Spatial Violence and the Documentary Image

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Patrick Brian Smith

LEGENDA
Moving Image 15
Modern Humanities Research Association
2024

Published by Legenda
an imprint of the Modern Humanities Research Association
Salisbury House, Station Road, Cambridge CB1 2LA

ISBN 978-1-83954-178-0

First published 2024

Copy-Editor: Charlotte Wathey

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The writing of a book takes its toll on many more people than just the author. Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Luca Caminati for his continual guidance and mentoring, and Kay Dickinson for her generous advice and support, which set me on the doctoral path in the first place. I would also like to thank the other members of my doctoral committee, Krista Lynes, Joshua Neves, and JD Rhodes for taking the time to read and critique the work contained in these pages. Thanks also to Graham Nelson, JD, Charlotte Wathey, and the anonymous readers for guiding me through the editing of this book and helping to get it out into the world. I'm forever indebted to my parents Judith and Keith (UTFT), my sister Jenny and her partner Rob, and my grandparents Brian, Valerie, and Ida. I simply couldn't have completed this project without their continual love and support. À ma nouvelle famille élargie au Québec, André, Madeleine, Charles, Catherine, Simone et Adèle, merci pour votre gentillesse et votre hospitalité. I would also like to thank friends in London, who always welcome me with open arms and a comfortable sofa: Andy, Claire, Dale, Dora, Jamie, Josh, Laurence, Liam, Milena, Rob, and Syd. Friends I made during my doctoral studies in Montreal have also been a constant source of kindness and warmth: Audrey-Anne, Ben, Cath, Eimear, Gui, and Matt. Academic colleagues and friends increasingly spread across the globe have always been there for a chat, a drink, or critical feedback: Patrick Brodie, Sasha Crawford-Holland, Jesse David Dinneen, Sima Kokotovic, Laliv Melamed, Pooja Rangan, Viviane Saglier, Masha Salazkina, Joaquín Serpe, Ryan Watson, and Andrew Williams. A special mention to the cats I share my home and life with, Cocobine and George. They are beautiful souls who enrich my existence every day. Finally, I would like to thank my partner Léa. I'm incredibly lucky to have found someone who is so impassioned by life, justice, and the natural world. She's made me a better person than I could ever have imagined.

Sections of Chapter 1 were previously published in 'Documenting Extractive and Indigenous Futurities: Thirza Cuthand and Thomas Kneubühler's Radical Work', *Afterimage*, 47.4 (2020), 50–68.

Sections of Chapter 2 were previously published in 'The Politics of Spatiality in Experimental Nonfiction Cinema: Jonathan Perel's "*Toponimia*"', *NECSUS: European Journal of Media Studies*, 5.2 (2016), 49–71.

Sections of Chapters 2 and 3 were previously published in 'Counter Logistics/ Counter Forensics: Seeing the Rot', *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and* Culture, 45.1 (forthcoming).

P.S., March 2024

INTRODUCTION

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Two Images/Two Spaces

We are presented with a close-up shot of a rippling body of water. Constantly shifting and undulating, the grey liquid mass is visually overwhelming; resembling the static noise of a CRT monitor. Next, an intertitle: 'THE END of the first EXPEDITION'. From here, we transition to a wide fixed-frame shot of a river. A five-span steel arch bridge cuts through the centre of the frame. The top half of the image is dominated by a city skyline. Above, a grey cloud-covered sky. In the bottom half of the image, a small trawler moves across the river — from the right to the left of the frame — carrying several bright yellow intermodal shipping containers. A voiceover states, 'Robinson believed that, if he looked at it hard enough, he could cause the surface of the city to reveal to him the molecular basis of historical events, and in this way, he hoped to see into the future'.

FIG. I.1. Still from *London*, dir. by Patrick Keiller (UK, 1994).

Another space, a different film. Here, we are presented with a shot of a flat metallic structure nestled in amongst some shrubland. Two small antennae extend vertically from the centre of the metal block. The camera moves and shakes slightly, occasionally panning left and right to reveal more of the structure's surroundings. Over this image, a voiceover explains that we are looking at a seismological measuring station, which sits atop the Maastricht geological formation in the Netherlands. This site is the proposed location for the Einstein Telescope, which 'is not a machine for looking out, or for looking up, or even for looking at light, it's a machine for looking back'. This is a device that seeks to better comprehend the nature of gravitational waves and gain further insights into the origins of the universe. The narrator suggests that gravitational waves can be used to 'echo-locate' and 'perceive the motion of the universe itself'. A moment's pause, then the narrator states:

> In Patrick Keiller's *London*, there's this line where Robinson is staring at the river and he says that if he could only look deep enough into the surface, we would be able to perceive the molecular basis of historical events, and thus also he would be able to perceive the future.

Fig. I.2. Still from *Se ti sabir*, dir. by James Bridle (UK, 2019).

Patrick Keiller's *London* (1995), focused on the changing nature of urban and ex-urban environments under the interrelated conditions of neoliberalism and late capitalism, and James Bridle's *Se ti sabir* (2019), which explores themes of artificial intelligence, surveillance, and the techno-industrial complex, are documentary works that focus intensely on material space. Throughout both, a consistent focus on specific sites and spaces — typically presented through protracted, deep focus shots — becomes their central and structuring foci. The aim of such visual examinations of material space is to forge connections between the particularities

of these localised sites and broader political, economic, social, and, crucially, *spatial* formations of power. For example, in Keiller's *London*, the extended shots of the city are juxtaposed with meditations on the wider geopolitical recomposition of the country under Thatcherite to Blairite neoliberal politics. In Bridle's *Se ti sabir*, the site-specific examination of the measuring station opens the film up to a wider consideration of how new modes of technological surveillance and artificial intelligence have rearticulated our relationship to material space. For these filmmakers, an intense focus on, and engagement with, specific spaces and landscapes serves as an entry-point into unearthing connections to wider global dynamics and power relations. Thus, within both these works, a form of intensely spatial interrogation of the material environment becomes an entry-point into a wider examination of the machinations of larger socio-political forces and events.

Of course, from the very origins of the documentary form there has been an inherent tendency to document places, spaces, and landscapes. We need only to think of the early actuality films of the Lumières or Georges Méliès to see that protracted examinations of material sites, spaces, and architectures drew the attention of the moving image from its earliest moments. As Gerry Turvey suggests, 'actuality films were, in a sense, about location, whether it was the views of rural, urban and foreign landscapes in the "scenics" or, in the case of "topicals," the sites of public spectacle'.[1] Whilst primarily focused on the profilmic actions of bodies labouring, playing, and socialising, material spaces and environments were also a source of fascination within these early actualities. From the flowing movements of the trees in *Le Repas de Bébé* (1895) to the layered and cavernous architecture of the factory in *La Sortie de l'usine Lumière à Lyon* (1895), there was a (perhaps coincidental) engagement with specific material sites and spaces. However, what happens when such a focus on material landscapes and spaces become the *structuring focus* of the documentary form; no longer a container or backdrop, but instead the primary area of focus, investigation, and critique?[2] Moreover, what happens when such engagements with material space aim to expose and engage broader socio-political formations of power? Are Keiller's and Bridle's films unique in their specific exploration of the spatial and its connections to broader forms of political contestation, exploitation, and violence? This book argues that they are not.

The aim of *Spatial Violence and the Documentary Image* is to examine the emerging intersections between the spatial and political in contemporary documentary practice. This book contends that there has been an increasing engagement with the spatial across a broad range of documentary media practices invested in an intense investigation of the increasing *spatialisation* of the political and, concomitantly, the *politicisation* of the spatial.[3] Exploring the interconnections between these two dynamic fields, this book argues that this trend in contemporary non-fiction media culture emphasises the crucial role that space and place play in contemporary forms of political violence, exploitation, and injustice. Indeed, spatiality has increasingly been perceived as a site of contestation and conflict under contemporary social, economic, and political conditions and their interrelated power relations. As a result, forging new ways of visualising and witnessing such spatial machinations has

become crucial. Thus, this book aims to examine a disparate group of contemporary documentary works, all of which operate in similar ways to Keiller's and Bridle's films — focusing on particular spaces, sites, and landscapes as a way to open up to an examination of larger formations of contemporary state and corporate power and violence.

More broadly, this book aims to interrogate the origins, practices, politics, and potential future directions of this contemporary trend within non-fiction media culture. Crucially, *Spatial Violence and the Documentary Image* maps out a new genre of non-fiction media practice and theorises its aesthetic and political potentialities by examining distinct spatial constellations and forms of power. It is my contention that the adoption of such a critical spatial perspective — what we could term a 'spatio-political aesthetic' — within contemporary documentary practice still needs to be effectively surveyed and theorised, and it is this crucial work that the book aims to undertake. Moreover, the book examines how non-fiction moving image practice might be particularly well-suited to undertaking such spatio-political work. What are the specific properties of the moving image that might make it a privileged medium for exploring such forms of spatio-political conflict? More specifically, how is it that a concentrated investigation of diverse political spaces and sites of contestation and conflict might help to reveal the layers of spatial violence, exploitation, and injustice embedded within them? These works emerge from, and engage with, a geographically diverse set of sites and spaces: First Nations lands in Canada and the Philippines; oil pipeline infrastructure running through Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey; logistical sea ports in Rotterdam, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, and Athens; a mine-turned-concentration camp in the village of Omarska, Bosnia and Herzegovina; infrastructures of migrant detention and removal in the UK; military 'resettlement' villages in northern Argentina; and the unstable and deadly corridors of migrant movement across the Mediterranean Sea. Although diverse in terms of their geographies, aesthetic approaches, methodologies, and politics, these works all share a desire to take up their chosen spaces, sites, and infrastructures as catalysts to interrogate broader formations of political, economic, social, and *spatial* power.

Michael Pattison has suggested that within such spatially-attuned documentary works, 'considered framing' and an attention to the 'arrangement of existing features, emphasises landscape and/or architecture as a thing to be looked at, investigated, studied'. For him, the aim of such a spatialised moving image praxis is to 'unearth some of the material strata and spectral traces still present in the manufactured landscapes and architectures of the recent past'.[4] To date, Pattison's short essay 'Steady-Stare Surveillance, or the Spatial Turn in Nonfiction Films' is the only sustained examination of this contemporary trend in documentary practice. *Spatial Violence and the Documentary Image* aims to build on this crucial intervention, providing a more comprehensive survey and theorisation of this contemporary turn, helping to build a rich portrait of its theoretical, methodological, and political concerns. By examining the different strategies and techniques taken up by these works, I aim to answer several interrelated questions. How can contemporary non-

fiction moving image practices represent, and concomitantly critique, the spatial operations of contemporary power relations? What are the different aesthetic, discursive, and political approaches that are utilised to conduct such spatialised work? How do these works interconnect with broader theoretical and political concerns with the spatial? What strategies of visualisation and critique have been developed? Which remain underexplored or underdeveloped?

By forging connections between these works, the book not only highlights the presence of such a spatio-political tendency, it also aims to examine the future aesthetic and political potentialities for such a critical visual praxis. Consequently, through this mapping of documentary's contemporary spatio-political turn, I also wish to map out some lines of flight for its continued critical development. I also want to think through how such spatio-political works force us to reflect on wider social, economic, and political power formations that have restructured our contemporary world in profound and fundamental ways. Thus, this book also aims to do more than just provide a taxonomy of the different forms and techniques of spatial analysis (aesthetic, political, discursive). It also aims to utilise these works as crucial points of entry into a broader examination of the different spatio-political forces that structure our contemporary world.

Approaching the Spatial

Across this body of documentary works, the spatial is perceived as a site of increasing contestation and conflict under contemporary social, economic, and political conditions and their interrelated power relations. It is important to note that the notion of the 'spatial turn' has a much wider theoretical history that extends well beyond the boundaries of documentary practice and theory. Examinations of how the spatial and geographical intersect with the social, political, and economic have developed within and across different disciplinary formations from the 1970s onwards. Here, I will begin by mapping out some of this theoretical history; situating the spatial within a wider set of debates. Undertaking this theoretical groundwork is crucial, as the book's focus on the spatio-political in documentary practice extends from (and builds upon) these earlier conceptualisations. This theoretical framing will also enable a more specific delineation of this book's approach to the spatial, both in a broad conceptual sense, and more specifically in relation to non-fiction moving image practice. Alongside mapping out the theoretical and conceptual development of the spatial turn, I will also consider the wider social, economic, and political factors that prompted this theoretical shift to the spatial in the first place. Contemporary constellations of socio-political power — neoliberalism, late capitalism, neocolonialism etc. — have radically rearticulated the politics of the spatial, and are perhaps the primary factors that have driven this more specifically theoretical turn. Therefore, we must understand how these formations of power potentially structure such a theoretical and conceptual shift.

After mapping out this historical and theoretical trajectory of the spatial turn, I will then examine previous intersections between spatial theory and the moving

image. Here, my aim is to focus on previous theorisations and practices that have read the moving image in relation to material space from a variety of divergent perspectives. This groundwork will also allow me to lay out my own theoretical approach to the contemporary spatio-political trend in contemporary documentary practice. How does it develop or extend from these previous moments of theoretical and conceptual convergence around the spatial and the moving image? Where does it diverge and differ? Consequently, I do not see the spatial turn within moving practice as something that has developed in isolation. It is heavily influenced by a wider theoretical and conceptual thinking across a range of disciplinary formations: human geography, political science, cultural studies, amongst others.

My aim across this book is to add to this more expansive theoretical history, placing this non-fiction turn within a broader interdisciplinary context. At the same time, it is also important to consider how this non-fiction turn to the spatio-political potentially enriches or reorients these broader theoretical and methodological approaches to the spatial. In what ways does the development of such a spatio-political praxis in documentary culture supplement the wider theories and methodologies generated by the spatial turn? Thus, by bringing together a geographically disparate collection of non-fiction practices that are working in this spatio-political mode, I aim to examine what new theoretical perspectives and forms of praxis they can bring to this expanded theoretical and conceptual realm.

A Spatial Turn

From the 1970s onwards, we have witnessed a 'spatial turn' in social and cultural theory, which has sought to emphasise the crucial role that space and place play in contemporary forms of political violence, exploitation, and injustice. Spatiality has increasingly been recognised as a site of contestation and conflict under contemporary social, economic, and political conditions and their interrelated power relations. As Edward Soja has suggested, this spatial thinking has aimed to understand 'how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology'.[5] Similarly, Doreen Massey has suggested 'not just that the spatial is political [...] but rather that thinking the spatial in a particular way can [...] contribute to political arguments already under way'.[6] Within these broad summations of the spatial turn, we can see a desire to politicise the study of spatiality and geography. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, these areas of geographical inquiry became concerned not only with the ways in which political, economic, and human activity reshaped material space and landscapes, but also how particular formations of the spatial and geographic impact and restructure human existence. Thus, for a range of scholars working at the intersection of political science, economics, and cultural studies, geographic enquiry had been politically ambivalent for too long; not sufficiently invested in trying to understand how multifarious social and economic forces rearticulate spatial and geographical relations.

Ultimately, geographical and spatial studies had sidelined a materialist-political perspective, privileging instead the study of broader physical geosystems or physiographies. For a range of these contemporary human geographers, there was a need to reassert a critical and political spatial perspective within geographical theory and practice. Ultimately, these spatial theorists aimed to expose how contemporary power relations operated in increasingly spatialised and geographical ways. Space could no longer be read as a neutral or empty container, rather it was increasingly reshaped by human, economic, and social activity, and often with specific formations of power dictating the ways in which such dynamics played out. Thus, within this period, understandings of spatiality and geography shifted considerably. Space was now something being actively reshaped, contested, and exploited by different social, political, and economic actors and formations of power.[7]

Particularly influential for such contemporary conceptualisations of the spatial was the Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre and his seminal work *The Production of Space*. Lefebvre defines space as a 'social product,' suggesting that the spatial 'is social: it involves assigning more or less appropriated places to social relations [...] social space has thus always been a social product'.[8] Lefebvre was at the forefront of reasserting a critical and theoretical spatial perspective, and his work in this area had a significant influence on a range of other disciplinary formations. For him, spatiality was not simply an empty vessel, a zone within which social relations and activities took place. Rather, it was a site of constant contestation and reconstruction, where spatial relations were actively produced by myriad social, economic, and cultural forces. Space then, for Lefebvre, was not a neutral zone of activity, rather it was an *actively produced* social product — a complex amalgamation of forces that had to be understood as always in flux. Indeed, as Christian Fuchs has suggested, one of the key ideas of Lefebvre's social theory is that 'humans not only produce social relations and use-values, but in doing so also produce social space'.[9] Thus, we can see here the influence that Lefebvre's theorisation of spatial production had on those theorists at the forefront of beckoning in the spatial turn, where they wished to put forward a similarly critical spatial perspective that could confront the myriad rearticulations of space and geography in the contemporary world.

As we can see from these initial summations of such theorisations, such spatially-attuned thinking was certainly not produced within a theoretical or academic vacuum. It is important to understand how the spatial turn within these theoretical realms was the result of tangible shifts in political, economic, and social realities on both global and local scales. Fundamentally, the embrace of such a critical spatial perspective aimed to respond to broad shifts and transformations in global power relations from the 1970s onwards: neoliberal governance, late capitalist economic rationality, neocolonial forms of state power, and the global fragmentation of labour, to name but a few. As the previously delineated spatial theories point out, these upheavals had specifically spatial and geographical articulations and impacts. Thus, shifting social, political, and economic realities were forcing a reconsideration of how to approach the study of space and geography. Ultimately, in a world increasingly shaped around significant transformations of geopolitical

relations, there was a need to come up with new spatial theories and methodologies to examine and expose these new formations of power.

These various shifts in the shape and operations of global power dynamics can be bracketed under the notion of 'globalisation'. Key transformations in global political and economic rationality led to a world that was seemingly more interconnected than ever. For example, the 'opening up' of national markets to global trade, an embrace of wholesale global financial speculation, and the increasing global fragmentation of labour — extending from both neoliberal political hegemony and late capitalist economic rationality — have led to what David Harvey terms 'the production of new forms of uneven geographical development, a recalibration and even recentering of global power'. For Harvey, the role of late capitalism in such spatial rearticulations cannot be understated. As he suggests, within the epoch of late capitalism's unrelenting expansion, its increasing globalisation requires spatial placeholders to both absorb the surplus of overaccumulation and to create new strategic centres for further movement, expansion, and accumulation. Harvey's examination of this global expansion — primarily developed through the notion of the 'spatial fix' — leads him to claim that late capitalism 'could not survive without being geographically expansionary'.[10] Similarly, Neil Smith, emphasising the decidedly spatialised nature of late capitalism's operations, formulated the notion of 'uneven development' to describe capital's inherently contradictory and uneven diffusion across material and economic space. For him, regular instances of capital crisis, flight, and deindustrialisation have material and infrastructural impacts on specific territories and spaces. The crucial role played by late capitalism within the wider logics of globalisation is explored in more detail within Chapter 1. For now, I simply want to signal the key role it plays within the dynamics of contemporary globalisation, and how it has been crucial to the development of such spatialised thinking from the 1970s onwards.

Ultimately, these new forces of globalisation have fundamentally reshaped the world we live in and its centres of power and control — realigning geopolitical and spatial relations in significant and structural ways. Around this time of global upheaval, many suggested that alongside such fundamental shifts in global power relations and the increasing interconnections present in the world we live in, there had been an interconnected annihilation of space and geography. With the planet becoming more interconnected, proximate, and reachable, there was an argument to be made that the spatial might have ceased to exist as an important zone of study. With rapid advances in communications technologies operating alongside the neoliberal and late capitalist logics mapped out above, some argued that we were witnessing the 'death of distance'.[11] Was it still possible to study the spatial and geographical in meaningful ways, when the forces of globalisation were so preoccupied with eradicating any sense of spatial specificity and difference? However, such claims of the 'death of space' were ultimately overridden by stronger theoretical perspectives that called for a renewed examination of spatiality in the face of such globalising logics. Instead of eradicating the importance of the spatial, the multifarious processes of globalisation made spatial and geographical investigation

and theorisation even more crucial. For example, as Barney Warf and Santa Arias suggest, 'far from annihilating the importance of space, globalization has increased it [...]. As neoliberal capital operates ever more effortlessly on a worldwide stage, small differences among regions become increasingly important'.[12]

Consequently, the spatial and geographical became crucial sites of theoretical and political interrogation, precisely at a moment when globalisation might have led to a reading of space as theoretically unimportant, or — more dramatically — 'dead' and 'dying'. Rather than the forces of globalisation leading to a decrease in the importance of the spatial and geographical, they have instead made the development of such spatially-attuned theories even more necessary. Moreover, as the interconnected forces of globalisation, neoliberalism, and late capitalism began to morph and shape the globe on an unprecedented scale, such spatially informed theorisations did not remain the exclusive property of urban theory or human geography. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, a wider range of disciplines across social and cultural theory underwent similar 'spatial turns', embracing the work of these human geographers to understand the contemporary transformation of the world through decidedly spatialised conceptual frames. The aim of this book is to suggest that a similar spatial 'reorientation' has occurred within the realm of contemporary non-fiction moving practice. In a moment where spatialised thinking has become a prominent zone of theoretical enquiry, a significant strand of contemporary documentary practice has embraced a similarly spatialised perspective. Its position within this wider theoretical constellation must be mapped out, and it is this work that I wish to undertake in these pages.

A range of theorists have also argued that the spatial turn in social and cultural theory aimed to react against the historical dominance of strictly *temporal* understandings of the social and political. As Soja suggests, within social and cultural theory, 'primary attention is [typically] given to social processes and social consciousness as they develop over time in comparison to what might be called spatial processes, spatial consciousness, and spatial development'. He continues to suggest that, for at least the last century, 'thinking about the interrelated historical and social aspects of our lives has tended to be much more important [...] than emphasising a pertinent critical spatial perspective'.[13] From Bergson to Marx, an overdetermined reliance on temporally-inflected readings of the social and political had led to a significant marginalisation of spatial thinking. As Foucault writes, 'space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic'.[14] Consequently, through an enduring reliance on temporality, spatial thinking had often been equated with mere representation; lacking its own 'fecundity, life, dialectic'. Thus, for many of the theorists who embraced the need for a critical spatial perspective within social and cultural theory, there was also a desire to push back against the dominance of the historicist thought that had dominated critical thinking for decades.

Once we move away from a mode of thought that sees the spatial as simply a mirror of the representational, we can begin to apprehend the socio-political potentiality of spatial thinking. Thus, Massey argues that it is 'not just that the

spatial is political [...] but rather that thinking the spatial in a particular way can [...] contribute to political arguments already under way'.[15] For Soja, the spatiality of human life must be interpreted and understood as 'a complex social product, a collectively created and purposeful configuration and socialization of space that defines our contextual habitat, the human and humanized geography in which we all live out our lives'.[16] Through this understanding of space as a 'complex social product' Soja offers up the notion of 'spatial justice', where thinking spatially allows for the creation of 'strategic pathways for reclaiming and maintaining an active and successful democratic politics, the foundation for achieving justice and reducing oppression and exploitation of all kinds'.[17] Massey's and Soja's Lefebvrian-informed theorisations of the spatial aim to shift our understandings of space away from a simplified equation with mere representation and, moreover, they aim to reassert its equal theoretical footing next to more strictly temporal understandings of the social and political. Fundamentally, across all these theorisations, there is a continual emphasis on the need to repoliticise examinations of the spatial. Here, spatiality is read as a complex amalgamation of different political, economic, and social forces.

As this book will argue, the non-fiction moving image works to be examined take up markedly similar approaches in their engagement with the spatial. They consistently resist a rendering of the spatial as 'fixed', 'dead', 'undialectical', or merely representational. Rather, within these works, the spatial is continually understood as that 'complex social product' suggested by Lefebvre: an assemblage of social, political, and economic relations continually in tension with each other. The moving image is not an apparatus to simply visualise such spatial dynamics, but also a critical tool for examining and interrogating these complex power formations. For Foucault, such a Lefebvrian-informed approach to the spatial can 'draw us out of ourselves [...] [it is] the space that claws and gnaws at us [...] a heterogeneous space'.[18] This contemporary trend in non-fiction practice similarly confronts the spatial as a heterogeneous amalgamation of different power relations. And, for artists and filmmakers working within this spatio-political mode, the unique aesthetic, visual, and temporal qualities of the moving image make it particularly well-suited to dissecting such complex spatial relations. The moving image as a 'not quite' spatial *or* temporal medium might make it a particularly useful tool for engaging with the spatio-political as something 'fluid', 'alive', and 'dialectical'. Indeed, Massey, writing on another of Patrick Keiller's spatio-political works, suggests that through non-fiction moving image engagements with the spatial, 'we see the landscape differently: not closed down into a familiar satisfaction but opened up to reinterpretation'.[19] Here then, spatiality is not 'closed down' to fixed or undialectical representation, instead, when rendered visible through the moving image, there is a potential for the spatial to be visualised as a complex and heterogenous social product, riven through with social, political, and economic conflict.

Within Massey's formulation of the relationship between the cinematic and the spatial, we can begin to sense how the moving image as a form of aesthetic praxis might be particularly well-equipped to undertake such spatial investigations; operating perhaps as a privileged tool for confronting the political heterogeneity

of the spatial. Within this section, I have begun to point towards how this contemporary trend in non-fiction moving image practice extends from, and builds upon, such broad theoretical work on the spatial. Before developing this analysis further, I think it is crucial to zoom in a little, examining previous instances where moving image practice and theory and studies of the spatial have intersected. Within the next section of this introduction, I will more specifically delineate such moments of conceptual convergence. Where have these two theoretical realms previously intersected, and crucially, what is the role of the aesthetic in such non-fiction engagements with the spatial? How does this contemporary trend in non-fiction practice extend from these previous moments of convergence? I open here by addressing the question of documentary aesthetics in relation to this contemporary spatial turn, as it will help to more concretely situate this wider body of literature on the moving image and the spatial. Unpacking the theoretical moments where the moving image and the spatial have previously intersected will help to lay some of the crucial theoretical groundwork for this book's examination of this contemporary spatio-political trend.

Moving Image and Spatial Aesthetics

Spatial Violence and the Documentary Image aims to refocus and recentre the importance of an aesthetic engagement with the documentary image. I argue that within this corpus of contemporary documentary works, emergent forms of aesthetic praxis are functioning as crucial methodological tools for engaging with the politics of the spatial. More precisely, these are documentary practices that are cultivating and experimenting with new and emerging forms of aesthetic practice to render visible and critique myriad material sites and spaces and their embedded and interconnected power relations. However, does placing the aesthetic at the centre of our study of such spatial works simply return us to Massey's critique of the historical conflation of spatiality with mere representation? I argue that it does not. Through the forms of aesthetic experimentation and attunement in these works, their engagements with specific spatial sites and formations always foreground them as 'fluid', 'alive', and 'dialectical' nodes that must be connected to broader spatio-political formations of power. Thus, in a perhaps peculiar double-move, I want to emphasise that a renewed attention to the aesthetic is crucial to wrest the spatial from its historical association with the representational.

Crucial to this argument for recentering the aesthetic as a method for capturing the political 'aliveness' of the spatial is Matthew Fuller and Eyal Weizman's theorisation of 'investigative aesthetics'. Moving away from historical definitions of the aesthetic that emphasised a capacity for the 'cultivation of a sensibility and meditation on experience', or the 'subjective experience of pleasure', the authors instead put forward a formulation that is centered around a political form of 'sensing and sense-making [...] affect and effect'.[20] Fuller and Weizman see the contemporary political landscape as one that is now registering different forms of power and violence in almost every facet of material space: infrastructures, architectures, environments,

ecologies, topologies, etc. Indeed, the spatial is a key theoretical node within their matrix of investigative aesthetics. As Weizman has suggested elsewhere, we cannot read the spatial as a 'static thing'. Rather, for him, 'physical structures and built environments are elastic and responsive. Architecture [...] is 'political plastic' — social forces *slowing* into form. This is true on the scale of a building and also on that of larger territories'.[21] To understand the spatial as a form of 'political plastic' it must be better sensed aesthetically. Fuller and Weizman thus propose that an emphasis on both 'sensing' (feeling, experiencing) and 'sense-making' (producing meaning, political legibility) could constitute a new form of politically-responsive and sensitive aesthetic praxis that is attuned to the politics of the spatial.[22] Thus, they argue that such a form of aesthetic analysis is emerging as a powerful tool for spatial-political contestation in a moment where the material world is riven through with contesting formations of power that are typically undetectable or obfuscated. To be attuned to the aesthetic is therefore to try and both 'sense' and 'make sense' of these multitudinous manifestations of power and violence that now surround us almost completely. Thus, the aesthetic and spatial are instrumentalised as tools for 'sensoring' particular forms of political violence.

Ultimately, for Fuller and Weizman, aesthetic engagement can be activated as a decidedly politicised activity, no longer infused with its historical reputation for detached appreciation, mediation, or indulgence. This theorisation of a mode of aesthetic investigation extends from Weizman's broader conceptualisation of a mode of emergent 'forensic architectural' praxis, which itself engages more explicitly with the spatial. Here, the forensic and architectural are taken up as interconnected methodologies that read spatial relations not as 'isolated' or 'discreet' surfaces or objects, rather they always function as a set of 'relations, associations and chains of actions' that uncover socio-political thicknesses in material space.[23] These attentions to the aesthetic perceive it as a decidedly politicised sensor of material spatialities that are increasingly riven through with contesting and obsfuscated formations of power and violence. By employing forensically-attuned techniques, such as the investigation of traces, patterns, and material evidence, this architectural and aesthetic practice unveils hidden narratives, power dynamics, and political implications embedded within material spatialities. This approach enables an unveiling of the complexities and underlying ideologies of spatial configurations, architectural designs, and urban landscapes. Weizman's use of forensics as a tool for spatial and aesthetic analysis allows for a deeper understanding and critical examination of the socio-political dimensions inherent in our surroundings. Thus, both the forensic architectural and aesthetic modes of investigation put forward by Fuller and Weizman aim to read political and social relations within and through material space.[24]

This book argues that such an approach to the aesthetic holds a particularly powerful, and renewed, ability for sensing and sense-making in relation to the spatial, precisely at a moment where material space is more intensely politically-infused than ever before. More precisely, these documentaries' aesthetic engagements with the spatial allow for politicised forms of sensing and sense-making to come

to the fore.[25] Thus, by taking up, and building upon, the forensic and investigative approaches mapped out by Fuller and Weizman, this book places their theoretical scaffolding in dialogue with the emerging spatial-political tendency in broader documentary practice. By centering the aesthetic, the book aims to emphasise how an engagement with documentary's aesthetic potentialities has recently served to confront some of the key spatial concerns of our late capitalist, neocolonial world.

Whilst this book argues that the spatio-political tendency in contemporary documentary practice has yet to be properly theorised, engagements with theories of space and landscape in moving-image practice and scholarship certainly have a much longer historical trajectory. As I suggested in relation to early actuality films earlier in this introduction, moving-image practice and scholarship has been concerned with questions of spatiality from its earliest years. Moreover, there has been a consistent scholarly emphasis on understanding the moving image as an inherently spatialised medium, perhaps perfectly equipped for visualizing, examining, and interrogating the spatial. For example, as John David Rhodes and Elena Gorfinkel suggest in their edited volume *Taking Place: Location and the Moving Image*, 'our experience of the moving image is intimately connected to our experience of place'.[26] Similarly, Tom Conley in his book *Cartographic Cinema* suggests that the moving image often encourages us to 'think of the world in concert with its own articulation of space'.[27] Within these and other theorisations, the moving image's unique visual and temporal properties are understood as being particularly well-suited to rendering visible the spatial.[28]

Much of this spatialised discourse within film and media studies scholarship extended from the wider spatial turn in social and cultural theory mapped out above, aiming to bring such spatialised thinking to bear on the moving image. However, it also originated from within the discipline itself, chiefly in the shape of Gilles Deleuze's much-cited theorisation of the shift from the 'movement-image' to the 'time-image'. For Deleuze, moving image practice was dominated by the 'movement-image' from its origins up until World War II. The movement-image describes filmic practices marked by logical temporal causality and a unity of filmic space. Typically, these works were narrative films that maintained a coherence of diegetic time and space, working through a causal chain of events and a classic story arc. The time-image came to dominate post-World War II, and was marked by inverse characteristics; an emphasis on discontinuity, duration, and temporal ellipses. Scholars have suggested that the shift mapped out by Deleuze was a reaction to wider post-war socio-political events. In a world marked by rapid urbanisation, industrialisation, and globalisation, new forms of cinematic expression and visual representation were needed to make sense of the increasingly unstable world around us. This is where, for Deleuze, the time-image intercedes. Indeed, as Conley suggests, the shift from the movement-image to the time image was marked by:

> The fact that film could 'no longer transcribe completed events but had to attain events in the process of their creation,' in other words, become consonant with the 'event as it was happening'. The new cinema brought forward the site of what [Deleuze] calls an 'open totality'.[29]

Thus, the slippage away from causality and unity and towards discontinuity and duration are perhaps symptomatic of the wider challenges posed by a post-modern world that was increasingly hard to render visibly in coherent and legible ways. As the complex social, political, cultural dynamics of the world became harder to readily comprehend and render visible, alternative — and often antithetical — aesthetic and visual modes of address needed to be developed.[30]

For Tom Conley, as the new aesthetic and visual forms offered by the time-image came to fore, 'space enter[ed] the field of view, isolating certain events in certain areas of the frame and allowing others to take place, simultaneously, in others'.[31] Here then, as the contemplative and durational potentialities of the moving image were pushed to the fore, cinema's capacity to render the spatial was also foregrounded. Thus, building from Conley's analysis, the 'time-image' might also be described as the 'space-image', privileging deep and protracted engagements with the spatial.[32] In many ways, Deleuze's move towards the forms and aesthetics of the time-image dovetails conceptually with the forms of aesthetic sensing and sense-making of this contemporary spatio-political trend in non-fiction practice. Within this contemporary trend, the forms of aesthetic investigation into sites and spaces riven through with formations of political power and violence are drawn out through extended surveying of, and engagement with, diverse material environments. Durational and observational strategies come to the fore here, allowing the spatial to 'enter the field of view' more concretely. However, this contemporary trend differs in two crucial ways from Deleuze's formulation. Firstly, the attention to the spatial within these contemporary practices has political aims and objectives that are absent within Deleuze's formulation of the 'time-image'. Mediated observation in these contemporary spatio-political works allow for the forms of spatial sensing and sense-making of socio-political events and power relations to come to the fore. Thus, this contemporary mode of practice is charged with a decidedly political rationale.[33] Secondly, Deleuze's formulation of the time-image predominantly focuses on a selection of narrative-based fiction films. Documentary practices and their spatial potentialities have almost no place within his conceptualisation.

Indeed, a dominant trend within spatially-informed film and media scholarship has been undertaken predominantly in relation to narrative cinema. A significant body of literature has been generated that focuses on cinematic depictions of specific spaces and landscapes; however, little of this work touches on non-fiction practices.[34] Of interest to these scholars are the moments in which a fiction film's location or setting seemingly 'exceeds' the narrative flow of the work, operating above and beyond the diegesis. For example, Martin Lefebvre — engaging with Victor Freeburg's notion of 'narrative subordination' — suggests that material spaces and landscapes have the potential to 'interrupt the forward drive and flow of narrative with 'distracting' imagery [...] thus replacing narrativised setting with visual attractions and unwanted moments of pictorial contemplation'.[35] Consequently, the role of the spatial here exists in a subservient position to the film's narrative, able at times to exceed its 'flow' and 'enchainment', but only in 'small units' or as 'unwanted moments'. A camera may linger on a specific location,

or consider a space or landscape worthy of significant diegetic attention; however, these moments of excess are eventually subsumed into the film's overall narrative arc. The aim of this book is to shift the discursive focus on place and landscape away from its perceived 'interruptive' function within narrative cinema to a focus on its structuring potential within these spatially-attuned non-fiction works, and how such refocusing draws forms of spatio-political sensing and sense-making to the fore. Within the spatio-political documentary trend that this book engages with, specific landscapes and spaces are not just a coincidental backdrop or setting that can be read as occasionally exceeding or complimenting the narrative flow of a work; rather, they are the primary zone of interest and investigation, operating as sites of political contestation and violence that can be aesthetically sensed.

The aim of this book is to take up such aesthetic concerns with the intersection between the spatial and the moving image and reorient them around this contemporary set of spatio-political works. By making this move, it is my contention that similar formal and aesthetic strategies to those mapped out above take on a radical political potentiality within this contemporary trend in non-fiction practice. Within this contemporary turn, deep examinations of the spatial mean that it is not only 'a thing to be looked at, investigated, studied', but also an intensely aesthetic-political political formation to be sensed and made sense of, *pace* Fuller and Weizman. Thus, my aim across this book is not to provide a simple taxonomy of aesthetic tropes or political concerns shared by these works. Instead, I see this spatio-political turn as a slippery and amorphous trend in documentary practice and only through a slow and methodical examination of a range of works operating in this mode can we delineate its political and aesthetic potentialities. Thus, my analysis will build upon the aforementioned works that place an emphasis on the moving image as an inherently spatial medium, but it will also push these conceptualisations further, examining how a politicised spatial moving image has developed in contemporary non-fiction practice of late.

Documentary Spatiality

This is not to say that theoretical work on the intersection between spatiality, politics, and non-fiction film has not been undertaken. Here, I want to map out several other works (scholarly and practice-based) that have examined the intersection between these theoretical areas, focusing on the interactions between spatiality and documentary aesthetics. Examining aspects of these sporadic engagements with space and documentary will help me to better situate my analysis of this spatio-political trend in documentary practice. Elizabeth Cowie's 2011 article entitled 'Documentary Space, Place, and Landscape' examines how documentary media might be particularly well suited to exploring the 'immanent becoming' of specific spaces and landscapes.[36] For her, there are three different ways of experiencing landscape and space through the moving image. The first and second experiences centre on cinematic spatiality as both 'pictorial' and 'immanent', with a 'freeing of depicted time from the temporal causality of cinematic representation' within the

shift from the first to second forms of experience.

These two different Deleuzian-influenced readings of documentary's spatial potential are then drawn together in the conceptualisation of her 'third way'. Here, she writes that documentary film, in its:

> Presentation of scenes of landscape and space, thereby also organizes these to produce a place of view for the spectator as a cognitive and emotional experience, so that we participate both as observers and as engaged in identifying, and this constitutes a third way in which we may encounter landscape.[37]

Ultimately, for Cowie, what she terms the 'documentary time-image' provides us with 'an anthropology of place and space insofar as our dwelling in place and space involves our dwelling *with* both a landscape and fellow people, and thus a community'.[38] Cowie's analysis is certainly pertinent to this book's delineation of a spatio-political aesthetic, particularly the tension she draws out between detached observation and more intimate spatial and place-specific identification. Moreover, within her delineation of the 'third way', we can see interconnections with Fuller and Weizman's forumulation of an investigative aesthetic that centres on both 'sensing' and 'sense-making'. Cowie similarly emphasises the particular sensorial capacities of the documentary image's engagement with spatiality — its ability to operate both affectively and effectively. Though her emphasis is placed more upon anthropological, emotional, or communal forms of spatial sensing, this argument is still underpinned by an assertion that a concentrated study of material sites and spaces can open onto a wider examination of broader forces and networks of power.

There are other sporadic examples of theoretical and practical work interested in examining the intersection between spatial representation and documentary. For example, a focus on landscape and space in the cinema of the 1960's Japanese political avant-garde offered an 'analytic mode of investigating the immanent relations of power that are found within a historically specific social formation', enabling filmmakers like Oshima Nagisa and Masao Adachi to provide 'a visual "diagram" of social and economic relations, especially those of domination, at work', precisely within a social milieu that was witnessing a rising interdependence between 'the increasing control over territorial space and the consolidation of postwar democratic state capitalism'.[39] Such a mode of engagement was called the 'fukeiron' [landscape] theory. The primary film associated with this theoretical work was Adachi's 1969 work *A.K.A. Serial Killer.* The film was composed of predominantly long static shots 'of urban and rural landscapes from the tip of the northern island of Hokkaido to the southwestern cities of mainland Japan'.[40] Through these shots, the filmmaker hoped to critique the 'microphysics of power' embedded within these seemingly innocuous spaces, exposing the 'invisible relations of power that produce such homogenized landscapes'.[41]

For Yuriko Furuhata, the increasingly uniform landscapes of urban and rural Japan that are presented in *A.K.A Serial Killer* spoke to the wider 'serial mass production and standardisation of commodities' that was radically rearticulating social relations and working conditions within the country.[42] Therefore, an interrogation of landscape and space was undertaken to reveal connections to wider

power formations, specifically the transformation of social relations and labour conditions by capitalist economic rationality within post-war Japan. Although not drawn upon directly within this book, the 'fukeiron' landscape theory certainly shares many points of interconnection with the spatio-political aesthetic being delineated here. Across both, there is a sustained attention to the ways in which the moving image can survey and examine spaces and landscapes to sense and make sense of broader spatial power dynamics. Across these brief engagements with the intersection between documentary and the spatial, we are given a fleeting sense of how non-fiction cinema can operate spatio-politically. By examining this contemporary trend in documentary practice — which shares many of the conceptual approaches mapped out here — the aim of this book is to build a more substantial theoretical picture of this broader turn to the spatio-political.

Perhaps the most crucial scholarly intervention that examines the intersection between spatiality and the moving image is Rhodes and Gorfinkel's edited volume, *Taking Place: Location and the Moving Image*, mentioned briefly above. Their volume argues that space, place, and geography structure and ground our understanding of moving image media in crucial ways. For Rhodes and Gorfinkel, understanding the complex entanglements between spatiality and media not only helps open new avenues of enquiry within media and film studies, it can also help to reshape and rearticulate spatial and geographical discourse and theory. Their study is twofold, concerned with both the politics of pro-filmicly rendering visible spaces, places, and landscapes, as well as how film and media literally 'take place' — embedded within material space through processes of production, distribution, and exhibition. Early in the introduction they ask, 'how can a political and politicised practice of attention to the place of the moving image serve to reanimate the practice of politicised image making more generally?'.[43] Their formulation of a 'politicised practice of attention' develops quickly throughout the introduction, as they draw out the ways in which film and media are always intimately tied up with the spatial. They write of a desire to wrest 'place from its status as mere setting and narrative "support" [...] focus[ing] on the generative structures, aesthetic conditions, and political implications of the profilmic, drawing background to foreground, periphery to center' (echoing Lefebvre's notion of the 'intentional landscape').[44] Here then, Rhodes and Gorfinkel are concerned with examining the political potentialities of how film and media can render visible particular spaces and places — not simply as pictorial landscapes, but rather as shifting, politically-charged spatial formations infused with uneven power dynamics.[45] Their theorisation of the relationship between the cinematic and the spatial has clear resonances with Fuller and Weizman's notion of investigative aesthetics. For Rhodes and Gorfinkel, such cinematic engagements can push beyond a simple rendering of the spatial as 'fixed', 'dead', or merely representational. Rather, the moving image can allow the spatial to be interrogated and sensed as a complex and heterogenous social product — riven through with social, political, and economic conflict.

This book aims to examine a range of non-fiction works that build on the spatialised theories mapped out by Rhodes and Gorfinkel, and Fuller and Weizman.

