

### **Liminality: Chavez Chapter 3**

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- Chavez: Shadowed Lives: Chapter 3, Crossing Borders pp. 45-65
  - coyotes and pollos
  - the **liminal state**, “betwixt and between”
    - crossing
    - also, being in the US without documents
  - **liminal space**: the soccer field
    - what does this mean?
  - p.49: increased surveillance at the soccer field pushes migrants to cross nearer the All-American Canal along the California-Mexico border
    - update: over 500 drownings as of mid-2010
    - now many immigrants cross into Arizona, in extremely harsh and mountainous desert, where hundreds each year die of thirst and exposure
  - **vulnerability**: people in liminal states are typically at risk
    - in the more usual use of the model of rites of passage, this is due to being in a socially and morally undefined state
      - the risk is seen as supernatural, or socially abnormal
      - people in liminal states are thought to be more likely to have visions, see spirits, get divine inspiration, etc.
        - as in shamans who are on the border between this world and the supernatural
        - or young people on a vision quest as part of their rite of passage into adulthood
    - in Chavez’s the metaphorical use of the model of rites of passage for undocumented immigrants, this vulnerability is more literal
      - because they are not in a standard, legal status, they cannot count on the Mexican nor the US government to protect them from theft, assault, rape, murder...
        - unscrupulous (or predatory) coyotes, drivers, etc.
      - even if Border Patrol would, in fact, help them, they won’t seek or accept help for fear of being apprehended and deported
      - liminality extends to not carrying ID, so they cannot be identified when arrested and deported
        - what could be more liminal than being without any evidence of your own identity?
        - but also cannot be identified if there is an accident or crime
    - once in the US, undocumented immigrants remain liminal and vulnerable for a long time
      - they have to hide on the edges of the society to avoid detection
        - which denies them many forms of protection (from crime, disease, hunger, etc.)
      - incorporation into US society is blocked or greatly delayed, or they never even seek it
      - so they remain vulnerable
        - an ideal workforce that has to accept whatever low wages are offered, and cannot complain about working conditions, mistreatment, compensation or treatment for accidents, failure to pay, etc.