: SAGE Publications.

Weizman, Eyal. (2014, September 02). Architecture of Violence. http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/rebelarchit

Special thanks to: J. Fernandez, P.J. Braaksma

In the case of The Wall, its old fences and new

Waves of migration because of war, political and

economic conflicts, have become a norm, and as much as this can bring economic benefits for those who welcome them, it also brings fast change, and with that comes fear, and with fear

in your town, in your home, what if you could put yourself in the place of the other, and instead of dangerous you could start perceiving it as human. The power of empathy and curiosity relies on the fact that gives us more knowledge about something or someone that we don't know, or that seems distant and strange. Instead of control, we can gain knowledge, instead of walls we can build freedom, and instead of dangerous others,

https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/spac 2. Tuan, Yi-Fu. (1977). Space and Place: The

perspective of experience, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. P. 411, 419.

5. Garcia, R. (1991). Rise of the Mexican

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Delpar, Helen. (1992). The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations Between the

Foucault Michel. (1995). Discipline and Punish:

Middle Class: San Antonio, 1929-1941. College Station: Texas Gutiérrez, D. G. (1995). Walls and Mirrors:

Hagstrom Miller. Karl. (2001). Mexican Past and

Mitchell. William J. (2005). Placing Words:

solitude. New York: Grove Press. Saar Maaeja and Palang Hannes. (2009). The Dimensions of Place Meanings: Living Rev.

Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945 . New York:

October 31), A look at Trump's Border Wall Prototypes,

Tuan, Yi-Fu. (1977). Space and Place: The perspective of experience, Minneapolis:

York: Pantheon Books.

Virilio Paul. (2006). Speed and Politics. MIT

ecture/2014/06/architecture-violence-2014629113 556647744.html

6. Hagstrom Miller. Karl. (2001). Mexican Past and Mexican Presence in San Antonio's Market Square: Capital, Tourism and die Creation of the

Brotton, Jerry. (2014). A Story of The World in

Garcia, R. (1991). Rise of the Mexican American

California Press.

the Local. New York: Routledge Publishers.

Miessen. Markus. Ed.. (2007). The Violence of

Symbols, Space and the City. London: MIT Press. Paz, Octavio. (1962). The labyrinth of

Sánchez, George. (1993). Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in

City and Nation: Rethinking Place and Identity (Comparative Urban and Comunity Research). New

https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/na tional/border-wall-prototypes/?utm\_term=.c4dd28

University of Minnesota Press.

University: Press Group Limited.