The works to be examined are centrally concerned with 'drawing background to foreground', focusing intently on particular spaces to sense and make sense of wider formations of spatial power and political violence. Through an analysis of the aesthetic and political concerns of these works, I aim to answer Rhodes and Gorfinkel's call to 'reanimate the practice of politicised image making' — mapping out the contours of this spatio-political turn in documentary practice. Crucially, the editors also emphasise that the volume's focus on the spatial aims to resist the 'pervasive discourse that proclaims the purported death of place in the era of late (or global, post-industrial) capitalism'. Instead, they suggest that taking such a definitively spatial or place-based stance:

> Might serve as a tactic (and even a topos) with which to resist the forces (ideological, material, rhetorical) that have threatened to flatten our notion of the uniqueness, the power, and the political potential of both place and the moving image.[46]

In many ways, this specific emphasis draws us back to our earlier contention that the spatial turn is in fact a direct response to such global shifts and dynamics, reinforcing the importance of spatialised studies at a moment when space and geography might be perceived as being eradicated. The works to be examined in this book share a similar desire to reassert the importance (ideological, material, political) of embracing a critical spatial perspective. Thus, it is within Rhodes and Gorfinkel's work that we arguably get the most thorough examination of how a particular form of spatio-political praxis can effectively sense and make sense of broader forms of power and violence. In many ways, their theorisation most closely connects to the aims and objectives of the spatio-political aesthetic to be examined across this book. A 'politicised practice of attention' to different material sites and spaces across this body of works allows for better forms of aesthetic sensing to be opened up.

As we move through the different chapters of this book, we will see that the works under analysis pull their individual engagements with the spatial in different directions through different forms of aesthetic experimentation. Essayistic modes of cinematic address bump up against radical forms of new media experimentation. Protracted, deep focus engagements with material sites are contrasted with simulated and artificial tours of other spatial formations. Whilst the aesthetic strategies at work across this body of works vary, I hope to indicate that such a spatio-political turn in contemporary documentary practice is united around a consistent focus on the particularities of certain spaces, sites, and landscapes. These localised examinations then allow for a broader exploration of larger formations of contemporary political and economic power and violence. Through a sustained engagement with these differing aesthetic, discursive, and political forms, this book aims to map out contemporary documentary's increasing spatialisation of the political and, concomitantly, the politicisation of the spatial.

Whilst important and extensive bodies of academic literature have been generated in relation to the geographical and spatial exploitations and mutations wrought by contemporary power relations, I argue that corresponding work within moving

image practice and theory has only recently begun to emerge. This book argues that non-fiction moving image practice has the potential to play a crucial role in undermining the apparently 'seamless' functioning of a logistified neoliberalism, globalisation, and state power, helping to throw into sharp relief their fissures, cracks, and contradictions. By surveying a variegated set of works that have made steps towards such a critical visual praxis, this book hopes to map out some lines of flight for its continued critical development. It is the contention of this book that moving image practice must become a radical tool to fight against the spatial machinations of contemporary power relations. By mapping out the presence of a spatio-political tendency in experimental non-fiction practice, this book aims to highlight the importance of continuing its development by finding new and radical forms of praxis.

Chapter Breakdown

This book is structured around three chapters, each of which centres on a different thematic concept: capital, carcerality, and borders. The works to be examined within each chapter all centre around one of these concepts, interrogating the spatialised power dynamics at play within each. More specifically, it is my contention that these three concepts — and their complex material entwinements with landscape and space — have been radically transformed by contemporary shifts in economic, political, and social power relations. Crucially for this book, these transformations have decidedly spatial impacts. A significant number of the spatio-political works that form part of this wider non-fiction media trend have coalesced around these conceptual and political themes; a clear sign that they are areas of marked interest to such spatially- and politically-minded practices and methodologies.

There is not space in this introduction to delineate and define these three overarching concepts that structure each chapter. Instead, a fuller theoretical orientation for each will come at the start of each chapter, providing the necessary groundwork to then examine how the non-fiction works under examination both gather around, and respond to, these wider conceptual frames. For the moment, I want to provide a brief road map of each chapter, examining both the wider theoretical and conceptual frameworks to be employed, as well as delineating the case studies that will be under examination within each chapter. As we shall see, although these three conceptual categories are addressed separately (allowing me to compartmentalise these works into different thematic chapters) there is in fact much cross-contamination between them and the moving image practices that explore the power dynamics and spatial logics intertwined with them. Therefore, the shifting regimes of late capitalist exploitation, carceral expansion, and border multiplication and proliferation are not discrete events and categories. Rather, it is often the case that similar constellations and formations of power are driving their spatial impacts and rearticulations. Thus, whilst I am keeping these categories separate, it is more for the sake of maintaining an organisational logic; the spatial impacts of these different areas frequently intersect and overlap. Similarly, the works

to be examined across these different chapters also intersect in their analytical, aesthetic, and methodological approaches. Here, in a little more detail, I will flesh out the focus of each chapter.

Chapter 1, 'Visualising Late Capitalism's Landscapes', examines several moving-image works that aim to visualise and critique the various impacts of late capitalist economic exploitation, including the exploitative practices of natural resource extraction and logistics. Capitalism has undergone radical spatial transformations under the political hegemony of neoliberalism and late capitalist economic rationality. Under these new formations of political and economic power, regular instances of capital crisis, flight, and deindustrialisation have had material and infrastructural impacts on specific territories and spaces. How can the operations of transnational late capitalism be visualised within non-fiction moving image practice? What role can non-fiction moving image works play in the fight against the savage encroachment of transnational global capital? What strategies of visualisation and critique have been developed? Which remain underexplored or underdeveloped? By focusing on a variety of non-fiction works that all share a concern with examining late capitalism's exploitative spatial logics, this chapter seeks to answer such questions. The chapter begins by defining the notion of 'late capitalism', suggesting how processes of neoliberal deregulation, financialisation, global labour fragmentation etc. are all constituent parts of its wider economic logic. Such processes also lead late capitalism to appear as an increasingly unclear and pervasive system: 'an abstract, intangible but overpowering logic, a process without a subject or a subject without a face'.[47] The chapter then examines various geographical-Marxist theories that have examined the particularly spatial dimensions of such late capitalist machinations. Through a synthesis of these theories, it is suggested that late capitalism requires ever more 'spatial fixes' to satisfy its accumulatory and inherently contradictory logics, and therefore it must exploit material geographical space on an ever-increasing scale.

From this initial contextual work, the chapter moves on to ask, how can we visualise a system that is both increasingly hidden but also spatially exploitative? The chapter takes up Fredric Jameson's notion of 'cognitive mapping' as a methodology that offers a way of visually and aesthetically countering such spatialised and 'overpowering' economic logics. For Jameson, a new aesthetic form is needed to dialectically visualise and critique late capitalism's increasingly opaque spatial operations. Indeed, as Toscano and Kinkle suggest in relation to Jameson's theorisation:

> To propose an aesthetic of cognitive mapping under conditions of late capitalism could be taken as an attempt to force into being a certain kind of political visibility and thus to counter the objective, material effects of a dominant regime of representation.[48]

The chapter then moves on to analyse several contemporary experimental, non-fiction works that — either explicitly or implicitly — embrace the theory of cognitive mapping laid out by Jameson. These case studies offer an opportunity to interrogate the political potentialities of such spatio-political praxes. The works examined here

share a desire to dialectically synthesise different scales of visualisation and mapping — a crucial structuring element of Jameson's theoretical framework. Thus, across the works, we find a shared preoccupation with constructing cognitive maps that dialectically oscillate between micro and macro spatio-politics.

The first work that is analysed is Thomas Kneubühler's *Land Claim* project, which examines the displacement of First Nations communities in Northern Quebec and the Philippines by multinational natural resource extraction companies. Here, I argue that within the moving image works that form part of this larger multimedia project, the speculative flows of global capital encounter the materiality of the landscapes they wish to exploit. By embracing the Deleuzian notion of the 'stratigraphic image', I argue that Kneubühler's work cognitively maps the relationship between abstract financial speculation and a topographical engagement with its proposed sites of future spatial fixing and exploitation. Next, the focus shifts to Ursula Biemann's *Black Sea Files*, a work that explores the socio-geographical recomposition of the territories carved apart by the creation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline — which extends from the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli oil field in the Caspian Sea to Ceyhan, a port city on the south-eastern Mediterranean coast of Turkey — and the connections to national and supra-national governance. Here, I argue that Biemann utilises an aesthetic of 'soft montage', originally conceived by filmmaker and theorist Harun Farocki, to oscillate between the micro and macro spatial-geographical injustices wrought by the pipeline's construction. Such a strategy ultimately aims to bridge the gap between larger homogenised forms of financial and governmental power and their impact upon the myriad 'local textures' and communities along the route of the pipeline. Finally, I examine Allan Sekula's photo essay *Fish Story* and Sekula and Noël Burch's *The Forgotten Space*, both of which focus on visualising the logisitification of maritime space. Here, I argue that Sekula's concept of 'critical realism' structures his (and Burch's) attempt to cognitively map the materiality of human labour in increasingly automatised and logistified spaces of circulation. All these works move between micro and macro spatio-politics in their attempts to map the matrixes of contemporary domination. It is through such modes of aesthetic sensing and dialectical mapping that the spatial is rendered in all its complexity and contradictions — an alive form of 'political plastic'. It is within these sites of tension that we can begin to tease open the fissures, cracks, and contradictions embedded within the operative logics of late capitalism.

Chapter 2, 'Carceral Geographies: Spaces of Exception and Internment', considers how the mass reduction of social welfare provision and infrastructure and the related rise of unemployment, homelessness, and poverty globally have led to the care of the state often being replaced by increasing disciplinary state action and mass incarceration. The resulting expansion of carceral spaces and infrastructures has also been motivated by both broader economic shifts towards prison privatisation and attempts to download social costs onto the individual. Since the year 2000, carceral internment has risen by roughly 20% globally. This rapid expansion of carceral populations and infrastructure over the last half century has brought about a 'punitive turn' within the humanities and social sciences, generally concerned with exploring

the 'historical, political, economic, and sociocultural roots' of mass incarceration 'as well as its collateral costs and consequences'.[49] Understanding the infrastructural and spatial transformations wrought by this expansionary development of the prison industry has become a chief preoccupation for economic and human geographers over the past twenty years. Indeed, this research has developed into a subfield of its own, carceral geography. Most broadly, carceral geography — as an area of theoretical and political enquiry — involves a geographical engagement with the spaces, practices, and experiences of confinement. In addition, geographers working within this field attempt to situate the carceral within wider social, economic, and geopolitical infrastructures, aiming 'to counter the imagination of a closed-off and sealed carceral institution, discussing instead the liminal spaces "betwixt and between" the inside and outside of prisons'.[50]

This chapter examines several experimental non-fiction works that — in a manner much akin to the carceral geographic turn — seek to visualise and critique the shifting spatial and infrastructural relations of carceral spaces. Here, I focus on works that aim to unpack how, under the conditions of globalisation and neocolonialism, carceral spaces increasingly impact and structure sites beyond their physical borders. In addition, I also examine works that focus on practices of internment that are more directly connected to the acceleration of states of exception that have become permanent rules: migrant detention centres, concentration camps, holdings sites for political prisoners, to name but three. Across all these works, there is a clear emphasis on not only visualising carceral spaces that are increasingly occluded from site, but also understanding their tight interconnections with larger judicial and biopolitical structures of power. In addition to examining works that engage with the contemporary mutations of carceral spaces, I also look at filmic practices that engage with the transformation of historical sites of carcerality, often appropriated as radical political gestures or exploited for financial gain.

The chapter opens with an examination of Susan Schuppli and Steffan Kraemer's *Omarska: Memorial in Exile*, a twenty-seven-minute video work that interrogates the historical and contemporary function of the mine-turned-concentration camp in the village of Omarska, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Here, I argue that through the dialectical juxtaposition of the material landscapes of extraction and the sites of sovereign violence, the film interrogates the shifting function of these spaces. Ultimately, Schuppli and Kraemer's film focuses upon how the appropriation of an already established spatial infrastructure clearly would have aided the occlusion and concealment of its new function. From here, I move on to examine James Bridle's 2015 work *Seamless Transitions*, which attempts to visualise the occluded infrastructure of UK migrant removal and detention centres in the UK. I suggest that Bridle's film points towards the deliberate occlusion of sovereign power and violence within these sites of detention and removal through the strategic mixing of public and private infrastructure and labour. Finally, I focus on Jonathan Perel's 2015 film *Toponimia*, which examines the historical and contemporary conditions of four military 'resettlement' villages in northern Argentina. The formal structure of the film emphasises not only the occluded sovereign control and surveillance over these spaces, but also their reclamation post-dictatorship. The work also points

towards the ways in which such processes of reclamation were facilitated by the structural neglect of contemporary neoliberal governance.

All these works understand that such carceral sites and spaces can never be read as hermetically sealed, they always operate at the border with — and in relation to — larger structures of power and discipline, both geographically and historically. In a manner akin to the previous chapter's examination of works interrogating the seeming abstraction of late capitalism's spatial operations, the works examined in this chapter perceive a similar occlusion and fragmentation of carceral space. Consequently, similar questions drive this chapter: how can carceral spaces that are increasingly fragmented and hidden from sight — intentionally masking sovereign state violence and control — be visualised within moving image practice? These works respond to such processes of violent masking by attending to the seepages of carceral violence beyond the confines of their material infrastructures. Once again, the attunement to the spatial and aesthetic within these works is aimed at excavating those embedded relationalities of carcerality that might not be readily visible at first glance, but which are productive sites of tension, and of potential resistance.

Chapter 3, 'Border Regimes: Labour, Ports and the Sea', contests that borders are no longer what they once were, or, at least, what they were once perceived to be. They have proliferated, shifting from the periphery to the centre of our social, economic, and political lives. They have also become markedly less visible systems of control and surveillance, often functioning beyond (yet still alongside) their traditional roles as the markers of geopolitical sovereign boundaries. Under the conditions of transnational global capitalism, understandings of borders as solid sovereign, geopolitical 'boundaries', 'walls', or 'barriers' have shifted.[51] In addition, the concomitant rise of both an increasingly fragmented global division of labour and the rise of neocolonial forms of extra-sovereign governance have changed the function and understanding of the border in myriad ways. The aim of this chapter is to examine how the documentary image has attempted to articulate this contemporary reconstitution of borders as heterogeneous, shifting, and proliferating regimes of spatial control. How is it that we can attempt to represent mechanisms of control — of bodies, labour, and capital — that are increasingly fragmented and often withdrawn from sight? Thus, it is evident that borders striate the social landscape in heretofore unexplored ways, becoming productive mechanisms in the exploitation of labour and the acceleration of late capitalism's accumulatory movements. Border regimes operate both within, across, and outside sovereign territorialities, relentlessly exploiting and reconstituting bodies, environments, and labour pools. However, once we do away with a conception of bordering regimes as something strictly sovereign — the wall, the fence, the barrier, which marks the limits of a nation state — attempting to render visible their intricate operations and functions become more of a challenge. Moreover, as the border becomes something extra-sovereign, a plethora of new actors and forces come into play, reshaping the function and operations of different bordering regimes. And, as the number of actors increases, locking down the responsibility for violence and exploitation across these new regimes of power and control also becomes more of a challenge.

Within the first section, titled 'Logistical Peripheries', I focus on Anna Lascari, Ilias Marmaras, and Carolin Phillip's *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds*. This work investigates how logistical spaces — ports, transportation corridors, storage facilities etc. — materially impact the sites that they border and interact with. I argue that the work examines how logistical spaces cannot be read as materially and geographically detached from the spaces at their peripheries. Instead, such sites and infrastructures of contemporary logistics create new, messy, and violent forms of extra-sovereign bordering. The second section of this chapter, entitled 'Regimes of (In)visibility', examines Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani's multimedia work *Liquid Traces: The Left-to-Die Boat*. This work examines the fragmentation and related proliferation of bordering regimes across the Mediterranean Sea. Here, I focus on how Heller and Pezzani's project unpacks the structural interconnections between these new forms of oceanic bordering/securitisation that striate the sea and the intensification of visibility and surveillance across these same spaces. With a multitude of sovereign and extra-sovereign actors now involved in the control and securitisation of this space, new technologies of visualisation and surveillance now exist to document movement across this oceanic area. Across both case studies, there is a keen focus on how the large-scale power dynamics of logistics and border control have material impacts on those fragmentary sites at the peripheries of these spaces. Such a visual focus on the fragment or detail once again draws us back to this book's emphasis on a politically-responsive and sensitive aesthetic documentary praxis that is attuned to such sites of spatial fragmentation and heterogeneity — helping to visualise, and simultaneously critique, the structures of violence upon which they are ultimately predicated.

Conclusion

Whilst there is an emerging body of work examining the intersection between the moving image and the spatial, this book marks the first comprehensive theorisation of such a spatio-political trend in non-fiction practice. By forging connections between these works, the book not only highlights the presence of such a spatio-political tendency, but also examines the future aesthetic and political potentialities for such a critical visual praxis. By bringing these spatio-political works together, *Spatial Violence and the Documentary Image* argues that they constitute an entirely new genre of political non-fiction media practice. Thus, by undertaking this crucial groundwork — mapping out the origins, politics, and potential future directions of this critical practice — this book hopes to open the door to a whole new area of documentary study focused on such spatialised practices. By delineating the boundaries of this field of practice, the book aims to create a fertile space for further scholarly research and investigation within documentary and moving image studies. However, the conceptual and theoretical groundwork conducted by this book also aims to extend beyond such scholarly realms. This research also aims to have wider resonances across the interdisciplinary area of spatial studies, opening new avenues of conceptual and methodological enquiry into the spatio-political.

To date, *Spatial Violence and the Documentary Image* is the first book to concretely and theoretically interrogate this new trend in documentary media practice. It is a crucial contribution not only to documentary media theory but also the wider fields of spatial studies, human geography, and new media. It therefore has a wider-reaching audience of readers beyond the disciplinary boundaries of film and media studies. Moving image practice offers up a whole new range of techniques for interrogating the politics of the spatial. By bringing together spatial theories, radical political theory, and documentary aesthetics, the book offers a sustained analysis of key trends in recent non-fiction media-making in relation to some of the crucial political challenges of our time.

Notes to the Introduction

1. Gerry Turvey, 'Panoramas, Parades and the Picturesque: The Aesthetics of British Actuality Films, 1895-1901', *Film History*, 16.1 (2004), 9-27 (p. 9).
2. Here, it is important to note that I am drawing on important work done by John David Rhodes and Elena Gorfinkel in their volume *Taking Place: Location and the Moving Image*. A central objective of the volume is to 'wrest place from its status as mere setting and narrative "support" [...] focus[ing] on the generative structures, aesthetic conditions, and political implications of the profilmic, drawing background to foreground, periphery to center': 'Introduction', in *Taking Place: Location and the Moving Image*, ed. by John David Rhodes and Elena Gorfinkel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), pp. vii–xxix (p. xii). A more thorough engagement with their theorisation can be found in the section 'Documentary Spatiality' in this chapter.
3. Here, I am building on crucial work associated with the 'spatial turn' that has emerged in the social sciences and humanities from the 1970s onwards. The section 'A Spatial Turn' in this chapter more fully articulates the rise of such a spatial focus and its increasing prevalence within documentary practice.
4. Michael Pattison, 'Steady-Stare Surveillance, or the Spatial Turn in Nonfiction Films', *Sight and Sound* [blog], 9 September 2018 <https://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/comment/unfiction/steady-stare-surveillance-documentaries-spatial-turn-nonfiction-cinema-uppland-home-resistance> [accessed 2 November 2023].
5. Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 2011), p. 6.
6. Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE Publications, 2005), p. 9.
7. Such spatialised thinking also extended into broader theoretical and political realms: feminist accounts of domestic space and labour (e.g. Federici); queer and trans theory (e.g. Halberstam); and colonial theory (e.g. Fanon), amongst others.
8. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991), pp. 186-87.
9. Christian Fuchs, 'Henri Lefebvre's Theory of the Production of Space and the Critical Theory of Communication', *Communication Theory*, 29.2 (2019), 129-50 (p. 135).
10. David Harvey, 'Globalization and the "Spatial Fix"', *Geographische Revue*, 2 (2001), 23-30 (pp. 25–26).
11. Frances Cairncross, *The Death of Distance: How the Communications Revolution is Changing Our Lives* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2001).
12. Barney Warf and Santa Arias, 'Introduction', in *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. by Barney Warf and Santa Arias (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 1–10 (p. 5).
13. Edward Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), pp. 2, 3.
14. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. by Colin Gordon, trans. by Colin Gordon and others (New York: Vintage, 1980), p. 70.

15. Massey, *For Space*, p. 9.
16. Soja, *Seeking Spacial Justice*, pp. 17–18.
17. Ibid., p. 7.
18. Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16.1 (1986): 22–27 (p. 23).
19. Doreen Massey, 'Landscape/Space/Politics: An Essay,' *The Future of Landscape and the Moving Image* (blog), 14 April 2011, <https://thefutureoflandscape.wordpress.com/landscapespacepolitics-an-essay/> [accessed 2 November 2023].
20. Matthew Fuller and Eyal Weizman, *Investigative Aesthetics: Conflicts and Commons in the Politics of Truth* (Brooklyn: Verso, 2021).
21. Eyal Weizman, *Forensic Architecture: Notes from Fields and Forums* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2012), p. 7.
22. Fuller and Weizman, *Investigative Aesthetics.*
23. Thomas Keenan and Eyal Weizman, *Mengele's Skull: The Advent of Forensic Aesthetics* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), p. 9.
24. A closer engagement with Weizman's specific theorisation of the forensic will come in Chapter 2, when we engage with the work of his research agency, Forensic Architecture.
25. The section 'Between the Extractive and Necropolitical: Carceral Geographies in Forensic Architecture's *Omarska: Memorial in Exile*' in Chapter 2 explores in more detail the relation between the aesthetic, evidentiary, and spatial, particularly as it relates to modes of human rights activism and investigative journalism.
26. Rhodes and Gorfinkel, 'Introduction', p. viii.
27. Tom Conley, *Cartographic Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), p. 1.
28. It is important to note that within Rhodes and Gorfinkel's examination of cinema's relationship to the spatial they do not remain strictly at the level of the aesthetic and representational. They not only consider cinema's wider 'real world' infrastructural impacts on material sites and places, they also problematise precisely what constitutes spatiality (preferring the term 'place'). I will return to their work later, as it forms a crucial theoretical touchstone for this project.
29. Conley, *Cartographic Cinema*, p. 9.
30. Here, it is important to note that I am conscious of the historiographical inaccuracies that such a draconian split (pre-World War II and post-World War II) activates; however, I still feel it functions as a useful descriptor of the large-scale shift towards a more contemplative set of aesthetic tropes, which simultaneously privileged a heightened engagement with the spatial.
31. Conley, *Cartographic Cinema*, p. 9.
32. Deleuze perhaps hints towards such a spatial articulation with what he has elsewhere termed 'any-space-whatever [...] a space of virtual conjunction, grasped as pure locus of the possible': Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image,* trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone Press, 1986), p. 109).
33. I will return to this political potentiality shortly, examining other scholarly intersections between the spatial and political in moving image practice
34. There are, of course, several notable exceptions to such a general scholarly focus on narrative cinema when examining cinematic depictions of landscape and space. For example, early actuality films (by the likes of Auguste and Louis Lumière and Alfred C. Abadie) often engaged with specific sites and landscapes of urban modernity, and they have been extensively theorised. Similarly, the early 'city symphony films' (by the likes of Manoel de Oliveira and Dziga Vertov) were hybrid experimental-documentary works produced mainly in the 1920s and aimed to capture the rapid urbanisation and modernisation of city spaces. Again, these have been well theorised.
35. Martin Lefebvre, 'On Landscape in Narrative Cinema', *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, 20.1 (2011), 61–78 (p. 65).
36. Elizabeth Cowie, 'Documentary Space, Place, and Landscape', *Media Fields Journal*, 3 (2011), 1–21 (p. 2).
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., p. 10.
39. Yuriko Furuhata, 'Returning to Actuality: Fûkeiron and the Landscape Film', *Screen*, 48.3 (2007), 345–62 (p. 348).

40. Ibid., p. 346.
41. Ibid, pp. 353–54.
42. Ibid, p. 354.
43. Rhodes and Gorfinkel, 'Introduction', p. xii.
44. Ibid., p. xi.
45. It is important to note that Rhodes and Gorfinkel wish to make a conceptual shift away from the notion of 'space' and towards that of 'place', suggesting that the latter term offers a greater potential for 'resonant and forceful political intervention'. For them, conceptions of 'place' are replete with 'tensions between ontology and codedness,' in ways that 'space' is not. Whilst I fully embrace this conceptual reorientation, my theorisation remains at the broader level of the spatial, where I believe similar arguments over ontology and codedness remain extremely pertinent, especially in the realms of social and political geography (for example, the questions of fixity, representation, and the undialectical, explored previously).
46. Rhodes and Gorfinkel, 'Introduction', p. xii.
47. Alberto Toscano and Jeff Kinkle, *Cartographies of the Absolute* (London: Zero Books, 2015), p. 39.
48. Ibid., p. 26.
49. *The Punitive Turn: New Approaches to Race and Incarceration*, ed. by Deborah E. McDowell, Claudrena N. Harold, and Juan Battle (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), p. 2.
50. Dominique Moran, *Carceral Geography: Spaces and Practices of Incarceration* (Farnham: Routledge, 2015), p. 90.
51. It is crucial to emphasise that contemporary attention should still be directed towards physical sovereign border practices, especially concerning the persistent existence of robust borders like Israel's illegal separation wall, the northern border of Mexico, US travel restrictions, and the emergence of 'fortress Europe'. Physically identifiable borders continue to play a pivotal role in various manifestations of spatial violence.

CHAPTER 1

❖

Visualising Late Capitalism's Landscapes

> The conception of capital is admittedly a totalizing or systemic concept: no one has ever seen or met the thing itself; it is either the result of scientific reduction [...] or the mark of an imaginary and ideological vision.
>
> — Fredric Jameson[1]

How can the machinations of late capitalism be visualised within moving image practice? How can contemporary non-fiction practices capture and critique the diffuse movements and operations of contemporary transnational capital, an economic system that is itself an increasingly all-enveloping machine of capture? By focusing on a variety of documentary works that all share a concern with examining late capitalism's exploitative spatial logics, this chapter seeks to answer such questions. Additionally, the chapter seeks to examine the political potentialities, and limitations, of such political-aesthetic praxes. Ultimately, what role can the documentary image play in the fight against the savage encroachment of transnational global capital? What strategies of visualisation and critique have been developed? Which remain underexplored or underdeveloped?

Non-fiction moving image work has a crucial role to play in undermining the apparently 'seamless' functioning of logistified and financialised capitalism, helping to throw into sharp relief its fissures, cracks, and contradictions. Indeed, this point returns us to one of the overarching themes of this book. Moving image practice must develop a political praxis that makes the invisible exploitations of spatial power relations legible and, most importantly, resistible. As Edward Soja suggests, spatiality under late capitalism has become a dominant site of exploitation: 'relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life [...] human geographies become filled with politics and ideology'.[2] It is the contention of this chapter that the moving image is a crucial tool of resistance against such exploitative spatial logics. By surveying a variegated set of works that have made steps towards such a critical visual praxis, this chapter hopes to map out some 'lines of flight' for its continued critical development. Through this analysis, I hope to map some aesthetic and political connections between this geographically disparate set of filmmakers, all of whom have attempted to visualise late capitalism's landscapes.

Defining Late Capitalism

Here, I think it is necessary to historically situate my uptake of the notion of late capitalism, with a more general aim of providing a working definition of the term. For Ernst Mandel, the epoch of late capitalism surfaced after the Second World War and was caused by the convergence and subsequent consolidation of several political and economic forces: the globalisation of labour movement, the concomitant rise of the multinational corporation, and the widening transnational flows of finance capital and globalised trading markets. The development of these new forms of global-economic organisation suggested by Mandel were also structurally aided by shifts towards neoliberal forms of political and fiscal governance. Up until the end of the Second World War, 'market processes and entrepreneurial and corporate activities [...] [had been] surrounded by a web of social and political constraints'.[3] However, as capital's movements were increasingly globalised and fluid, such 'social and political constraints' had to be lifted. Neoliberalism promoted the opening of national markets to global trade and financial speculation, coupled with a massive reduction in state interventionism. Within these new approaches to the political economy, the supposedly 'natural forces' of global trade were normalised and the 'free hand' of the markets began to reign supreme. Within these new configurations of global capitalism, more emphasis had to be placed upon capital fluidity and mobility. As the fixity and embeddedness of traditional forms of constrained political-economic organisation no longer matched the operations of global trade, new strategies of organisation and exploitation had to be developed.[4]

Indeed, the language of 'fluidity' and 'mobility' marked the discursive *and* material development of late capitalism. For Zygmunt Bauman, the increased 'fluidity' and inequality of the global economic system is exactly where these new global formations of economics derive their strength from. For such a system based on logics of fluidity and inequality to be most effectively realised, Bauman suggests that there had to be effective 'social disintegration'. He writes, 'global powers are bent on dismantling such networks for the sake of their continuous and growing fluidity, that principal source of their strength and the warrant of their invincibility'. Thus, for Bauman, these new global economic forces must necessarily disintegrate 'the social network', those 'effective agencies of collective action [...] particularly a territorially rooted tight network'. It is from here that a system based on 'the new lightness and fluidity of the increasingly mobile, slippery, shifty, evasive and fugitive power' could be realised.[5] Fundamentally, for both Mandel and Bauman, late capitalism is defined by such fluid operations, the consequences of which are the rise of multinational corporations (and the complicity of state power in their perpetuation), an increasingly globalised and fragmented labour market, and uneven geographical development (consequences that in turn feed back into, and perpetuate, the extension of such a fluid system).

Late Capitalist Aesthetics

Such apperceptions of late capitalism as a centralised — yet fundamentally fluid and mobile — system of power have led theorists to suggest that it is a deeply abstracted and interconnected political-economic formation.[6] Indeed, the fluidity and mobility of such a system has led many theorists to conclude that late capitalism is an increasingly all-pervasive and invisible system. This poses significant issues at the levels of the aesthetic and representational. As David Hodge and Hamed Yousefi suggest, 'as abstraction reaches into every crevice of our existence, art increasingly adopts a style that Emily Apter has called *oneworldedness*: "a delirious aesthetics of systematicity ... held in place by the paranoid premise that 'everything is connected'" '.[7] For Apter, at the level of aesthetic representation, oneworldedness 'matches the circular form of the globe — imagined as a smooth surface allowing the unimpeded flow of capital, information, and language'.[8] Apter's conception of 'oneworldedness' can be seen as a dangerously homogenising trend within a broader range of contemporary aesthetic practices. The danger of such systems of representation is that the social totality takes on behemoth-esque proportions; indestructible and completely pervasive. Here, the residual cracks and contradictions of late capitalism are abstracted.[9] Thus, within Apter's conceptualisation, it is increasingly difficult for cultural and aesthetic practice to imagine an 'outside' to the all-pervasive nature of late capitalism.

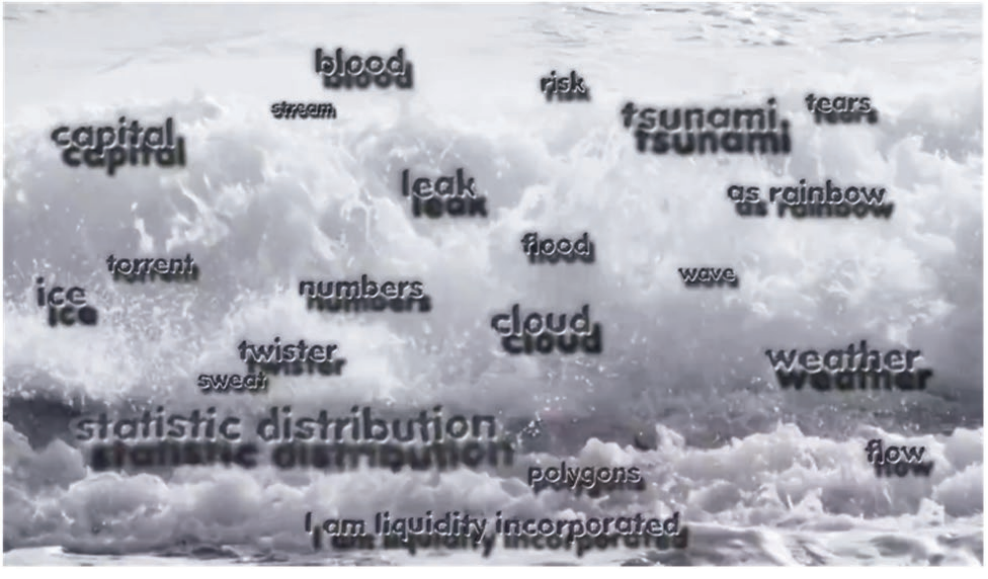

Fig. 1.1. Still from *Liquidity Inc.*, dir. by Hito Steyerl (Germany, 2014).

Apter's notion of 'oneworldness' is perhaps most poignantly (and critically) interrogated in Hito Steyerl's 2014 film *Liquidity Inc.* Steyerl's work as a visual artist and filmmaker has focused extensively on visualising and critiquing late capitalism's exploitative logics. *Liquidity Inc.* imbricates a range of narratives that

focus on different understandings of 'liquidity', ranging from the financial to the environmental. We meet Jacob Wood, a former financial advisor, whose career ended with the Lehman Brothers' crisis. Wood, a practising 'mixed martial arts' fighter, discusses the flexible fighting style of Bruce Lee: 'that's what makes it exciting, that's what keeps things liquid, and fluid'. Another recurring narrative is a balaclava-wearing weather reporter — a nod, as Gary Zhang has suggested, to the 1970s militant leftist group The Weather Underground — who maps the Vietnamese-born Wood's journey to the USA, his life constantly at the mercy of wider geopolitical (Vietnam War) and financial (2008 crash) events. Mixed martial arts clashes with the 2008 financial crash, weather reportage with property foreclosure, all of which are hyperbolically woven together by their shared concerns with liquidity. Zhang suggests:

> The interconnections of finance and hydrology affect us all: weather is water plus history. Therein lies also the elemental alignment proposed by Steyerl's montage [...]. Anxiety is in the water here, not only because of the film's post-crash moment, but because of the inherent volatility of all the systems to which it alludes.[10]

Whilst Zhang seems to suggest that Steyerl's emphasis on liquidity is sincere — aiming to present the inherent volatility of inextricably intertwined systems — I would instead suggest that it is more of a self-reflexive critique of the 'oneworldness' style that it hyperbolically employs. One particularly memorable image from the start of the film overlays a variety of words — capital, blood, torrent, tsunami, sweat, statistic distribution, amongst others — on top of an image of a crashing wave.

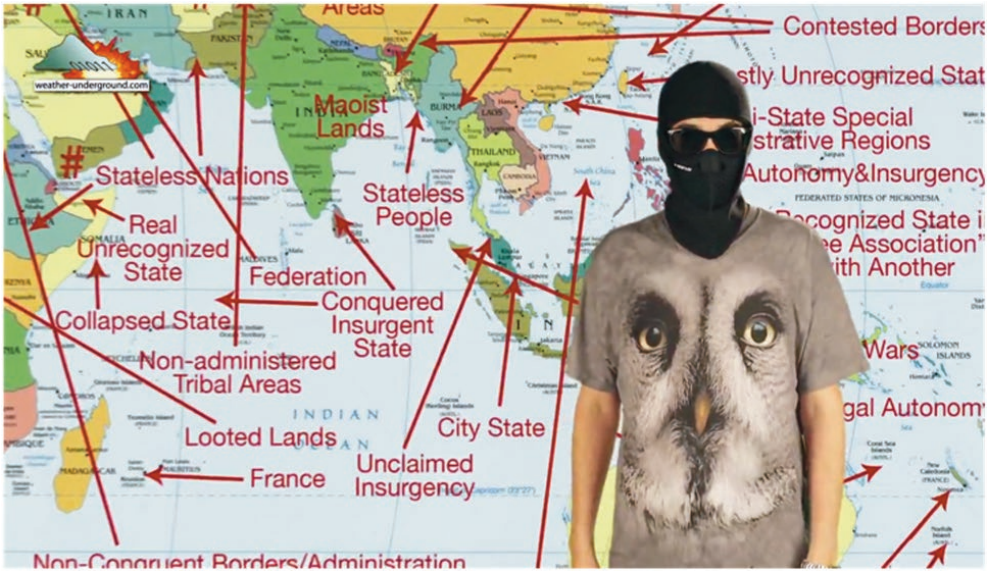

Fig. 1.2. Still from *Liquidity Inc.*, dir. by Steyerl (Germany, 2014).

In a certain respect, Steyerl's film seems to echo Jameson's famous claim that nowadays 'it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism'.[11] From the Thatcherite-Reaganite discourses of 'market forces' to the reuptake of Adam Smith's 'invisible hand of the market', there has been a prevalent tendency to treat late capitalism as some sort of natural phenomenon. Ultimately, *Liquidity Inc.* points towards a greater tendency in artistic practice to enshrine a particularly abstracted, 'oneworlded' and *liquid* representation of capitalism's contemporary machinations.[12] Hodge and Yousefi also offer the provocative question 'can art help to induce new forms of subjectivity, which might be better equipped to trace the totality?'[13] Clearly, this question is intertwined with the one that opened this chapter. Both seek to understand how we can fight against an aesthetic embrace of late capitalism's 'naturalised' and 'obfuscated' operations. Indeed, the works we will survey in this chapter are concerned with resisting such modes of aesthetic representation. Rather, they are concerned with locating and mapping the concrete spatio-political impacts of such exploitative logics.

Spatiality and Late Capitalism

Several contemporary theorists have tried to understand how aesthetic practices can be employed to expose the inner workings of late capitalism, from Fredric Jameson's notion of 'cognitive mapping' to Alberto Toscano's formulation of mapping the 'social totality'. As the names of their concepts suggest, geographic and spatial understandings of late capitalism's movements are a critical component of such aesthetic approaches. Such a spatial thrust is representative of the wider spatial turn in social and cultural theory, extending from Henri Lefebvre's canonical *The Production of Space* to David Harvey's notion of the 'spatial fix'. For both these Marxist geographers — and we can include Jameson and Toscano here as well — contemporary finance capital seeks to exploit and bed itself within material space on an unprecedented scale. As Harvey suggests:

> The 'spatial fix' (in the sense of geographical expansion to resolve problems of overaccumulation) is in part achieved through fixing investments spatially, embedding them in the land, to create an entirely new landscape (of airports and of cities, for example) for capital accumulation [...] the infrastructures of urbanization are crucial, both as foci of investment to absorb surpluses of capital and labor (providing localized/regional forms of the 'spatial fix' as through the dynamics of suburbanization or the building of airport complexes) and as the necessary fixed capital of an immobile sort to facilitate spatial movement and the temporal dynamics of continued capital accumulation.[14]

Thus, within the epoch of late capitalism's unrelenting expansion, its increasing globalisation requires spatial placeholders to both absorb the surplus of overaccumulation and to create new strategic centres for further movement, expansion, and accumulation. Harvey's examination of capitalism's global expansion — primarily developed through the notion of the 'spatial fix' — led him to conclude that capitalism 'could not survive without being geographically expansionary'.[15]

Neil Smith has also conducted important research into late capitalism's exploitative spatial logics. For Smith, the ascension of late capitalism — particularly over the last three decades — has restructured geographical space on an unprecedented scale.[16] The result of this restructuring is a pervasive and global process of 'uneven development'. As he suggests, uneven development is the:

> Hallmark of the geography of capitalism. It is not just that capitalism fails to develop evenly, that due to accidental and random factors the geographical development of capitalism represents some stochastic deviation from a generally even process. The uneven development of capitalism is structural rather than statistical.[17]

Thus, the forces of late capitalism that produce uneven development are not restructuring space in any natural or organic way, rather these transformations are the result of a structurally produced inequality, fostered with the complicity of national and supranational governing powers and global corporations. Consequently, the ever-escalating globalisation of capitalism is being built around an ever-increasingly streamlined ability to find and exploit new spaces of accumulation. Thus, from Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, and continuing through into the work of Smith and Harvey (amongst others, such as Massey, Soja, Gregory), there has been a clear theoretical emphasis on trying to understand the spatial transformations wrought by the machinations of late capitalism. What role can moving image practice play in such discursive formations? Can we push for the development of a political praxis within moving image culture that seeks to expose the spatial injustices brought about by late capitalism? What shape would such a praxis take?

One theoretical concept that responds, both directly and indirectly, to such questions is Fredric Jameson's notion of 'cognitive mapping'. Jameson's concept is an aesthetic rallying call, pushing artistic practitioners to develop new modes of praxis that map and figure the spatial logics of late capitalism. Whilst not focused specifically on the aesthetics and politics of the moving image, Jameson's concept is particularly central to this chapter, due to the way it works at the intersection of capitalist critique, spatial theory, and aesthetic praxis. As Alberto Toscano and Jeff Kinkle suggest:

> To propose an aesthetic of cognitive mapping under conditions of late capitalism could be taken as an attempt to force into being a certain kind of political visibility and thus to counter the objective, material effects of a dominant regime of representation.[18]

Jameson's aesthetic formulation will provide the theoretical underpinning for the analysis of several key experimental non-fiction works that follows. Ultimately, we will ask how these practitioners respond to, develop, or subvert the principles of a 'cognitive mapping' praxis. However, before we begin this analysis, I feel it is necessary to map out the germination and development of Jameson's concept — framing cognitive mapping's constituent parts and political stakes.

Jameson's 'Cognitive Mapping'

Elucidations of cognitive mapping's theoretical parameters are scattered somewhat intermittently throughout Jameson's writings.[19] Perhaps the most sustained exploration of the concept can be found in a chapter entitled 'Cognitive Mapping', which forms part of the edited volume *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Jameson argues that with the rapid expansion of late capitalism after the Second World War, our understandings, and representations, of the spatial have become more and more fractured. Under the double-barrelled (and tightly enmeshed) development of neocolonialism and globalised free market capitalism, we find a 'growing contradiction between lived experience and structure, or between a phenomenological description of the life of an individual and a more properly structural model of the conditions of existence of that experience'.[20] As the individual's subjective life is increasingly bound up with colonial and capitalist exploitation, it becomes ever harder to forge connections between lived experience and the socio-economic forces that shape such an existence. It is here, in the face of such spatial dislocations, that we begin to encounter a crisis of representation and figuration; an 'inability to grasp the way the system functions as a whole'.[21] Thus, whilst the transition into this epoch extended certain aspects of imperialist monopolisation, for Jameson it is 'decisive but incomparable with the older convulsions of modernization and industrialization, less perceptible and dramatic, somehow, but more permanent precisely because more thoroughgoing and all-pervasive'.[22] Consequently, the late capitalist epoch is perhaps centrally defined by an increasingly 'undramatic' and 'imperceptible' acceleration of capitalist exploitation. As touched upon earlier, when the operations of late capitalism are perceived as increasingly illegible, there is a theoretical tendency to embrace such a sense of imperceptibility; admitting powerlessness in front of an invisible social totality. Indeed, Toscano and Kinkle point towards this when they suggest that an apperception of late capitalism:

> As an infinitely ramified system of exploitation, an abstract, intangible but overpowering logic, a process without a subject or a subject without a face — poses formidable obstacles to its representation [and] has often been taken in a sublime or tragic key.[23]

Whilst Jameson admits that the machinations of late capitalism may be less immediately visible, he refuses to become defeatist. Indeed, it is precisely *within* the epoch of late capitalism that Jameson's call for a process of cognitive mapping is most concretely situated. For him, a new aesthetic form is needed to visualise and critique late capitalism's increasingly opaque spatial operations and fight back against the culture of lamentation and sublimation that surrounds such discourses of economic totalitarianism. As Jameson himself suggests, through this new political aesthetic 'we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial as well as our social confusion'.[24] Thus, in the face of a system that is increasingly opaque and omniscient we must struggle for new forms of representation that can reposition individual and collective political action. As

Toscano and Kinkle continue on to suggest, works which would be classifiable under the banner of cognitive mapping would:

> Enable individuals and collectivities to render their place in a capitalist world-system intelligible [...] we could argue, to propose an aesthetic of cognitive mapping under conditions of late capitalism could be taken as an attempt to force into being a certain kind of political visibility and thus to counter the objective, material effects of a dominant regime of representation.[25]

Thus, for Toscano and Kinkle there is strong political bite to Jameson's rallying call, aiming as it does to resituate and reorient political struggle against a more visible and definable opposition. Indeed, it is in fact the very representational challenges that such an increasingly imperceptible system presents which engender and foster a new struggle for political legibility.

How is cognitive mapping presented as a variegated aesthetic protocol that can be taken up to aid in visualising late capitalism's socio-spatial injustices? Fundamentally, Jameson's delineation of cognitive mapping weaves together two theoretical concepts: Kevin Lynch's phenomenological urbanist notion of 'cognitive mapping' and Louis Althusser's canonical reformulation of the 'ideological'. Lynch's project of cognitive mapping — unpacked most comprehensively in his book *The Image of the City* (1960) — is concerned with understanding an individual's (predominantly) phenomenological relation to ever changing and morphing urban environments. His central claim is that as urban topography is transformed and expanded, a sense of urban alienation, 'directly proportional to the mental unmapability of local cityscapes', can set in.[26] As for Toscano and Kinkle, 'for an urban space to be successfully cognitively mapped, it "should possess a certain 'imageability'" '.[27] Lynch's resolutely phenomenological — and at times dogmatically utilitarian — approach 'can no doubt be subjected to many criticisms on its own terms (not the least of which is the absence of any conception of political agency or historical process)'.[28] Instead, Jameson is interested in how such a theory might be expanded — and, to a degree de-phenomenologised — to engage with the financialised and globalised spatial reconfigurations wrought by late capitalism. Consequently, Jameson's uptake of Lynch's concept is fundamentally 'emblematic', serving as a basic methodological framework upon which a more overtly political, and wider reaching, strategy could be grafted.

To undertake such an extrapolation, Jameson takes up Althusser's formulation of the ideological. As Jameson writes:

> I have always been struck by the way in which Lynch's conception of city experience — the dialectic between the here and now of immediate perception and the imaginative or imaginary sense of the city as an absent totality — presents something like a spatial analogue of Althusser's great formulation of ideology itself, as 'the Imaginary representation of the subject's relationship to his or her Real conditions of existence'.[29]

For Jameson, the great strength of Althusser's formulation — particularly in relation to Lynch's concept — is its articulation of a schism between the location of an individual subject vis-à-vis 'the totality of class structures in which he or she is

situated', thus moving us beyond a bounded phenomenological engagement with particular urban environments.[30] Indeed, as Robert T. Tally suggests:

> Althusser provides a theoretical framework for Lynch's more empirical or experiential analysis of the ways in which individuals negotiate their surroundings. 'Ideology' provides a bigger picture than the 'image of the city' [...]. By 'synthesising' Althusser and Lynch, Jameson is able to expand Lynch's city model to a more global terrain.[31]

Consequently, Lynch's spatial theorisation of the city can be extrapolated, shifting us into the realm of late capitalism's globalised and financialised structures and systems. Fundamentally, within Jameson's articulation of cognitive mapping, we can see a desire to keep the spatial and topological components of Lynch's analysis, whilst simultaneously upscaling the site of analysis beyond the city space to the totality of socio-economic relations constructed under late capitalism. Crucially however, this upscaling does not disavow a need to render visible the localised, spatial, and material impacts of such an economic totality. Thus, Jameson's project of cognitive mapping aims — through its synthesis of Lynch and Althusser — to make more visible and tangible the totality of the social structure and class relations within the late capitalist epoch, whilst also remaining attentive to individual's and collective's spatial emplacement within such a system.[32]

Consequently, cognitive mapping aims to confront understandings of late capitalism 'as an infinitely ramified system of exploitation, an abstract, intangible but overpowering logic', by forging connections between these overarching structures of power and their grounded, material impacts on localised, material spaces.[33] It is this dialectical synthesis of Lynch's and Althusser's conceptual frameworks that I carry forward into my analysis of the documentary works below. In various ways, these works all aim to forge connections between late capitalism's overarching structures and their localised, material, and spatial modes of exploitation in ways that mirror Jameson's dialectical synthetisation. It is of course arguable that Jameson's theory confronts the unrepresentability of late capitalist social totality with what is ultimately other modes of representation. However, building once again on Fuller and Weizman's concept of 'investigative aesthetics', I argue that to be attuned to the aesthetic and representational is crucial to both sense and make sense of late capitalism's multitudinous manifestations of power and violence that now surround us in seemingly imperceptible, yet wholly structural, ways. Consequently, this conceptual framework of the cognitive map productively interlinks with this book's broader desire to refocus and recentre the importance of the aesthetic as a tool for sensing the spatial as a 'political plastic'. Moreover, the similar attention to issues of the scalar within both Jameson and Fuller and Weizman's concepts are crucial within the modes of documentary practice which we will examine. I argue that the cognitive maps fashioned in the works below forge powerful connections between localised, material sites and spaces of capitalist exploitation and their structural and systemic power relations. Thus, these modes of mapping capital's violent and exploitative movements take up the aesthetic as a tool for both sensing and making-sense of systems of power that are increasingly abstracted and invisible by

regrounding them within material sites of exploitation. In the context of capital's increasing material evaporation, the aesthetic and representational thus become crucial lines of defence and resistance.

Cognitive Mapping in Practice

Now that the theoretical foundations of cognitive mapping have been laid out, I will move into the analysis of several contemporary experimental non-fiction works that, either explicitly or implicitly, embrace the aesthetic and political principles laid out by Jameson. As Toscano suggests:

> Across the contemporary arts and social theory — in domains of production and practice difficult to pigeonhole and categorize — the past years have witnessed, alongside a resurgent concern with politics, a veritable efflorescence in efforts to provide models, diagrams or narratives that might allow us to orient ourselves around the world-system.[34]

The following case studies will offer us an opportunity to interrogate the political potentialities of such spatio-political praxes. Here, I am also concerned with staking out the importance of non-fiction moving image work within the constellation of aesthetic approaches to cognitive mapping. As stated earlier, not only do I wish to examine those strategies that have already been developed, but also map out some 'lines of flight' for their continued critical development. Ultimately, through this analytical work, I hope to examine how the documentary image can play a crucial role in the fight against the savage encroachment of transnational global capital — examining strategies of visualisation and critique that have already been developed, whilst also gesturing towards to those which remain underexplored or underdeveloped.

This analysis will begin by focusing on Thomas Kneubühler's *Land Claim* project, which examines the impact of resource extraction on First Nations communities in northern Quebec and the Philippines. I will argue that within the moving image works that form part of this larger multimedia project, the speculative flows of global capital encounter the materiality of the landscapes they wish to exploit. By embracing the Deleuzian notion of the 'stratigraphic image', I argue that Kneubühler cognitively maps the relationship between abstract financial speculation and a topographical engagement with its proposed sites of future spatial fixing and exploitation. Next, the focus will shift to Ursula Biemann's *Black Sea Files*, a work that explores the socio-geographical re-composition of the territories carved apart by the creation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline — which extends from the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli oil field in the Caspian Sea to Ceyhan, a port city on the south-eastern Mediterranean coast of Turkey — and the connections to national and supranational governance. Here, I will argue that Biemann utilises an aesthetic of 'soft montage', originally conceived by filmmaker and theorist Harun Farocki, to oscillate between the micro and macro spatial-geographical injustices brought about by the pipeline's construction. Such a strategy ultimately aims to bridge the gap between larger homogenised forms of financial and governmental power and their impact upon the myriad 'local textures' and communities along

the route of the pipeline. Finally, we will examine Allan Sekula's photo essay *Fish Story* and Sekula and Noël Burch's *The Forgotten Space*, both of which focus on visualising the logisitification of maritime space. Here, I will argue that Sekula's concept of 'critical realism' structures his (and Burch's) attempt to map cognitively the materiality of human labour in increasingly automatised and logistified spaces of circulation. As we shall see, all these works move between micro and macro spatio-politics in their attempts to map the matrixes of contemporary domination.

Thomas Kneubühler's *Land Claim* Project

To begin this analysis, let us return to Harvey's notion of the spatial fix. For him:

> The 'spatial fix' (in the sense of geographical expansion to resolve problems of overaccumulation) is in part achieved through fixing investments spatially, embedding them in the land, to create an entirely new landscape (of airports and of cities, for example) for capital accumulation.[35]

Thus, within the epoch of finance capital's unrelenting expansion, its increasing globalisation requires spatial placeholders to both absorb the surplus of overaccumulation and to create new strategic centres for further movement and expansion. This section aims to examine how Thomas Kneubühler's *Land Claim* project tackles such spatial exploitations by visualising the transnational operations — and attendant spatial impacts — of several multinational mining companies operating within both northern Quebec and the Philippines. Across several of the project's C-Print photographs, Kneubühler examines the interrelations between three seemingly disparate locations: Raglan, a nickel mine in northern Quebec; Aupaluk, an Inuit village in Nunavik (under threat from a planned iron mine); and Zug, Switzerland, where the headquarters of several Swiss mining companies are located. In addition, *Forward Looking Statements* — the first of two video works that formed a part of this larger multimedia project — directly juxtaposes an extended visual examination of a traditional hunting-ground for the Aupaluk community with audio extracts from the Canada-based mining company Oceanic Iron Ore Corporation's conference calls with its investors, where the discussion circulates around the possibilities for resource extraction from this site. The second video work, *Relocation (FPIC)* contains a similar visual-aural juxtaposition, this time focusing on the relationship between Anglo-Swiss multinational mining company Xstrata's (now merged with Glencore) headquarters in Zug, Switzerland, and their mining operations in the Philippines. Here, I contest that such visual and aural juxtapositions function as a polemical spatio-political critique of these multinationals' planned appropriation and exploitation of such imperilled spaces. Ultimately, through the employment of a rigorous spatio-political aesthetic, Kneubühler aims to throw into sharp relief the obfuscated socio-economic machinations of such multinational organisations: the speculative flows of global capital encounter the materiality of the landscapes they wish to exploit.

The Raglan mine, located approximately sixty-two miles south of Deception Bay in the Nunavik region of Quebec, has been operated by Glencore since 1997.

Glencore is a Swiss multinational commodity trading and mining company with headquarters in Zug, Switzerland. As stated on Glencore's website, the Raglan mine 'takes up an area of nearly 70 kilometres and consists of a series of high-grade ore deposits composed mostly of nickel and copper [...] four active underground mines, a concentrator, as well as administrative and accommodation facilities'.[36] Development of the mine was approved after the signing of an Impacts and Benefits Agreement — called the 'Raglan Agreement' for short — by both the companies involved in the mine's operations and five Inuit groups.[37] *Land Claim* brings together a range of C-Printed images of the Raglan site. We are presented with images of miners, mining camps, exploratory drill holes, company jets, helicopters, and offices. Kneubühler's images seem to oscillate between a close, localised examination of these individual sites and a broader focus on the logistical and economic infrastructures supporting their connections to global capital and trade. Two images that are directly juxtaposed here are *Miners* and *Traders*. Within the first image, *Miners*, we are presented with a set of miners' headsets charging in docks at the Raglan mine. The second image, *Traders*, presents us with the exterior of a corporate building in Zug. Across these images, the material sites of resource extraction are drawn into a close comparative dialogue with the abstract modes of financial operation that both undergird and facilitate their operation. This simple strategy of juxtaposition forges connections between two sites that might otherwise have remained materially and conceptually detached. Thus, by drawing these two spaces together, Kneubühler forces us to consider the interrelations between these, and other, locales that form part of a much wider and complex network of exploitation.

Such a strategy of juxtaposition and interrelation also marks the project's moving image works. For example, throughout *Forward Looking Statements*, Kneubühler's GoPro camera — mounted on top of his guide Charlie Angutinguak's ATV — moves across a section of the Aupaluk landscape, where another potential mining site is being explored, this time by the Vancouver-based resource extraction multinational the Oceanic Iron Ore Corporation. Unstable and juddering over the uneven terrain, the camera seems to render the materiality of the landscape. As previously mentioned, the audio accompanying this work comes from a conference call describing the possible future extraction from this site by the multinational. Approximately halfway through the call, we hear from the company's Chief Operating Officer, Alan Gorman:

> The prefeasibility study delivers positive economic results. We have assumed a price for iron of $100. All amounts have been recorded in US dollars with a one-to-one exchange rate and the base case, pre-tax net present value of $5.6 billion.

As Gorman continues to speak, the camera snakes along the side of a rocky outcrop, seemingly searching for an appropriate place to scale this incline. How then does Kneubühler's visual-aural juxtaposition seek to map the interconnections between the abstract extractive future speculation of the Oceanic Iron Ore Corporation and the materiality of the sites it wishes to exploit?

Fig. 1.3. Still from *Forward Looking Statements*, dir. by Thomas Kneubühler (Canada, 2014).

To answer this question, it is useful to turn to another aesthetic-topographic notion: the stratigraphic image. As Tom Conley suggests, 'Gilles Deleuze speculates that modern cinema accedes to a "new visibility of things"'. The visibility he describes is of a character that accompanies what he calls the new and unforeseen presence of the 'stratigraphic' image'.[38] For Deleuze, with the shift from the movement-image to the time-image, 'the visual image becomes archaeological, stratigraphic, tectonic. Not that we are taken back to prehistory (there is an archaeology of the present), but to the deserted layers of our time which bury our own phantoms'.[39] As the durational temporality of the time-image came to dominate modern moving image practice, there was a fundamental shift in the visual representation of space: a change that pushed to the fore the archaeological, stratigraphic, and tectonic qualities of cinema's rendering of landscape. As Conley continues:

> Deleuze sketches out what seems to be a thumbnail treatise of the landscape of contemporary cinema. He writes of a layered and metamorphic landscape, a landscape composed of so many deposits of time that it indicates the presence of an extremely long duration.[40]

In Deleuze's formulation, this new cinematic stratigraphy fits into the larger function of the time-image, which was supposed to foster a new 'cinematic visibility of the world'. In certain ways, the notion of the stratigraphic image can be read as a precursor to the contemporary practice of deep mapping — long-form multimedia documentations of particular spaces that aim to render 'inherent instabilities' as well as 'the ongoing development of a place's identity, and its capacity to reveal historical and contemporary human experience' in an almost palimpsestic fashion.[41] For Deleuze, the formally rigorous and avowedly modernist filmmakers Danièle

Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub were the primary practitioners of this new cinematic stratigraphy. Their images traced 'the abstract curve of what has happened, and where the earth stands for what is buried in it'.[42]

Thus, the works of Huillet and Straub constituted a 'manual of stratigraphy', with each shot 'functioning as a cross section revealing little pointed lines of absent facies and full lines of those we continue to touch'.[43] Conley readily acknowledges the metaphorical thrust of Deleuze's conceptualisation. He argues that the stratigraphic image works in a dialectical fashion, causing 'one to think of the impossibility of being able to think about or through it in all its totality [...]. Yet we are able to perceive to some degree what we cannot perceive'.[44] Thus, the process of stratigraphy makes us confront the impossibility of comprehending the precise functioning of the social totality, whilst also allowing us to discover the cracks and fissures left behind by such macro movements. Huillet and Straub's 1981 essay film *Trop tôt/Trop tard* [Too Early/Too Late] is a prime example of this oscillatory dialectic. The film is divided into two parts: the first is shot across various locations in rural France. Landscapes dominate, figures remain fleeting. Accompanying these rural landscape shots is Huillet's voiceover, reading extracts from a letter written by Friedrich Engels to Karl Kautsky in 1889, describing the impoverished condition of the French peasantry. In addition, excerpts are read from the 'Notebooks of Grievances', written by the mayors of these same rural areas in protest at the establishment of the seigneurial system (a model of semi-feudal subsistence farming) in 1789.[45] The second section, shot throughout Egypt, contains extracts from a Marxist text by Mahmoud Hussein, focusing on the Egyptian peasants' 'resistance to English occupation prior to the "petit-bourgeois" revolution of Neguib in 1952'.[46] As Jonathan Rosenbaum has suggested, both sections 'suggest that the peasants revolted too soon and succeeded too late'.[47] Within both sections, the voiceover undermines any 'neat' or 'pictorial' rendering of the landscape, instead examining, interrogating, and excavating palimpsestic spaces of historical significance in peasant resistance movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It is arguable that within *Forward Looking Statements* there is a similar stratigraphic impulse at work. Kneubühler seeks to examine the topographic transformation of the landscape and the concomitant impact upon its inhabitants, both of which are under threat from the machinations of extractive capitalism. However, there is a fundamental difference that places Kneubühler's work somewhat apart from the particularities of both Deleuze's theorisation and Huillet and Straub's practice. The stratigraphy of the latter two is centrally concerned with a palimpsestic deep mapping of the *historical* landscape, unearthing often partially uncovered or socio-politically unacknowledged past injustices and horrors. Alternatively, Kneubühler's work is less of an archaeological examination of the palimpsestical histories of the Nunavik landscape. Instead, the film offers a mediation on the precarious and 'unknown' *future* exploitations and injustices that might take place within this space. In certain ways, this ties us back to our earlier examination of Harvey's spatial fix. When we confront the precarious 'unknown' futures of the landscape and its inhabitants we are also confronting how these are inextricably bound up with late

Fig. 1.4. Still from *Trop tôt/Trop tard*, dir. by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub (France, 1981).

capitalism's own 'projections' and 'risks'. Therefore, instead of an excavatory look back, we are instead offered a precarious look forward at a landscape and people in flux; unsettled by capital's spatial fixing. Kneubühler's work is interested in examining how forms of late capitalist speculation imbue these spaces with future precarity — a projection of possible exploitation that is always intimately tied to the fickle machinations of transnational global capital. Perhaps development will begin, perhaps it won't. A landscape may be destroyed, and afterward, investment removed.

David Harvey has examined how the spatial fixing response is riven through with its own contradictions:

> It has to build a fixed space [...] necessary for its own functioning at a certain point in its history only to have to destroy that space (and devalue much of the capital invested therein) at a later point in order to make way for a new 'spatial fix' [...] at a later point in its history.[48]

The reason for such destruction is the speculative and fickle nature of financial capital that underpins such spatial machinations. As Harvey goes on to suggest, these are always 'speculative developments', and if they prove unprofitable, they may be devalued and, ultimately, destroyed.[49] Within *Forward Looking Statements*, the speculative flows of global capital encounter the materiality of the landscapes they wish to exploit. Thus, the cognitive map constructed by Kneubühler takes up aspects of Deleuze's stratigraphy, whilst simultaneously moving beyond it — constructing a dialectical relationship between abstract financial speculation

and a topographical engagement with its proposed sites of future spatial fixing and exploitation. Telescoping the abstract, opaque and, invisible with a material traversal of the spaces of future exploitation, Kneubühler aims to visualise and critique extractive capitalism's increasingly opaque spatial machinations that almost serve to colonise the future. Whilst the central polemic of Kneubühler's project may seem deceptively simple, its emphasis on the need to constantly apprehend the link between abstract financial flows and the appropriation and exploitation of material and social space is an important example of just one strategy of cognitive mapping and of how futurity is examined and critiqued in his work. It is through such strategies that we can begin to examine the slow cultivation of precarious futurities that extend from such extractive speculation.

Relocation (FPIC), the second moving image work that forms part of the *Land Claim* project, embraces a similar oscillatory dialectic to *Forward Looking Statements*. The work is a looped video of a single forty-one-second static shot of Anglo-Swiss multinational mining company Xstrata's office in Zug, Switzerland. The audio comes from a Xstrata shareholder meeting, with discussion centring on the merger with Glencore. As Kneubühler suggests, Zug is a known 'tax haven', used to take advantage of Switzerland's generous tax breaks for large multinationals (a common, and widely acknowledged, strategy amongst global firms). As Jane G. Gravelle suggests, 'multinational firms can artificially shift profits from high-tax to low-tax jurisdictions using a variety of techniques, such as shifting debt to high-tax jurisdiction'.[50]

Glencore (now merged with Xstrata) has been implicated in such forms of financial 'shifting'. For example, in Zambia, the company holds a majority stake in the Mopani copper mines, alongside the Canadian mining company First Quantum and the Zambian government. A leaked report from 2011, commissioned by the Zambia Revenue Authority, found that 'Mopani's operations included tax planning strategies "equal to moving taxable revenue out of the country"'.[51] In addition, the ownership structure of the mine means that 90% of the company is located in 'secrecy jurisdictions'. Mopani is '90% owned by a company registered in the British Virgin Islands, which in turn is majority owned by Glencore Finance, registered in Bermuda'.[52] Therefore, through the transfer of ownership of profitable assets to international subsidiaries, multinational corporations can capitalise on their geographical and spatial flexibility and mobility.[53]

The specific section of audio included within *Relocation (FPIC)* is the voice of Mick Davis, a British politician and former South African businessman and then CEO of Xstrata, to a question from a representative of MultiWatch — an organisation which aims to raise awareness about the human rights violations of Swiss multinationals — regarding Xstrata's involvement with another mining company, Sagittarius Mines Inc. (SMI) in the Philippines. SMI are a contractor of the Philippine Government and, as of 2012, Xstrata held a majority share of 62.5% in the company.[54] The involvement of the government in the company came about through the signing of a Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement. The catalyst for the agreement was the development of the Tampakan Copper-Gold

Fig. 1.5. Still from *Relocation (FPIC)*, dir. by Thomas Kneubühler (Canada, 2014).

Project, which aimed to excavate the Tampakan copper-gold deposit, one of the largest undeveloped copper-gold deposits in the world, located in the south of the island of Mindanao. The MultiWatch representative at the Xstrata shareholder meeting questions the impact the TGCP would have on five ancestral domains of the Indigenous Bla'an people. Two separate reports from 2007 and 2008 highlighted that levels of pollution in the area could be significantly increased by the mining operation.[55] The 2008 report ultimately recommended 'that mining in the area be banned, considering the risk of pollution, erosion, siltation, and continuing devastating flash floods and landslides'.[56] In addition, reports from 2013 and 2014 highlighted that three 'extra-judicial killings' were 'concentrated in areas where national and transnational companies have become involved in conflicts over land and natural resources'.[57] These killings, carried out by military or para-military groups, evidence the interconnections between state power and extractive capital in the expansion of TGCP. In addition, the 2014 report also stated that:

> All the victims are families and relatives of Daguil Capion, the Bla'an chief entrusted with defending the ancestral lands, particularly against the entry of the Tampakan mining project. Daguil Capion has been wrongfully tagged as a communist insurgent by the military.

As the report continues, it is precisely through such a discourse of illegitimacy — labelling community rights activists as 'insurgents', 'bandits' or 'criminals' — 'that the state justifies the arrests and attacks on the community'.[58]

The bracketed 'FPIC' in the film's title refers to Section 7, point C in the Philippines Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997.[59] 'FPIC' stands for 'free, prior and informed consent', which must be obtained by a party before any relocation of an Indigenous group is enacted. Section 7, point C, 'Right to Stay in the Territories',

provides 'the right to stay in the territory and not to be removed therefrom. No Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples will be relocated without their free and prior informed consent, nor through any means other than eminent domain'.[60] Thus, the FPIC clause aims to prevent any attempts to coerce or misinform Indigenous populations when they are considering relocation offers. However, as the 2014 report states, Xstrata have failed to secure FPIC. They have also regularly engaged in activities that attempted to divide the Bla'an peoples, including offers of misleading social development projects and scholarships, as well as the forced installation of corrupt Indigenous leaders.[61] As of August 2023, the TGCP had still not begun commercial operations; however, SMI are still pushing for this to begin in late 2026.[62]

Within *Relocation (FPIC)*, the small Xstrata office in Zug is centrally framed, presenting three lit floors of the building. Several workers can be seen moving around this clinical corporate space, as Davis's words repeat twice during the forty-one-second duration: 'we have not commenced any relocation activities and will not do so unless we have received the free, prior and informed consent of the affected Indigenous people'. Davis's words remain somewhat detached: a vacuous corporate-speak structures his intonation and, additionally, he speaks of the impact on a community far away from this offshored space. It is arguable that *Relocation (FPIC)* functions as an inverted diptych of *Forward Looking Statements*, within which we are offered a voiceover that speaks directly to the potential transformation of the material space through which the camera moves. Within *Relocation (FPIC)*, the camera presents a space at a remove from the location being described. However, this space is still intimately connected through the potential social, economic, and geographic violence that could be inflicted on the Tampakan region by the extractive capital that flows through Xstrata's offices.

Within *Relocation (FPIC)* the camera remains static, offering a degree of stability and fixity to the space where Xstrata-Glencore have their offices. This sense of fixity offered by the camera of course belies the logistical transience that structures such processes. Being 'on the move' is a prerequisite for offshoring practices — whilst one national or sub-national zone may tighten regulation, another will open up elsewhere to take its place. As Keller Easterling suggests, within such infrastructural spaces:

> Buildings are often no longer singularly crafted enclosures, uniquely imagined by an architect, but reproducible products [...] they constitute an infrastructural technology with elaborate routines and schedules for organizing consumption. Ironically, the more rationalized these spatial products become the better suited they are to irrational fictions.[63]

Here, Easterling highlights the fact that such spaces take on a purely infrastructural role, aiding in the logistification of finance capital's movements. In addition, the reproducibility of such clinical corporate spaces has, for her, a rationalising logic that masks the irrational and extraterritorial financial exploitations that they facilitate.

Through the visual-aural juxtaposition found within *Relocation (FPIC)*, an interesting spatial dialectic is set up that explores tensions between socio-economic

constructions of 'mobility' and 'fixity' under late capitalism's relentless globalisation. Several theorists have highlighted how, by the turn of the millennium, globalisation had become a totalising — and, by extension, opaque — theoretical concept.[64] In *Globalisation: The Human Consequences*, Zygmunt Bauman aims to undermine the apperception of 'unity' within late capitalism's relentless globalisation. As Winnie Lem and Pauline Gardiner Barber have suggested, for Bauman:

> A more profound understanding of the global forces at work in contemporary capitalism, in its varying manifestations, requires a consideration of the forces that produce mobility as well as immobility... and categories of people who remain tied to particular locations.[65]

For him, one of the central tensions centres on the notion of 'space/time compression', a discursive metaphor that 'encapsulates the ongoing multifaceted transformation of the parameters of the human condition'.[66] However, through his deconstructive socio-economic analysis, Bauman aims to pick apart this notion:

> Once the social causes and outcomes of that compression are looked into, it will become evident that the globalising processes lack the commonly assumed unity of effects. The uses of time and space are sharply differentiated as well as differentiating. Globalisation divides as much as it unites; it divides as it unites.[67]

Thus, whilst certain socio-economic forces 'take on planetary dimensions', through intensive logistification and financialisation, the opposite — fixation and localisation of certain populations — also occurs, and is in fact a structural necessity for the alternative's growth. As Bauman states, 'what appears as globalisation for some means localisation for others; signalling a new freedom for some, upon many others it descends as an uninvited and cruel fate'.[68] Ultimately, in the age of globalisation, mobility becomes the dominant 'stratifying factor'. Thus, whilst we are experiencing the increasing 'planetary dimensions' of trade, finance and logistics, simultaneously, 'a "localising", space-fixing process is set in motion'. For Bauman, this 'progressive spatial segregation, separation and exclusion' is due to 'the progressive breakdown in communication between the increasingly global and extraterritorial elites and the even more 'localised' rest'.[69] As the centres of 'meaning and value production' become increasingly 'extraterritorial', localised constraints, and populations, become increasingly unimportant.

However, by returning to Harvey, we still see that immobility and fixity is a crucial component of capital's geographical expansion. As touched upon earlier, late capitalism's explosive expansions are primarily due to its 'insatiable drive to resolve its inner crisis tendencies by geographical expansion and geographical restructuring'.[70] For Harvey, this is the basic principle for his conception of the 'spatial fix': whilst needing to be highly mobile, at particular points in time capital also needs to be fixed and secured in space. This contradictory operation is thus another cause of the divisions between mobility and fixity mapped out above. As Harvey continues to suggest:

> Capitalism has to fix space (in immoveable structures of transport and communication nets, as well as in built environments of factories, roads, houses,

> water supplies, and other physical infrastructures) in order to overcome space (achieve a liberty of movement through low transport and communication costs).[71]

The specificities of such fixings rest upon whether capital searches 'for markets, fresh labor powers [or] resources (raw materials)'.[72]

This tension between fixity and mobility is something that is powerfully rendered within *Relocation (FPIC)*. The location of the office in Zug is a strategic logistical site for Xstrata, it is a use of space that is built around a desire for financial mobility. It is a perfect encapsulation of a site used by the 'global and extraterritorial' elite. Directly opposed to such elitist logics of mobility and extraterritoriality are, of course, the impacted communities in the Tampakan region who, by desire or necessity, remain firmly fixed to the site of proposed exploitation — their ancestral lands. Within *Relocation (FPIC)*, these two sites are directly juxtaposed. Visually, we are presented with a clinical corporate site that encapsulates extractive capital's mobility, whilst the audio track speaks of a deep locality that is increasingly violated by capital's global movements. When movement is undesired or impossible, flexibility and mobility are increasingly weaponised by the extractive industries. Thus, the cognitive map fashioned by Kneubühler highlights the process of stratification built around zones of financial exception and mobility. Across both these works, Kneubühler constantly focuses on issues of globality-locality and mobility-fixity, deploying different aesthetic techniques to emphasise the exploitative work of these multinational organisations.

Both video works, as well as the *Land Claim* project more broadly, make palpable the material connections between seemingly disconnected sites and spaces. Once again, we are drawn back to the dialectical model offered by Jameson's cognitive mapping, and its emphasis on different scalar and spatial zones of capital's circulatory movement. Moreover, and drawing us back to Fuller and Weizman's 'investigative' model of the aesthetic, Kneubühler's project takes up the visual as a powerful dialectical mode of both spatial sensing and sense-making. These material sites are not blankly rendered, instead they are riven through with the deep injustices and violence that structure, on the one hand, their existence, and on the other, their potential destruction. Such forms of violence, which frequently operate in geographically detached and obfuscated ways, are brought into close and intimate relation with the sites and communities that they will potentially affect. Thus, the spatio-political aesthetic developed by Kneubühler is heavily invested in modes of aesthetic sensing, producing a visually legible model of these violent networks of power. Now let us turn to the next case study of this chapter, Ursula Biemann's *Black Sea Files*, a work that also seeks to connect global and local spatial injustices.

Ursula Biemann's *Black Sea Files*

The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline extends from the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli oil field in the Caspian Sea to Ceyhan, a port city on the south-eastern Mediterranean coast of Turkey. The pipeline is 1,099 miles long and carries crude oil out from the land-locked Caspian Sea. The line also travels through Georgia, with a terminal in Tbilisi. The primary shareholders in the project are British Petroleum (BP) and Azerbaijan BTC (AzBTC). The smaller-stake shareholders included Chevron, Statoil, and Total. The Azerbaijan section was constructed by the Greek company Consolidated Contractors International, Georgia's section was a joint venture between France's Spie Capag and Britain's Petrofac International, whilst Turkey's section was constructed by the Turkish crude oil/natural gas trading company BOTAŞ Petroleum Pipeline Corporation.

The collective funding for the project was a mix of private finance and what BP CEO Sir John Browne called 'free public money'.[73] As Daphne Eviatar suggested back in 2003, 'regional conflicts and uncertain production make the $3.5 billion pipeline so risky that the oil executives who devised the venture don't want to pay for it — and the commercial banks they normally deal with don't want to lend them the money'.[74] These multinationals looked to the US government for financial assistance. The Bush administration's involvement in oil investment was well publicised, with several figures previously holding key positions in major oil companies (Vice President Dick Cheney was chief executive of Haliburton, Commerce Secretary Donald Evans had investments in oil and gas exploration company Tom Brown Inc., and National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice was a director at Chevron). The saturation of the administration by oil connections led to an energy policy programme built around investment into foreign private oil.[75] Funds for investments came from two wholly owned federal government corporations, the Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im) and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). Whilst the investment was justified through neoliberal discourses of 'trade boosts' and job creation — alongside the need to 'reduce dependence on OPEC oil producers in the Middle East, create a secure supply of oil to Israel, and begin to end dependence on Russian and Iranian oil transportation networks from the Caspian region' — the administration's investment tactics ultimately enriched only a select few oil companies.[76]

This is the starting-point for Ursula Biemann's *Black Sea Files*, a film which explores the socio-geographical recomposition of the territories carved apart by the creation of this subterranean pipeline and the connections to national and supranational governance. Biemann, a multidisciplinary artist and researcher, has always been concerned with developing an aesthetic praxis that explores the ecological, sociological, and environmental impacts of natural resource extraction. For Biemann, a central concern of such a praxis is to understand the large-scale power relations and investments — both national and supranational — embedded within such extraction projects. For example, as she states in the opening of *Black Sea Files*:

> These records are about the new Caspian oil and the deep incision made through the Caucasus to secure the precious fluid for the West. They speak

> of power that no longer resides in weapon technology but in the possession of vital resources or the ability to procure them. Building the oil pipeline means more than the invisible transfer of fluid, it is an economic project with military objectives.

Consequently, *Black Sea Files* is invested in mapping the power relations at play within new zones of oil extraction, focusing particularly on the tight imbrication of global-financial and national-governmental interests. Alongside this attempt to map the deeply interconnected financial and governmental machinations, Biemann also attempts to render visible the micro-impacts upon a range of communities along the pipeline. This imperative is signalled within Biemann's short summary of the work, where she suggests that:

> The video sheds light on a multitude of secondary sceneries. Oil workers, farmers, refugees and prostitutes who live along the pipeline come into profile and contribute to a wider human geography that displaces the singular and powerful signifying practices of oil corporations and oil politicians.[77]

This oscillation between micro and macro spatial-geographical injustices becomes a structuring concern of *Black Sea Files*. Examining the spatio-political aesthetic that Biemann utilises to cognitively map such a 'hidden matrix of [...] political space', moving between the micro and the macro, will be the central focus of this section. Here, much like in *Land Claim*, there is a strong emphasis on cultivating an aesthetic of cognitive mapping that aims at both spatial sensing and sense-making.

The film is built around a series of nine field recordings, each marked as a separate 'file'. Each file — ranging in length from approximately fifty seconds to five minutes — jumps to a different location impacted by the creation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline: Baku, Azerbaijan; Zeytinburnu, Turkey; Tsalka, Georgia; Ankara, Turkey; Yevlakh, Azerbaijan; Trabzon, Turkey; Yumurtalık, Turkey; and Kurtkulagi, Turkey. Across this range of locations, Biemann attempts to understand both the macro and micro economic, social, and political impacts of the pipeline. Alongside the constantly shifting focus on different socio-political stakeholders in the pipeline's construction — displaced Kurds, migrant workers from Columbia, Azerbaijani famers, Turkish sex workers — Biemann also moves between different modes of non-fiction address, from found-footage news reportage to ethnographic documentation, which aids her ability to shift between different scales of impact.

'File 1', filmed at the Baku oil extraction zone in Azerbaijan, opens with a close-up shot of a slew of oil passing the camera, with the 'field note' summary overlaid. Next, we are presented with a split screen image of several pump jacks extracting oil. Biemann's voiceover states:

> The place is literally soaked in oil, for over one hundred years the earth has been pierced down to the fossil fuel. First by the Europeans, then the Soviets and now by a transnational consortium. Powers have changed, but the problem remains of how to pump the Caspian crude to the west.

As the image on the right of the screen remains focused upon a solitary pump jack, the images on the left begin to depict a variety of labourers working on the site.

This thematic split — with images alternatively rendering the technological and

Figs. 1.6 and 1.7. Stills from *Black Sea Files*, dir. by Ursula Biemann (Switzerland, 2005).

industrial infrastructure of the mining site and the human labour that supports it — remains in place for the duration of the file's three-minute and twenty-six-second length. After a brief fade to black roughly half way through the file, we are presented with a series of shots that depict the workers' downtime, chatting and playing football. Over these images, Biemann asks:

> What will it take to write the hidden matrix of this political space? When transnational relations increasingly take place in the invisibility of electronic spaces, off-road terrains, and classified zones. And when international media only features political elites and large economic stakes in the region, offering little insight into local textures.

As these shots of the labourers' recreational activities on the site continue to unfold, Biemann introduces several scrolling, and often overlapping, passages of text across the screen, rendered in a large bright yellow font, each of which presents a particular news headline, evidence, perhaps, of this mediatised 'macro political-economic' focus: '1992 - Five Memoranda signed by SOCAR and Foreign Oil Companies for joint infrastructure: export pipeline, offshore pipeline, onshore processing facilities, offshore marine fleet and onshore supply base'; '1993 - Foreign Oil Companies Amoco, BP, Statoil, Pennzoil, McDermott, Ramco, Turkish Petroleum and Unocal sign contract'; '1994 - $7.14 B Oil contract signed by FOCs and leaders from UK, Norway, Saudi Arabia, US, Turkey and Russia'; '1994 — SOCAR and Foreign Oil

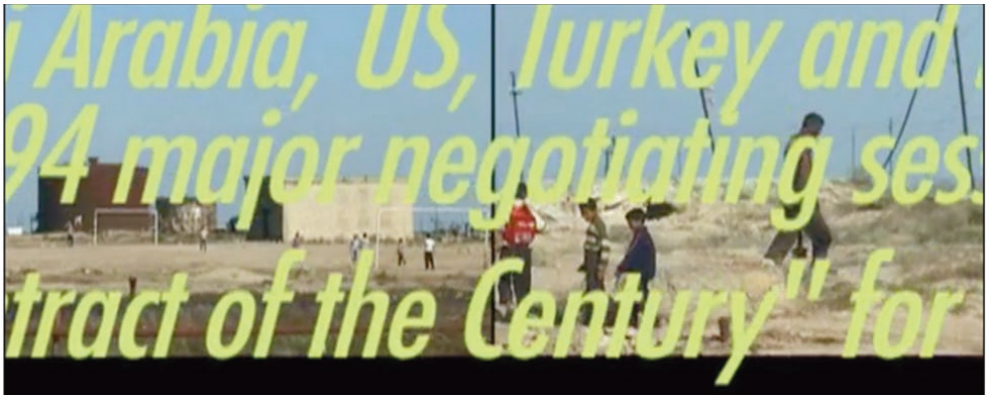

Fig. 1.8. Still from *Black Sea Files*, dir. by Biemann (Switzerland, 2005).

Companies sign 'Contract of the Century' for the offshore fields'; '1994 — major negotiating sessions with FOCs in Baku and Istanbul'.

Both the speed of the text and its overlapping structure make it often illegible, passing by as a slew of multinational and governmental legislative news — much like the crude oil that rushed past the screen earlier in the segment. This visual-textual juxtaposition serves to reinforce Biemann's argument that the international media's focus upon the macro politics of oil extraction mask 'local textures'. Indeed, Biemann reinforces this point after the text has finished scrolling, suggesting that 'the pushing of resources on a macro level is bound to be accompanied by a myriad of human trajectories on the ground'. Thus, throughout this sequence, Biemann not only juxtaposes the on-site relationships between workers and machines, labour, and infrastructure but also begins to unpack how the abstracted macro politics of the pipeline infrastructure masks over local textures and micro politics. For her, such 'local textures' must be made visible and directly connectable to these larger supranational operations. The split screen is a constant presence throughout the film. It is my contention that such an aesthetic strategy allows Biemann to create several of these oscillatory juxtapositions, all of which are primarily concerned with bridging the gap between larger homogenised forms of financial and governmental power and their impact upon the myriad of local sites, spaces, and communities along the route of the pipeline.

To unpack more fully the strategy deployed by Biemann, it is productive to place it in dialogue with German filmmaker and theorist Harun Farocki's notion of 'soft montage'. I believe that when we frame Biemann's split screen aesthetic through the lens of such a 'soft montage' praxis, we can begin to more concretely comprehend her aesthetic-political approach to cognitive mapping. The first serious elucidation of the term is found in *Speaking About Godard*, a dialogue between Farocki and Kaja Silverman centring on Godard's *œuvre*. The pair discuss Godard's 1975 film *Numéro deux* [Number Two], which focuses on 'the domestic life of three generations of a proletarian family living in a social housing apartment'. Most of the film's sequences were shot on video and then reshot from video monitors in 35mm. Throughout the

film, Godard often has two monitors on screen, showing separate video images. As Farocki suggests, this 'doubling' of the image is likely a result of Godard's shift from film to video:

> Video editing is usually done while sitting in front of two monitors. One monitor shows the already edited material, and the other monitor raw material, which the videomaker may or may not add to the work-in-progress. He or she becomes accustomed to thinking of two images at the same time, rather than sequentially.[78]

Thus, for Farocki, Godard's use of dual screens in representative of a wider shift in his approach to image construction and editing practice, from the sequential to the simultaneous. It is this shift that provides the foundation for the development of the 'soft montage'.

As Nora M. Alter suggests, soft montage 'comprises a general relatedness of images, rather than a strict equation of opposition produced by a linear montage of sharp cuts [...] soft montage operates according to a logic of difference'.[79] Thus, for Alter, the technique of soft montage is structured around the creation of 'relations' and 'differences' rather than the dialectical oppositions of sequential cinematic montage. Three years prior to this engagement with Godard's work, Farocki had begun to embrace a similar strategy of image construction in his own work. In *Interface* (1995), Farocki reflected on his own transition from film to video. The film begins with dual overlapping images of a sheet of paper and a video monitor. The voiceover states, 'I can hardly write a word these days if there isn't an image on the screen at the same time. Actually, on both screens'. Farocki then appears on screen, presenting his video editing station and explaining how it has restructured

Fig. 1.9. Still from *Interface*, dir. by Harun Farocki (Germany, 1995).

his editing process. Next, we are presented with another set of dual overlapping images of two video monitors. The image in the top left of the frame is duplicated on the video screen in the bottom left, which Farocki partially masks with his hands, further nesting frames within frames.

The voiceover states that 'Paul Cozighian shot this footage in Bucharest, on December 21st 1989, shortly before the revolution began'. Across both images, the camera pans up from the video set and focuses on the scene outside the room, as crowds of protestors flood past. In the bottom right image, Farocki follows the pan of the camera with his hands. Farocki's voiceover suggests:

> With his camera he established a connection between the TV set and the street [...] Cozighian moved his camera from the TV screen to the window. He juxtaposed the official image with the street image: image with counter-image. It was now time to abandon the TV set and go into the streets.

Thus, for Farocki, the simple juxtaposition and nesting of images that Cozighian undertook with his pan from the television set to the window functioned as a potent 'soft montage' between the mediatised coverage of the Romanian revolution and the 'local texture' of events immediately outside his domestic space. Clearly, this sequence from *Interface* ties back to the previous analysis of Biemann's *Black Sea Files*. Within both, the strategy of the soft montaging — created by image nesting and simultaneous presentation — affords a space to juxtapose the traditionally mediated and mediatised macro politics with the impacts and local textures 'on the streets' or 'in the fields'. Farocki, reflecting on his soft montage praxis some fourteen years later, in a 2009 article entitled 'Cross Influence/Soft Montage', suggests:

> There is a succession as well as simultaneity in a double project, the relationship of an image to the one that follows as well as the one beside it; a relationship to the preceding as well as to the concurrent one. Imagine three double bonds jumping back and forth between the six carbon atoms of a benzene ring; I envisage the same ambiguity in the relationship of an element in an image track to the one succeeding or accompanying it.[80]

Another key example of how Biemann develops her own oscillatory montage strategy — with a specific emphasis on trying to map cognitively the spatial machinations of multinational resource extraction — can be found within 'File 5', which focuses on a range of farming communities in rural Azerbaijan. Within the first pair of images we are presented with a slow tracking close-up on a map that shows the pipeline's route through Azerbaijan (left) and a portrait of an Azerbaijani farmer and his daughters (right).

Over this pair of juxtaposed images, Biemann's voiceover states:

> It seemed so easy to draw a long red line on a map, but contrary to the corporate fantasy, the space was not void. Twenty thousand farmers along the trajectory had to yield their land. But eventually the oil company gained the right of way for the pipeline across all three territories.

The image on the right then cuts to a woman cleaning a table in an outhouse, the image on the left continues to track along the map. The voiceover continues: 'they launched a campaign that would define the land use politics for the corridor,

Fig. 1.10. Still from *Black Sea Files*, dir. by Biemann (Switzerland, 2005).

which is as much governed by the production, dissemination, and withholding of knowledge, as it is by direct interventions in national legislations'. Next, both images present slightly different framings of the same woman from the previous shot, one with her standing next to her daughter and the other slightly blurred. She states, 'I don't know exactly how much land we had to give for the pipeline. My husband knows'. Biemann then asks her what the family have done with the money they have received from BP. The woman replies that they have bought a car and started work on a house, but the money ran out before this project could be completed.

Within this sequence, Biemann's soft montage constructs a juxtaposition between what Henri Lefebvre would term the 'conceived space' of the pipeline (representations, renderings, and mappings of space by dominant social groups, such as logistical engineers who determine routes and distributive networks for natural resource extraction) and its 'lived' and 'perceived' spatial formations and impacts (both of which arise from the daily inhabitation, and material engagement with, a particular socio-spatial formation, in this case the micro 'local textures' that arise from the communities living and working on the land). The images of cartographic mapping become representative of BP and AzBTC's conceived 'corporate fantasy', which aimed to reimagine and restructure social space and land-use politics along the route of the pipeline through the 'production, dissemination, and withholding of knowledge'. Simultaneously, we witness the impacts that such conceived spatial formations have upon the communities living along the pipeline, forced to yield their land through pressure tactics and coercion. Indeed, the 'ease' of mapping the pipeline's route was ultimately matched by the logistical 'ease' with which these multinationals forced through the yielding of land by communities living along the pipeline's path. Thus, the macro and micro spatio-politics of multinational resource extraction are cognitively mapped by Biemann here, rendering the localised impacts of large-scale transnational exploitations. Ultimately, this juxtaposition leads Biemann to suggest, 'what is the farmers imaginary of this same space? Those who have inhabited and laboured the land for generations, what is their agency in this moment of contact with transnational interests?'

The next sequence of the film further develops this oscillatory strategy of cognitive mapping. The image on the left presents two pairs of legs seemingly 'standing atop' a superimposed image that presents an animated cross section of the pipeline in full flow. The image on the right presents another portrait of a farming family. A passage of text then moves across both images, which reads: 'the transcaucasian post-kolkhoz subterranean energy tunnel sucks out the black fluid from Caspian reservoirs and connects it to a distant elsewhere. Silently. Invisibly. Highspeed'. As this text scrolls, the top left image cuts to a travelling shot that depicts a rural landscape. The image on the right then cuts to another farmer who holds various images of the pipeline's proposed route through his land. Next, this farmer is interviewed and states: 'I don't know the exact sum they will pay, it isn't mentioned in the contract. There was no space for negotiation, they had fixed the price on their own'. The image on the right then cuts to a close up of the same land yield proposals, and the farmer suggests: 'the first time they came, the proposal was for a much wider land strip. The second time it was reduced to 8 meters. The security area is much less now'. Here, Biemann confronts how the coercion of local communities along the pipeline is structured around a 'masking' or 'making invisible' of oil infrastructure itself. The second part of the sequence highlights how a key strategy of coercion by BP and AzBTC was to marginally reduce the geographical size of their proposed land yield requests. Within the first part of the sequence, Biemann emphasises how the completed pipeline will ultimately function as a largely invisible transportation infrastructure, moving oil 'Silently. Invisibly. Highspeed' — quite literally under the feet of the communities it has irrevocably impacted.

Biemann argues that through such techniques of abstraction and invisibility 'BTC gained the right-of-way for the pipeline across all three territories. It gives BP effective governing power over a strip of land 750km long. Where the company may override all national, environmental, social, and human rights laws for the next forty years'. Thus, whilst the logistical infrastructures of the oil pipeline may ultimately remain physically invisible, the myriad governmental powers ceded to BP and AzBTC through their land grabs have given them tangible and legal control of this space. Consequently, through the process of soft montage, Biemann attempts to bridge the gap between the tangible and intangible structures of spatial dominance and governance fostered by pipeline's planning, logistics, and infrastructure.

Biemann also interrogates issues of visibility and invisibility surrounding the pipeline's structures of power within the film's previous section, 'File 4'. Here, she is primarily concerned with understanding the ways in which the involved multinationals have constructed their own mediatised 'image regimes'. Over images that depict both Biemann recording her narration and 3D renderings of the planned pipeline, the voiceover suggests:

> It sounds odd, but it's risky to simply record a pipeline. Oil companies run a severe image regime. During construction, image making is prohibited; later it will be invisible anyway. What is the meaning of this tube in the hidden corporate imaginary of this space? What function does it have in their own secret bordering system of the Caucuses?

Fig. 1.11. Still from *Black Sea Files*, dir. by Biemann (Switzerland, 2005).

As this section of voiceover ends, text scrolls across both images: 'Local bypass through network design', 'Seamless connection between resources and premium consumers', 'Logistics based on spatial division', 'Silent and invisible transfer of energy', 'Linking and delinking', 'Space of flow'.

Next, we are presented with images that show Biemann shooting a section of the pipeline under construction. The voiceover states that to generate images of oil infrastructures:

> Is not an aesthetic project, it is an undercover mission. The challenge is to go undetected, probing for hidden, secret and restricted knowledge. Are these cognitive methods any different from the ones used by geologists, anthropologists, or secret intelligence agents?

Next, we are offered a pair of images where Biemann's camera traverses the land yielded to the pipeline. Over these images, the voiceover states 'they all probe different sorts of sediments and plots that could give meaning to this space'. The way Biemann's camera moves across this space links us back to the stratigraphic impulse found within Kneubühler's *Forward Looking Statements*. Moreover, in her voiceover, Biemann subsumes the aesthetic into a broader project of 'undercover' investigation. Such an approach once again links us back to Fuller and Weizman's call for an operationalisation of the aesthetic as an investigative modality, a praxis of spatial sensing and sense-making.

Consequently, a comparable mode of spatial sensing and sense-making is in operation here, drawing us back once again to the dialectical synthesisation of Jameson's cognitive mapping. Indeed, this material traversal of the landscape sits in marked contrast to the preceding 3D renderings and cartographic projections of these same spaces. The smooth corporate gloss of the latter's imagery is continually undermined and broken down by Biemann's intense focus upon the material 'local textures', both social and topographic. Through the oscillatory strategies adopted by Biemann — which shuttle between the macro and micro impacts — she also seems to fold her images together, opening a space for new configurations and understandings of how natural resource extraction functions at several socio-

Fig. 1.12. Still from *Black Sea Files*, dir. by Biemann (Switzerland, 2005).

economic and political levels. As Alter suggests later:

> The segments are meant to be taken together, as a succession and simultaneous with one another. This play of images constructs temporal as well as spatial relationships [...] each concurrent image no more significant than the one beside it, the recto always dependent on the verso.[81]

To conclude, let us return to one of the questions that Biemann poses at the opening of *Black Sea Files*: 'what will it take to write the hidden matrix of this political space?' I would contend that Biemann — through the aesthetic praxis of soft montage — fashions the 'spatial relationships' that Alter sees as key, precisely as a method that tries to expose the hidden matrix of the pipeline's logistical and infrastructural space. Spatial operations at the macro level are always intimately wedded to their micro-impacts. Through an aesthetic of Farockian soft montaging, Biemann fashions powerful connections between these different scales of exploitation and violence. Such a strategy ultimately aims to bridge the gap between larger homogenised forms of financial and governmental power and their impact upon the myriad 'local textures' and communities along the route of the pipeline. Through the dialectical mode of address in *Black Sea Files*, the work's spatio-political aesthetic emerges as a powerful tool for political contestation in a moment where the material world is riven through with contesting formations of power that are typically undetectable or obfuscated. The visual-aesthetic organisation of the work becomes, once again, a critical tool within its spatial investigation. Thus, in a manner akin to Kneubühler's work, *Black Sea Files* is continually concerned with the ways in which spatial violence operates at different scales. The juxtaposition of these different scales of violence is where these works' affective and effective power comes from. Once more, we are drawn back to the dialectical synthesis of Jameson's cognitive map.

Allan Sekula's *Fish Story* and Allan Sekula and Noël Burch's *The Forgotten Space*

The two case studies examined thus far in this chapter have focused on the spatio-politics of resource extraction, arguably one of the more tangible and visible forms of contemporary capitalism's exploitations. Consequently, the final pair of case studies to be examined will focus on a less immediately visible form of late capitalism's spatial machinations, global trade logistics. Firstly, however, how do we define the concept of logistics, and, moreover, how is it wedded to — and structured by — the logics of late capitalism? For Jesse LeCavalier, logistics 'concerns the entire life of a product and works to flatten, connect, smooth, and lubricate as it organizes material in both space and time'.[82] In a certain sense, the increasing importance of logistics is deeply imbricated with global capital's contradictory search for spatial fixes (examined in some detail above, through the lens of Harvey's conceptualisation). As new spaces, markets, and labour pools are exploited globally, the supply chains that connect these geographically fragmented sites rely on (typically ruthless) strategies of logistical streamlining to maximise profitability. As LeCavalier suggests, 'rather than encouraging congestion, logistics pursues unencumbered movement. Rather than seeking density, logistics aspires to coverage. It is a horizontalizing and externalizing industry, not a vertical and integrating one'.[83] For Deborah Cowen, the rise of logistics is 'a highly specialized form of spatial calculation [that] has been crucial but overlooked in the process of time-space compression that has remade geographies of capitalist production and distribution at a global scale'.[84] Here, Cowen invokes Harvey's notion of 'time-space compression' — the necessary condensing or eliding of spatial and temporal distance by late capitalism's globalisation and the simultaneous reduction in the turnover time of capital.

The rise of logistics as a structuring component of global trade under late capitalism is not only ruthless but structurally violent. Cowen is concerned with unpacking 'how the seemingly banal and technocratic management of the movement of stuff through space has become a driving force of war and trade [...] examin[ing] [...] the military art of moving stuff'.[85] Thus, Cowen traces the militaristic origins of logistics, arguing that it was 'adopted into the corporate world of management in the wake of World War II'. Within the epoch of late capitalism, 'corporate and military logistics are increasingly entangled; this is a matter of not only military forces clearing the way for corporate trade but corporations actively supporting militaries as well'. Whilst the art and tactics of logistics was historically a militaristic enterprise, contemporary capitalism's desire to connect ever-more disparate spatial fixes meant that 'military logisticians' were increasingly employed in the commercial logistics sector.[86] This deep imbrication of the militaristic and commercial under late capitalism extends from logistics' historical military imperative to not only 'circulate stuff' but 'sustain life... [by] fuelling the battlefield'. Thus, the extreme and often violent securitisation of logistics space results chiefly from the fact that:

> Threats to circulation are treated not only as criminal acts but as profound threats to the *life* of trade [...]. Those on the outside of the system, who aim to

> contest its flows, face the raw force of rough trade without recourse to normal laws and protections.[87]

Logistics infrastructures are not only violent, they largely go unseen. Whilst the infrastructure of resource extraction examined above, either planned or enacted, leave material scars upon the landscape (both geographical and social), the infrastructure of logistics operates within what Toscano terms an 'increasingly Taylorized and militarized "forgotten space"'.[88] Thus, the logistical frequently operates in hidden ways, disguising its operations and movements. It operates within and across material spaces that exist at the peripheries and margins of different regimes of control and governance. Consequently, it becomes apparent that the smooth and fluid functioning of logistics infrastructure is crucial for the continued expansion of its own supranational governance and violence.

Often the ocean is perceived as the ultimate peripheral and hidden space. As Brett Story suggests:

> The sea ('and its ancient terribleness') is the forgotten space par excellence of our age; that space with which it is no longer possible to relate, except by a few as yet another commodified vista during annual seaside vacations, or for even fewer, traded on as value-added to beachside luxury real estate.[89]

Philip E. Steinberg makes a similar claim about the imaginative 'cognitive blankness' that surrounds ocean space, suggesting, 'under capitalism, the sea is idealised as a denatured and seemingly immaterial surface of latitude-longitude coordinates'.[90] Both these scholars rearticulate, either explicitly or implicitly, Deleuze and Guattari's 1987 claim that the sea had become the 'smooth space par excellence'.[91] Moreover, the ever-increasing movement of commodities across maritime space ('95 percent of U.S.-bound global trade moves through ports and more than 11 million containers enter') is similarly abstracted: 'still remote is the maritime movement of commodity capitalism; the ocean's role in the concrete movement of goods and the abstracted circulation of capital, displaced in our imagination of the ocean by an intractable, cognitive blankness'.[92] Thus, in particular ways, the ocean — now dominated by the movements of global trade — seems to completely resist constructions of territory or national governance.[93]

In addition to the obfuscation of ocean space under late capitalism, we have also witnessed the increasing invisibility of the commodities that move across its network of supply chains, chiefly through the process of containerisation. Nested within the wider rise of the global logistics infrastructure, containerisation also had militaristic roots, experimented with during the Second World War to reduce the friction involved in transporting military supplies. The efficiency of this militaristic system soon attracted the logisticians of global commodity trading. Indeed, as several scholars have noted, one central feature of logistics 'is the drive to maximise the capacities of existing infrastructures [...] containerisation is an emergent global system which "piggy-backs" on top of existing infrastructures'.[94] Thus, global trade logistics' appropriation of existing infrastructure is intimately related to the abstraction of the commodities it transports; funnelling commodities through pre-established supply networks helps to mask their movements, '"smoothing"

the interfaces between them, and [...] reorganising material flow'.[95] Under late capitalism, containerisation has become a crucial tool to 'flatten, connect, smooth, and lubricate' global trade networks.

Attempting to render visible the functioning of an ever-logistified and containerised maritime economy was a central preoccupation of photographer, filmmaker, and theorist Allan Sekula. His 1995 exhibition and photo-essay project *Fish Story* sought to visualise the functioning of the maritime economy across a geographically diverse set of spaces. However, from the outset of this photo-essay, Sekula readily acknowledged the representational challenges posed by such 'flattened' and 'smooth' spaces. Within the essay 'Dismal Science Part I', Sekula poses the question, 'why would anyone be foolish enough to argue today that the world economy might be intelligently viewed from the deck of a ship?' Elsewhere, Sekula writes, 'use values slide by in the channel [...] the more regularised, literally containerised, the movement of goods in harbours, that is, the more rationalised and automated, the more the harbour comes to resemble the stock market'.[96] Thus, for Sekula, the inherent abstractions of finance capital's machinations are increasingly reflected in the sequestered infrastructures of containerisation. How does Sekula seek to tackle this 'crisis of representation'? The bulk of the photographs contained within the collection seek to capture the materialities of human labour expended in support of such global trade networks. Sekula moves between a variety of geographically disparate locales, visualising a wide range of labour activities: we shift from a welder working on a fast combat support ship for the US Navy in San Diego, California, to welders working in a privatised section of the former Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk, Poland, to a man salvaging bricks from a demolished waterfront warehouse in Rotterdam, Holland.

Sekula's materialist rendering of human labour moves between activities that are alternatively state-funded, privatised, and 'illicit'. In the early 1990s, Sekula had developed his concept of a photographic 'critical realism'. As Bill Roberts notes, Sekula's critical realism sought to fight against 'postmodern "hyperreality"' and instead insisted upon 'the historical, social and institutional inscription of photographic meaning'. For Roberts, this meant Sekula desired not only to bring home to 'his audience some of the myriad local effects of global capitalism, but to relate his necessarily incomplete impressions of the totality dialectically [...] this means to recognise the inherent contradictions of a complex and continuously changing world-system'.[97] Thus, through the myriad of 'local effects' and labour forms captured by Sekula's camera — moving between different geographical, sovereign, economic, and juridical frames — we come to recognise the 'social contradictions' and 'economic disparities' at the heart of the operative logics of logistics infrastructure.

The emphasis that Sekula's critical realism places on rendering the 'local effects' of a structurally 'global' system draws us back to Biemann's micro-macro praxis of soft montage and Kneubühler's audio-visual dialectic, both of which, I've argued, can be read through Jameson's theory of cognitive mapping. Toscano and Kinkle frame this in different, yet relatable, terms when they suggest that 'Sekula's photographs

Fig. 1.13. Image from *Fish Story*, photographed by Allan Sekula (Germany, 1995).

resist, with their attention to the slowness and materiality of labour at sea, the immaterialization of global capitalism into a smooth space of flows, his essays track the passage from the panorama to the detail'.[98] Micro-macro/'panorama'-'detail'; *Fish Story* develops an aesthetic praxis of cognitive mapping that pinpoints localised labour conditions and social effects within the broader matrix of global capitalism's extractive and logistical infrastructures. This critical realist approach is not simply about bland representation of human labour, but rather a dialectical juxtaposition between the global machinations of logistics and the localised sites of exploitation and violence upon which they are predicated. It is not a valorisation of labour but more an attempt to perceive its presence in a disappearing space of mobility and fluidity.

This critical realist approach to labour in maritime economies is further developed within the non-fiction feature *The Forgotten Space*, co-directed by Sekula with Noël Burch. Jumping back and forth between four port cities — Los Angeles, Rotterdam, Hong Kong, Bilbao — the film similarly resists the 'immaterialization of global capitalism' through a focus on the transformed materialities of human labour. Whilst acknowledging the structural impacts that the rise of global trade logistics and post-Fordist production have had upon the form of human labour,

Fig. 1.14. Still from *The Forgotten Space*, dir. by Allan Sekula and Noël Burch (USA, 2010)

Sekula and Burch are still keen to focus on the 'slow materiality' of work within a global trading network that increasingly hides its labour force. The opening section of the film focuses on the port of Rotterdam and the ever-increasing levels of automation involved in its shift to containerisation. Over shots that present the movement of containers through the port, Sekula's narration states: 'in the outer terminals in Rotterdam, the physical human labour that remains has become a literal appendage to the machine'.

Next, the film presents a brief interview with a dock worker. In response to Sekula's question 'there's a new terminal here which is completely automated. Why?', the dock worker responds, 'I think that's because they wanted to get rid of the human factor. Workers may become ill and so on'. Next, we are presented with several shots of rearticulated forms of labour that are generated with the shift to automation: a worker at a centralised control centre, another controlling a container spreader. Sekula's voiceover continues:

> Starting in the late 1980s, Dutch terminal operators took container handling to a new level of automation. Some of the new land became intelligent. Robot vehicles are guided by transponders in the pavement. We speak of labour-saving machines, and yet what is really saved by automation? Automation does not guarantee freedom from drudgery. It merely raises drudgery to a higher power. The skilled workers who remain work in isolation. Lonely aristocrats of labour.

With the human labour nested within such logistics infrastructures appearing more abstracted, Sekula and Burch focus heavily upon the sites where it has been rearticulated and rehoused. Thus, the camera moves into the spreader's control cabin, where an interview is conducted with the controller. As he continues to move containers, he states:

Fig. 1.15. Still from *The Forgotten Space*, dir. by Sekula and Burch (USA, 2010)

> You actually need to work here peacefully in your own little world. If there's trouble at home you go crazy simply because you have to focus all the time here. I'm looking down 30 metres through a dirty window and I still have to get those containers out at a specific time.

Sequestered in this space of logistics infrastructure par excellence, Sekula and Burch are keen to render the 'slow materiality' of his labour, primarily through a focus on the cognitive and affective demands placed on the controller by his isolation and the temporal regulation of his work. Indeed, as he states, 'I still have to get those containers out at a specific time'. From here, *The Forgotten Space* moves through its other disparate locations, always concerned with oscillating between the larger logistical infrastructures of global trade and their connected impact upon the material labour embedded within them. Consequently, we move between interviews with Mexican truckers in Los Angeles, to deckhands in Bilbao, to factory workers in Beijing, all the time concerned with trying to understand the relationality at work between labourer and infrastructure.

It is my contention that *Fish Story* and *The Forgotten Space* are both intrinsically built around Sekula's 'critical realist' approach to image making, and through this conceptual framework they seek to render the deep instabilities and exploitations of a system that we often never see. Indeed, as Story has suggested, *The Forgotten Space* 'is a study in social institutions, experiences, and relationships; its curious digressions now recognized as realism's partiality for those on the outer margins or left behind, the potency of their "mutinous longings" recalled and historicized'.[99] It is arguable that Sekula's 'critical realist' approach dovetails productively with Fuller and Weizman's previously examined framework of 'investigative aesthetics'. Sekula's aesthetic approach, which melds together radically opposing scales of investigation aims to both sense and make sense of these multitudinous manifestations of power

and violence that surround the operations of logistics infrastructure and mobility. The repeated focus on the materialities of human labour across *Fish Story* and *The Forgotten Space* attempt to juxtapose regimes of mobility and flexibility with the human labour that always, at various levels of abstraction and alienation, undergirds it (and here again, we are also brought back to the dialectic relationship between mobility and fixity that structured much of Kneubühler's *Land Claim*).

Fundamentally, both Sekula's critical realism and Fuller and Weizman's investigative aesthetics are concerned with pushing for a documentary practice that seeks to examine and critique dominant structures of power not through a 'panoramic' or 'abstracted' world view, but by focusing on the myriad forensic impacts that such infrastructures and networks of domination cause. Thus, Sekula's construction of a critical realist praxis is built around observational engagement with the 'slow materialities' of the labour force that supports the hidden power structures of global trade logistics. The micro, local textures of labour begin to paint a picture of the wider structures of power at play within global maritime economy. Labour thus becomes the site of micro investigation, but always with a critical eye towards how such localised conditions feedback into broader networks and systems of power. Across both *Fish Story* and *The Forgotten Space*, a model of cognitive mapping is built that attempts to render a geographically disparate range of material labour forms, disrupting the apperception of global trade logistics as a smooth, lubricated, and flattened infrastructure through the insertion of these instances of belaboured alterity and contingency. As with the previous case studies examined in this chapter, here there is a similar investment in imbuing the visual and aesthetic with a radical spatio-political potentiality. As the networks of capital flow are ever more sequestered, hidden, and insidiously violent, the visual has a key role to play in sensing and making sense of its spatial-geographical impacts across multiple sites and scales.

Conclusion

Whilst not focused specifically on the aesthetics and politics of the moving image, Jameson's conceptual framework of cognitive mapping has been central to this chapter. The works examined here share a desire to synthesise dialectically different scales of visualisation and mapping — a crucial structuring element of Jameson's theoretical framework. Across the works of Kneubühler, Biemann, Sekula, and Burch we find a shared preoccupation with constructing cognitive maps that dialectically oscillate between micro and macro spatio-politics; moving between what Toscano calls the 'panorama and detail'. Whether it is Kneubühler's 'stratigraphic' approach, Biemann's use of 'soft montage', or Sekula's 'critical realism', these films, through their presentation of the local, textural, and material impacts of the machinations of transnational global capital, insert points of rupture into a system that is typically read as 'smoothed', 'flattening', and all-pervasive.

It is precisely here, within these sites of tension, that we can begin to tease open the fissures, cracks, and contradictions embedded within the operative logics of late capitalism. For Toscano, we must 'understand the "aesthetic" dimension of

social research not as a supplement or an ornament, but as a matter of our modes of representing, figuring or imaging the social'.[100] Here, once again, we are drawn back to the broader emphasis that this book places on a renewed attention to the aesthetic. It is through these new modes of aesthetic sensing and experimentation that the spatial is rendered in all its complexity and contradictions; an alive form of 'political plastic'. When the logistics of late capitalism rely on an increasing apperception of material space as flattened, liquidised, and compressed, the aesthetic modes of experimentation we have examined seek to expose the deep, violent complexities that have been ever-present, only partially disguised and obfuscated by capital's desire for imperceptibility and liquid movement.

Notes to Chapter 1

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2. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, p. 6.
3. David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 11.
4. I would like to thank my colleague Patrick Brodie for the many discussions and collaborations that helped me to think through these issues.
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6. Indeed, as David Hodge and Hamed Yousefi suggest, 'the internationalisation of finance and other aspects of globalisation [...] can make it feel as if everything has become completely interconnected, and there is nowhere left to hide from the encroachment of capital', in Martin John Callahan and others, 'Paranoid Subjectivity and the Challenges of Cognitive Mapping — How Is Capitalism to Be Represented?', *e-flux* <https://conversations.e-flux.com/t/paranoid-subjectivity-and-the-challenges-of-cognitive-mapping-how-is-capitalism-to-be-represented/1080> [accessed 16 May 2017].
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16. Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), p. 6.
17. Ibid., p. 4.
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21. Fredric Jameson, *The Modernist Papers* (London: Verso Books, 2007), 157.
22. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (New York: Verso Books, 1992), xxi.
23. Toscano and Kinkle, *Cartographies of the Absolute*, p. 40.
24. Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 54.
25. Toscano and Kinkle, *Cartographies of the Absolute*, p. 40.
26. Jameson, 'Cognitive Mapping', p. 353.
27. Toscano and Kinkle, *Cartographies of the Absolute*, p. 11.
28. Jameson, 'Cognitive Mapping', p. 353. As Robert T. Tally notes, Lynch's notion of cognitive mapping is locked within a phenomenological analysis of an individual's location in particular urban spaces, and does little to account for the wider socio-politics of such a situatedness: 'Jameson's Project of Cognitive Mapping', in *Social Cartography: Mapping Ways of Seeing Educational and Social Change*, ed. by Rolland G. Paulston (New York: Garland, 1996), pp. 399–416.
29. Jameson, 'Cognitive Mapping', p. 349.
30. Ibid., p. 353.
31. Tally, 'Jameson's Project of Cognitive Mapping', p. 403.
32. Tally's essay was crucial to my understanding of cognitive mapping's theoretical basis.
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CHAPTER 2

❖

Carceral Geographies: Spaces of Exception and Internment

> Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?
>
> — Michel Foucault

> The state of exception tends increasingly to appear as the dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics.
>
> — Giorgio Agamben[1]

Global prison populations continue to rise. Shifts towards ever subtler (yet, simultaneously structurally violent) forms of disciplinary governmentality — both juridical and biopolitical in nature — are the predominant causes of this steady increase. These factors are also supplemented by the increasing economic lucrativeness of expanding the industrial carceral complex, for both public and private sectors. Indeed, under the economic logics of neoliberal late capitalism, the discipline of the state is increasingly replaced by private multinationals. Carceral infrastructures and networks are tightly interconnected with these market logics. As Angela Davis suggests, we are in the:

> Era of the prison industrial complex. The prison has become a black hole into which the detritus of contemporary capitalism is deposited. Mass imprisonment generates profits as it devours social wealth, and thus is tends to reproduce the very conditions that lead people to prison.[2]

The United States provides perhaps the starkest example. Whilst the country has around 5% of the world's population, it houses 25% of its prisoners. The Nixonian 'War on Drugs' era was emblematic of these structural shifts in the forms of carceral governmentality. For example, in 1980 those imprisoned for non-violent drug offences represented 7.5% (23,900) of the total prison population. By 1990 this figure had risen to 24% (177, 600). These shifts in governmentality also operate along blatantly racialised and gendered lines. In 2010, people of colour made up 69% of the total US prison population. In addition, the female prison population has increased by roughly 50% since the year 2000. Such increasing rates of incarceration are not a US-centric phenomenon however: 'since about the year 2000 the world prison population total has grown by almost 20%, which is slightly above the

estimated 18% increase in the world's general population over the same period'.[3] Thus, the expansion of the prison-industrial complex is a global phenomenon.

Historical and contemporary epochs of violence by governments and militaries are also invariably marked by myriad forms of internment. These violent disciplinary practices are usually undertaken during periods that Giorgio Agamben would term 'states of exception'.[4] Agamben's theorisation confronts how governments, operating under the auspices of a 'crisis period', systematically suppress human rights, whilst increasing state power and extra-juridical forms of control. As Sharon Dolovich has suggested, under such a state of exception, 'protection of law and other constraints on state power have been withdrawn. In such a state, occupants are reduced to "bare life" '.[5] Such 'periods of crisis' usually take the form of military coups and civil wars; however, often such periods become states of prolonged exceptionalism where the exception becomes a permanent rule. Indeed, as Agamben writes:

> Modern totalitarianism can be defined as the establishment, by means of the state of exception, of a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination not only of political adversaries but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system. Since then, the voluntary creation of a permanent state of emergency (though perhaps not declared in the technical sense) has become one of the essential practices of contemporary states, including so-called democratic ones.[6]

Agamben explicates the transition from temporally fleeting to permanent states of exception as a shift that defines modern forms of totalitarianism.

Here, it is important to note that we cannot neatly separate forms of internment geographically and temporally. Clearly, the states of exception that structure the military coup or civil war in predominantly non-Global North contexts are also present in a myriad of supposedly Western 'liberal democratic' contexts. For example, Agamben highlights the issuing of the USA Patriot Act on 26 October 2001 as a case in point. Those held under its terms — typically when deemed a threat to national security — are:

> Neither prisoners nor persons accused, but simply 'detainees' [...] the object of a pure de facto rule, of a detention that is indefinite not only in the temporal sense but in its very nature as well, since it is entirely removed from the law and from judicial oversight.[7]

Thus, we see how supposed Western democracies exercise similar states of exception primarily through the control of movement: tighter border security, immigration detention, and immigration removal. Sites and spaces of internment become crucial infrastructural mechanisms in the deployment of such an extra-judicial biopolitics, where 'law encompasses living beings by means of its own suspension'.[8] Carcerality has, of course, always relied upon a significant spatial infrastructure for the internment of bare life. However, with the rapid expansion of the prison population globally, alongside states of exception increasingly becoming the permanent rule (particularly through border regimes), sovereign governance has required the establishment of ever larger, yet also necessarily imperceptible, carceral spaces for imprisonment.

This rapid expansion of carceral populations and infrastructure over the last half century has brought about a 'punitive turn' within the humanities and social sciences, generally concerned with exploring 'the historical, political, economic, and sociocultural roots of mass incarceration, as well as its collateral costs and consequences'.[9] Understanding the infrastructural and spatial transformations wrought by this expansionary development of the prison industry has become a chief preoccupation for economic and human geographers over the past twenty years.[10] Indeed, this research has developed into a subfield of its own, carceral geography. Most broadly, carceral geography, as an area of theoretical and political enquiry, involves a geographical engagement with the spaces, practices, and experiences of confinement. In addition, geographers working within this field attempt to situate the carceral within wider social, economic, and geopolitical infrastructures, aiming 'to counter the imagination of a closed-off and sealed carceral institution'.[11] This broadened definition of what constitutes the carceral attempts to throw into sharp relief 'their porosity [...] recognising that techniques and technologies of confinement seep out of "carceral" spaces into the everyday, domestic, street, and institutional spaces'.[12] This attempt to shift the study of carceral spaces outside the physical boundaries of the prison or camp has been driven by several interrelated factors, including the:

> Mutations in the neoliberal landscape, [the] inclusion of criminal justice systems in industrial systems for the generation of value, [the] criminalization of poor and othered communities, the mobility and agility of finance capital and the expedient generation of surplus populations.[13]

Thus, under the conditions of these socio-economic factors, carceral spaces become more fragmented and fluid; functioning in more occluded and less detectable ways than before. Strategies of border control and immigration detention are perhaps most emblematic of such a fragmented carcerality, controlling the movement of surplus populations through a vast network of detention and removal centres, typically located near transport hubs.

The aim of this chapter is to examine several experimental non-fiction works that — in a manner much akin to the carceral geographic turn — seek to visualise, and also critique, the shifting spatial and infrastructural relations of carceral spaces. Here we will focus on works that aim to unpack how, under the conditions of globalisation and neocolonialism, carceral spaces operate '"betwixt and between" the inside and outside of prisons'.[14] In addition, we will also examine works that focus on practices of internment that are more directly connected to the acceleration of states of exception that have become permanent rules: migrant detention centres, concentration camps, holding sites for political prisoners, to name but three. Across all these works, there is a clear emphasis on not only visualising carceral spaces that are increasingly occluded from site, but also understanding their tight interconnections with larger state-corporate structures of power. In addition to examining works that engage with the contemporary mutations of carceral spaces, we will also look at documentary practices that engage with the transformation of historical sites of carcerality — often appropriated as radical political gestures or exploited for financial gain.

All these works understand that such carceral sites and spaces can never be read as hermetically sealed; they always operate at the border with, and in relation to, larger structures of power and discipline, both geographically and historically. Echoing the previous chapter's examination of works interrogating the seeming abstraction of late capitalism's spatial operations, the works examined in this chapter perceive a similar occlusion and fragmentation of carceral space. Consequently, similar questions drive this chapter: how can carceral spaces that are increasingly hidden from sight — intentionally masking state-corporate violence and control — be sensed and made sense of? How do these works build connections between localised, material sites and spaces of carceral violence and their structural and systemic power relations? We will begin with an examination of Forensic Architecture's *Omarska: Memorial in Exile*, a work that interrogates the historical and contemporary function of the mine-turned-concentration camp in the village of Omarska, Bosnia and Herzegovina. From there, we will move on to examine James Bridle's 2015 work *Seamless Transitions*, which attempts to visualise the occluded infrastructure of UK migrant removal and detention centres in the UK. Finally, we will explore Jonathan Perel's 2015 film *Toponimia*, which examines the historical and contemporary conditions of four military 'resettlement' villages in northern Argentina. How can we visualise spaces of carcerality, as well as the formations of power that structurally support them, when they are increasingly obfuscated, sequestered, and fragmented? With the carceral's increasing material evaporation, the visual becomes a crucial line of defence and defiance. How does a politically-responsive and sensitive aesthetic praxis that is attuned to the politics of the spatial help to reconstruct the violence that cemented into the very foundations of these spatial agglomerations?

Between the Extractive and Necropolitical: Carceral Geographies in *Omarska: Memorial in Exile*

We are in an epoch defined by the alleged death of non-fiction media facticity and veracity. Discourses of supposed 'conspiracy' and 'paranoia', mobilised from the fringes to the centre of the political spectrum, and labelled as such depending on one's political affiliations, perpetuate ideas of fake news, mediatised echo chambers, 'deepfaked' military surveillance images, documentary falsity, and clandestine social media manipulation (amongst other concepts). Whilst these ideas are often underpinned by legitimate truth claims, typically these moments of potential veracity are lost within the sheer deluge of 'post-truth' discourse.[15] Interconnected with this notion of 'post-truth' is the wider postmodern critique of 'realism' and 'truth production' within theories of media culture.[16] As notions of 'truth' and 'realism' are increasingly read as contingent, plural, and socially constructed, simple conceptions of non-fiction media forms as tools for evidence-creation, witnessing, and documentation have been widely problematised, if not outright rebuked. Consequently, it is arguable that we live in a moment defined by a 'post-factual' political discourse.

However, within an epoch that seemingly tries to evade veracity and facticity at every turn, we have recently witnessed a re-engagement with questions — and, crucially, representations — of the evidentiary and forensic across a wide range of non-fiction media practices. Such modes of renewed attention to the forensic and evidentiary are closely intertwined with modes of human rights activism and investigative journalism. For example, the 2017 exhibition *Evidentiary Realism* at the NOME gallery in Berlin brought together a range of artists concerned with examining the 'aesthetics of secrecy, complexity, rhetoric, and the control of social, economic, and technological systems'.[17] As suggested by the curator Paolo Cirio, 'the contemporary features of the social landscape are unintelligible at first glance. Although we see the shocking results of our social reality, we are nonetheless often unable to see the systems and processes that generate such conditions'.[18] Once again, this draws us back to the previous chapter's focus on the totalising views of late capitalism's abstractions; however, here there is a shift in focus onto modes of state-corporate power and their intertwined modalities of humanitarian violence.

For Cirio, artists working within this mode are attempting to confront the 'complexities', 'secrecy', and abstraction of contemporary modes of state-corporate power with new modes of visibility that can expose multifarious forms of human rights abuse and political violence. Cirio cites the work of artists such as Hans Haacke, Mark Lombardi, and Harun Farocki, suggesting that they were some of the first practitioners 'invested in decoding complex systems of power' and their intimate connections to human rights abuses.[19] For example, Haacke's photomontage work *A Breed Apart* sought to critique UK state-owned manufacturing company British Leyland's involvement with the apartheid regime in South Africa. The company sold vehicles to the South African police and armed forces and the local branch of the company in South Africa refused to recognise trade unions and bargaining units. Haacke appropriated and reworked British Leyland's advertisements, juxtaposing images of apartheid abuses with text from the company's own press releases. For example, the 'advertisement' below features an image of military abuse alongside text that reads 'in 28 years of production the Land-Rover has become one of the United Kingdom's greatest export winners, opening up areas of the world previously inaccessible to ordinary vehicles and playing a major role in the development of overseas territories'.

Thus, when the company's own rhetoric (which is extremely neocolonialist in nature) is placed alongside evidentiary materials of complicity in state violence, this commercial discourse is powerfully undermined and reframed. The works that formed part of the *Evidentiary Realism* exhibition aimed to continue this work, interrogating 'post-9/11 geopolitics, increasing economic inequalities, the erosion of civil rights, and environmental disasters'. Consequently, this broad turn towards evidentiary realism mapped out by Cirio is preoccupied with visualising the social and humanitarian consequences of particular forms of control and violence, whilst additionally attempting to render visible the structures of power that have not only been intentionally occluded from sight, but which also structurally facilitate such forms of brutality.

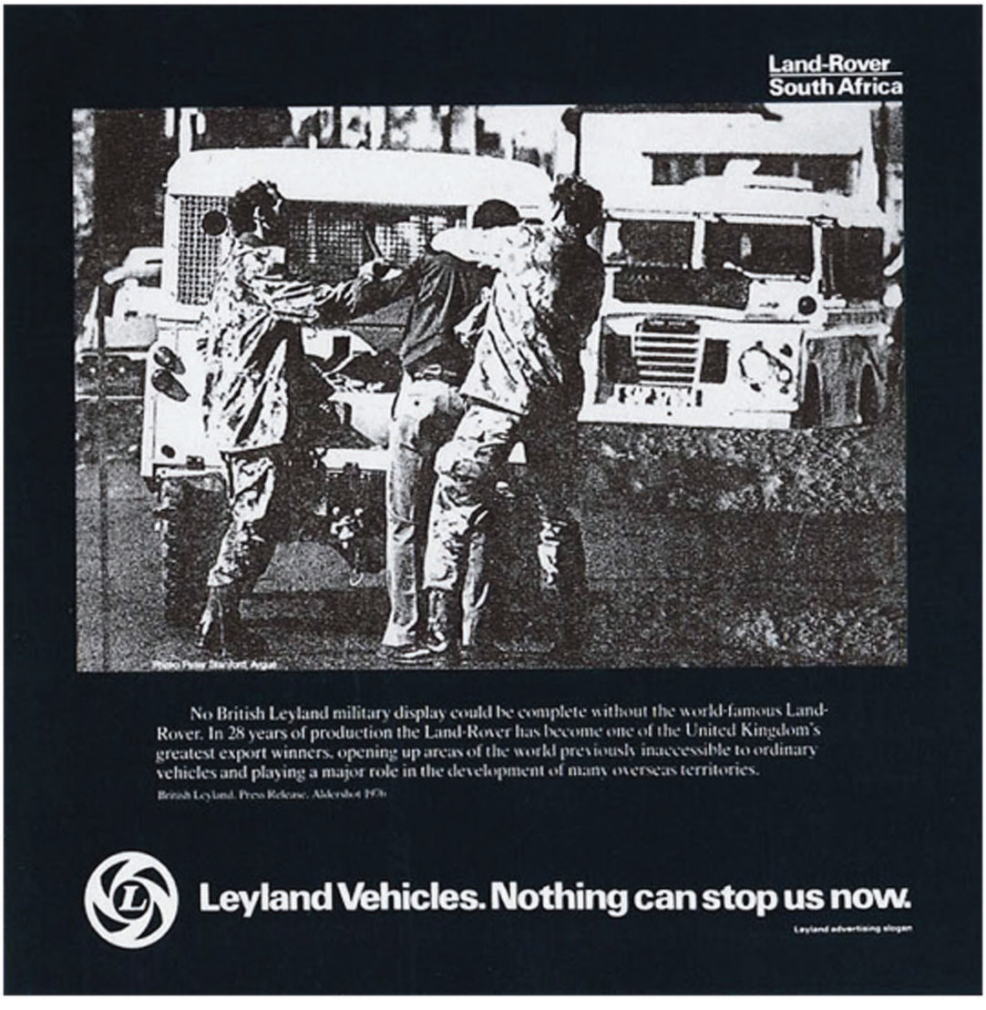


Fig. 2.1. Image from *A Breed Apart*, photographs by Hans Haacke (Germany, 1978).

Within the range of contemporary practices that have engaged with the evidentiary and forensic, questions of geography, spatiality, and architecture have become crucial sites of interrogation. One group that has been working at the forefront of this spatio-forensic mode is multidisciplinary research group Forensic Architecture, based at Goldsmiths, University of London. This research agency is interested in how geographic and architectural space can function as evidentiary repositories and sensors of state violence/violations of human rights, and how such spatial-architectural evidence can be visualised and presented in judicial forums. The aim of this section is to focus on one of Forensic Architecture's recent investigative projects, entitled *Omarska: Memorial in Exile*, which examines how their exploration of a mine turned concentration camp in Bosnia and Herzegovina intertwines their interest in both an 'aesthetics of the forensic' and their desire to expose the

hidden violences of carceral space. Through this analysis, I argue that the group's spatio-forensic approach not only reflects upon the historical modes of human rights abuse associated with such sites, but also points towards their contemporary post-carceral function and use-value — dimensions that are more intimately connected than we might first think. As mentioned in this book's introduction, the notion of 'forensic aesthetics' closely interconnects with this book's broader investment in a renewed attention to documentary aesthetics, as well as Fuller and Weizman's previously explored work on 'investigative' modalities. These attentions to the aesthetic perceive it as a decidedly politicised sensor of material spatialities that are increasingly riven through with contesting and obfuscated formations of power and violence (those social forces, slowing into form). Weizman, the director of Forensic Architecture, is a central and recurring voice arguing for a mode of decidedly politicised aesthetic investigation, and exploring the longer lineage of his foundational theoretical work and practice in this section allows space for a deeper interrogation of these interconnections between the aesthetic, evidentiary, and spatial that undergird the central theoretical pillars of this book. Here, I want to focus particularly on how such a spatial-aesthetic mode of investigatory practice functions both through and alongside practices of human rights activism and investigative journalism.

Weizman has suggested that 'the direction of the forensic gaze could [...] be inverted, and used [...] to detect and interrupt state violations [...] a *new forensis* must emerge to challenge the assumptions of received forensic practices'.[20] Since 2011, Forensic Architecture has attempted to enact such a process of inversion, utilising a variety of forensic and aesthetic praxes to make visible previously obfuscated instances of state violence and human rights abuses.[21] In a 2012 article entitled *Forensic Architecture: Notes from Fields and Forums* — which sought to lay out the basic theoretical concerns of the group's practice — Weizman begins by mapping out the contemporary rise of a forensic-evidentiary sensibility:

> The primacy accorded to the witness and to the subjective and linguistic dimension of testimony, trauma, and memory — a primacy that has had such an enormous cultural, aesthetic, and political influence that it has reframed the end of the twentieth century as 'the era of the witness' — is gradually being supplemented (not to say bypassed) by an emergent forensic sensibility, an object-oriented juridical culture immersed in matter and materialities, in code and form, and in the presentation of scientific investigations by experts.[22]

Once again, we can see close connections to the mapping out of 'evidentiary aesthetics' by Cirio, discussed above. Here, Weizman accords a similar importance to forensic and evidentiary modes of investigation. Whilst he tackles the question of the evidentiary and forensic from a judicial rather than aesthetic standpoint, techniques of visuality are still of critical importance for him. For example, he speaks repeatedly of the aesthetics of matter and materialities. Thus, for him, the subjective and linguistic basis of testimony, trauma, and memory as evidentiary repositories are now being bolstered by deeper visual and aesthetic interrogations and examinations of material, aesthetic, and object-orientated forms of evidence.

For example, in a conversation between Yve-Alain Bois, Michel Feher, Hal Foster, and Weizman, we are offered the following question and response:

> BOIS You write that 'Forensic Architecture seeks to [...] employ aesthetics as a way of intensifying the investigation process by augmenting our senses and increasing our sensitivities to space, matter, narrative or images'.
>
> WEIZMAN Yes, seeing is a kind of construction that is also conceptual and culturally conditioned, hence the indispensability of artistic sensibility.[23]

Thus, new aesthetic techniques of evidentiary examination and presentation become tools for reinforcing architectural and spatial forensic evidence, 'augmenting our senses and increasing our sensitivities to space'.[24] Some examples of these new aesthetic techniques include 'geospatial data, maps and models of cities and territories, the "enhanced vision" of remote sensing, 3D scans'.[25] Weizman has stated this more explicitly elsewhere, suggesting that one of Forensic Architecture's central aims is to 'reorient the practice of contemporary forensics and expand it [...] bring[ing] new material and aesthetic sensibilities to bear upon the legal and political implications of state violence, armed conflict and climate change'.[26] Thus, the work of Forensic Architecture is inextricably tied up with wider questions of the spatial, aesthetic, and evidentiary.

Weizman takes up Arjun Appadurai's notion of 'methodological fetishism' to develop the aesthetic and visual dimensions of the group's practice further. Pushing back against the utilisation of the fetish that highlights its obfuscating or mystifying capacity (Marx's commodity fetishism and its cloaking of the human relations of production), the concept of 'methodological fetishism' put forward by Appadurai focuses on how objects hold an inherent 'thingness' and are an amalgamation of 'complex social relations' and 'imprinted political forces'. Weizman builds on Appadurai's argument to suggest that within such a practice of forensic fetishism, 'the part or the detail becomes an entrypoint from which to reconstruct larger processes, events, social relations, conjunctions of actors and practices, structures and technologies'.[27] Here, Weizman's 'forensic fetishism' works in opposition to that of the commodity fetish, unveiling rather than veiling the complexity of an object's embedded social relations through new aesthetic and representational strategies.

Within Forensic Architecture's practice, new technologies and representational practices of evidentiary and forensic analysis are utilised and interrogated as mediated sensing devices that can help unearth new forms of evidentiary material. Alongside such a showcasing of new evidentiary technologies within these practices, new aesthetic and formal strategies also help to frame evidence in new and novel ways. Certain formal and aesthetic strategies — mapping, 3D modelling, diagramming — aim to reframe and augment the truth-bearing capacities of certain forms of evidence. Ultimately, across a variegated set of practices, we have seen the showcasing of new technologies and aesthetic strategies that attempt to evince and forensically examine various formations of socio-political injustice and violence: humanitarian crises, police abuse, indigenous genocide, and miscarriages of justice, to name but a few. Across this broad spectrum of works, new technologies and aesthetics of evidentiary and forensic investigation are deployed with the aim of creating new modes of what

Weizman and Thomas Keenan term 'truth construction'. For them, this practice is 'an arduous labor [...] one employing a spectrum of technologies [...] and all sorts of scientific, rhetorical, theatrical, and visual mechanisms'.[28]

Tied into the primacy accorded to the aesthetic and the visual in Forensic Architecture's work is a wider concern with examining spatial and architectural formations as evidentiary repositories. Thus, questions of geography, architecture, and space play a crucial role in the 'emergent forensic sensibility' of Weizman and his group. As we shall see, the notion of the 'architectural' does not simply refer to the spatiality of individual structures or the infrastructure of the urban environment, rather, for the group, it represents a much wider focus on the socio-spatial — interrelating the urban, ex-urban, and rural. Within Weizman's definition of the spatial, and its interconnections with the evidentiary, he emphasises how space can never be read as an 'isolated' or 'discrete' surface or object, rather it is inherently imbued with sets of 'relations, associations and chains of actions' that give it a socio-political thickness.[29] Weizman's definition of the spatial returns us to the theories of spatiality mapped out in the introduction to this book. There is a clear connection between Weizman's definition and the wider politicisation of geography and spatiality across the social sciences and humanities, extending primarily from both Marxist discourse on late capitalism's destructive 'spatial fixity' and neocolonial geopolitics.

Here, we are reminded of both Edward Soja's contention that 'relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology'[30] and Doreen Massey's suggestion:

> That thinking the spatial in a particular way can [...] contribute to political arguments already under way, and — most deeply — can be an essential element in the imaginative structure which enables in the first place an opening up to the very sphere of the political.[31]

In their theorisations, like Weizman's, spatiality is not seen as surface, object, or empty container, rather space is always a 'thick' web of social relations and politics. Thus, within the work conducted by Forensic Architecture, spatiality is similarly understood as the terrain on which violence is increasingly conducted. It is also important to note that this spatial engagement moves across multi-scalar levels:

> Concerned not only with buildings but rather with an ever-changing set of relations between people and things, mediated by spaces and structures across multiple scales: from the human body to human-induced climate change, from the scale of a single home, through that of larger territories.[32]

Thus, within the wider 'emergent forensic sensibility' mapped out by Weizman, the spatial plays a crucial role and this moves across different registers; from micro to macro geopolitics. In these early theorisations of the forensic by Weizman, we can already see the germination of the later conceptualisation of 'investigative aesthetics', and its emphasis on attending to the aesthetic as a mode of political sensing and sense-making for exposing different forms of power and violence in almost every minute facet of material space.

Weizman also suggests that the spatial can function as a particular 'agent': built environments 'are composite assemblies of structures, spaces, infrastructure [...] and technologies with a certain capacity to act and interact with their surroundings. They structure rather than simply frame events'.[33] Thus, whilst architectures often operate as passive sensors of social and environmental forces (as we have explored above) they also have the capacity to hold an agency of their own; 'acting and interacting' with their surroundings. To further explicate architecture's role as 'agent' as well as sensor, Weizman focuses on the trials of the West Bank separation wall. Here, the trials were 'not [...] of people but rather trials of an apparatus'. Using the proportionality principle of international humanitarian law, 'the wall was found to disproportionately violate an entire territory that included people, fields, houses, roads, military bases, colonies'.[34] Moreover, the rerouting of the wall that the verdict called for meant that 'aggressive acts of colonization and dispossession were presented as a tragic necessity administered with care and responsibility'.[35] Thus, the judgement against the border wall provides us with an example of architecture operating as agent, with the 'attribution of liability to material things'.[36] Here, we have a particular spatial infrastructure that takes on an agency of its own; a capacity for 'disproportionate violations'.

This notion of the spatial as an 'agent' of violence offers a good conceptual pivot into the analysis of the *Living Death Camps* project by artist and researcher Susan Schuppli and filmmaker Steffan Kraemer. Omarska is the site of a former mine turned concentration camp. Today, the site functions as a mine once again, bought in 2004 by commercial mining company ArcelorMittal. *Omarska: Memorial in Exile* explores the shifting status of these territories, marked by the historical violence of incarceration and genocide. Yet the site is still occupied and financially exploited, rather than memorialised. With a focus on the latter project at the Omarska site, the aim of this analysis is to examine how the work's forensic-aesthetic method renders visible the relationship between the material pasts and presents of such sites of historical trauma and incarceration. Through an intertwining of critical, legal, spatial, and aesthetic practice, Forensic Architecture attempts to excavate and memorialise these instances of carceral trauma, taking them up as practical political tools to be utilised against those forces of late capitalism that wish to once again exploit such unused 'dead spaces'. In addition, I will examine how the film attempts to render visible the infrastructural and geographical conditions that facilitate the transition between the use functions of Omarska, from its origins as a mine, then as a death camp, then as a mine again — from the extractive to the necropolitical and back to the extractive.

My usage of the term 'necropolitics' builds from the formulation of Achille Mbembe, for whom the 'ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die. Hence, to kill or to allow to live constitute the limits of sovereignty'.[37] Mbembe's notion of the necropolitical is thus defined by the sovereign technologies of power that can both 'foster life' and 'produce death'. These outer limits of the sovereign operate most intensely within carceral space. For example, as Sarah Lamble suggests,

'the prison is a site that produces the conditions of living death; it is a place where bodies are subject to regimes of slow death and dying'. Therefore, according to Lamble, the carceral space closely maps onto what Mbembe terms the creation of necropolitical 'deathworlds', with 'death' here including both literal material death, but also 'social, political and civil death'.[38]

Between May and August 1992, more than 3,200 Bosnian Muslims and Croats were killed in and around the town of Prijedor and at the Omarska concentration camp, previously an iron ore mine. The camp was run by Bosnian Serb forces in the mining town of Omarska, near Prijedor in northern Bosnia and Herzegovina, set up for Bosniak and Croat men and women during the Prijedor massacre. Functioning in the first months of the Bosnian War in 1992, it was one of 677 alleged detention centres and camps set up throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war. While nominally an 'investigation centre' or 'assembly point' for members of the Bosniak and Croatian population, Human Rights Watch has subsequently classified Omarska as a concentration camp. In all, 3400 Bosniaks and Croats from Prijedor went missing or were killed during 1992, and 3334 were imprisoned in the camp at Omarska.

ArcelorMittal, a Luxembourg-based multinational steel manufacturing corporation bought the Omarska mining complex (which had remained inactive since the war) in 2004 and planned to resume iron ore extraction. In 2005, the company made a commitment to finance and build a memorial on the grounds of Omarska; however, nearly two decades later, no progress has been made. In addition, the mine's postwar workforce is comprised almost exclusively of Bosnian Serbs, with evidence of systemic discrimination against Bosnian Muslim workers. In 2012, the ArcelorMittal Orbit — a 114.5-metre-high sculpture and observation tower — was created in the Olympic Park in London using iron from the Omarska mine. The 2013 experimental documentary *Omarska: Memorial in Exile* was created for Forensic Architecture's *Living Death Camps*. The work examines the historical transformations of the Omarska mine from a variety of perspectives — geographical, economic, archaeological — all with a keen eye towards understanding the material relations between state-sanctioned violence and natural resource extraction. Ultimately, the documentary points towards the interrelations between these two differing, yet structurally connected, forms of violence, one extractive and one necropolitical. Schuppli and Kraemer's film remains attentive to the porosity and mutability of this space, continually emphasising its shifting function as a site of both extraction and state violence.

The documentary draws parallels between the extractive and the necropolitical right from the off, forging connections between the shifting function of Omarska and its surrounding landscapes. An opening frame of text provides us with the chemical composition of limonite, the primary mineral form of iron ore extracted from Omarska and its surrounding sites. After a brief fade to black, we find ourselves located in the passenger seat of a car travelling along a road in the early morning. Initially, the camera follows a line of trees along the roadside, before panning down to the road in front. Over these images, Schuppli's voiceover states,

Fig. 2.2. Still from *Omarska: Memorial in Exile*, dir. by Susan Schuppli and Steffan Kraemer (UK, 2013).

'it's September now, five months after our initial visit and it's still overcast. It is this constant moisture that gives Limonite its particular name'. We then transition to close-up shots of the mineral form, and Schuppli's voiceover explains how the substance derives its name from the 'Greek word for meadow, due to its frequent occurrence in bogs and marshes'. We are then presented with various archival images of mass killing sites from both the Bosnian and Kosovo wars.

The first set of archival images are preceded by an intertitle that reads 'Izbica [IT-05–87]'. As Schuppli states, 'these tapes form part of [...] [a] material evidence archive and were entered as exhibits during the trials of Slobodan Miloševic and Milan Milutinovic'. The bracketed information in the intertitle refers to the trial's case number. The footage — shot by Liri Loshi and Sefedin Thaqi in the aftermath of the massacre at Izbica, 28 March 1999 — begins with some magnetic feedback and interference, symptomatic of multiple transfers and improper preservation. The image then corrects itself and we are presented with various groups of bodies at the Izbica site. The first shot is brief and shows a group of bodies on a hillside, the image then falters once more. Within the next sequence, the camera pans across an open meadow, before we cut to a close-up on several bodies lined up along the far hedgerow. At the end of this shot, the image once again degrades. We then return to the close-up shots of limonite, as Schuppli's voiceover states:

> While limonite is amorphous, a number of minerals will decompose to produce it without losing their own unique crystal shape. As such, limonite is the carrier of form, but has no distinctive form itself. It is matter in potential, a becoming structure of formless matter.

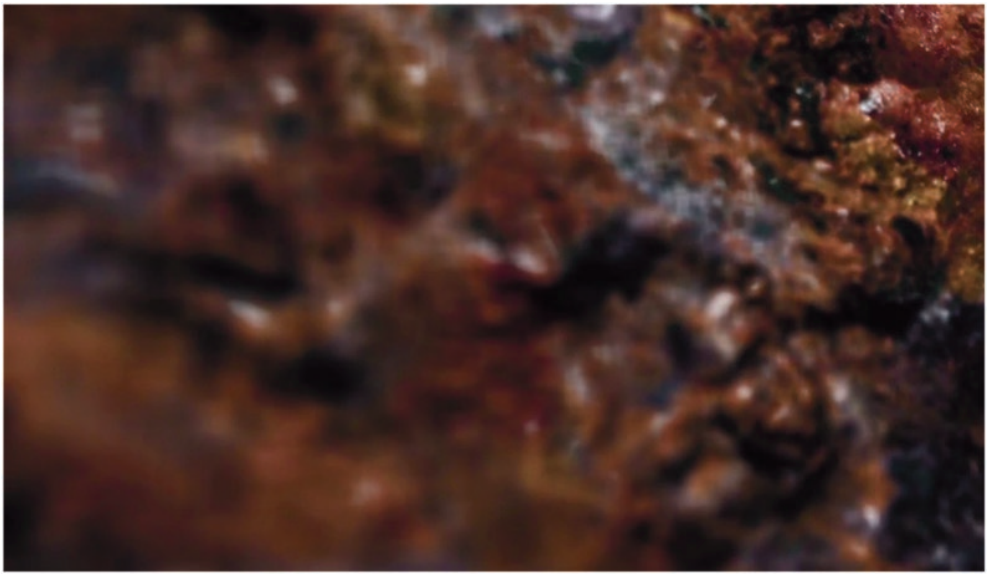


Fig. 2.3. Still from *Omarska: Memorial in Exile*, dir. by Schuppli and Kraemer (UK, 2013).

The bookending of this archival footage by a close examination of limonite's material composition is certainly not incidental. It carves open a space for Schuppli and Kraemer to interrogate the shifting function of Omarska and its landscapes. As touched upon earlier, within the initial section focusing on limonite, Schuppli and Kraemer highlight its etymological connection to the Greek word for meadow (*leimon*). The archival images we are subsequently presented with are implicitly connected by their shared focus on bodies in remote rural spaces, which, perhaps not coincidentally, are mainly fields and meadows. The sites of extraction become the sites of necropolitical violence, before returning to the extractive. Indeed, later in the film Schuppli suggests that 'some contend that the subterreanean deposits of iron ore still carry the decomposing remains of victims and that oxides have been hydrated with their blood, producing the ore that is limonite'. Consequently, limonite becomes a connective thread between Omarska's shifting infrastructure, a space alternatively utilised for extractive industry and state-sanctioned murder. Through the dialectical juxtaposition of the material landscapes of extraction and the sites of sovereign violence, Schuppli and Kraemer begin to interrogate the shifting function of these spaces.

This emphasis on the shifting functionality of Omarska perhaps points towards a more fundamental spatio-political question: are sites of extraction particularly well suited to adaptation into spaces of carceral internment and violence? Interconnections between natural resource extraction and carcerality do have historical precedents.[39] For example, under colonial rule in South Africa, prison labour satisfied the demands for additional workers in the burgeoning diamond and gold mining industries. In 1885, the De Beers Diamond Mining Company became

'the first private organisation to employ convicts for labour [...] the population of both compounds and prisons consisted not only of criminals in the ordinary sense, but of a new labouring population criminalised by laws and controlled in new institutions'.[40] Moreover, in the following decade De Beers also built their own prison branches, which they owned and managed. As Shanta Singh suggests, 'the characteristic feature of the development of South African prisons was its resemblance to the mine compound. Such compounds housed mine workers, of whom many were convicts supplied by the prison system'.[41] Thus, in the case of De Beers, we see an early example of the interconnections between natural resource extraction and carceral infrastructure.

The demands for surplus labour meant that carceral spaces had to be adapted so they could be sequestered within the infrastructural spaces of resource extraction. The origins of the Omarska mine's role as a carceral space was, of course, qualitatively different. In the South African case, it was the increased demand for labour that led to the development of new kinds of carceral infrastructure, one that could serve the needs of private enterprise. The Omarska mine, in contrast, was opened under post-war Yugoslav socialism, before the conflicts of the 1990s led Bosnian Serb forces and local authorities to halt excavation and transform the mine into a concentration camp. Indeed, as David Campbell has suggested, the majority of camps in Bosnia:

> Were not purpose built as detention centres. Instead, existing buildings — a mining complex, as in the case of Omarska, or former community buildings and a school as in the case of Trnopolje — were redeployed as part of the ethnic cleansing campaigns.[42]

Thus, rather than new carceral spaces being developed in tandem with privatised sites of resource extraction, in the case of Omarska the interconnections between extraction and carcerality are temporally demarcated.

What are the potential explanations for the decision to appropriate existing spaces and architectures rather than to produce new ones? And how does Schuppli and Kraemer's film seek to visualise such strategies of appropriation? To answer these questions, it is necessary to turn back to Agamben. Under the logics of the Agambian state of exception, examined briefly in the introduction to this chapter, the concealment and occlusion of carceral space is key. For Agamben, with the intersection between the exception and the production of bare life, it is the camp that becomes the quintessential example of the state of exception. The camp is thus 'the pure, absolute, and impassable biopolitical space [...] which will appear as the hidden paradigm of the political space of modernity, whose metamorphoses and disguises we will have to learn to recognise'.[43] Dominique Moran, furthering Agamben's definition, suggests that 'bare life and spaces of exception exist in multiple concealed forms within the political space in which we now live'.[44] Thus, for both Agamben and Moran, processes of occlusion, disguise, and concealment come to define the camp under the state of exception. Consequently, the choice to locate the Omarska camp within an already established spatial infrastructure clearly would have aided the occlusion and concealment of its new function. In this way,

spatial and architectural appropriation, rather than fresh construction, served to mask the camp's true function from public view.

Here, it must be acknowledged that I am taking Agamben's political ontology quite literally, thinking through how the material infrastructure of carceral space has been effectively 'disguised' and 'concealed' in Omarska. Indeed, David Campbell's two-part essay 'Atrocity, Memory, Photography: Imaging the Concentration Camps of Bosnia - The Case of ITN versus *Living Marxism*' maps out the protracted debates that took place over the veracity of images from the camps, both during and following the conflict. As Campbell writes, the occlusion of the camp — facilitated mainly by its appropriation of existing mining infrastructure — and the resulting disputes over its true function, enabled 'the potential link between Bosnia and the Holocaust to be cut, the meaning of the Bosnian war to be diminished, and the responsibility of those who perpetrated the ethnic-cleansing campaigns to be denied'.[45] In addition, the typical spatial location of mining complexes — remote, though never too far away from pools of labour — mean that they served the dual function of remaining out of sight, yet also accessible. Thus, the prisoners housed at Omarska were moved there easily enough, and, once interned, they could largely be hidden from public view.

Shots throughout the film highlight the strategic location of the mine, existing outside heavily populated areas and dominated (spatially and representationally) by the exterior presence of mining technologies and infrastructure. For example, around five minutes and thirty seconds into the film we transition from an aerial shot of the Omarska mine, which shows its geographically sequestered location, to a travelling shot from the interior of a car that focuses on the exterior mining architectures and technologies. These shots continue for the next minute and a half

Fig. 2.4. Still from *Omarska: Memorial in Exile*, dir. by Schuppli and Kraemer (UK, 2013).

as we move around the perimeter of the complex. As the camera registers fleeting glimpses of the mining infrastructure, a voiceover states 'once a spectral silence hung over these buildings, the cavernous rust coloured hanger containing a heavy industrial plant and piles of tyres'. The combination of these crawling tracking shots around the perimeter of the space and Schuppli's voiceover serve to emphasise the ways in which the processes of occlusion and concealment of sovereign violence — so central to Agamben's formulation of the camp — would have been aided by the exterior presence of the mine and its infrastructures.

From here, we transition to a series of archival images. Firstly, we are presented with an aerial photograph that focuses on a building known as the 'white house' (previously an administrative building for the mine), the primary location of torture and murder at Omarska. Next, we have a sequence of news reportage that captures fleeting glimpses of prisoners lined up in a canteen. Shot through the broken windows of the canteen space from an exterior position, the prisoners inside are visible only as fleeting shadows. We are then presented with a photograph taken after the conflict that shows the interior of this same canteen space. Finally, the two photographs and a still from the archival footage are presented on screen as a triptych. Within the archival news report sequence, it is possible to imagine that we are simply observing factory workers from a distance, collected together in a communal space. Indeed, this was often one of the rhetorical strategies utilised by the military to conceal the true function of Omarska — work was simply 'continuing as normal'. However, as Andrew Herscher has suggested, perhaps the Omarska mine did continue to function as a factory during the conflict, albeit producing something radically different from its typical product: 'just as the factory was a space where the modern industrialized worker was made, the mine's functional ruin

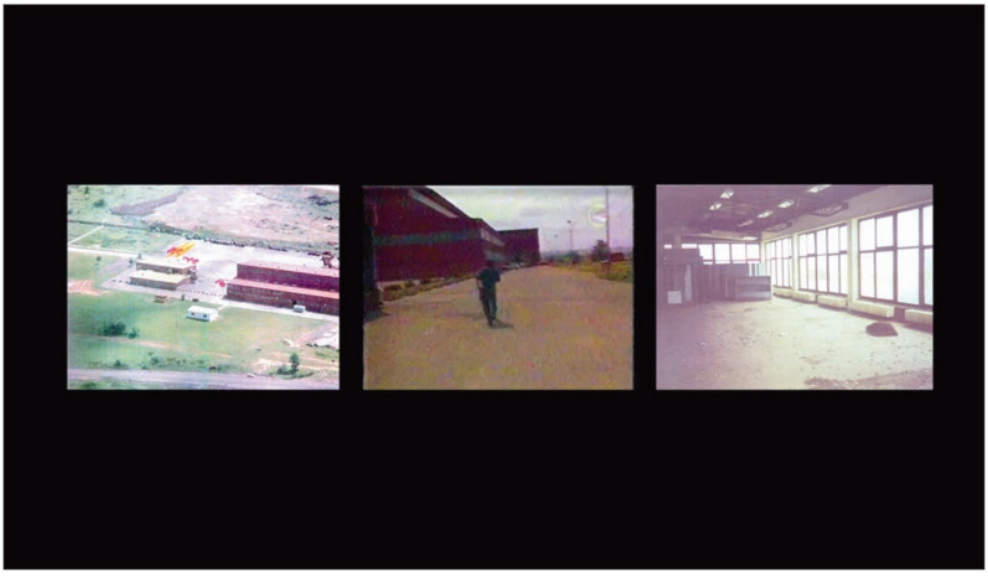


Fig. 2.5. Still from *Omarska: Memorial in Exile*, dir. by Schuppli and Kraemer (UK, 2013).

at Omarska yielded a space where citizens of socialist Yugoslavia were remade as subaltern ethnic communities of Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats'. Thus, for Herscher, the Omarska mine came to function as a space for the production and 'formation of political subjectivities'.[46]

Thus, it is contestable that whilst one form of production ended at the mine, another, facilitated by sovereign torture and murder, was initiated. As Herscher suggests, 'ethnicity, in other words, was not only a social construction; it was also conjoined to the architectural reconstruction of a mine into a camp'.[47] Perhaps this is another reason for the connections that Schuppli and Kraemer draw between limonite and the prisoners interned at the camp; both are subjected to different forms of production. Through this reading, we see a potential shift from an extractive to necropolitical form of manufacture, facilitated by the appropriation of this infrastructure. Within the latter necropolitical mode, sovereign murder and violence, as well as 'architectural reconstruction', facilitated the formation of new political subjectivities.

As suggested earlier, there were debates over the veracity of the news report images filmed by ITN during the conflict. Many simply refused to acknowledge that the architecture and infrastructure of the mine was being used for mass internment and murder. Similar debates over the veracity of images also extended into the trials of Slobodan Miloševic and Milan Milutinovic, as well as the video material that had been shot by Thaqi and Loshi. During the presentation of their footage in the film, the voiceover presents a reading from a section of the transcripts of the Miloševic/Milutinovic trial. Dated Tuesday, 3 September 2002, lead prosecutor Dirk Ryneveld describes a section of the video shot by Loshi and Thaqi, during the cross examination of Loshi:

> I propose to show the witness this four-minute tape, and it shows four — and I'm now told actually five — scenes. The first scene shows the first group of victims where they were found. And I pause here to say you've heard one witness who testified about that first group. Then there is a short break in the film, purposely to separate the scenes, and we then see the second group of victims — and I pause here to say that you've also heard a witness who testified about being a survivor of that second group — followed by a brief view of the large meadow where the people had been assembled. The original videotape was apparently handed over by the witness to an investigator, Tait-Harris, of the ICTY while he was in Tirana, Albania, on the 18th of May, 1999. The witness, in his statement, explains how the video was made and states that this tape was the original version and had not been edited, added to, or altered in any way.

This voiceover not only narrates and interprets the images we see, it also situates their role as evidentiary materials within the judicial forum. As Schuppli has suggested elsewhere, much of the discussion during Loshi's cross-examination focused 'not only to the veracity of the images recorded on one of the tapes, but also regarding its material integrity and the custodial handling of the videotape prior to its admittance into the legal archive of the ICTY [The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia]'.[48] Indeed, in another section of Loshi's cross-

Fig. 2.6. Still from *Omarska: Memorial in Exile*, dir. by Schuppli and Kraemer (UK, 2013).

examination we hear of how the tape and camera were stolen for a period of time, and multiple transfers were made — the primary cause for the decomposition of the images. Schuppli and Kraemer are keen to examine the tension that is evident in the court discussions between the visual information captured on the tape and these instances of 'incidental inscription'. Whilst within the judicial forum these two evidentiary forms — the visual information rendered and the incidental inscription resulting from material degradations — exist in a tension (with the latter potentially disrupting the veracity of the former), for Schuppli:

> The material violations evidenced in the dense overlay of defects caused by the repeated copying and over-coding of the tape immediately alerts us to the material violations of the body-proper that will soon emerge out of the depths of the image.[49]

For Schuppli, the 'material violations' present within these archival sequences do not serve to undermine the veracity of the images (the driving line of questioning within the judicial forum). Instead, they forcefully signal the necropolitical violence that will soon become visible within the sites and spaces filmed. Schuppli goes on to suggest that within the realm of the cinematic, such distortions 'signal immanent danger and threat, as the stability of a world organized as a coherent picture falls apart and is consumed by violence'. Whilst she recognises that the visual documentation of the massacre cannot be equated with cinematic narrative construction, she does contest that 'the impoverished condition of the tape, with its material degradations and destabilized image field, are disturbingly resonant with chilling effect, reminding us of the political program that sought to eradicate difference through ethnic cleansing'.[50] Thus, the condition of the tape — rendered

Fig. 2.7. Still from *Omarska: Memorial in Exile*, dir. by Schuppli and Kraemer (UK, 2013).

visible through the instances of material 'degradation' to the image — mirror the processes of attempted spatial and architectural concealment and occlusion described above. More precisely, whilst events at Omarska were concealed by the spatial and architectural veneer of the mining complex, the visual documentation of this same sovereign violence was also forcibly removed from public view, and the material degradation of the images becomes evidence of attempts to conceal and destroy it. Moreover, whilst both the spatial infrastructure of the mine and the material degradation of the images become sites for undermining the veracity of events at Omarska, Schuppli and Kraemer's film attempts to reverse these processes, allowing them to function as evidentiary repositories in and of themselves.

Whilst the veracity of the degraded image is re-established by Schuppli and Kraemer through their engagement with the massacre footage, they are also keen to utilise contemporary technologies of hypervisuality as evidentiary devices, those 'new material and aesthetic sensibilities' that Weizman suggests must be brought 'to bear upon the legal and political implications of state violence'. This is particularly evident in a section midway through the film, which focuses on the architectural construction of the 'white house', the primary site of torture and murder at Omarska. Schuppli and Kraemer used a 3D laser scanner to create detailed images and renderings of the building. Over shots that show the scanner at work, Schuppli states, 'scanning the surfaces of the 'white house', our camera's high-resolution sensors are charged with the task of documenting history. Searching for residual clues that might somehow disclose the violence unleashed in this now rather prosaic place'. Following this sequence, we are presented with the resulting series of images captured by the 3D scanner. The voiceover provided here is a re-enactment of testimony provided by a former Omarska prisoner.

> QUESTION Do you recall the number of people who were in the 'white house'?
> RESPONSE Yes, I do. On the 24th June, when I was brought to Omarska, I spent my first night in the 'white house'. The second room on the right as you go in. There were forty-three people inside, plus the eight of us who had just arrived. That's fifty-one people all together. I had recognised a young man I had known when we were both very young. He had been badly beaten and he was the only one who was allowed to lie down as his kidneys had been broken.

The images provided by the laser scanner allow us to see the complete skeletal structure of the building, with walls and partitions rendered as partially opaque. These spectral images simultaneously allow us to see the building's complete architectural footprint, whilst also impressing upon us the restricted spatial organisation of the individual rooms. Such imaging technology also allows for the visualisation of imperceptible material degradations to the building's structure, which are themselves possible evidence of sovereign violence. For Weizman, visualisation tools like the 3D scanner function as 'prosthetic technologies [...] [which] mediate, and thus augment, the aesthetic sensitivity of material formations, buildings, and territories'.[51] The combination of traditional testimony and these 'prosthetic' technological renderings serve to heighten our apperception of the violence enacted within the space of the 'white house'.

Within this sequence, we see how the forensic or investigative methods developed by the film utilise the aesthetic to read built structures as sensoring devices; able to provide testimony in ways that mirror traditional linguistic forms of evidence. The role of 'prosthetic technologies' in such alternative forms of evidence production become key in this regard. Indeed, as Schuppli suggests near the end of the film, 'what trace effects might linger in the surface grain of plaster and paint, and are captured by electronic pixels [...] can images be made to speak, to testify, on behalf of events that precede them?' Thus, within this closing passage of voiceover, Schuppli and Kraemer point us back towards Weizman's wider definition of architectural space as a '"political plastic" — social forces *slowing* into form'.

The manner in which Schuppli and Kraemer attempt to unpack the shifting infrastructures of violence at the Omarska mine can, I think, be read in close relation to the carceral geographer's attempt to render visible the porosity of carceral spaces during both their 'functional and post-functional lives'. However, instead of examining how contemporary carcerality transforms social and economic geographies outside the immediate space of the prison — those contemporary sites and spaces impacted by the current 'expansion, diversification and proliferation of [...] strategies of control and coercion', towards which geographic carcerality is attuned — Schuppli and Kraemer's project is instead concerned with the appropriation and exploitation of a seemingly 'dead' or 'post-functional' site of carcerality. Thus, within *Omarska: Memorial in Exile*, the traditional carceral geographer's process and praxis is reversed; here we look at how a historical carceral site of violence is coopted and exploited, returned to its original function as a space for resource extraction. What factors (be they infrastructural, legal, geopolitical etc.) facilitate the Omarska mine's oscillation between a carceral

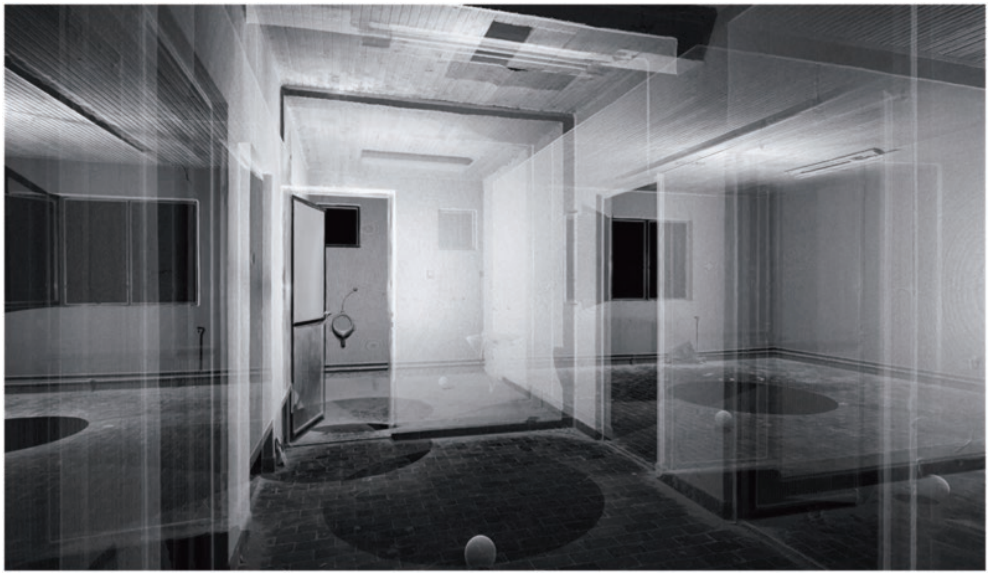


Fig. 2.8. Still from *Omarska: Memorial in Exile*, dir. by Schuppli and Kraemer (UK, 2013).

space of violence and an economic space of extraction, between the extractive and necropolitical? Whilst blood soaks the iron ore at Omarska, does it also help to lubricate ArcelorMittal's expansionary infrastructure? Schuppli and Kraemer's film continually seeks to address these questions, always remaining attentive to the mutability of the Omarska site, always conscious of its 'porosity [...] recognising that techniques and technologies of confinement seep out of "carceral" spaces into the everyday, domestic, street, and institutional spaces'.[52]

The closing section of the film is also intensely focused on such instances of carceral 'seepage' and 'porosity'. Here, Schuppli's voiceover describes how the ArcelorMittal Orbit, a large metallic sculpture built for London for the 2012 Olympics, was constructued using iron ore extracted from the Omarska site. Forensic Architecture, in collaboration with the activist group Four Faces of Omarska, claimed the Orbit as a 'Memorial in Exile'. Calling a press conference to reveal their claims to the structure, the two groups used this event as an opportunity to present their wider findings about the horrors at Omarska. As Schuppli suggests, the structure is 'tragically intertwined with the history of war crimes that took place at Omarska'. Here then, the work takes up a particular site of 'seepage' from the Omarska site (the Orbit) to publicly expose the historical violence that took place there. Consequently, such a site of seepage becomes the ground for a new political struggle to be waged.

Seamless Transitions: Rendering the Invisible Spaces of Migrant Detention

In this next section, we shift our focus to a markedly different carceral network, albeit one that still bridges public-private infrastructure and the occlusion of sovereign violence: UK immigration detention and removal. Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre at Heathrow Airport, the Special Immigration Appeals Commission (SIAC) at Field House in the City of London, and the Inflite Executive Jet Centre at Stansted Airport are the three sites investigated by James Bridle in his short video work *Seamless Transitions*. Bridle, a multi-disciplinary artist, writer, journalist, and technologist, is perhaps best known for his formulation of the 'New Aesthetic'. Through the conceptualisation of this term, Bridle aimed to highlight both the increasing illegibility of technology and technological infrastructure as well as the moments when the visual image regimes of digital culture erupt into the physical world. Bridle was also keen to explore what images produced within such infrastructural networks potentially 'reveal about the underlying systems that produce them, and/or the human viewpoint which frames them'.[53] Therefore, the theoretical work grouped under the banner of the 'New Aesthetic' was centrally preoccupied with this relationship between the physical and digital, examining how our material environment is increasingly built, or, perhaps more aptly, *generated* by digital technologies. For Bridle, a primary example of the 'New Aesthetic' is the manner in which architectural rendering and visualisation technologies imagine and advertise private housing infrastructure across the globe. Discussing his *Render Ghosts* project, Bridle suggests how he became fascinated with the 'aesthetics and processes of architectural visualisation — the computer-generated images of future buildings visible on the hoardings around construction sites', and how these technologies of visualisation are inextricably tied to processes of 'intensive development, regeneration, and gentrification'.[54] The theoretical impetus behind the 'New Aesthetic' has also structured much of Bridle's more recent work, which has focused primarily on how to visualise abuses of sovereign power and discipline.

Seamless Transitions is a work that is very much a part of Bridle's wider 'New Aesthetic' project. However, as the examination of this work will show, the physical/digital nexus so central to the 'New Aesthetic' is crucially inverted within *Seamless Transitions*, as Bridle aims to examine the spatial and sovereign power dynamics of border control and immigration detention. Here, architectural visualisation is utilised to imagine physical locations that already exist, attempting to understand the power relations embedded within them. Before examining how *Seamless Transitions* interrogates the spatial power dynamics of these three unique, yet intertwined, sites of border control, I think it is important to briefly map out the history of the UK's expanded immigration detention infrastructure. Laying out this history — which involves a steady accrual of increasingly stringent legislation, xenophobia-inflected policy-making and socio-economic fearmongering — will help to highlight how such sites of exception (which resolutely interlock detention with criminalisation) have become naturalised and widely accepted within public discourse.

Mapping out the historical patterns of border control and immigration detention within the UK, Mary Bosworth suggests that we have seen a steady increase in state intervention, with 'the British government gradually and then more rapidly [beginning] to deny entrance, remove, deport, and eventually, detain'.[55] An early catalyst for the escalation and expansion of border control and immigration restriction was of course the decline of British imperial rule. The British government implemented a range of legislative measures to manage Britain's 'changing relationship to places it had previously governed'. These were often contradictory in nature, 'recognis[ing] on the one hand while restricting on the other, the rights of former imperial subjects'. For example, the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act offered the right to live in the UK to those Commonwealth citizens who had a British father or grandfather, 'effectively linking the right to enter and reside with race'.[56] The racialised restrictions imposed by legislative measures like this were contested and pressured for change.

Bosworth locates the origins of the contemporary British immigration detention system in the opening of the Harmondsworth Detention Unit in 1970. For her, this site — along with its sister institution Dover Castle — 'linked custody and border control in new ways'.[57] Both of these sites were set up primarily in response to the Immigration Appeals Act 1969 — itself a response to the pressure on the earlier racialised legislation — which had given Commonwealth citizens who had been denied entry the right to in-country appeal. Thus, whilst this 1969 Act had aimed to offer recourse to Commonwealth citizens seeking entry through a process of appeal, the act also 'greatly expanded the Immigration Service and concomitant Tribunals and resulted in the first purpose-built Immigration Detention Centre [Harmondsworth]'. Thus, for Bosworth, the construction of these two sites, alongside the measures put in place by the Immigration Appeals Act, 'unlocked the potential for administrative confinement of foreign nationals, thereby expanding state power'.[58] With this legislative shift, and its interrelated architectural enclosures, the UK began to see the steady naturalisation of administrative immigration detention.

We have thus seen a steady accumulation of immigration legislation — responding primarily to the dissolution of the British Empire — which has rarely been revised or expunged, leading inevitably to an increased web of control and discipline. Alongside this accrual of legislation, Bosworth highlights several other factors that have created the harsh state of contemporary immigration detention. Firstly, basic fears and rhetoric around race and national identity have long been identifiable within policy development, where 'immigration' often appears as 'an adjunct to race'.[59] Secondly, economic concerns also underpin the current structure of immigration detention and border control. Bosworth highlights the interrelations between debates over 'mass migration, post-Fordism (De Giorgi, 2010), and neoliberalism (Melossi, 2013; Sitkin, 2013) or the popularization of the term "economic migrant" to refer, disparagingly, to those who move in search of work'.[60] She also highlights how these factors have historical lineages that often intersect.[61]

Alongside these longer-term systemic factors, particular events have also repositioned the politics and ethics of border control, the most obvious and central being the terror attacks of 2001 in New York and Washington and 2005 in London. As Bosworth suggests, there was a noticeable discursive shift in official and popular discourse 'linking issues of asylum to potential terror threats. Foreigners were no longer simply a danger to social order or race relations. They were potentially perilous to the very lives of British citizens'.[62] The Labour government of the time rapidly increased the 'sum of laws [...] governing non-British citizens', including the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 and the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005, both of which helped to shore up and solidify policy that allowed for the indefinite detention of foreign nationals. Thus, this accrual of post-empire and anti-terror legislation has led to the ever-escalating severity of immigration and border policing and control. Additionally, this growing web of legislation led directly to the expansion of the physical infrastructure for immigration control, including the construction of three immigration detention centres. One of these, Harmondworth, is a central focus of Bridle's film.

The origin of the *Seamless Transitions* project extends back to 2013, when Bridle read an article on the British government's use of private chartered flights for the deportation of asylum seekers whose applications had been rejected.[63] The use of private contractors within the immigration detention and removal system is widespread, from the logistics of deportation transportation to the infrastructure of internment. Whilst failed asylum seekers were previously transported on commercial flights, typically accompanied by privately-contracted security guards, this process of removal is now funnelled exclusively through private charter companies. Bridle, offering a possible cause for this shift, suggests that 'the main reason the government uses private planes is because commercial carriers (and their passengers) don't like flying people under duress, especially after the horrific death by suffocation of deportee Jimmy Mubenga'. As Bridle references, in 2010 Mubenga, a political refugee from Angola, had his asylum application rejected. Later that year, on 12 October, he was placed on British Airways Flight 77 back to Angola. During the flight, he died. Official reports initially claimed that the flight was rerouted to Heathrow after Mubenga had become unwell and he later died in hospital. However, the investigative journalists Paul Lewis and Matthew Taylor gained witness testimonies from other passengers on the plane that attested to the fact that Mubenga had been placed in a dangerous restraining hold by three security guards employed by private security firm G4S.

Thus, the calculated attempt to cover up the cause of Mubenga's death was only thwarted by the presence of passengers who could provide public testimony to counter this official narrative. This tragic event not only offers a possible reason for the shift to privately-chartered flights for immigration removal, it is also representative of a collaborative effort between governmental and private sector forces involved in immigration detention and removal increasingly to occlude the physical and material presence of such disciplinary (and potentially deadly) practices from public view. Indeed, Bridle, speaking about this shift, suggests:

> What struck me most was the incongruity and apparently deliberate obfuscation of what was happening: a luxury private jet terminal being used to hurry overwhelmingly poor and vulnerable people out of the country under cover of darkness and blanket security.[64]

The British lawyer and human rights activist Gareth Peirce has similarly interrogated the increasing occlusion of various extrajudicial processes in the UK. Exploring UK complicity in practices of rendition, internment without trial, and torture, Peirce writes that 'what is in fact the law precisely mirrors instinctive moral revulsion' but that 'in this country, the government hardly needs such acceptance, since here the additional and crucial factor is that the public is unlikely to be given sufficient information to trigger revulsion'.[65] As Bridle suggests, engaging with Peirce's work, 'hence the night, the private terminals, charter flights, the hired coaches. All of this is deliberate: it is a policy of not being seen'.[66] These practices of increasing obfuscation within immigration removal and detention — enabled primarily via increased private contracting — were the catalyst for Bridle's project, attempting to bring into public view the extrajudicial practices that were increasingly occluded.

Bridle worked with the London-based architectural visualisation studio Picture Plane to create the 3D renderings of Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre, SIAC at Field House, and the Inflite Executive Jet Centre. He had previously written about this group's work as part of his *Render Ghosts* project, itself a part of the wider 'New Aesthetics' project. Here, Bridle was interested in the way that architectural visualisations, like those created by Picture Plane, could be 'considered the most visible public, legal, urban art of the 21st century. Displayed on hoardings throughout the metropolis, they confront us every day with a kind of digital futurism'.[67] What struck Bridle was the fact that many of the visualisations produced by companies like Picture Plane never ended up becoming physical structures, rather they operated as particular kinds of 'digital imaginaries' of future urban development. As Bridle continues, 'today's architectural visualisations exist [...] to call into being, and physicality, the buildings of the imagination'.[68] Thus, Bridle was interested in the relationship between architecture and visualisation, particularly in the rendering of urban imaginaries that might not find physical form. Through the *Render Ghosts* project, Bridle offers a subtle critique of the impact that such digital architectural imaginations have on processes of urban development, particularly the placing of rendered simulacra of future urban exploitation into socio-economically vulnerable sites and spaces (billboards or hoardings on vacant properties and land). As briefly suggested above, the interesting dimension of Bridle's return to Picture Plane for the *Seamless Transitions* project is that the digital visualisation company was asked to imagine and render spaces that already have a physical form, yet remain hidden and occluded through a matrix of extrajudicial legislation and private ownership. Thus, instead of Picture Plane's architectural visualisations imagining the urban futures of gentrification or commercialisation, these same tools were used to expose sites that materially exist, yet lack a place in the public imaginary — precisely through the deliberate obfuscation of the violence and internment that takes place within their walled boundaries.

Bridle used a mix of evidentiary materials to create these visualisations: satellite images, planning documents, interviews with activists, academic literature (predominantly drawing on Bosworth's volume), and testimony from those who are 'subject to [...] [the] machinations' of these spaces.[69] The film is a series of slow tracking shots that move throughout these digitally rendered spaces. We begin with a crawling tracking shot through the entrance of SIAC at Field House. As the camera moves over a security x-ray belt in the main lobby, the image divides in two. The bottom image continues tracking towards a set of double doors at the end of a corridor immediately off the main lobby, whilst the top image focuses on two sets of lifts to their immediate left. We then shift locations, moving down another corridor in the same building. This corridor opens onto a larger space that is flanked on either side by chairs, presumably a waiting area that connects several of the floor's court chambers and hearing rooms. Moving inside one of these rooms, we see a typical configuration for a small hearing chamber. The furthest wall is adorned with a large royal coat of arms of the United Kingdom. In an article for the *Guardian* newspaper, Bridle discusses his sole field trip to Field House in 2015. His first interaction was with a security guard in the main lobby, who told Bridle 'how proud he was to work there, because: "It's transparent. It's open to the public and anyone can come and see justice being done" '.[70] However, as Bridle suggests, after handing over his recording equipment to the security guard and proceeding to one of the court rooms, he 'found the door was locked. The court was in secret

Fig. 2.9. Still from *Seamless Transitions*, dir. by James Bridle (UK, 2015).

session: under the special rules of SIAC, not even the defendant nor their legal team are allowed into the room to know the evidence against them'.[71]

SIAC was established in 1997 primarily as a venue of appeal for foreign nationals who, according to a BBC News report, were 'facing detention, deportation or exclusion from the UK on grounds of national security'.[72] Prior to 9/11, SIAC was a rarely used system as such deportation cases were uncommon. However, the steady accrual of anti-terror legislation post-9/11 and 7/7 meant the number of cases heard by SIAC greatly increased. The reason for SIAC's implementation was the fact that evidence heard in cases involving alleged terrorism offences often included material that the appellant and their legal team could not access due to national security protections — 'reports of spying operations, phone taps or the testimony of informers deep inside terrorism organisations' — and therefore there were parts of the case that could not be accessed by the appellant. SIAC aimed to address this by appointing 'security-vetted special advocates (SA) to act for the appellant'. These security-vetted advocates can work with appellants on the case to a certain degree; however, closed sessions are held where only the special advocate can challenge the protected evidence, with no oversight by the appellant. Therefore, whilst the special advocate can access and challenge the secret evidence, this material cannot be discussed with the appellant and his legal team — a 'virtual shutter' is drawn. Thus, the fundamental issue remains, appellants and their legal team cannot access certain evidence. Some have suggested that the 'special advocate is hamstrung

Fig. 2.10. Still from *Seamless Transitions*, dir. by Bridle (UK, 2015).

because they cannot build a proper case without being able to discuss the evidence with the appellant'. In addition, Amnesty International has argued that 'judgements rely on a "shockingly low burden of proof" because evidence cannot be tested to the same standards in the criminal courts'. It also suggests that much of the secret evidence has been obtained by methods that amount to torture. Bridle and Picture Plane's rendering of SIAC at Field House seems to emphasise the hidden nature of the processes that take place within this building. Whilst their architectural visualisations afford us virtual access to this site, the fact that the space remains devoid of the infrastructural and judicial figures and mechanisms responsible for such extrajudicial obfuscation means that these levers of power remain beyond our grasp.

However, Bridle has suggested that maintaining this level of impenetrability was intentional:

> I realised the work was doing something slightly different to that tradition of direct, subject-oriented photoreportage. *Seamless Transitions* is not about the individual stories of immigrants and borders — as necessary and important as those stories are. It's about the unaccountability and ungraspability of vast, complex systems: of nation-wide architectures, accumulations of laws and legal processes, infrastructures of intent and prejudice, and structural inequalities of experience and understanding.[73]

Thus, whilst Bridle's attempt at visualisation attempts to afford us some degree of 'access' to the spatial configuration of this site of sovereign power, it also reinforces the fact that the tactics of extrajudicial power within its walls remains 'ungraspable' through the intricate web of anti-terror legislation that encases appellants and their legal support. The only true 'image of power' we are offered in this sequence is purely symbolic, the royal coat of arms — a representation of sovereign extrajudicial law and exploitation par excellence.

From here, we shift locations, moving through the Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre. Originally named Harmondsworth Detention Unit, the site was opened in 1970. As Bosworth has noted, Harmondsworth was created as a space to detain 'Commonwealth citizens denied entry at the border who had been given in-country right of appeal under the Immigration Appeals Act 1969'.[74] This site was the first purpose-built immigration detention centre and the first to be constructed outside a prison or airport. It expanded state power in crucial ways as it 'unlocked the potential for administrative confinement of foreign nationals'.[75] As briefly touched upon above, whilst the 1969 Appeals Act aimed to strengthen the right of those Commonwealth citizens denied UK citizenship the right to in-country appeal, the resulting web of infrastructure surrounding it — of which Harmondsworth forms a crucial part — ultimately served to enhance sovereign power over foreign nationals, with powers for indefinite detention being perhaps the most crucial dimension of this control. The original Harmondsworth Detention Unit building is now occupied by the Immigration Removal Centre Colnbrook. In 2000, the new Harmondsworth facility, the version that is rendered in *Seamless Transitions*, was constructed a short distance away from the previous site. This new

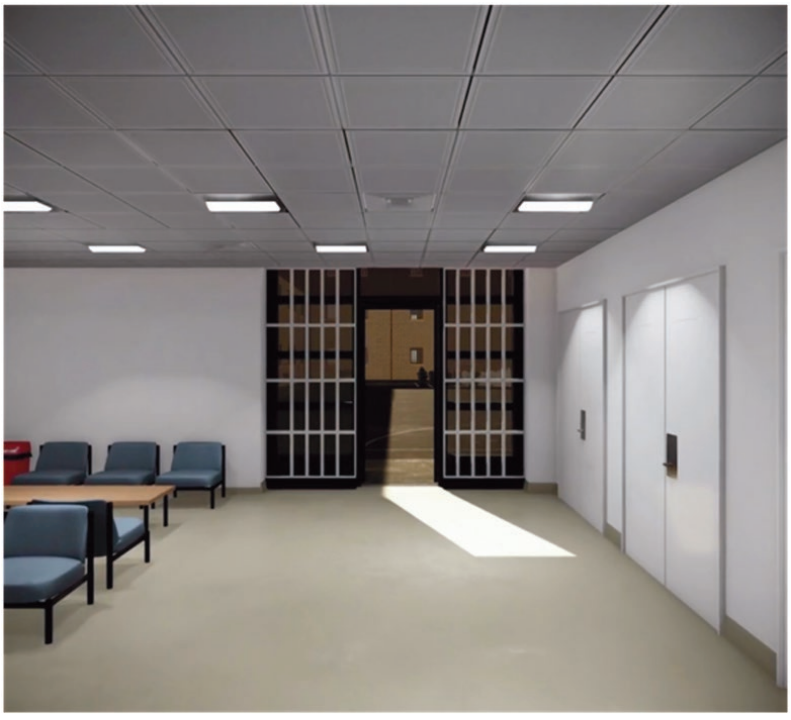


Fig. 2.11. Still from *Seamless Transitions*, dir. by Bridle (UK, 2015)

site was built to Category B prison standards, Category B being part of a four-category system devised by HM Prison Service. Whilst Category A spaces are reserved for 'Prisoners whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public or the police or the security of the State', Category B is reserved for 'prisoners for whom the very highest conditions of security are not necessary but for whom escape must be made very difficult'.[76]

We begin with a slow tracking shot through a set of double doors, reinforced by iron bars and monitored by a CCTV camera. This room then opens up into what appears to be a waiting room or lobby area, fluorescent lighting panels in the ceiling give the room an austere white glow. The track continues, moving us across the room and towards another, identical set of double doors, on the far side. Between these two doors, the supposedly natural exterior light casts a long ray of light onto the floor. Already 'illuminated' by the fluorescent lighting panels in the ceiling, this ray of 'natural' light seems particularly incongruous.

Moving through this second set of double doors, the camera opens onto an interior courtyard. The weathered concrete floor has the markings of a sports field and at the far end of the courtyard a giant chess set is visible. The courtyard is enclosed on all sides by a three-story building. As we near the mid-point of the courtyard, the camera begins to track towards the left, once again the image splits in two. The lower half of the image is shifted forty-five degrees to the left of the upper image, and moves us through an exit from the left of the courtyard, towards a large

concrete structure that is topped by several feet of wire mesh and coiled barbed wire. Beyond this, we can see the exterior wall of the prison. Again, a concrete base is topped by the same wire mesh. Next, we move into one of the cell blocks. This space is split over two open-plan floors, each level lined with individual cells. The centre of the floor is lined with fixed chairs and tables. The myriad of florescent lights on the ceiling bounce their light off the hard, highly polished floor. Each of the cell doors has a metal observation flap. We track to the far side of the room, before the image splits in two once more. The lower half presents another view of the open-plan seating area, whilst the upper half gives us a closer view of the cell doors. The upper half of the image settles on a cell door that is now open, offering us a view inside. Returning to a single frame, the camera now tracks into the cell space. At the far end of this narrow space is a small sink, and above it is a small iron barred window. To the far left is a bunk bed, and on the near side a table and chair.

Fig. 2.12. Still from *Seamless Transitions*, dir. by Bridle (UK, 2015).

As suggested above, Bridle's rendering of these sites remains attentive to the 'unaccountability and ungraspability' of these spaces of sovereign power. Whilst these spaces remain devoid of the infrastructural and governmental figures and mechanisms responsible for such extrajudicial force, the 'uncanniness' of their digital rendering and visualisation also plays an important role in trying to understand where the responsibility lies for the creation of these extrajudicial carceral spaces. As briefly touched upon above, Bridle has a long-standing interest in architectural

visualisation technologies. For years, he has been:

> Fascinated with the increasing visibility in the world of unreal representations: the computer-generated images of products, buildings, even whole districts. If you watch TV adverts carefully, you start to notice the impossibly clean lines of fitted kitchens and background streetscapes.[77]

Thus, once again we are returned to some of the central preoccupations of the 'New Aesthetic' — that nexus between the digital and physical within the material environment. Within *Seamless Transitions*, we find multiple instances of 'uncanny' representation that mirror the 'impossibly clean lines' discussed by Bridle above: the incongruous double illumination of the lobby area in Harmondsworth or the impossibly smooth and reflective floor in the cell block. As Jörg Majer, director of Picture Plane has suggested:

> We didn't want to take it to an absolute real space, we wanted it to feel like it is still... somehow virtual, so that we are not pretending to know exactly what it's like. It was important to have a slightly diagrammatic feel to the whole experience.[78]

Thus, the incongruity of certain features of the spatial renderings in *Seamless Transitions* seem to have been intentionally constructed.

Why did Bridle insist on keeping these 'diagrammatic' qualities within his architectural renderings? As he suggests, 'the film is itself at a distance; like all simulations, it cannot possibly convey the bodily, fleshy, visceral realities of detention and deportation'.[79] Thus, Bridle acknowledges that the film operates at a remove, both through the absence of figures and infrastructures responsible for the execution of sovereign power and through the virtual and diagrammatic veneer of the renderings themselves. As he suggests:

> I believe these unreal representations to be emblematic of some truth about the present that we live in: a technologically augmented reality which both obscures the true intentions of its creators while simultaneously offering us a clearer view of the realities of power than anything we have been able to see before.[80]

Thus, through the uncanny aesthetics of these images, Bridle seems to want to point towards their inherent constructedness, as well as the larger formations of power behind their creation. In her article 'Infrastructural Violence: The Smooth Spaces of Terror' Susan Schuppli makes a markedly similar point, suggesting that there is something 'deeply sinister in the relentless perfection of these multiplying screen spaces emptied of human presence. Dread streams from their plasmatic pixels and violence lurks beneath their digital cladding'.[81] For both Bridle and Schuppli, the 'perfection' of these renderings seems simultaneously to mask and point towards the violence they conceal. Bridle furthers this point in when he asks:

> Who designs these CGI systems? Designed in pieces of software — assemblages of planners and engineers, plus people who originally wrote the software — where does the responsibility for these buildings lie, when they're constructed from these images. The same is true of immigration policy and justice system; these are kinds of agglomerations and accumulations of practice and policy, law

> and political intent that are extremely complex and difficult to parse out who's responsible and where pressure can be applied.[82]

Here, Bridle offers a potent parallel between the generation of such architectural visualisations and the increasingly impenetrable web of immigration policy-making and border control. For him, within both these realms of practice — one primarily corporate and visual, the other judicial and semantic — there is a similar obfuscation of who is accountable for their creation. The complex webs of actors and infrastructure involved in their generation mean that these 'kinds of agglomerations and accumulations' make it extremely difficult to locate who is fundamentally responsible. This is particularly true of the current immigration detention system in the UK, where we find the complex interrelations between public and private actors, policy and contracting, law and finance, all united around a wider aim to obscure the extrajudicial activities they are tasked (and oftentimes financed) to carry out.

The third and final section of the film opens with a shot from the back of a bus. As the camera slowly tracks forward, we can see another bus from the left window, and to the front and right the entrance to the Inflite Executive Jet Centre at Stansted Airport, lit by two small floodlights. After a fade to black, we now find ourselves positioned at the back right corner of the bus in a car park, facing the entrance to the Jet Centre directly. As we begin to track forwards towards the entrance, we move over several pools of water, each offering an unbroken, and

Fig. 2.13. Still from *Seamless Transitions*, dir. by Bridle (UK, 2015).

uncanny, reflection of the surrounding space. We then move through the entrance and into the interior lobby of the Jet Centre. This space sits in marked contrast to the two spaces focused on previously.

A small central table, positioned on a wider circular rug, is flanked on either side by various sofas, lamps, and plants, an elegant chandelier extends down from the centre of the ceiling. A low-level halogen strip light that runs the length of the apex between the far ceiling and wall offers a low purple glow. We move through this space to a pair of double doors on the far side of the lobby. Here, we move across a short track of airport tarmac towards a small white and black private jet, shrouded in low-level mist. We move up the central steps of the plane, towards the cabin door. Beyond, all is black.

Our movement through this final space offers the clearest articulation of the interconnections between sovereign power and private infrastructure, which simultaneously structure the increasing invisibilisation of immigration detention and removal. Writing about his field trip to the Jet Centre on a night in December 2013, Bridle describes how after approximately 9pm a series of coaches arrived:

> Accompanied by police and private security vans. Most of them are from WH Tours in Crawley; one bears the exuberant legend of the holiday company 'Just Go!' The coaches have come from detention centres all over England. They are carrying people who are being deported.[83]

Fig. 2.14. Still from *Seamless Transitions*, dir. by Bridle (UK, 2015).

The Inflite Jet Centre is located on the eastern fringe of Stansted, near a series of other private hangers. As Bridle suggests, Inflite 'presents itself online as something between a boutique hotel and a serviced office complex, offering "luxurious" furnishings, on-site chef and meeting rooms'.[84] Indeed, the Inflite website repeatedly emphasises both the luxuriousness of their facilities and the 'seamless' movement through the space that passengers will experience. Whilst this discourse is of course directed towards Inflite's moneyed clientele — who, because of their wealth, have no issues with global movement — it also seems to speak to the 'discreet' and 'occluded' practices of deportation that take place during the night. Both practices must function seamlessly, though for markedly different purposes. Indeed, as Schuppli suggests, 'even the executive lounge in the airport terminal at Stansted withdraws from the regime of visibility when its human cargo switches from its elite business clientele to that of the dispossessed'.[85] The gliding, floating tracks through this space of corporate travel — slightly faster than those through the judicial and carceral spaces that come before — perhaps speaks to the duality of the need for frictionless movement through this space; at once satisfying the needs of two distinct (yet financially lucrative) client bases. Firstly, those private 'global travellers' who wish to move with maximum ease, and secondly the state, who wishes to remove those who have been denied such freedom with ruthless efficiency. At once intensely visible and occluded — depending on the site's function — the space of the Inflite Jet Centre becomes representative of the inherent contradictions between 'global frictionless travel' for some and detention and removal for others. Moreover, these are divisions which, more often than not, are drawn along the lines of race, class, and nationality.

Ultimately, Bridle's film uses the aesthetics of architectural digital rendering to highlight both the impenetrable webs of private-governmental governance that surround these carceral sites, whilst simultaneously indicating how these processes are predicated on 'seamless' and frictionless switches between clandestine mobility and immobility. Thus, the aesthetic and political aims of *Seamless Transitions* seem to focus on rendering the 'unaccountability and ungraspability' of these extra-sovereign spaces. However, when 'unaccountability and ungraspability' are in fact integral to how these spaces operate, systematically attempting to avoid scrutiny and oversight, this approach risks re-emphasising what is already self-evident about such sites and spaces. It is certainly arguable that the aesthetic-political approach developed by Bridle risks simply reinforcing the abstracted logics that allow these spaces to function without proper structures of accountability and justice. Whilst the work offers important insights into the spatial organisation of these carceral sites, it is perhaps limited in its ability to sense or make sense of the violence it attempts to depict when we remain consistently at the level of the abstract and intangible.

Toponimia and the Carceral Village

Here we shift into the final case study of this chapter, Jonathan Perel's 2015 film *Toponomia*. The case studies examined thus far in this chapter have been focused upon architecturally enclosed sites of carceral internment. Whilst appropriating existing architectures and embedding themselves within already existing infrastructural networks, maximising their ability to occlude their violent practices, both the Omarska camp and the infrastructural sites of immigration detention and removal in the UK are enclosed by concrete physical perimeters. They have spatial boundaries, the limits of which are surveyed and traversed by cameras both real and virtual. However, in Perel's film we examine sites of historical interment that have porous boundaries and perimeters — they are physically 'liminal spaces "betwixt and between" the inside and outside of prisons'.[86] Here then, we will examine how Perel's film interrogates sites of carceral internment that are seemingly boundless; the structures of sovereign power that aided their construction seemingly bleed out into the wider social landscape, linking up with the wider project of state terror undertaken by Argentina's military dictatorship in the 1970s.

Located in the far north of the country, Tucuman is the smallest and most densely populated of Argentina's provinces. Tucuman was the site of 'an armed rebellion of mountain-dwelling peasants [led primarily by the guerrilla group the People's Revolutionary Army (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo or ERP)] in the early 1970's, crushed in brutal fashion by the country's military during what was officially known as "Operation Independence" [Operativo Independencia]'.[87] As Miguel Teubal suggests, the ERP — the armed faction of the Workers' Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT), a Trotskyist-Maoist communist organisation) — was formed in direct opposition to the military dictatorship that had overthrown the government in June 1966.[88] The PRT (and ERP, by extension) opposed the political and economic policies implemented by the military junta and their first de facto president Juan Carlos Onganía. These policies were primarily neoliberal in outlook, favouring minimal state intervention and maximum free market speculation. They simultaneously aimed to suppress advances that had been made to improve workers' rights over the previous half century. Alongside this neoliberal economic doctrine, the military dictatorship was also responsible for a sustained period of state terror throughout the mid to late 1970s, involving the torture, murder, and disappearance of many thousands of Argentinians. These clandestine extrajudicial military operations were undertaken to suppress guerrilla insurgencies like the ERP, which had arisen in opposition to the ruling junta.[89]

The aim of this section is to examine how Perel's *Toponimia* confronts the socio-spatial recomposition of Tucuman province after the brutal suppression of the uprising. Focusing on four villages constructed by the military to rehouse locals and dissidents, Perel's film utilises a rigorous spatio-political aesthetic that aims to interrogate how the spatial organisation of these sites sought to maximise powers of surveillance and military state control. As previously suggested, it also shows how the limits of these carceral spaces were fluid and porous. Whilst techniques

of observation were maximised, concrete boundaries did not exist. Thus, across these four villages we are presented with less spatially demarcated carceral sites, which concomitantly allowed for subtler forms of sovereign violence to seep out beyond their borders, reflecting in crucial ways the wider project of state terror that engulfed the whole country. At the same time, however, such an aesthetic also highlights contemporary social transformations post-dictatorship. More specifically, it will be argued that while the inhabitants of the villages post-dictatorship have been able to reclaim and appropriate such authoritarian social spaces, uneven geographical developments between urban centres and rural peripheries in Argentina have created the economic and infrastructural void for such strategies of (re)appropriation. Before moving into this analysis of Perel's work, I think it is necessary to lay out more concretely the historical circumstances that led to both the suppression of the insurgency in Tucuman and the subsequent creation of these four sites of surveillance.

As Donald C. Hodges suggests, during the Fifth Congress of the PRT in July 1970, the ERP took the decision to shift from resistance to revolution. During congress, the official document of the ERP was adopted, part of which read:

> In the course of the revolutionary war launched in our country, our party has begun to fight with the objective of disorganising the armed forces and making possible the insurrection of the proletariat and the people [...] the armed forces of the regime can only be defeated by opposing to them a revolutionary army.

Diaz Bessone has divided the revolutionary war into three periods:

> The initial aggression with the complicity of General Peron that came as the culmination of the resistance (1970–1973); the continuing and intensified war by the guerrillas on their own account in opposition to the Peronist party in power (1973–1975); and the extension of the revolutionary war to the entire country that compelled the last Peronist government to authorise the intervention of the armed forces in February 1975.[90]

As Donald C. Hodges writes, it was during the early 1970s that the ERP and other guerrilla insurgencies sought to secure control of rural zones beyond the urban centres, where conflict had typically taken place. Their aim was to secure larger land bases for their military operations, and Tucuman was a prime site for this expansion. The ERP's activities in Tucuman were primarily 'responsible for Isabel Peron's directive to the military in February 1975 to use any and all means for combating the rural guerrillas'.[91] The issuing of these 'annihilation decrees' greatly expanded military powers, enabling state-sanctioned torture and murder in the name of suppressing left-wing dissidents. The signing of the annihilation decrees is widely acknowledged by many historians as the primary catalyst for Operation Independence.

Operation Independence formed a crucial part of this wider practice of state terror. It was the first large-scale military operation to take place during the 'Dirty War' (Guerra Sucia) — the name given to this latter stage of state terror in the country that lasted from approximately 1975 to 1983. Known officially as the Process of National Reorganisation (Proceso de Reorganización Nacional), the

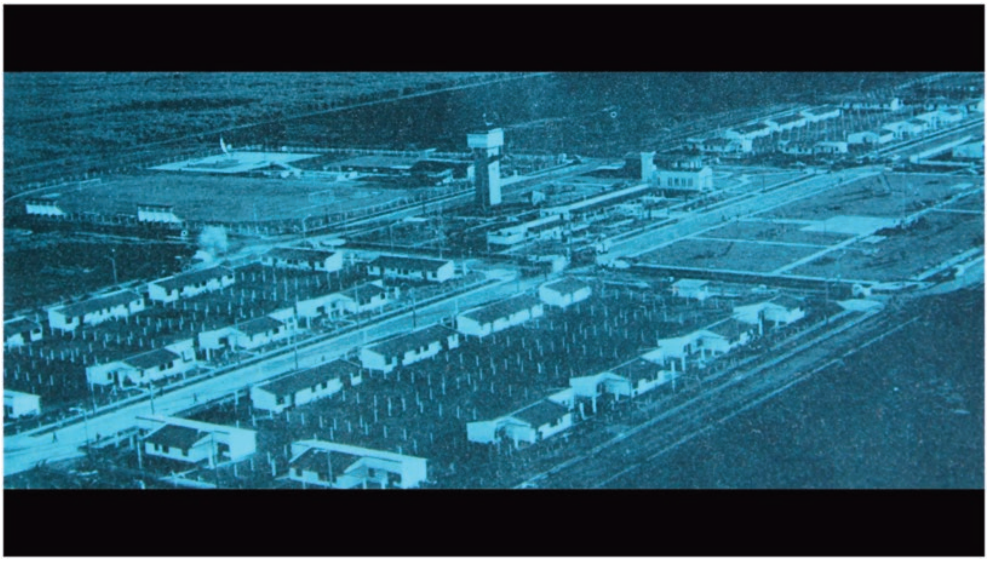
conflict was one of the first instances where the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance (Alianza Anticomunista Argentina) — formed in 1973 during the rule of Isabel Perón and which united a number of military units and rightist death squads under a single title — actively sought to eradicate left-wing guerillas and leftist political organisations, such as the ERP. By 1983, the conflict's death toll was estimated to stand at between 10,000 and 30,000, with many more disappeared. Moreover, as Hodges suggests, by the peak of the Dirty War, even the vaguest espousal of left-wing leanings or political affiliations became enough to make individuals subject to the threat of disappearance, torture, or internment. Therefore, with the rapid expansion of the country's interned and disappeared population, there was an increased necessity to find sufficient carceral space to house them. As Hodges writes:

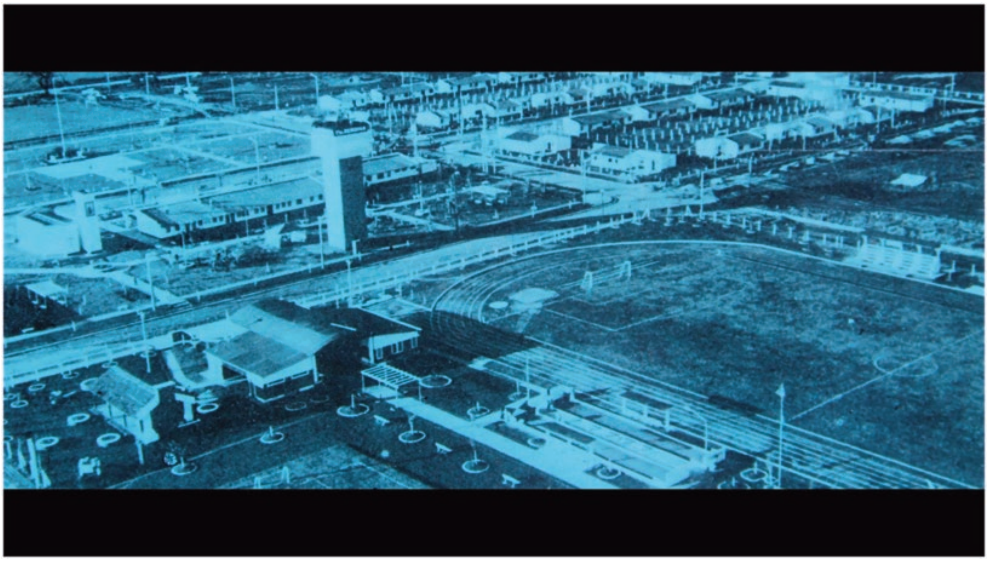
> With Operation Independence began the so-called dirty war. In retaliation for the ERP's frustrated attack on the army's command post in the town of Famailla, the army turned the town's school into the first clandestine concentration camp for the disappeared.[92]

Thus, the rapid expansion of potential prisoners required spaces that could easily be coopted for such acts of clandestine sovereign violence. The appropriation and creation of clandestine spaces for detention, torture, and murder was a central tactic of the military during this period. Changing the functional use of already existing public/private infrastructures and spaces is — as we have seen throughout this chapter — a common practice during the expansion of such extrajudicial state violations and violence, allowing for the cloaking and occlusion of such furtive practices. Alongside this appropriation of already existing territories and architectures, there was also the creation of new settlements within Tucuman province. The primary aim of these new sites was 'to prevent the repetition of such an uprising [...] [with] the surviving indigenous population [...] [being] relocated to the four new settlements where they could be more easily kept under surveillance and thus controlled'.[93] Part of the larger military sanctioned 'Rural Relocation Plan' (Plan de Reubicación Rural), each town was named after a prominent member of the state military who had died during Operativo Independencia: Capitán Cáceres, Soldado Maldonado, Sargento Moya, and Teniente Berdina.

Toponimia is divided into four chapters, each focusing on one of the four villages. Perel employs a rigorous formal structure, with each chapter consisting of 'sixty-eight shots lasting fifteen seconds apiece'. The ten initial shots in each chapter present 'excerpts from official documents relating to the settlement's founding', whilst the remaining fifty-eight visually map out each of the villages, as they exist today.[94] With the construction of each village being near identical, the film cycles through the same set-ups for each of the live action shots across the four locations. For example, we find near-identical set-ups that depict markedly similar gateways, roads, farmland, and monuments across the four locations. In addition to these four meticulously organised chapters, a twenty-two-shot prologue offers further archival evidence of the villages' construction. The following images and text are taken from the urban planning documents presented within this prologue:

In 1974, the inhabitants of the region in some ways lacked basic support until the Armed Forces arrived and developed a broad action plan of assistance, guidance and support for residents. 'Operation Independence' completely eradicated the subversion returning peace to those who did not accept the criminal arrogance of organised terrorism. The 'Rural Relocation Plan' had as its primary objective to centralise the scattered population and to stop the subversive action that was developed with support of the dissemination by inhabitants of the Tucuman hills. The constructions are modern and urbanised. The homes are distributed among four rectangular blocks, seventy-eight homes [...]. The urban layout of the town is connected by a total of seven streets, completely paved each named





Figs. 2.15 and 2.16. Stills from *Toponimia*, dir. by Jonathan Perel (Argentina, 2015).

> for a hero of the subversion. Created by the efforts of soldiers and workers, it symbolises the victory of the Argentine Army over the armed subversion. Its inhabitants, proud of their town, wait, full of hope, for the establishment of some source of work [...] dreams of progress.

Whilst attempting to espouse a rhetoric of community cohesion and collective struggle — think, for example, of phrases such as 'the inhabitants, proud of their towns, wait, full of hope, for the establishment of some source of work [...] [and] dream of progress' — the planning documents presented by the film are in fact ideologically shot through with the military dictatorship's desires for social suppression and containment, aiming, for example, to 'centralise the scattered population' and 'return peace to those who do not accept the criminal arrogance of organised terrorism'.

Additionally, various visual documents of the villages are presented in this prologue — blue prints, architectural plans, maps — indicating how these social spaces were to be organised in such a way as to maximise surveillance and control. For example, archival photographs underscore the panoptic and carceral organisation of the four villages, which are structured in a grid-like manner around a central watchtower. Consequently, within this opening sequence a clear disjuncture develops between the socially progressive and liberatory rhetoric espoused by the military dictatorship and the panoptic and carceral social spaces they fabricate. Furthermore, the rigorously formal style employed by Perel aims to echo not only the rigidity of these fabricated social spaces, but also the military dictatorship's ideological and spatial desires for control and surveillance. As Michael Pattison suggests, *Toponimia* 'imposes (as might a fascist dictatorship) mathematical precision onto pre-existing landscapes that are at once geographically disparate and ideologically linked, fragmenting each space into images that are echoed from one

Fig. 2.17. Still from *Toponimia*, dir. by Perel (Argentina, 2015).

numbered chapter to the next'.[95] Consequently, it is arguable that the mathematical, and arguably dictatorial, formal structure employed by Perel functions as somewhat of an ideological corollary to the panoptic and carceral construction of these post-revolutionary social spaces in Tucuman province. Fundamentally, there is a conceptual mirroring between the formal structure of the film and the panoptic and carceral organisation of the four villages.

Here, it is worth pausing briefly to delineate more concretely the boundaries of Perel's formal-spatial construction and examine how it mirrors the military dictatorship's ideological desire for control and suppression. To draw together such formal and ideological elements, it is productive to turn once more to Henri Lefebvre's theoretical framework of space as a social product. Returning to such a concept is also useful as it structures and undergirds the theoretical frameworks of an array of the spatial thinkers examined throughout this book. For Lefebvre, there is a tripartite division of social space: conceived space, lived space, and perceived space. Conceived space can be understood as the conceptualisations and representations of space within dominant social groups and spheres, such as urban planners. Lived space comprises the spatial representations that individuals create as they navigate their lives — the mental constructs through which they engage with the physical world. Perceived space is 'the practical basis of the perception of the outside world' and is also intimately related to Lefebvre's notion of 'spatial practice', which is constituted by activities in a person's day-to-day life that are determined by particular social, political, and economic conditions and contingencies.[96] As Doreen Massey has noted, there are marked connections between the models of lived and perceived space, both of which arise from the daily inhabitation of, and material engagement with, a particular socio-spatial formation. Consequently, the central division to be found within this tripartite framework is between conceived space — the somewhat abstracted strategy of (re)organising a particular socio-spatial formation, typically influenced by particular institutional forms of governmentality — and the more intimately wedded (and potentially liberatory) notions of lived and perceived space.

Such a socio-spatial framework can be productively mapped onto the spatio-political formalism of Perel's film. Providing a further delineation of the notion of conceived space, Stephen Connolly has suggested that it is constituted primarily by 'techniques of measuring, enumeration and apportioning space by the spatial disciplines'.[97] It is arguable that both the presentation of planning materials (drawings, maps, letters etc.) and the rigorous formal construction employed by Perel across the later live action sequences expose the 'conceived' aspects of this social space, and, concomitantly, the governmental imperatives of the military dictatorship in conceiving and fashioning such carceral sites. The notion of 'governmentality' is defined by Foucault as 'the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses, reflections, calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population'.[98] Productive connections can thus be made between the conceived and governmental dimensions of such spatial constructions.

Consequently, we can return to Pattison's earlier contentions about the mathematical and dictatorial structure of the film through a more specifically spatial lens, that of the ideologically constructed 'conceived' space. Perel's formal structure aims to expose such 'conceived' spaces, and their embedded forms of governmentality, thus highlighting the panoptic and carceral enclosure of the rural proletariat within Tucuman province. However, these images also seem to emphasise implicitly the boundlessness of the villages; no fixed perimeters are visible in the archival materials. Indeed, the seemingly incongruous 'openness' of these carceral spaces mirrors the pseudo-liberatory rhetoric espoused by the military dictatorship. However, as we have seen across the previous case studies, these are potentially processes of carceral occlusion and masking. The physical 'boundlessness' of these carceral spaces potentially makes them less immediately detectable as sites of internment. Indeed, as Agamben suggests, for camps to be effective mechanisms of control, they must be removed from plain sight. Once we understand the wider forms of disciplinary governmentality that underpinned the spatial organisation of the four villages, it is impossible to read this boundlessness as anything other than a seeping out — or, perhaps more aptly, a *seeping in* — of the sovereign and militaristic violence felt across the whole of Argentina during this period of state terror. Although these sites are not physically demarcated, the less perceptible structures of power move across these spaces of 'soft' internment.

It is also crucial to note that by utilising this mathematical (or arguably dictatorial) formal structure to examine the *contemporary* social milieu of the four villages, a powerful juxtaposition is set up between the historical desire for control and surveillance and contemporary attempts to reclaim such social spaces. With vandalised government monuments and community appropriation of state buildings in evidence throughout these live action sequences, there is a growing apperception of the liberatory transformations of these suppressive spaces post-dictatorship. Neil Young highlights this juxtaposition, suggesting that 'while the government may have succeeded in quelling the troublesome populace, the condition of the villages forty years on displays the triumph of human individualism over externally imposed uniformity'.[99] Thus, whilst Perel's structuring logic arguably aims to reflect the military dictatorship's desire for rigid control over these fabricated social spaces in Tucuman province, the live action shots of the villages today undermine such a sense of oppression, indicating the ways in which the community has reshaped and reappropriated its social milieu.

The ways in which *Toponimia* juxtaposes conflicting approaches to these social spaces — the historical desire for control/surveillance and contemporary attempts at reclamation and reappropriation — arguably lends the film an almost heterotopic dimension. Foucault, defining the heterotopia, suggests:

> We live inside a set of relations that delineate sites that are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another [...]. The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible.[100]

Thus, the heterotopia is a non-hegemonic and heterogeneous space that contains

connections to other places and temporalities that are not immediately readable within material space. One of Foucault's 'principles' for heterotopic space, which is particularly applicable to *Toponimia* and its manifestation of different conceptualisations of space, is the suggestion that:

> A society [...] can make an existing heterotopia function in a very different fashion; for each heterotopia has a precise and determined function within a society and the same heterotopia can, according to the synchrony of the culture in which it occurs, have one function or another.[101]

Consequently, the ability of a society to transform significantly the function of a particular socio-spatial location is a concept that can be productively mapped onto the four villages in Tucuman. Here we find communities that have fundamentally undermined the previously militaristic and carceral function of their social spaces.

Foucault's notion of the heterotopia is very much interrelated with both Massey's and Soja's discourses on spatiality. For example, earlier in the same piece Foucault suggests:

> The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history [...]. The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed.[102]

Clear connections can be made here between Foucault's 'epoch of space' and Massey's 'space as the dimension of a multiplicity of durations'. Elsewhere, Massey has suggested that the relationship between the spatial and the durational is key to understanding how such a filmic spatio-political aesthetic functions. Discussing the extended examinations of space that structure such works, Massey suggests, 'these long takes give us, in the midst of the rush and flow of globalisation, a certain stillness. But they are not stills. They are about duration. They tell us of "becoming", in place'.[103] Fundamentally, for both, when thinking spatially we must remain attentive to the myriad of historical and durational temporalities that have informed, and continue to inform, the organisation of social space.

It is my contention that Perel's filmic practice aims to juxtapose different historical and ideological constructions of space, bumping them up against one another to highlight their shifting socio-political configurations of such sites, from militaristically conceived to contemporaneously appropriated and reclaimed. Such an approach echoes both Massey's and Foucault's theories in productive ways. For example, we are presented with a variety of artefacts throughout the film — busts, religious statues etc., leftover from the time of the dictatorship — which are either significantly damaged or completely destroyed. Whilst the busts of Capitán Cáceres, Soldado Maldonado, and Teniente Berdina are still relatively intact, only the plinth upon which the bust of Sargento Moya should sit remains. Graffiti also becomes a recurring motif throughout the film, once again further evincing the ways in which the community has placed its indelible mark on such social spaces post-dictatorship. Consequently, such images of reclamation and appropriation can be productively mapped onto the 'lived' and 'perceived' dimensions of Lefebvre's tripartite formulation of social space, where a sense of everyday co-habitation,

Figs. 2.18 and 2.19. Still from *Toponimia*, dir. by Perel (Argentina, 2015)

social practice, and community building works in opposition to the militaristic and panoptic ideology that originally underpinned the villages' 'conceived' spatial structuring.

It is also necessary to examine and imbricate the uneven economic and political operations — both historically and contemporaneously in Argentina — that have helped to facilitate the virtually unhindered community restructuring of these social spaces. Tucuman province has been consistently one of Argentina's most impoverished provinces, lacking both adequate government investment and infrastructural support. Writing in 1968, María Teresa Gramuglio and Nicolás Rosa

suggested that Tucuman had been subjected to 'underdevelopment and economic oppression'. The current government, 'insistent upon a disastrous colonial policy, closed most of the Tucuman sugar refineries, a vital force in the province's economy. The result has been widespread hunger and unemployment, with all its attendant social consequences'.[104] Such a socio-economic situation continues to the present day, with much of the provincial economy precariously relying on minimal state subsidies to maintain this 'unprofitable but labour intensive' sugar industry.[105] Consequently, it is easy to see how the community appropriation of these authoritarian spaces post-dictatorship was facilitated by the fact that the government, historically and contemporaneously, has paid little social or economic attention to the area. Thus, another layer of heterotopic spatio-politics is imbricated into *Toponimia*, with the neoliberal metropolitan centres of governmentality neglecting the region and thus facilitating the rural working-class population's virtually unhindered (re)appropriation of their social space. Here, we can once again imbricate Soja's claims about the impact of urban neoliberal centres on non-urban space; uneven development and strategic neglect are indicative of how the 'urban condition has extended its influence to all areas'.

Throughout the film, we not only gaze into these carceral spaces, we also look outwards, examining the peripheries and liminal zones at the fringes of the villages. This is particularly true of the film's epilogue, which presents us with a series of shots that move further outside the inhabited space of the four villages, focusing initially on a network of rivers and abandoned buildings, before moving into a dense forest. As this sequence progresses, we increasingly focus on the minutia of this natural landscape — primarily plant life and vegetation — through a series of tight close ups. These shots also inhibit our ability to locate ourselves spatially and geographically within this environment.

Fig. 2.20. Still from *Toponimia*, dir. by Perel (Argentina, 2015).

It is arguable that this slow progression out into the liminal spaces beyond the four villages reinforces the fact that their carceral formation had no fixed boundaries. The sovereign violence enacted by the military dictatorship did not stop at the edges of these carceral spaces, it spread throughout the entire social landscape of Argentina during this period of state terror. Thus, under the military dictatorship, the 'lived' and 'perceived' spatial formations beyond the peripheries of these carceral sites were still structured around control and violence. However, as we move into these ever more remote locales, this sequence also seems to reinforce the fact that, contemporaneously, the country's neoliberal centres have strategically neglected the region's infrastructure and have thus structurally enabled the strategies of community appropriation that the film bears witness to. Thus, these rural zones are extremely porous, heavily influenced by the structural neglect of neoliberal centres of control. Ultimately, through the spatio-political aesthetic deployed by *Toponimia*, a juxtaposition is set up between the historical desire for authoritarian control of social space and contemporary attempts at spatial liberation. However, the uneven geographical development between urban centres and rural peripheries has created the economic and infrastructural void for such strategies of (re)appropriation. Thus, *Toponimia* imbricates a number of contrasting socio-spatial formations, allowing us to perceive both the forms of governmentality and the broader uneven economic power relations that have structured the (re)creation of such heterotopic spaces. The film continually emphasises the porosity of this post-carceral space.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined three different engagements with sites of carcerality and internment. The three works examined share a desire to push back against understandings of carceral space as infrastructurally or geographically 'closed-off' or 'sealed'. Schuppli and Kraemer's film interrogated the shifting function of the Omarska site, moving from the extractive to the necropolitical and back to the extractive. Through the dialectical juxtaposition of the material landscape's use as both a site of extraction and sovereign violence, the film interrogates its shifting, and intertwined, functions. Ultimately, *Omarska* focuses upon how the appropriation of an already established spatial infrastructure clearly aided the occlusion and concealment of its new function. In *Seamless Transitions*, the uncanniness of the digital renderings created by Picture Plane highlight the complex web of actors and infrastructures involved in the creation of such carceral spaces — those 'kinds of agglomerations and accumulations' that can be extremely hard to disentangle and visualise. Simultaneously, Bridle's film points towards the deliberate occlusion of sovereign power and violence within these sites of detention and removal, through their strategic mixing of public and private actors. The formal structure of Perel's *Toponomia* emphasises not only the obfuscated sovereign control over these spaces, but also their liberatory reclamation post-dictatorship. The work also points towards the ways in which such processes of reclamation were facilitated by the structural neglect of contemporary neoliberal governance.

Across these works, we are confronted by carceral spaces that are increasingly hidden from sight; intentionally masking more and more nefarious forms of sovereign violence and control. These works respond to such processes of violent masking by attending to the seepages of carceral violence beyond the confines of their material infrastructures. Once again, the attunement to the spatial and aesthetic within these works is aimed at excavating those embedded relationalities of carcerality that might not be readily visible at first glance, but which are productive sites of tension and potential resistance. Ultimately, all three works can be aligned with the methodological approaches of the contemporary carceral geographic turn, which combines 'supra-, sub-, inter-, intra- and extra-institutional imaginaries and perspectives'.[106] Within these sites of tension that exist 'beyond', we can begin to tease open the fissures, cracks, and contradictions embedded within the operative logics of carcerality's multifarious forms. And, concomitantly, this allows us to open up points of rupture, contestation, and breakage.

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CHAPTER 3

❖

Border Regimes: Labour, Ports, and the Sea

> The contemporary configuration of global space cannot rightly be mapped as a series of discrete territories. This is because it comprises a series of overlaps, continuities, ruptures, and commonalities.
>
> — Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson[1]

Borders are no longer what they once were, or, at least, what they were once perceived to be. They have proliferated, shifting from the periphery to the centre of our social, economic, and political lives. They have also often become markedly less visible systems of control and surveillance, often functioning beyond (yet still alongside) their traditional roles as the markers of geopolitical boundaries. Under the conditions of transnational global capitalism, understandings of borders as solid sovereign, geopolitical 'boundaries', 'walls', or 'barriers' have shifted.[2] In addition, the related rise of both an increasingly fragmented global division of labour and the rise of neocolonial forms of extra-sovereign governance has changed the function and understanding of the border in myriad ways. The aim of this chapter is to examine how the non-fiction moving image has attempted to sense and make sense of this contemporary reconstitution of borders as heterogeneous, shifting, and proliferating regimes of spatial control. Building on the previous chapter's interrogation of the occlusion and fragmentation of carceral space, this chapter argues that a similar set of invisibilisations has structured contemporary modalities of bordering. How is it that the documentary image can attempt to sense — both aesthetically and politically — mechanisms of control (of bodies, labour, and capital) that are increasingly fragmented and often withdrawn from sight? How does a politically-responsive and sensitive aesthetic praxis that is attuned to such sites of spatial fragmentation and heterogeneity help to visualise, and simultaneously re-map and critique, the structures of violence upon which they are ultimately predicated?

Charles Heller has suggested that such reassessment of bordering regimes as increasingly dispersed and incomprehensible 'brings us a long way from what may still be imagined as border work: the control, by state actors, of the movement of people and goods across the *line* that defines the outer limit of a state's territory'.[3] Thus, a rethinking of the politics of borders is closely related to a wider

re-examination of the role of the nation-state in the epoch of globalisation. This dismantling of the inside/outside of sovereign territoriality has been well theorised over the last two decades. Here, it is necessary to map out briefly the shifting function of the nation state under globalisation, as this provides us with an entry-point into understanding how such bordering practices have taken on a particularly extra-sovereign dimension. For Ulrich Beck, globalisation had transformed the traditional conception of the national sovereign, that 'idea that we live and act in the self-enclosed spaces of national states and their respective national societies'.[4] For Marek Kwiek, this was a consequence of the fact that within the geopolitical configuration of globalisation, 'capital, goods, technologies, information and people cross frontiers in ways that were unimaginable before: thus globalisation is "the space/time compression" (Bauman), "the overcoming of distance" (Beck), *la fin de la geographie* (Virilio)'.[5] These scholars were united around two fundamental approaches to the impacts of globalisation. Firstly, under globalisation 'state sovereignty was being eroded by supra and sub-national flows and the proliferation of competing non-state actors'.[6] Secondly, and intimately tied to this first point, national sovereign borders were perceived as increasingly porous and ineffectual: capital, information, commodities, and people traversed them largely unhindered.[7]

There have, however, been significant push-backs against such understandings of waning sovereign power and, additionally, the functioning of such border formations. For example, Saskia Sassen has suggested that 'globalization is not simply growing interdependence [...] but the actual production of spatial and temporal frames that *simultaneously* inhabit national structures'.[8] Thus, for her, the state plays a fundamental role in the (re)constitution of the border and is in fact complicit in many of its extra-sovereign rearticulations by transnational global capital. Configurations of power have thus shifted rather than waned. For example, she also suggests that 'some aspects of state participation are in fact instances of states adapting to and participating in the global'.[9] Here then, the nation state becomes a crucial actor and node within the diverse logics of globalisation, aiding in the transformation of border regimes. Thus, the power of the nation state has not waned, it has been interpolated and transformed, becoming a constituent part of globalisation's bordering operations.

Ultimately, understanding the nation state as a crucially reconstituted actor rather than a waning force within the geopolitics of globalisation can help us to reconceptualise related theorisations of the border. Tied to this shifting function of the nation state in the era of escalating global mobility, regimes of bordering have also been reconfigured. They still function as traditional sovereign boundaries and yet, crucially, they have also proliferated as new forms of socio-economic control under global capitalism. Bauman's 'space/time compression', Beck's 'overcoming of distance', Virilio's 'end of geography' — all these late twentieth-century theories of globalisation would like us to envisage a flattening of space, a removal of barriers and boundaries that allows for the unimpeded flows of 'capital, goods, technologies, information and people'. Indeed, as Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson suggest, 'the hydraulic metaphor of flow has [...] come to monopolize the critical discussion of the new forms of global mobility'.[10] However, this repeated scholarly emphasis

on 'flows', 'flattening', and 'compression' obscures the fact that borders — in new and multifarious forms — have proliferated in the epoch of globalisation, functioning as mechanisms that aid the violence of global capital's transnational machinations. Indeed, Mezzadra and Neilson's broader consideration of the 'border as method' aims to reemphasise the importance of border regimes and practices in the epoch of global capitalism. They aim to describe the ways in which borders are integral to 'the very *production* of the deep heterogeneity of global space and time'.[11] Thus, they wish to shift discourse on globalisation away from the notion of 'unimpeded flows' or the 'overcoming of distance', articulating instead 'the crucial role that borders play in the production of the deeply heterogeneous space and time of global capitalism'.[12] As they suggest elsewhere, the concept of border as method allows them:

> To grasp the mutations of labor, space, time, law, power, and citizenship that accompany the proliferation of borders in today's world. Among these are the multiplication of labor, differential inclusion, temporal borders, the sovereign machine of governmentality, and border struggles. Taken together, these concepts provide a grid within which to fathom the deep transformations of the social, economic, juridical, and political relations of our planet.[13]

Thus, in a similar way to the changing operations of the nation state in the era of globalisation, borders have also shifted in their functionality. Crucially, they are no longer just the markers and protectors of nation states, they have become new, and proliferating, mechanisms in the global management of capital, labour, and people. They also become new technologies of violence, containment, and control. Thus, heterogeneous border practices and regimes now criss-cross the socio-geographical landscape, often functioning to delimit and control 'extra state' sites such as free trade zones, special economic areas, privately operated ports, global corridors of logistics transportation, and labour pools etc. Here, border regimes control movement through spaces of capital flow and transportation. Ultimately, these various reconceptualisations of borders focus on how their proliferation is intimately related to the new and manifold demands for geographical control brought about by late capitalism. Under such conditions, borders can no longer be read as negative mechanisms of exclusion, rather, they take on a productive force; creating 'new conditions of illegalised and precaritised labour through "inclusive exclusion"'.[14] The notion of 'inclusive' or 'differential inclusion' is central to Mezzadra and Neilson's theorisation of contemporary border regimes. The proliferation of these extra-sovereign borders functions to filter and stratify labour pools, typically with the aim of further illegalising and precaritising migrant labour. For Mezzadra and Neilson, such 'divisions and hierarchies [...] are a necessary feature of the organization of labor under capitalism'.[15] Thus, it is evident that borders striate the social landscape in heretofore unexplored ways, becoming productive mechanisms in the exploitation of labour and the acceleration of late capitalism's accumulatory movements.

Border regimes operate both within, across, and outside sovereign territorialities, relentlessly exploiting and reconstituting bodies, environments, and labour pools. However, once we do away with a conception of bordering regimes as strictly

sovereign *and* material — the wall, the fence, the barrier, which marks the limits of a nation state — attempting to render visible their intricate operations and functions becomes more of a challenge. Moreover, as the border becomes something extra-sovereign, a plethora of new actors and forces comes into play. And, as the number of actors increases, it becomes more difficult to determine who is responsible for the violence and exploitation across these new regimes of power and control.

This chapter will examine the various techniques utilised by non-fiction moving image works when attempting to sense and make sense of the operations of contemporary border regimes, particularly as they are continuously rearticulated and recomposed by the geopolitical operations of global capitalism. Within the first section, titled 'Logistical Peripheries' I will focus on Anna Lascari, Ilias Marmaras, and Carolin Phillip's *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds*. This work investigates how logistical spaces — ports, transportation corridors, storage facilities etc. — materially impact the sites that they border and interact with. The work aims to examine how logistical spaces cannot be read as materially and geographically detached from the spaces at their peripheries. Instead, such sites and infrastructures of contemporary logistics create new, messy, and violent forms of extra-sovereign bordering. The second section, 'Regimes of (In)visibility', examines Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani's multimedia work *Liquid Traces: The Left-to-Die Boat*. This work examines the fragmentation and proliferation of bordering regimes across the Mediterranean Sea. The aim of this section is to examine how Heller and Pezzani's project unpacks the structural interconnections between these new forms of oceanic bordering/securitisation that striate the sea and the intensification of visibility and surveillance across these same spaces. With a multitude of sovereign and extra-sovereign actors now involved in the control and securitisation of this space, new technologies of visualisation and surveillance exist to document movement across this oceanic area. Across both case studies, there is a consistent concern with examining, documenting, and visualising how border regimes have been rearticulated and recomposed in our late capitalist and neocolonial epoch. As borders become less and less visible, these works seek to examine the new spatial infrastructures generated by these regimes of control and movement. Moreover, these works attempt to reassemble such networks of power and violence through a dialectical engagement with their localised spatial operations and impacts.

Logistical Peripheries: *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds*

We have visited the port, via the infrastructural geographies of logistics, before. In the final section of Chapter 1 we explored how Allan Sekula and Noel Burch's work resisted the 'immaterialisation' of global capitalism through a focus on the transformed materialities of human labour across four ports that are crucial nodes in the global supply chain: Los Angeles, Rotterdam, Hong Kong, and Bilbao. Here, the notion of 'immaterialisation' extended primarily from theorisations of the logistical that emphasise its inherent desire to operate across material space in a manner that is perceived to be 'frictionless' and 'borderless'. As Jesse LeCavalier

suggests, 'rather than encouraging congestion, logistics pursues unencumbered movement. Rather than seeking density, logistics aspires to coverage. It is a horizontalizing and externalizing industry, not a vertical and integrating one'.[16] Thus, crucial to the optimisation of logistics operations is a conception of space, both geographical and political, as 'flattened' and 'smooth'. Here then, we can see the distinct conceptual interrelations between the theorisations of logistics space and the theorisations of globalisation mapped out above.[17] Across both, things — 'capital, goods, technologies, information and people' — can 'cross frontiers in ways that were unimaginable before'.

The zones of logistics — seaports, airports, inland ports, freight villages, logistics parks, intermodal rail terminals — that connect these webs of logistics space are also predominantly understood as discrete spatial arrangements, seamlessly networked across the globe. A series of supra-national nodal points that do not interact with their immediate geographical surroundings. Indeed, as Katja Werthmann and Diana Ayeh suggest, 'global capital does not flow but "hops" from one securitized [...] enclave to another'.[18] Within such conceptualisations of the logistical — which perceive space as 'seamless', 'networked', and 'flowing' — we also, by extension, find varying degrees of emphasis on the erosion or displacement of borders, which supposedly helps structurally to facilitate the free-circulation of goods, capital, and bodies. Logistics space is perceived as smooth and flattened, whilst the zones that connect these spaces are predominantly perceived as divorced from their immediate material surroundings. Thus, within such conceptions of the logistical, there is a continual lack of emphasis on the myriad of impacts — social, economic, environmental, human — that such movements and sites can have.

Within this section, we will examine how *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds* highlights the ways in which logistics space creates new forms and mechanisms of bordering that structurally impact the spaces at their peripheries. More specifically, we will examine how the film undermines such a 'frictionless', 'nodal', or abstracted reading of logistics space. Instead, the film emphasises how the logistical spaces that are so central to the operations of global capital, produce new, powerful, and multifarious forms of bordering which materially impact the geographical spaces peripheral to them. Indeed, as Deborah Cowen suggests, 'these "pipelines" of flow are not only displacing the borders of national territoriality but also recasting the geographies of law and violence that were organized by the inside/outside of state space'.[19]

Whereas the previous examination of the logistical space of the port was focused on the materialities of human labour contained with them, here I wish to explore how such zones of logistics create new regimes of extra-state governance and bordering that interact with the spaces at their edges. Thus, we will examine how the film visualises the port's peripheral zones, those largely forgotten border spaces that interact and are restructured by the logistical port itself. Here, the border sites at the periphery of the port impact and restructure the lives of those who inhabit these spaces, shifting us away from a conception of the supposedly 'nodal' space of logistics 'networks'. Therefore, logistical spaces become key sites where we witness the contemporary 'proliferation of borders', as suggested by Mezzadra and Neilson.

This need to re-emphasise the material interrelations between logistics space and its peripheral zones has been emphasised by several scholars. Indeed, as Martin Danyluk has suggested:

> The goods-movement network is not a seamlessly integrated system or a cohesive operational unit, as it is often depicted by the industry, but a fragmentary, unstable ensemble of physical and social infrastructures that are conceived, constructed and managed by formally independent actors [...] bound together in complex relations of contingency and interdependence.[20]

For Danyluk, it is important to emphasise that logistics space cannot be read as a seamless or cohesive network or 'operational unit' that is detached from its immediate milieu. Instead, we must understand its forms of operation and influence as fragmentary and interdependent; interacting with the social-political spaces at their peripheries. The spaces of logistics and their border spaces are messy and violent mixes of sovereign and extra-sovereign (often private multinational) control. Indeed, as Danyluk suggests, by understanding logistics space as unstable constellations of physical and social infrastructures we can gain a stronger insight into how 'communities and workers [...] live and labor in the arteries of global trade, as the costs and risks of supply-chain volatility are disproportionately borne by the most vulnerable actors in the network'.[21] Thus, reading logistics space as fragmentary and interdependent allows for a better insight into the impacts on those who live and labour in these peripheral arteries. As we shall see, *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds* examines how these sites at the periphery of logistics space often find themselves trapped in a sort of socio-economic liminality. As Kay Dickinson suggests, logistical free zones 'ultimately perform at a remove from state jurisdiction'.[22] It is my contention that such exceptional 'extra-state' conditions also bleed out into the peripheral spaces of logistics zones; state infrastructure and care is typically minimal, and whilst the zone itself periodically exploits these peripheries, they have no mandated duty of care. They are then, following Keller Easterling's formulation, what we could term 'extra-state' peripheries, structured around 'overlapping, or nested forms of sovereignty, where domestic and transnational jurisdictions collide'.[23]

Through such collisions between national and transnational infrastructure, these peripheral spaces fall into the fissures and gaps between the two, typically left to structural decline. Indeed, as Waltraud Kokot suggests, 'port neighbourhoods and their environs have undergone processes of social and economic degradation'.[24] Under dominant forms of neoliberal governance (certainly the case for contemporary Greece) that emphasise reductions in social welfare and infrastructure spending — whilst simultaneously promoting the reduction of global trade barriers and the expansion of logistics infrastructure — those living in these peripheral spaces find themselves largely beyond the limits of minimised state care and support. Here then, the care of the state is replaced by the fickle care of transnational capital. For periods of time these peripheral sites are exploited for their labour and resources before the arteries of global trade are realigned, shifting to another, cheaper zone and thus dispossessing this population of its source of livelihood. Consequently,

logistics zones both materially dispossess those at their peripheries and create new forms of 'extra state' governance. Here then, I am interested in the ways that the film articulates this ever-shifting division between investment, exploitation, and dispossession of these peripheral spaces. Through the new forms of power and governance afforded to logistics multinationals and the intertwined neoliberal logics of reduced state support and infrastructure, logistical spaces have a huge influence over the sites and spaces in their peripheries, alternatively exploiting and dispossessing those on the borders of their trading arteries. Ultimately, the film seeks to reground the space of logistics, examining how it interacts with its peripheral economies, societies, and landscapes. In certain ways, such a process of regrounding draws us back to Jameson's dialectical synthetisation of the cognitive map explored in Chapter 1, where connections between localised, material sites and spaces of capitalist exploitation and their structural and systemic power relations are constantly forged.

The port of Piraeus has long historical interconnections with trade, transport, and seafaring. As Sitta von Reden has suggested, until approximately the third millennium BC, Piraeus was an island, detached from the mainland for long periods by coastal tidal pools that flooded the low-lying areas in between. During the fifth century BC, and after the Athenian-led coalition of city-states defeated the Persian invasion in 478 BC, the port was selected as the main trading and transport hub for Athens. It was during this 'Golden Age of Athenian democracy' that the 'long walls' were constructed between Athens and Piraeus. Approximately six kilometres in length, these walled fortifications protected the route between Athens and Piraeus during periods of wider conflict in the Attica region.[25] Over the centuries that followed, the port went through stages of territorial contestation as well as abandonment and degradation during the rule of the Ottoman Empire. As Reden describes, it was only in the middle of the nineteenth century, and following the declaration of Piraeus as an independent municipality in 1833, that serious infrastructural investment (in terms of both trade and transport) was put into the port once again, helping to re-establish it as the main hub for trade and transport into and out of Athens. The rapid expansion of the port over the next one hundred years led to the creation of an autonomous port administration body, the Piraeus Port Authority (OLP) in 1930 and the establishment of the Piraeus Free Zone in 1932. The boom in the global logistics trade throughout the latter half of the twentieth century meant that the port expanded even more. New container terminals were built, quays were extended, new technologies were invested in to streamline flows of capital through the port. The financial crisis of 2008 hit the Greek economy particularly hard and caused a significant shift in the operations and power relations at the port. It is at this moment that *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds* begins.

Over the opening shot of the film, the text at the bottom of the screen reads 'Cosco's motto "bridging the east with the west" begins in the port of Piraeus'. The film begins by focusing on the takeover and operation of two of the port's piers by Chinese state-owned company Cosco in 2009. Previously operated by the

Greek state-owned company the OLP, the concession agreement with Cosco was signed amid the death throes of the global economic crisis. As Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter have suggested, part of the country's bailout package meant signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the 'so-called troika of the European Commission (EC), the International Monetary Fund, and European Central Bank'.[26] The signing of this memorandum paved the way for the troika to implement their much-criticised policy reforms via a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). Supposedly aimed at resolving crisis-hit countries' fiscal imbalances, the SAPs primarily consist of internal economic changes that aim to open up markets through a combination of deregulation, the weakening of labour rights, and the removal of barriers to trade. The film itself forms part of a wider research project called *Logistical Worlds: Infrastructure, Software, Labour (2013–2016)*, which was centred on three locations, Athens, Kolkata, and Valparáiso, and aimed to investigate how 'regimes of circulation and containment [...] connect China's manufacturing industries to different corners of the world'.[27]

Whilst this larger project was broadly focused on how 'infrastructure and software combine as technologies of governance' within, and between, nodal sites in the logistical expansion of Chinese production along the 'New Silk Road', *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds* moves outside the space of the port itself, focusing instead on the changing socio-economic composition of the local peripheral zones that border such sites of logistics operation. Thus, as suggested before, the film is concerned with examining how such zones of logistics can never be read as detached from their material surroundings, rather they are deeply embedded in the local landscape and socio-economic environments that house them. Indeed, as Neilson and Rossiter suggest in their broader overview of the *Logistical Worlds* project, 'logistics also actively produces environments and subjectivities, including those of workers and labour forces, through techniques of measure, coordination and optimization'.[28] Thus, the border sites of logistics zones are reconstituted and recomposed by their interaction with these spaces of capital and commodity flow. The film offers up a deceptively simple formal construction, slowly telescoping outwards from a brief examination of the port itself to the multiple peripheral border spaces with which it interacts. It is this slow widening of the film's spatio-political lens that allows us to perceive the impacts that logistics space has on its border sites and spaces, regrounding it within the material space (economic, political, social) with which it interacts. The following analysis of the film will proceed in a similar fashion, tracing the film's slowly expanding formal structure.

The initial section of the film combines both still and moving images of the port at night and in the early morning. An initial pair of shots renders the port as something akin to a cityscape skyline. Lights flicker and blink as the camera picks out several container carriers — the dominant architectural structures in this logistical space. Here, the focus is primarily upon the state of the port and its border spaces prior to the 2009 takeover by Cosco. Over the image that picks out several containers, a passage of text reads 'most people of the New Ikonion used to work at the ship repair docks west to the Pier III'. The town of New Ikonion

sits on a hill to the north of the Piraeus Container Terminal (PCT). Historically tied to the shipping industry, the small town of around three hundred people was heavily impacted by the decreasing flow of business through the port after the 2008 financial crisis. As Anna Lascari, one of the filmmakers behind *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds*, has suggested:

> Framed between new quay cranes and super post-panamax quay cranes, New Ikonion appears as an irregularity or a forgotten backdrop standing totally irrelevant to the working norms of PCT. The lives of the residents of Ikonio seem to be affected by PCT and its daily operations. Stacks of containers, large quay cranes and tracks going in and out of the piers are the predominant view from this rather precarious settlement.[29]

Indeed, the next passage of text on screen suggests that 'since 2009, the shipyards lost more than 70% of their business leaving most of New Ikonion residents unemployed'. Likely a combined result of both the increasing automation of operations at the port and the overarching ripple-effects of the 2008 crash, unemployment has steadily increased in the town of New Ikonion. Largely dependent upon the port for employment, the town has now become a largely 'forgotten backdrop'. Unemployment combined with the more endemic crises of late capitalism has rearticulated the relationship between the port and its border spaces. Moreover, such peripheral 'extra state' spaces are also typically vacated of the traditional networks of state infrastructure and support. The care of the state is often replaced by the care, or lack thereof, of the zone (we will return to these shifting infrastructures of care later). Thus, we begin to see the ways in which the

Fig. 3.1. Still from *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds*, dir. by Anna Lascari, Ilias Marmaras, and Carolin Phillip (Greece, 2014).

'logistical world' of the port also impacts and reconstitutes the zones peripheral to it. Indeed, just preceding this passage of text, we are offered an image that reinforces the deep spatial and historical interrelations between the socio-economic life-world of the port and its nearby border town.

Shot within the town, the camera captures the reflected image of a road mirror. Within its circular frame, we can see some of the town's architecture and landscape in the immediate foreground, as well as the infrastructure and technology of the container terminal beyond. The visual composition of the image — which closely nests together the port and its peripheral zone — serves to emphasise the spatio-political interconnectedness of these two sites. Moreover, the convex shape of the mirror collapses the geographical distance between the logistics zone and its border town. Through a dual emphasis on both the spatial proximity of the port as well as the textual narration of the destructive impact on the socio-economic life of New Ikonian, we begin to understand how logistics space not only 'actively produces environments and subjectivities' in its peripheral zones, but also has the capacity to destroy or dispose of them during periods of capitalism's structural crises.

Whilst the logistics space of the PCT has the capacity to sustain a town like New Ikonion, it also has the capacity to dispossess and destroy the socio-economic lifeworld of such a border space. Indeed, the subsequent images in this sequence similarly emphasise the spatial and economic interconnections between the town and port. We are presented with shots that frame various views of the town in the foreground — fields, plant life, walls, debris — with the infrastructure of the port

Fig. 3.2. Still from *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds*, dir. by Lascari, Marmaras, and Phillip (Greece, 2014).

in the background. Across these shots, there is also a marked contrast between the crumbling and dilapidated infrastructure of the town and the sleek logistified efficiency of the terminal. Functioning largely as an 'extra-state' periphery, the care of the state has been largely withdrawn within such a border space. It has supposedly been left to the care of the logistical zone, but as Werthmann and Ayeh suggest, they 'are either governed by underperforming national administrations or by non-state actors, or left to themselves'.[30] Thus, whilst the logistical space looms large in the landscape of this small town, the socio-economic support it once offered has been materially withdrawn.

As suggested earlier, my focus here is on the ways *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds* regrounds the space of logistics, resisting an understanding of such logistical zones as abstracted and networked nodal points in the transnational movements of global capital. As the analysis of the sequence above demonstrates, this is done through a granular examination of the material, social, environmental, and economic interactions and exploitations happening at the borders of such sites. This 'practice of regrounding' can I think be productively connected to Alberto Toscano's call to 'defetishise' visual and aesthetic engagements with logistics. As Toscano suggests, 'in contemporary visual practice, especially photographic and cinematic work oriented toward logistical complexes, the mimetic lure of real abstraction has several modalities, among which is the figure of logistics as a depopulated landscape of megastructures'.[31] Thus, for Toscano, visual practices that have attempted to render logistics space visible have privileged the same 'smooth', 'flattened', and 'abstracted' conceptualisations as much of the theoretical discourse mapped out above. Toscano wishes to push back against such approaches to the logistical through a process of defetishisation: 'logistics might be framed not only through its material apparatuses but also through its legal, operational, managerial and commodity form'.[32] It is my contention that the regrounding work undertaken by *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds* can be read as such an attempt to defetishise its visual engagements with logistics space. Through the film's focus on the border spaces of the port, it is more interested in these peripheral operations (legal, political, operational, governmental) than the port itself as an abstracted 'megastructure'. This attempt at defetishisation also matches Danyluk's assertion that we must confront logistics space and their peripheries as 'fragmentary, unstable ensemble[s] of physical and social infrastructures'. This shot of the road mirror, which emphasises the spatio-political interconnectedness of these two sites can very much be aligned with both Danyluk's and Toscano's assertions. The site of logistics is defetishised, and, concomitantly, its 'fragmentary' and 'unstable' relationship with its border space is reasserted. Therefore, the attempt to both reground and defetishise logistics space are intertwined structuring conceits of *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds*.

The interrelations between the town and port are further examined in the film's next section; however, the established visual-textual structure is reworked. Here, the camera returns to the port itself, whilst we are offered the testimony of local PCT ex-employees via onscreen subtitles. Over a shot that shows the construction of a new jetty at the port, the text reads 'you were receiving an SMS to be at work

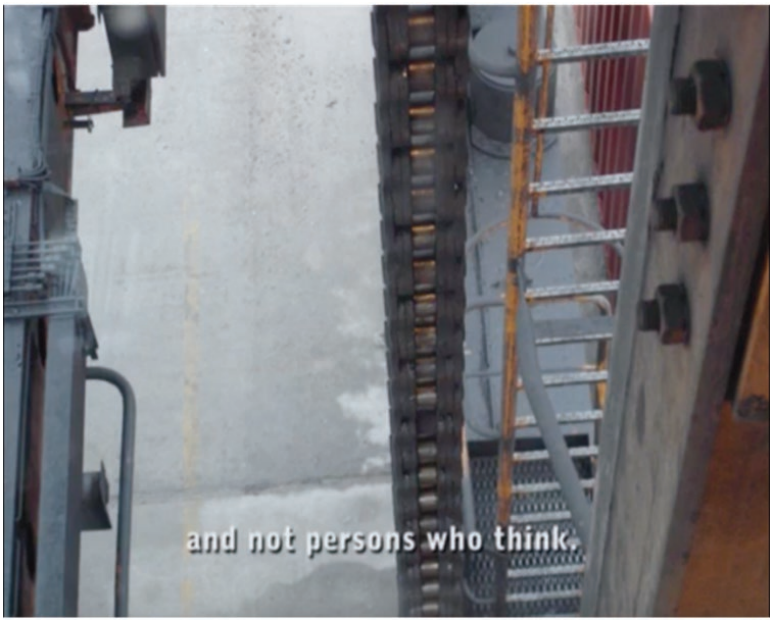

Fig. 3.3. Still from *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds*, dir. by Lascari, Marmaras, and Phillip (Greece, 2014).

in 3 hours. Nobody knew in which shift he would work the next day'. Over a second image of the same jetty, another passage of text reads 'for nine months, I never worked on the basis of a work schedule. There was no schedule at all'. We then shift to a series of close-up, low-angle shots of trucks and cranes in and around the port. The on-screen text reads, 'in Cosco working conditions are of the Middle Ages. The main thing is that they want the workers to be little soldiers and not persons who think'. Through this sequence, we are thus grounded in the material space of the terminal, whilst we hear testimony from several local former employees of the PCT. Where we previously found ourselves outside looking in, now we are inside looking out, reading testimony on the labour conditions at the port from those who live in the border spaces adjacent to it.

Once again, the film seeks to emphasise the material interconnections between the port and the spaces it borders. Lives and livelihoods are reconstituted by the ebb and flow of capital and business through the PCT. Where the opening of the film sought to emphasise these interconnections by visualising the spatial proximity of town and port, here it is textual testimony that renders these same interconnections palpable. The legal and political 'extra-state' functioning of logistics zones typically means they don't have to adhere to the traditional forms of worker protections and rights of the state. Indeed, as Dickinson suggests, there is often 'eradication of worker rights legacies' within such spaces that are beyond the control of the state.[33] Through the textual testimony provided in this sequence, we bear witness to how such reconstitutions of labour regulations materially impact those living

Fig. 3.4. Still from *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds*, dir. by Lascari, Marmaras, and Phillip (Greece, 2014).

in the port's peripheral spaces. Working schedules are ad hoc and conditions are precarious. Whilst the camera focuses on the solid material infrastructure of the port, the textual testimony reveals the precarious and fragile working conditions that support this same space. Once again, the film seeks to emphasise how logistics space can never simply be read as 'enclaved' or 'nodal'; rather, it has material impacts upon the spaces that it borders, reconfiguring labour regimes and regulations in its peripheries. Thus, whilst focusing on the material site of the port and its infrastructures, the textual juxtaposition once again serves to fragment and defetishise this logistics space, exposing it as an 'unstable ensemble of physical and social infrastructures'.

As the film's geographical lens widens, we shift to an examination of the new Ikonion-Thriassion Rail Line, which extends from the PCT to the under-construction Thriassion Freight and Intermodal Center in Thriassion Plain, Western Attica. The opening shot of this sequence presents us with a sketch of a railway track and a distant tunnel. The writing next to the drawing reads 'corridors connect zones, corridors cross borders, decisions are made in the corridor'. Here, the film foregrounds the fact that within this section we will be focusing on a connective thread between two zones of logistical operation. However, as we shall see, even this connective 'corridor' materially impacts the spaces it borders; rearticulating and recomposing social imaginaries, as well as sovereign and infrastructural dynamics in its peripheral zones. Thus, such logistics corridors not only cross borders, but create new border regimes. Next in this sequence, we transition to a series of shots

that traverse a section of the track. The first of these shots is a pan up from the track itself to a tunnel in the distance, visually replicating the drawing seen in the previous shot.

Here, the text reads, 'from Schisto, the line, clean and polished, runs its lonely route to Thriassion'. The next sequence of shots, once again a mix of still and moving images, focuses further on the infrastructure of the Ikonion-Thriassion Rail Line. The text reads, 'as it crosses the Attica landscape, the New Ikonio-Thriassio line carries the optimism of growth implied by the State and the Media and the illusion of change, even when all it does is to be visible'. As with much of the infrastructural development extending out from the PCT, the communities living in the spaces peripheral to these zones and corridors are hopeful that they will experience the knock-on benefits of such development projects.

Whilst expectations of wider social economic development within the zones immediately peripheral to the PCT have largely been quashed (with strikes, pushbacks, and protests on the rise) as the logistics zone spreads itself further across the Greek landscape, hope remains for the wider population of the region. Thus, expectations for economic and social stability and growth are pinned on the expansion of such infrastructures of global trade. Indeed, as Lascari suggests, 'forgotten settlements imagine themselves within this cartography of promised growth'.[34] As a result, beyond simply impacting the daily realities of life and material conditions of labour, such zones and corridors of logistics also impact the construction of social imaginaries for the communities living in the spaces peripheral to them. The inclusion of the corridor 'sketch', in combination with the textual focus on the potential optimism (economic, infrastructural etc.) that the corridor's construction carries, emphasises the imagined desires that communities place upon such spaces of logistical capitalist expansion. Consequently, this section of the film aims to examine how certain social imaginaries and developmental desires are connected to, and grounded in, the expansion of these infrastructures of global trade. However, as we have seen, such expansionary projects exploit and dispossess much more that they support and invest. And there is a renewed focus on these processes within the film's next section. Here, we also confront the potential ways in which these border communities attempt to co-opt the infrastructures of such logistical spaces in acts of simultaneous necessity and resistance.

The next section of *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds* begins with an extract from Christos Karakepelis's 2011 film *Raw Material*. Shot over six years, the film focuses on various communities across Greece who survive by collecting and selling scrap metal. One of the groups Karakepelis focuses on is a Roma community living in the town of Neoktista [New Builds], which borders the Ikonion-Thriassion Rail Line. Over a shot of several men removing scrap metal from the back of a van, we hear a voiceover that states 'it would take two months to mine the metal we collect in a day. The prices vary from day to day'. From here, we transition to a series of still shots of piles of scrap metal, shot both within the town and around its peripheries. Here, some context for the historical importance of the scrap metal industry is provided:

> As a by-product, the ship building provided scrap metal for recycling. It was used mainly for building material that used to be one of Greece's most profitable businesses and export commodities. With the decline of the shipbuilding as well as of the domestic building sector the production of steel declines. One phenomenon at the end of the local economy's hierarchy chain is diversifying though: individual and groups of scrap metal seekers working the streets with their supermarket carriers.

We then shift back to a second extract from *Raw Material* and the scrap metal collectors of Neoktista. Over shots of more collectors throwing their scrap into a large skip, a voiceover describes the informal economy surrounding the valuation of the collected metal. Unregulated by the government, the valuation market is extremely corrupt, resulting in huge fluctuations in the amount of money collectors receive for their materials. As the voiceover suggests:

> I keep my mouth shut, I need the money. The state does not exist here. If we had a proper government, I would send an official from the department of weights and measures to tell them 'Let's take a look at those scales'. They thrive in this lawlessness.

The relationship between the sovereign state and the zones and peripheries of logistics space has been a continually recurring theme throughout this section, and this is re-emphasised by the scrap metal collector's claim that 'the state does not exist here'. As is so often the case within such peripheral spaces, state jurisdiction overlaps with the transnational control of the logistics zones, often meaning that crucial social, economic, and infrastructural mechanisms of state support and welfare fail to extend into these liminal spaces. Again, these forms of overlap and rupture bring us back to Danyluk's contention that the spaces of logistics and their peripheries are 'fragmentary, unstable ensemble[s] of physical and social infrastructures that are conceived, constructed and managed by formally independent actors'.[35] As the excerpts from *Raw Material* point out, the now largely defunct ship building industry in Piraeus once provided ample excess materials to support the scrap metal industry. However, with the decline of the industry, scrap metal collectors have been forced to extract their resource from elsewhere.

The penultimate section of the film begins with a series of shots that surveys the landscape of Neoktista. Over these shots, the film describes how the town is a site of openly racialised tension between the ethnic Greek and Roma inhabitants, who are 'accused of being responsible for the degradation of the town, due to their involvement in the drug trade and the scrap metal industry'. Alongside a subsequent series of shots showing debris and rubbish on the streets of Neoktista, we are presented with a quotation from the president of ERGOSE SA, a subsidiary of the Hellenic Railways Organisation (OSE), a company instrumental in the creation of the Ikonion-Thriassion Rail Line. He states that 'vandalism is a huge problem. It particularly grew during the economic crisis but it is gradually being mitigated'. From here, the camera continues to scour the streets of Neoktista, showing evidence of the theft of various metals — sewer caps, street lights etc. — from the town's infrastructure. The on-screen text states, 'the Newly Builds are linked

Fig. 3.5. Still from *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds*, dir. by Lascari, Marmaras, and Phillip (Greece, 2014).

to infrastructures in contingent and fleeting ways [...]. They are constructed and sustained by what was stolen, reused and sold from existing infrastructures'. We are then presented with a shot of a stuffed toy bear plugged into the open sewer — a warning to drivers to avoid this spot.

The film's detailed focus on these infrastructural absences seeks once again to reinforce the interconnection between the logistics zone and its peripheral spaces. Although the expansion of logistical channels may offer up imaginaries of development — both in terms of infrastructure and jobs — the material reality is that these peripheral communities have been left to cannibalise their own infrastructures.

Whilst the infrastructural development of the Ikonion-Thriassion Rail Line passes by the edge of Neoktista, the town itself is evidence of how economic and infrastructural mechanisms fail to extend their support into such liminal spaces. They are largely 'left to themselves', indefinitely subjected to structural 'processes of social and economic degradation'. Thus, whilst developmental imaginaries might leak out from the arteries of global trade zones and corridors, the reality is that these liminal spaces fall between the gaps of private and sovereign control and support. These sites' position as peripheries result in fragmentations, instabilities, and gaps between state jurisdiction and the infrastructures of global trade; neither is prepared to take control of these areas and they are therefore left to a process of managed decline.

The aim of this section has been to examine how *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds* regrounds and defetishes its engagement with the sites and spaces of logistics.

Through the work's close engagement with the peripheral sites of global trading networks, the film repeatedly emphasises that logistical spaces foster new, violent, and messy forms of governance and bordering. Through this close, piecemeal engagement with the border spaces of global trade, the film simultaneously resists 'the mimetic lure of real abstraction' that has dominated aesthetic engagements with logistics space.[36] Instead, the film is invested in practicing what Toscano, *pace* Allan Sekula, terms 'a materialist and corporeal, as well as partisan, practice of photography, practicing "purposeful immersion" into the social'.[37] Through its detailed study of such peripheral zones, the film seeks to reground logistics spaces, providing a better understanding of how they interact and intersect with the spaces they border. Through this focus on such peripheral zones, we begin to understand how the border regimes of contemporary logistics are central to 'the very *production* of the deep heterogeneity of global space and time'. Ultimately, the work's slowly expanding focus on this fragmentary border site helps us to understand the layers of exploitation that structure the site's liminal existence. Much discussion of tactically negotiating and negating such logistical power formations emphasises the need to expose chokepoints or weak links in such infrastructural systems, which are predicated on precarious and fragile forms of mobility/immobility, a conception that, in and of itself, further undermines a reading of these spaces as seamless/smooth. Beginning to unpick and undermine such totalising and abstracted imaginaries of logistics space is indicative of the visual's potential capacity to act as a tool of resistance to such formations of power, sensing and making sense of the deep political relationalities that indelibly mark such spatial formations.

Regimes of (In)visibility: *Liquid Traces: The Left-to-Die Boat*

If the rise of logistics as one of the dominant modes of contemporary capital accumulation fosters new forms of governance and bordering, it also simultaneously rearticulates patterns of movement and mobility. Oceanic space has become a crucial site for the expansion of logistical transportation, particularly with the increasing importance of containerisation in supply chain operations. As oceans become increasingly important to the workings of logistified capital, its spatial securitisation has also become a primary concern. Additionally, the perceived risks — typically racially and xenophobically inscribed — posed by the supposed increase and expansion of various 'illegalised' activities that could threaten such capital flows in these same spaces ('migration', 'piracy') also accelerate the implementation of such security infrastructures. Consequently, securitisation of oceanic space is a fundamental dimension of such reformulations. However, these modes of safety and protection are unevenly distributed, aiding certain forms of mobility whilst structurally precluding (and endangering) others.

During the night of 27 March 2011, seventy-two migrants boarded a small dinghy in Tripoli on the Libyan coast in the hope of reaching the Italian island of Lampedusa. Approximately eighteen hours after departure, the boat sent out a distress call from an on-board satellite phone. In the early hours of 28 March, the boat ran out of fuel and for the next fourteen days, the boat drifted. Finally, on 10

April, the boat beached back on the coast of Libya; only nine of the seventy-two passengers had survived.[38] During the period of the boat's fateful journey, NATO was in the process of enforcing an arms embargo in the central Mediterranean. As a result, the oceanic space the boat moved across was being meticulously patrolled and surveyed by an array of national and supra-national forces — the boat's drift took place in one of the 'most highly surveyed areas of sea in the entire world'.[39] The boat was spotted, surveyed, and interacted with approximately nine times during its fateful journey: initially by a French aircraft, then through its GPS distress call, and on several other occasions by military ships, fishing vessels, and helicopters. Despite these multiple instances of interaction and visibility, the boat was offered no substantive assistance or aid. How was it that a boat travelling through such a space of intense surveillance did not receive the assistance it so desperately needed?

Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani's multimedia work *Liquid Traces: The Left-to-Die Boat* sought to find the answers to this question. Their multifaceted investigation highlights the structural neglect of the migrant vessel by an array of state and extra-state actors. However, the work is more than simply an investigative study into the results of criminal inaction by these state/extra-state bodies. It is also concerned with examining the intensification and proliferation of bordering, surveillance, and visualisation technologies across contemporary oceanic space. More precisely, alongside its focus on such an instance of state/extra-state neglect, the work also aims to underscore the new and powerful forms of bordering that striate the sea, and how these new forms of governance create the conditions for the proliferation of new regimes and technologies of surveillance and visibility. The increasing modes of technological visibility across oceanic space are intimately connected to the multiple fragmentations of the border within these same spaces. Consequently, reformulations and multiplications of the border have led to marked rise in 'operational' or 'instrumental' imaging regimes, necessary for the documentation and control of movement across these spaces.

Heller and Pezzani's investigation was nested under the wider *Forensic Oceanography* project, headed by them and closely related to the Forensic Architecture research centre. As Heller and Pezzani suggest, *Forensic Oceanography* 'is a project that critically investigates the militarised border regime in the Mediterranean Sea, analysing the spatial and aesthetic conditions that have caused over 16,500 registered deaths at the maritime borders of Europe over the last 20 years'.[40] The aim of this section is to examine how Heller and Pezzani's project unpacks the structural interconnections between these new forms of oceanic bordering/securitisation that criss-cross the sea and the intensification of visibility and surveillance across these same spaces. The fragmentation of the border has led to a multiplication of image regimes surveying this oceanic space, and *Liquid Traces* is keenly focused on examining this interconnection. Ultimately, the work seeks to highlight the deep contradiction in the fact that whilst there have been a rapid proliferation of new forms of surveillance and border protection, there is an increasing risk involved in traversing these spaces for sections of the population that are deemed to fall 'in-between' the various sovereign and extra-sovereign remits of control and protection.

As briefly mentioned above, this contradiction in oceanic securitisation brings us back to the earlier considerations surrounding the role of logistics in contemporary regimes of bordering and control. Both earlier in this chapter and Chapter 1, we saw how logistical efficiency is now one of the primary methods of profit accumulation under late capitalism. As Charmaine Chua has noted, this revolution in logistics has 'shifted capital's focus from its sites of production to its sites of circulation [...] firms began to experiment with increasing the speed and efficiency through which commodities could circulate across the globe'.[41] The increasingly fragmented global division of labour, continually aiming to search out lower-cost labour pools and cheaper sites of production, has meant that efficient circulation between these new locations of exploitation is of primary importance. As this new form of circulatory profit accumulation evolved, anxieties have clearly developed around how to protect and secure such infrastructures, corridors, and channels. Thus, much of the expansion of oceanic surveillance and control has been in aid of such logistical securitisation. Cowen has suggested that, 'the rise of supply chain security entails a move away from territorial models of security in order to protect the transnational material and informational networks of global trade'.[42]

Consequently, shifts towards transnational forms of bordering and control — primarily in the service of increasing the security and safety of logistics space — have led to the creation of 'intensely policed naval corridors'.[43] Indeed, a 2011 report from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) entitled 'Securing the Supply Chain' aimed to provide 'a multifaceted analysis of the importance of supply chain security for the transportation and logistics industry'. The report suggested that an 'upswing in terrorism and piracy' could potentially have devastating impacts on logistical supply chains. The report concludes that 'transportation and logistics companies [...] need to take security concerns into account when choosing transport routes'.[44] Similarly, as Cowen suggests:

> The threat of disruption to the circulation of stuff has become such a profound concern to governments and corporations in recent years that it has prompted the creation of an entire architecture of security that aims to govern global spaces of flow.[45]

Thus, such a shift in the sites of profit accumulation inevitably means that new forms of state and extra-state security must be developed to survey and patrol these corridors of capital flow. Cowen has labelled these new forms of regulation and control as methods of 'supply chain security', which rely 'on a range of new forms of transnational regulation, border management, data collection, surveillance, and labour discipline, as well as naval missions and aerial bombing'.[46]

Over the past ten years, and roughly matching up with PwC's report, we have seen the development of a range of new forms of border surveillance and control technologies. For example, the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR), created and operated by the Joint Research Centre, 'represents a mechanism for EU Member States' authorities responsible for border surveillance, such as border guards, coast guards, police, customs and navies, to share operational information [...] with the aim of reinforcing the control of the European southern

maritime borders'.[47] A slew of other EU security research projects supported EUROSUR. Amongst these were PERSEUS (Protection of European seas and borders through the intelligent use of surveillance), led by the private Spanish information technology and defence systems company Indra Sistemas, and CONTAIN (Container Security Advanced Information Networking) led by the Organisatie voor Toegepast Natuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek, which aimed to 'support transport security stakeholders in managing container security threats as part of an integrated approach to the management of transportation networks'.[48] This emphasis on 'managing container security threats' underscores how the securitisation of oceanic space is closely intertwined with the advance of supply chain capitalism. As suggested earlier, the perceived risks posed by the supposed increase in 'illegalised' migration have also fed into these desires for an expansion of oceanic securitisation. Much of this highly prejudicial discourse perhaps extends from a more endemic 'spectacularisation' of contemporary processes of migration and bordering. Indeed, as Maribel Casas-Cortes and others suggest, the border spectacle is defined by how:

> The enactment of exclusion through the enforcement of the border produces (illegalized) migration as a category and literally and figuratively renders it visible. A representation of illegality is imprinted on selected migration streams and bodies, while other streams and bodies are marked as legal, professional, student, allowable.[49]

Thus, in many ways, the extension and expansion of bordering regimes — typically in the service of logistics contemporary domination — become a performative act, 'where illegalization functions along with other devices (waiting, denial, missing paperwork, interview, etc.) to govern and manage migration'.[50]

Consequently, the expansion of such security and surveillance infrastructures across oceanic space creates a particular sort of feedback loop, where their very presence reinforces the spectacularisation and illegalisation of migratory flows. As Casas-Cortes writes, as securitisation is amped up, inevitably 'illegality is imprinted on selected migration streams and bodies'.[51] However, it is also important to note that whilst these methods of securitisation and surveillance may help produce such illegalised representations of migration, they also often structurally avoid responsibility for such precarious forms of movement and mobility. More precisely, while extensive infrastructures have been developed to protect the movement and circulation of contemporary containerised capital across the seas, these same forms of spatial surveillance and control have arguably made other forms of oceanic movement and transportation more dangerous than before. Whilst the increasing importance of global supply chains — and the safety anxieties attached to their development — seemingly create a 'safer' oceanic space, as with any spatial infrastructure operating according to the logics of capital accumulation, these forms of safety and protection attempt structurally to preclude and bypass other forms of supposedly 'unproductive' or 'harmful' movement and circulation. Migration is one such form.

As a result, whilst bodies and organisations like EUROSUR, PERSEUS, and CONTAIN attempt to secure ocean space, they do so in ways that further endanger

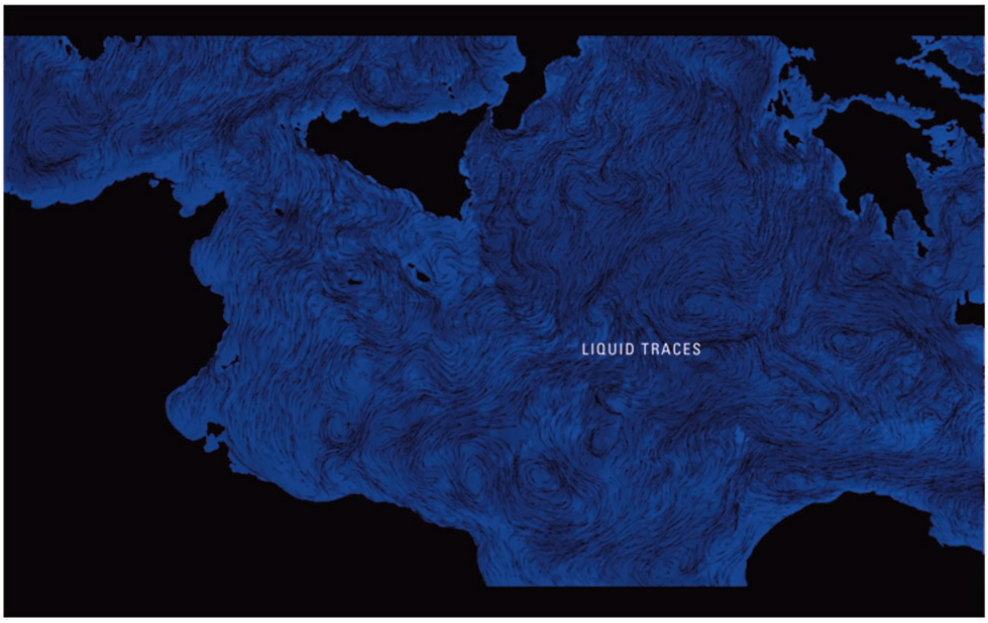

Fig. 3.6. *Liquid Traces: The Left-to-Die Boat*, dir. by Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani (UK, 2012).

the lives of those sections of the population that fall outside their accumulatory strategies, rendering them as 'worthless' and 'debased' — such as the seventy-two migrants fleeing from Tripoli. It is this contradiction that is explored within Heller and Pezzani's film. As new regimes of surveillance and technologies of visualisation allow for intensified visibility across oceanic space, other supposedly 'illegal' forms of transportation and movement are increasingly hidden, precaritised, and made more dangerous. Through these processes of obfuscation, the violence of inaction reigns supreme. Heller and Pezzani's work interrogates these new regimes of bordering and surveillance, unpacking how these formations of governance and security create an abundance of imagery of 'illegalised' migration, whilst simultaneously avoiding any structural responsibility or accountability for the safety of these very same people. Thus, these new regimes of bordering and security not only create a violence of visibility, they simultaneously foster a violence of inaction, leaving those cast as illegalised exposed to an uncertain and often deadly fate on the high seas.

The centrepiece of the multimedia *Liquid Traces: The Left-to-Die Boat* project is a seventeen-minute video, which brings together the central evidence and findings of the overall investigation. It is built around a single image of the Mediterranean Sea, the oceanic space traversed by the migrant vessel. The landmasses surrounding this expanse of water — southern Europe and northern Africa — are rendered as black, negative spaces of absence. In contrast, the oceanic space itself is presented as a thick, swirling mass of dark blue. This aesthetic choice perhaps signals Heller and Pezzani's intention to render the ocean not as an empty space of absence and neutral traversal, but rather as a space of deep political contestation and political

violence. Indeed, this is backed up by the voiceover at the opening of the film, which suggests:

> Modulations of the sea's ever moving surface immediately fold back into its immense liquid mass. What traces might death at and through the sea leave? How to reconstruct violations when the murder weapon is the water itself? What are the conditions that transform the sea into a deadly liquid?

This search for the 'conditions of transformation' becomes the central preoccupation of the work, as it aims to examine and unpack how various regimes of bordering and visual surveillance have rearticulated this oceanic space.

The opening of the film aims to establish how such regimes of maritime control have expanded over the past ten years. Heller and Pezzani suggest that a central catalyst for this expansion was the fall of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia in 2011, one of the earliest events of the so called 'Arab Spring'. As the voiceover states, 'in early 2011, the turbulent movement of maritime currents spilled over onto North African land [...] following the fall of Ben Ali, several thousand Tunisians seized their freedom to move'. In the bottom right corner of the frame, we are presented with a short extract from a YouTube video entitled 'Le Peuple a parlé', which shows some of the protests in Tunisia in 2011. Simultaneously, a small white marker on the central image of the land and sea indicates the location of Tunis.

As the film progresses, the entire image is overlaid with a grid and different diagrams and lines begin to criss-cross the ocean space as the film's investigative narrative unfolds. In the top right section, we are presented with a list of items:

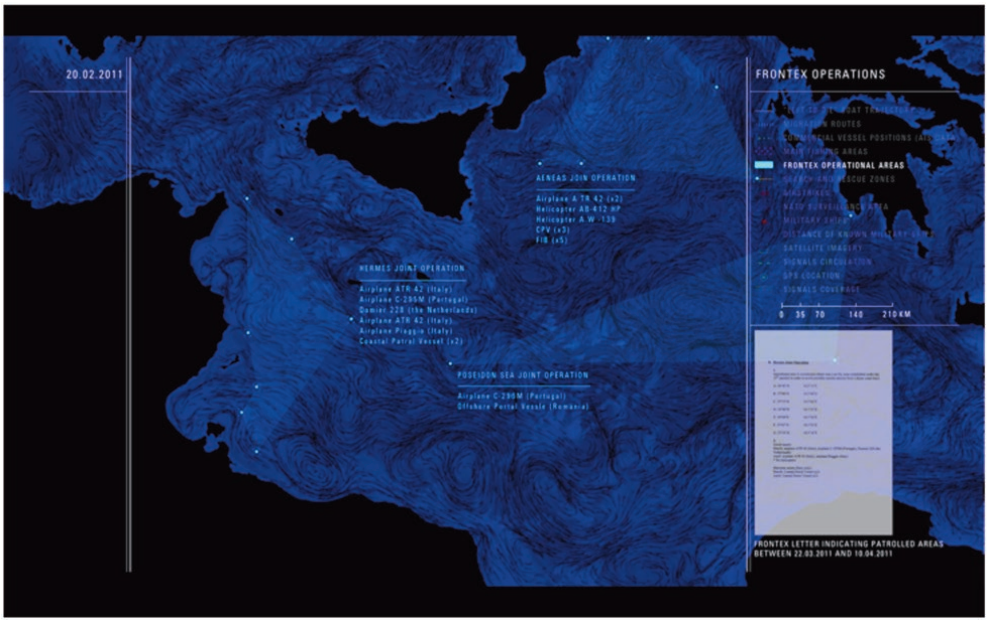

Fig. 3.7. *Liquid Traces: The Left-to-Die Boat*, dir. by Heller and Pezzani (UK, 2012).

'Migration Routes, Search and Rescue Zones, Military Ships, GPS Location, NATO Surveillance Area etc'. — these are a key, helping to identify each of the diagrammatic elements introduced onto the map.

The film proceeds to map out how FRONTEX (European Border and Coast Guard Agency, a crucial part of the EUROSUR infrastructure) stepped up their surveillance and patrols after the fall of Ben Ali. The protest footage is now replaced by a copy of a FRONTEX document that lists the newly patrolled areas across the Mediterranean. Simultaneously, three geometric shapes mapping out these areas of surveillance appear across the map: the Aeneas Joint Operation, the Hermes Joint Operation, and the Poseidon Sea Joint Operation. Under each of these headings, we are also offered a detailed breakdown of the various international vessels and aircraft involved in the operations. As the voiceover suggests, FRONTEX deployed 'patrol boats and aircraft to police the unruly freedom of the high seas, it constituted a mobile and deterritorialised border'. Over this voiceover, the image of the FRONTEX document is now replaced by footage shot from an Italian coastal patrol vessel, which formed part of the Hermes Joint Operation, a recurring technique used throughout the film. Images gleaned from a variety of the visual surveillance and patrol technologies in action across this 'mobile and deterritorialised border' are visually stitched together by Heller and Pezzani. This ever-morphing composite map becomes the structuring visual coda for the film, its matrix-like web of images and diagrams helping to map out how the new forms of oceanic bordering/securitisation that striate the sea lead to an intensification of visibility and surveillance technologies across these same spaces.

From here, the film focuses on the civil war in Libya, the subsequent international military intervention, and the associated arms embargo enforced by NATO across the Mediterranean. As part of this embargo, NATO also created a Maritime Surveillance Area. Here, the image of the sea is overlaid with a series of red lines, indicating the parameters of the surveillance area. The bottom right image shows the official NATO map of the same area. The voiceover describes how several days after the Maritime Surveillance Area was established, up to thirty-eight warships were participating in this surveillance project. However, these warships were not the only technologies of control and surveillance to be deployed. NATO also relied on a 'complex assemblage of remote sensing technologies so as to detect threats hidden within maritime traffic. These included AIS vessel tracking systems, which emit a signal to coastal radar systems'. But, as the AIS system's scope was limited in the area immediately surrounding the Lybian coast, 'NATO also relied on Synthetic Aperture Radar Imagery [SAR], which emits radar signals from satellites, snapping the surface of the earth according to their orbit'. Using electromagnetic pulses, SAR creates much higher resolution images and 3D renderings of landscapes than traditional satellite photography. Here then, the film seeks to highlight how different technologies, both 'on the ground' and 'in the air' were taken up to create a dense web of visibility across this oceanic space. As Heller and Pezzani suggest, 'through such technologies, the sea's liquid ways are supplemented by a constantly pulsating sea of electromagnetic waves'.

Consequently, this opening section of the film establishes how these infrastructures and technologies of surveillance came to form a crucial part of such a 'mobile and deterritorialised border' across the Mediterranean. What the film seeks to do in this opening section is map out the various forms of intense control and visibility that now cross this oceanic space. By initially presenting us with the overabundance of such imaging and surveillance technologies, the film also foreshadows how the migrant vessel could only have existed as an extremely *visible* node within this space. Consequently, it was only through what they term a 'violence of non-assistance' that the tragedy occurred. Thus, the film not only shows us how new regimes of bordering create new infrastructures of visibility, it also takes up the images generated by these new forms of surveillance and patrolling as evidentiary materials in and of themselves; retooled as forms of counter-evidence to expose the crime of non-assistance. Indeed, in their summary of the investigation, Heller and Pezzani suggest that they aimed to turn 'the knowledge and awareness generated by those surveillance technologies into evidence of responsibility for the crime of non-assistance'.[52] Thus, as suggested at the outset of this section, central to their work is an uptake and subversion of such dominant image regimes of power and control.

It is arguable that these acts of subversion and co-optation lead to the emergence of a strong 'counter forensic' sensibility within their work. Whilst not directly addressed by Heller or Pezzani, the notion of the counter forensic was a fundamental building block for the development of Forensic Architecture's work, which we examined in some detail in the previous chapter. It also served as a pre-cursor to the later theoretical development of Fuller and Weizman's 'investigative aesthetics', which has been a conceptual underpinning of this book's theoretical framework. The concept was originally put forward by Allan Sekula. For him, the practice of counter forensics aimed to take up forms of forensic evidence and forensic techniques — typically state-created and produced — and to turn them into an archive of accountability and resistance against the very same formations of power responsible for generating them. As Thomas Keenan suggests — channelling Allan Sekula's original formulation of the term — counter forensics 'refers to nothing less than the adoption of forensic techniques as a practice of "political manoeuvring", as a tactical operation in a collective struggle, a rogues' gallery to document the microphysics of barbarism'.[53] Sekula's essay examines how state-sanctioned processes of photographic surveillance and cataloguing have been indelibly tied to processes of genocidal extermination and disappearance, giving us an intimate bond between what he terms 'Identification' and 'Annihilation':

> The oppressor state catalogues its victims as precisely as possible [...] seeking to register and track individual members. The key to ideological power over the 'other' lies in typing; the key to functional power lies in individuation [...] stereotypes are ideologically useful and necessary, but in the end it is individuals who must be reduced to ashes.[54]

Thus, identification is of central importance within the process of such violence, as it relies on individuation for effective 'annihilation'.

Crucially however, Sekula believes that such processes of cataloguing and surveillance can be taken up and used against those very same formations of power.

This reversed process then operates as 'Identification-Annihilation-*Identification*', where the process of re-identification can help not only with the discovery and documentation of those who may have been killed or disappeared by various forms of state violence, but can also cast new light on the perpetrators of those same crimes. As Keenan suggests, 'the history of human rights forensics is marked by this asymmetrical reversal of state policing techniques into tactics for resisting and challenging injustice'.[55] Thus, for Sekula (and later Keenan), state-produced materials hold the potential to be taken up and utilised as tools for 'political manoeuvring' and, consequently, to produce an archive of state violence. As Keenan suggests, quoting Sekula, ' "forensic methods (detective methods focusing on evidence and the body) offer a tool for oppressive states". But, he [Sekula] somewhat unexpectedly continues, "forensic methods have also become tools of opposition" '.[56] Thus, the aim of a counter forensic practice is to build up evidence of violence and oppression though a 'reversal' or co-option of 'policing techniques'. Ultimately, various power formations have, intentionally or not, created vast archives documenting their acts of violence and neglect, and the practice of counter forensics seeks to retool these repositories, holding those same power formations to account.

A counter forensic praxis is clearly in evidence throughout *Liquid Traces*. As we have already seen, the film repeatedly stitches together a variety of evidentiary materials — geolocation data, surveillance imagery, transcripts — to both emphasise the rapid proliferation of such surveillance regimes and expose the 'crime of non-assistance' carried out by a mix of state and extra-state bodies. These counter forensic strategies and techniques continue to proliferate and develop throughout the rest of the film. For example, as the film begins to map the boat's journey on 27 March, it describes its first sighting. The voiceover states that:

> At 14.55, the passengers noticed an aircraft flying high above them. It was a French patrol aircraft, which, as an investigation by the Council of Europe has subsequently determined, transmitted a photograph and the boat's coordinates to the Italian coastguard headquarters in Rome.

In the bottom right of the screen, we are presented with an image taken by the French patrol aircraft. This grainy photograph, taken almost directly above the vessel, shows how tightly the migrants are packed onto the deck. Next, the voiceover describes a call for help made from the vessel to Vatican priest Father Zerai, whose number had been widely circulated between different groups attempting the Mediterranean crossing. The priest then transferred this message to the Italian coast guard, 'who determined the vessel's location through the satellite phone provider based in Abu Dhabi'. However, as the boat was positioned outside the 'Italian Search and Rescue Area [...] the Italian coast guard did not intervene. Neither did they ensure themselves that any other actor would. But they did alert their Maltese counterparts and NATO HQ in Naples'. The image of the oceanic space is then overlaid with the parameters of both Italian and Maltese search and rescue areas, with the migrant vessel clearly beyond the limits of both. The coast guard also alerted all vessels in the Sicily channel of the boat's position through an INMARSAT-C distress call.

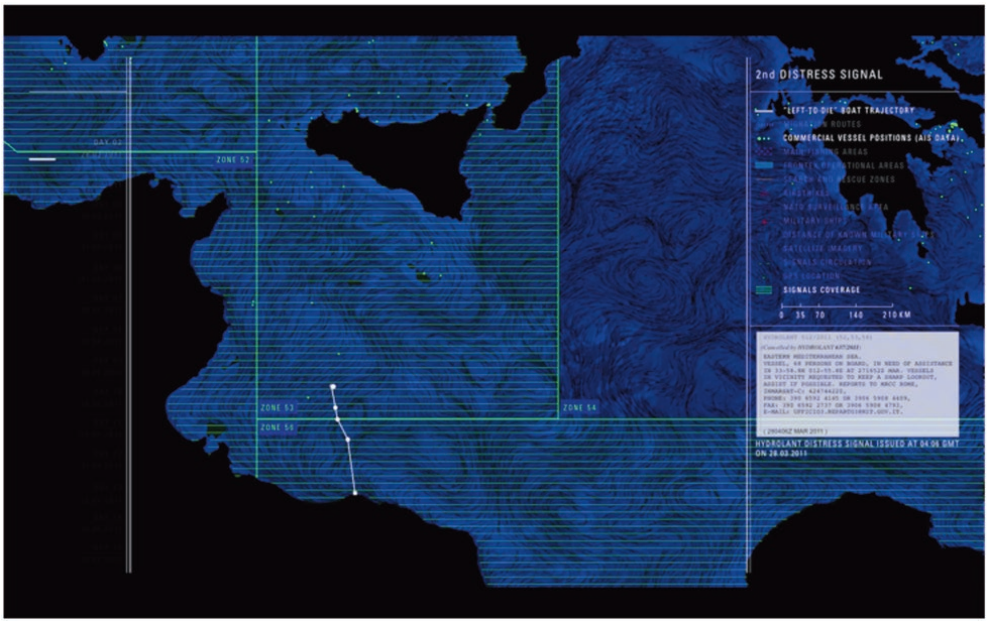

Fig. 3.8. *Liquid Traces: The Left-to-Die Boat*, dir. by Heller and Pezzani (UK, 2012).

Here, we are presented with the locations of all the boats within this channel, acquired through AIS tracking data. In addition, we see a transcript of the INMARSAT-C call sent out by the Italian coast guard, in the bottom right corner of the screen. Next, the film highlights the fact that whilst the boat was outside both these national jurisdictions, it was within NATO's maritime surveillance area and that, additionally, there were 'several military vessels' located within the boat's immediate vicinity. In the bottom right-hand corner, we are presented with a copy of a document NATO presented to the Council of Europe 'indicating the distance of several military ships from the migrants' boat'. At this time, NATO's 'standard practice regarding migrants in distress at the time was one of minimal assistance [...] NATO sought to enable migrants just far enough for Italy or Malta to become responsible for them'.

This is a clear example of just one instance of active 'non-assistance' undertaken by one of the key actors within the oceanic space of the Mediterranean. Here, we are offered a firm sense of how the multiple and fragmented border regimes across this ocean space attempted strategically to shift responsibility for the migrant vessel through active non-assistance. Throughout this sequence, we see the practice of counter forensics in action: tools and images utilised and generated by different power formations are co-opted, appropriated, and ultimately turned into archives of evidence, presenting the 'microphysics of barbarism', or, perhaps more aptly in the case of *Liquid Traces*, the microphysics of non-assistance. Thus, these technologies of control and surveillance are weaponised against their operative logics, retooled as media regimes that can sense and make sense of such violent acts of biopolitical statecraft.

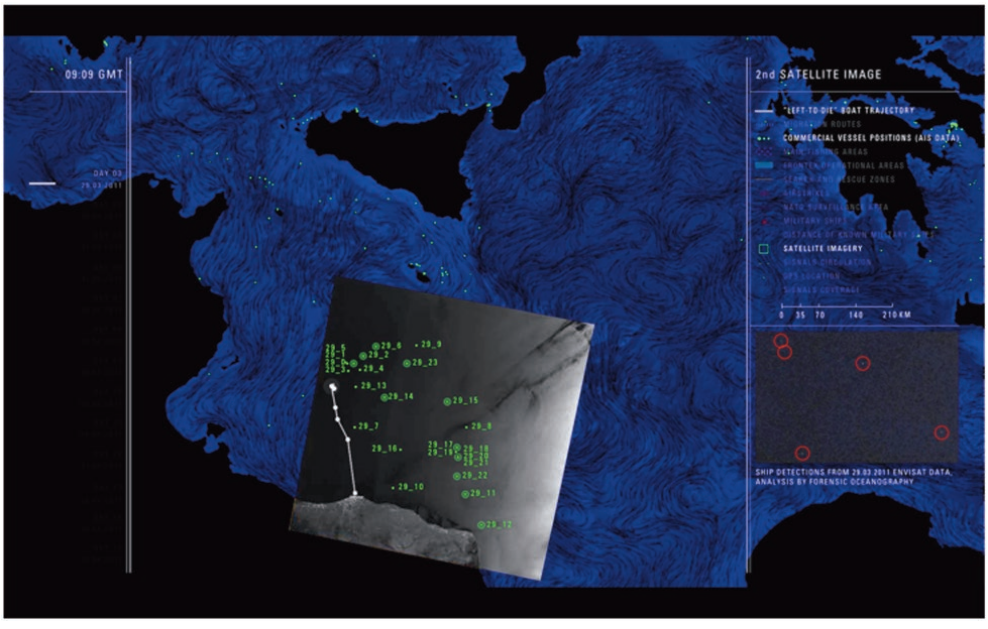

Fig. 3.9. *Liquid Traces: The Left-to-Die Boat*, dir. by Heller and Pezzani (UK, 2012).

The work continually stacks up these different techniques and technologies of surveillance and imaging, almost to the point of oversaturation. Occasionally, there is such a dense web of materials across the oceanic backdrop that we forget where our attention is supposed to be focused. This is arguably an intentional move by Heller and Pezzani, as they attempt to reinforce the sheer proliferation of surveillance technologies within this space of intense securitisation. However, such a stacking-up of evidence never leads to total visual incomprehensibility. The very composition of the work, its grid-like structure and detailed organisational key, continually foregrounds the intimate connections and localised points of interaction between these multifarious actors and forces. While stitching together a wide array of evidentiary forms, the work is always concerned with a focus on the detail and fragment — those key points of interaction. These compositional strategies continue into the next section of the film. The narration describes how on the morning of 28 March, the vessel ran out of fuel. Next, the film presents us with evidence of another distress signal sent out in the early hours of the 28th, roughly matching up with the time that the vessel's engines stopped. Here, we are once again presented with the location of commercial vessels within this area, acquired through AIS tracking data. In addition, laid over the top of these locations are horizontal green lines, representing the area coverage of the distress signal. As the narration suggests, 'none of the commercial vessels accounted for by AIS data diverted its course to abide by its duty to rescue passengers in distress'. Next, the film overlays SAR acquired from the Envisat satellite, showing the location of additional 'large vessels' within the immediate vicinity of the migrant boat, several of which 'must have been military'.

As the narration suggests, 'the closest vessels appearing in the image from the 29th March were only forty kilometres away and could have reached the migrant's boat in less than two hours'. With no assistance offered within this space of intense visibility, the migrant vessel was left to the natural forces of the sea: 'abandoned to the winds and currents they became prisoners of their frail boat, chained to the sea's open expanse. The sea became an unwilling killer and yet it is also a witness to the events'. Here then, another interactive force — and potential evidentiary repository — is introduced into the film, the sea itself. The role of the 'sea as witness' becomes evident in this section of the film. The narration explains how an oceanographer was employed to more specifically map the subsequent trajectory of the drifting boat. Whilst the satellite signals provided periodic locations for the boat, this did not account for its entire journey. Working with oceanographer Richard Limeburner (of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute), the group were able 'to reconstruct the trajectory of the boat during its fourteen days of deadly drift, by analysing winds and currents'.[57] According to this 'drift analysis', the vessel did in fact briefly cross into the Maltese search and rescue zone, although no assistance was offered. From here, the boat began to drift back towards the Libyan coast. The film's constant search for ever-more precise ways to map the boat's trajectory, and, consequently, to detect those localised points of traversal and interaction is underscored by their utilisation of this drift analysis. Here, the sea becomes an almost mediated form, a supplementary evidentiary repository to map the microphysical movements of the boat and its apparent crossing into Maltese waters.

As suggested earlier, this focus on the techniques and technologies of surveillance as a crucial site of resistance has become a crucial facet of Forensic Architecture's work. For example, Eyal Weizman suggests that the group is 'committed to the possibilities of reversing the forensic gaze [...] turning forensics into a counter-hegemonic practice [...] to challenge and resist state and corporate violence and the tyranny of their truth'.[58] However, as I have already touched upon, this practice of counter forensic appropriation and co-option does not simply create archival evidence of the crimes committed, it also, somewhat reflexively, points towards the explosion of such technologies and techniques of surveillance and imaging at these border sites. Thus, Heller and Pezzani not only take up these images to expose such humanitarian crimes, but they also emphasise how these image regimes have expanded and multiplied, becoming a widespread infrastructure and, as a result, a complicit part of this violence. Consequently, through its counter forensic appropriation of such forms of evidence, *Liquid Traces* also aims to present and critique the explosion of techniques and technologies of surveillance and imaging across oceanic space, and how these are interlinked with new policies of bordering and securitisation.

It is arguable that Heller and Pezzani have somewhat retooled the notion of the counter forensic, not only interested in the content that can be gleaned and appropriated from such 'state and corporate' image archives, but also examining and critiquing the wider forms of infrastructure that support this explosion of surveillance and monitoring within oceanic space. They have pointed towards

this reformulation of the counter forensic through their coining of another term, the 'disobedient gaze', in 'New Keywords: Migration and Borders'.[59] Within the subsection entitled 'counter-mapping', the authors suggest that the:

> Disobedient Gaze is a counter-cartographic response to the extension of the militarized border regime in the Mediterranean Sea [...]. Optical and thermal cameras, sea, air- and land-borne radars, vessel tracking technologies and satellites constitute an expanding remote sensing apparatus that searches for 'illegalized' activities.[60]

Thus, we can see here how their counter forensic practice is also structured around an attempt to sense and make sense of the wider expansion of different surveillance regimes across the oceanic space of the Mediterranean. Indeed, as the article continues, the disobedient gaze aims to 'turn surveillance mechanisms back on themselves by demarcating those areas that are being monitored by different technologies and agencies to show what could be "seen" by which border control agency in any particular case'.[61] Therefore, this attempt to turn such devices back on themselves not only aims to expose evidentiary materials, but also aims to look at the wider infrastructures that produce these new archives of surveillance and monitoring. Through this approach, the film also explores the broader interconnections between new practices of border securitisation and the expansion of various spatialised surveillance image regimes.

Conclusion

Across both works examined in this chapter, there is a shared interest in how to reconceptualise the border as a multiple and fragmented space of political and geographical contestation. Towards the end of the analysis of *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds*, I touched upon Toscano's claim that 'the mimetic lure of real abstraction' has dominated visual studies of logistics space. He develops this argument further, suggesting that 'in contemporary visual practice [...] oriented toward logistical complexes, the mimetic lure of real abstraction has several modalities, among which is the lure of logistics as a depopulated landscape of megastructures'.[62] Moreover, crucial to the very optimisation of logistics operations is a general conception of space, both geographical and political, as 'flattened' and 'smooth'.

Similarly abstracted aesthetic approaches have also dominated approaches to visualising the operations of bordering regimes. The 'spectacularisation' of border regimes in much artistic practice also privileges imaginaries of border spaces as solid walls, barriers, and controlled zones — another set of 'depopulated megastructures'. Consequently, issues of how to visualise and map such systems of power are consistent problematics that have plagued visual culture and artistic practice. Through various forms of ruthless efficiency that structure both the operations of logistics and border control, these power formations resist visibility and legibility. Moreover, these processes of obfuscation also simultaneously help to facilitate the continued effectiveness of their myriad forms of exploitation and brutality. How do we comprehend systems and networks of power that are predicated on what we

could perhaps term a 'violence of abstraction'? It is my contention that both *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds* and *Liquid Traces* are examples of aesthetic practices that resist the 'mimetic lure of real abstraction'. Within both works there is a keen focus on how the large-scale power dynamics of logistics and border control have material impacts on those fragmentary sites at the peripheries of these spaces. Within *Piraeus in Logistical Worlds*, there is a constant return to the peripheral sites of the port, examining the local textures and infrastructural impacts of such a space of global trade. *Liquid Traces* methodically weaves together detailed evidence of the dangerous fragmentation of border space within the Mediterranean and the deadly impact this has on those trying to move through these politically contested sites. All this might be understood as a simple question of scale (micro vs macro), but when such systems of power are predicated on forms of violent abstraction, the scalar and detail both seem of central importance. As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, these works seek to sense regimes of bordering and their increasingly obfuscated and heterogeneous mechanisms of control. Thus, focusing on the fragment or the detail offers up the potentiality for the visual to act as a chokepoint, a locus for intervention. Moreover, such a visual focus on the fragment or detail once again draws us back to this book's emphasis on a politically-responsive and *sensitive* aesthetic documentary praxis that is attuned to such sites of spatial fragmentation and heterogeneity, helping to visualise, and simultaneously critique, the structures of violence upon which they are ultimately predicated.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), p. 63.
2. As mentioned in the Introduction, by focusing on the insidious fragmentation of various bordering regimes, we must not lose sight of physical bordering practices that still persist today. The continuing presence of 'strong borders', such as Israel's illegal separation wall, Mexico's northern border, US travel bans, and the rise of 'fortress Europe' are clear evidence that physically locatable borders still play a fundamental role in such forms of spatial violence.
3. Charles Heller, 'Liquid Trajectories: Documenting Illegalised Migration and the Violence of Borders' (unpublished PhD thesis, Goldsmiths, University of London, 2015), p. 27.
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CONCLUSION

❖

Media's Spatial Wake

In closing, I would like to stay in the unstable zone between land and sea. In 1996, 20th Century Fox built a fifty-one-acre studio in the small Mexican coastal village of Popotla, Baja California. The central feature of this new studio complex was a 360,000-square foot 'infinite horizon' water tank overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The catalyst for the initial development of the studio and tank was James Cameron's 1997 film *Titanic*. In the following years, the tank was utilised by a variety of other production companies for their own oceanic escapade films, such as Warner Brothers' *Deep Blue Sea* (1999) and Buena Vista Pictures's *Pearl Harbour* (2001).

Fig. C.1. Photograph of the *Titanic* set in Popotla, Baja California, Mexico (author and date unknown).

In 1997, Allan Sekula travelled to Popotla to photograph the studio and examine its myriad impacts on the local communities and ecologies of the region. These

photographs were compiled into a photo essay entitled *Dead Letter Office* and later formed part of a multimedia exhibition entitled *TITANIC's Wake*. In the press release for the exhibition, Sekula wrote about how 20th Century Fox chose Popotla as the location for the studio primarily to exploit cheaper Mexican labour and other production-related tax breaks. Thus, the choice of Mexico as a production location for the film was primarily financially motivated: the construction and day-to-day operation of the studio would be markedly cheaper than a comparable coastal location in the USA. Such strategic relocations of cinematic production reflect capital's broader and more systemic searches for cheaper sites of production and manufacture, maximising profits by cutting a range of geographically variable operating expenses.[1] In the case of *Titanic* and the Popotla studio, such processes of financial exploitation had other interconnected spatial impacts.

Focusing on the multiple impacts of the studio, Sekula writes:

> The neighboring village [Popotla], just to the south of the walls and guard towers of the set, has no running water. Efflux from the filming tanks has lowered the salinity of the coastal tide pools, damaging the traditional mussel-gathering livelihood of the villagers.[2]

Thus, through 20th Century Fox's global drive for overhead reduction and profit maximisation, a local ecosystem and industry were destroyed. I bring up the example of the Popotla studio to invert the dominant theoretical and methodological focus of this book. Throughout this book, I have engaged with a wide range of non-fiction works that utilise different modes of aesthetic address to sense and critique various formations of spatial power. However, what the example of the Popotla studio forces us to consider is moving image media's own capacity for spatial exploitation. Indeed, as Stephen Rust, Salma Monani, and Sean Cubitt suggest in their introduction to *Ecomedia: Key Issues*, 'our love of media and media technology has become part and parcel of our global environmental crisis'.[3] Such eco-critical approaches to media studies have become prevalent over recent years, with scholars keen to underscore how the different material infrastructures, formations, and movements of media 'are inextricable from their frictive landscapes of resource depletion, protest, social inequality, and environmental risk'.[4] Thus, within a book that has explored the political potential of moving image aesthetics to sense, make sense, and critique different formations of spatial power and violence, it is also necessary to highlight how such forms of media are themselves predicated on similar forms of spatial exploitation. Indeed, as Cubitt suggests elsewhere, any media object or practice must 'take responsibility for its own existence, an existence premised on the medium's imbrication in circuits of materials and energy'.[5] Thus, in multifarious and complex ways, different media forms leave their own traces of financial, social, political, ecological, and ultimately *spatial* violence — as the example of the *Titanic* production and Popotla studio makes starkly evident.

Clearly, such forms of industrial and material analysis account for the spatial in multiple and intersecting ways, examining the geographical and geopolitical impacts of media production. However, within these pages I have instead been concerned with the different ways in which scholars and practitioners have conceptualised the

moving image's aesthetic engagement with the spatial. Building from Fuller and Weizman's framework of aesthetic investigation, I have focused on documentary works that try and both sense and make sense of multitudinous manifestations of spatial power and violence that now surround us almost completely. Thus, the aesthetic is instrumentalised by these works as an investigatory tool for 'sensoring' particular modalities of spatial violence. And, as a result, these works provide us with various strategies for reading the spatial as a 'political plastic — social forces *slowing* into form'.[6] As I have previously suggested, this is an approach that is open to criticism. To understand the political potentiality of a particular moving image work, we must take into account its material — and, by extension, spatial — conditions of production, distribution, and exhibition. However, I bring up the example of Popotla, *Titanic*, and Sekula's work not to underscore the potential shortcomings of this book, but rather to highlight one last time the potential fecundity of such modes of aesthetic sensing when attempting to critique different formations of spatial power and violence (even when such forms of exploitation extend from the realm of media production itself). In one of Sekula's most striking diptychs from his photographic exploration of this area, we are presented with the two distinct, yet structurally intertwined, forms of production and labour in Popotla.

Fig. C.2. Photograph from *TITANIC's Wake*, by Allan Sekula (Austria, 2005).

The image on the left presents us with the under-construction *Titanic* set. The foreground of this image is dominated by a large pile of dirt and rubble, likely materials that have been excavated to make way for the water tank. A short dirt road leads up to the concrete surrounds of the tank, upon which sits the under-construction Titanic replica. The image on the right presents us with two mussel gatherers outside one of several shacks, cooking some of their (ever-depleting) daily catch. In the top right of the image, we catch a glimpse of the ocean. When placed side-by-side, it appears as if the large pile of rubble from the studio excavation in the left image is stacked upon the frame of the right image, about to collapse onto the mussel gatherers.

Here, Sekula seems to foreground the damaging impacts — environmental, industrial, and financial — that this new media-industrial formation in Popotla

has had. Indeed, the diptych presentation of these images draws us back to the Farockian notion of soft montage, that technique of image juxtaposition that aims for the creation of 'relations' and 'differences' rather than the oppositional logics of sequential montage. The fate of the mussel gatherers is indissolubly wedded to the ebb and flow of 20th Century Fox's media production, and Sekula's simple visual strategy makes these interconnections powerfully evident. Here, we see how Sekula's visual investigation is fundamentally concerned with examining the exploitative spatial logics of another, larger-scale form of visual media production. As a result, we enter a feedback loop of sorts. Within Sekula's photographic investigation, it becomes starkly evident that visual media can be responsible for diverse forms of spatial exploitation; however, at the same time, through the creation of these photographic diptychs, we are once again shown how a particular mode of aesthetic sensing can also function as an effective tool for spatial examination and critique. To highlight the spatial exploitations of a globally dominant visual media industry, Sekula takes up another form of visual critique; the visual to critique the visual, with a constant focus on the spatial. Ultimately, the modes of aesthetic investigation explored in this book do not close down the spatial to fixed or undialectical representation, instead they force us to apprehend it as a complex and heterogenous social product and political plastic, riven through with social, political, and economic forces that are 'slowing into form'. Consequently, whilst it is important to account for the forms of spatial exploitation upon which different media forms and practices are built, these very same forms and practices always hold the powerful potential for spatio-political critique. Media forms and formations are powerful and potentially violent industries and infrastructures, but this doesn't mean that we should discount their various political potentialities. It is this latter argument that has structured the analytical work of this book.

The discussed works collectively explore critical themes related to late capitalist exploitation, carceral spaces, and border regimes. In visualising late capitalism, the focus has been on critiquing economic exploitation, utilising Fredric Jameson's 'cognitive mapping' to reveal fissures within the operative logics of late capitalism. The exploration of carceral geographies has extended beyond physical prison boundaries, unveiling hidden spaces of sovereign violence and resisting the perception of carceral spaces as closed-off. Finally, the examination of border regimes has highlighted their proliferation in the context of transnational global capitalism, emphasising the shift from solid boundaries to fragmented modalities of spatial control. Collectively, these works seek to understand and reveal the multiple, shifting, and obfuscated mechanisms of control within these regimes, identifying material choke-points as potential sites for intervention. *Spatial Violence and the Documentary Image* has argued that an approach to the aesthetic that emphasises its ability to both sense and make sense of spatial forms of political power and violence is particularly key at a moment when such formations of power are increasingly obfuscated. *Pace* Fuller and Weizman, to be attuned to the aesthetic opens up new methodologies to sense and make sense of these multitudinous manifestations of power and violence that now surround us almost completely.

Aesthetic engagement can be reactivated as a decidedly politicised activity, no longer infused with its historical reputation for detached appreciation, mediation, or pleasure. More precisely, these documentaries' aesthetic engagements with different spatial formations and agglomerations allow for such politicised forms of sensing and sense-making to come to the fore. As this book has argued, the documentary image has a powerful capacity to sense modes of political-spatial violence 'slowing into form', precisely at a moment where material space is more intensely contested and exploited than ever before.

The documentary practices examined here cultivate and experiment with new and emerging forms of aesthetic practice that can more effectively render visible and critique myriad material sites and spaces and their embedded and interconnected power relations. Through the forms of aesthetic experimentation and attunement in these works, their engagements with specific spatial sites and formations always foregrounds them as 'fluid', 'alive', and 'dialectical' nodes that must be connected to broader spatio-political formations of power. By undertaking this crucial groundwork — mapping out the origins, politics, and potential future directions of this critical practice — this book points towards a whole new area of documentary study focused on such spatialised practices. By delineating the boundaries of this field of practice, the book has aimed to create a fertile space for further scholarly research and investigation within documentary and moving image studies. We must continue to forge modes of documentary practice that are intensely aware of such spatialised power relations and their obfuscated machinations and movements.

Notes to the Conclusion

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