



Unresolved Subjects in the Cinema of Statelessness

Noah Viernes*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3123-7006>

Abstract

Cinematic projections of refugees, exiles, and forced migration depart from the conventions of documentary fact to expand the experience of statelessness. For instance, Pierre-Yves Vandeweerdt's post-ethnographic work configures voices and bodies onscreen to communicate political subjectivities lost to names, dates, and macropolitical events. These films thereby return existing questions about the unresolved sovereignties of states.

Key words: borders, cinema, mobility, post-ethnographic, statelessness.

Stateless Fictions

Recent films open transitional spaces that confound representations of statelessness in national and global space. For instance, post-ethnographic documentary films like Pierre-Yves Vandeweerdt's *Lost Land* (2011) point to the unresolved time of people and partitions across Western Saharan territory as a call for more stories to be told. The unfinished political state of affairs of the film's backdrop appears in the transnational spaces and times of the

*Noah Viernes is an Associate Professor at Akita International University, Japan, where he teaches courses in visual politics and social movements.
Email: vnoah@aiu.ac.jp

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Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, a no-man's land that lends to debates about geographies of loss, or what Michael J. Shapiro calls "violent cartographies."¹ But there are also cinematic experiments at the frontier of documentary and fiction, such as Ruth Beckerman's *The Dreamed Ones* (2016), which reposition politics beyond geography, time and cartography, and toward contemporary histories of statelessness. This film unfolds entirely in a Berlin radio studio, where Beckermann posthumously assembles the lives of two poets, Ingaborgh Bachmann and Jewish exile Paul Celan, by engrossing the audience in the voices of two readers who amplify the late poets' letters in a coherent, yet tragic narrative of violence and separation. Their relationship is stateless in the geopolitical and aesthetic sense: shifting between linear and non-linear times, moving across territorial space in the posted journeys of love letters, then brought to light in Beckerman's film. The difference between a vast desert landscape and the interior space of a radio studio provokes the following inquiry into the statelessness of cinema itself. The transmission of love letters and images across unstable boundaries becomes an auditory optic for rethinking violence.

I do not want to decontextualize the violence as aesthetic objects of representation, but first-person memories of war and dispossession take the form of encryptions to overcome the sort of cultural policing that Jacques Rancière associates with, roughly speaking, ideal orders. He locates this common political frame in what he calls the "ethical regime of art," where an arrangement of parts adhere to a predetermined whole.² In Beckerman, the persistence of voice resists the expulsions of Fascism while Vandeweerd's subjects counter the Moroccan border partition of El Hisam with a visibility that demands a new form for its story. An emergent cinema of statelessness thereby reconfigures space to rethink political subjectivity. This is because statelessness materializes in stories where narrative voice is reconstructed through *fictionality*. Rancière articulates this process as a meditation on the real that pushes against the plight of exclusion. For Rancière, the space of 'fictionality' is a political orientation that challenges 'everything silent and the proliferation of modes of speech and levels of meaning'.³ Contemporary visual culture thinks in and through literary and cinematic texts, between the mimetic story and some banal realism that lays claim to the totality of the image. As a politics,

the filmmaker breaks with historic divisions of genres and ways of doing art in order to challenge dominant modes of seeing.⁴ Fictionality is therefore an open zone of entry set against the presupposition of borders, which does not preclude truth, but rethinks bodies beyond the conventions of a militarized image. In treating the connection between fiction and realism, Rancière further underscores a literary and political convergence in the 'expansion' of 'random moments' into the lives of characters that rarely find their place in the dominant chronicles of historical movements.⁵ In its multiplication of the real, Rancière emphasizes the 'random individual' and events repositioned beyond the tropes of representation. Tellingly, he borrows this aesthetic emergence from Erich Auerbach who formulated his analysis of literary realism in the context of his own statelessness.

This fictionality is therefore not specific to a strict documentary film format, but it encourages a consideration of cinema's engagement with the real in literary terms. Theodor Adorno's well-known critique of poetry after Auschwitz comes to mind, especially through Hamid Dabashi's more recent reading. Critiquing the 2014 Israeli bombing of Gaza, Dabashi wrote that Adorno's resistance to a post-Holocaust poetry was driven by the re-packaging of aesthetic form in a totalizing field of nationalist ideology. As an example, he demonstrates how poetic verse has been most effectively harnessed by state Zionism's call for the erasure of the Palestinian—or, further abstracted, as the final determination of the nation-state order as it already exists. Here, statelessness and alternative histories disappear, and absolutist state violence moves forward against the invisibility of parts. On the other hand, statelessness is not just a 'lack' of statehood, but an aesthetic potential—or fiction as political genre—where cinema re-orders what is already there. To be stateless might be addressed as a formlessness that defies formalism and a search for a different mode of expression. In *The Art of Not Being Governed*, James C. Scott argues that statelessness is a condition of liberation, a movement to more remote regions to elude the state's consolidation of manpower. What if we were to understand this movement in aesthetic terms rather than Scott's topographic perception of minoritarian exclusion that propels movement toward the higher elevations of Southeast Asia? In Vandeweerd's *Lost World*, the Sahrawi fight to remain, ever

conscious of territorial demarcations that bridge space and time. Statelessness becomes exile and an ongoing resistance from within. Always unfinished, the intensity of events *deforms* representation after the manner that Giles Deleuze locates in paintings that enact movement into the artifice of fixed representation.⁶ With works that range from ‘post-ethnographic’ to narrative films pieced together from primary texts, the question for filmmakers like Vandeweerd is how to address the simultaneity of location and displacement, the life beyond the constitutional myth dreamed up to institutionalize exceptional violence. A cinematic mode of seeing re-thinks statelessness to offer new methodologies for thinking through the political.

I consider filmmaking as a possibility for a new transdisciplinary nexus that rethinks the global continuum of statelessness beyond its dominant textual expressions. We have arrived at a juncture of global interconnections and images that shift subjectivity, as Elmo Gonzaga writes, from intertextual positioning to intermedial circulation. As Gonzaga shows, “disparate” modalities of film can redefine and amplify moments and experiences “without being reduced or simplified.”⁷ The impromptu infrastructure of disconnections and invisibilities deform our own movements and complicates the attempt to engage people and experiences through existing languages. We might also shift our working vocabularies across multiple mediums of expression. In my own experience, border regions often exemplify the continuum of statelessness sustained within the territorial legalities of statehood. Thailand’s three Southernmost provinces along the border of Malaysia were annexed to Thailand in 1909—a re-formation of visual cartography formalized in the legality of the Anglo-Siamese Treaty. Since 2004, the dominant signal of disruption there is death toll, which filters through Thailand’s National Statistics Office and journalistic reports of the “southern fire” in the “Deep South” that rages on between an active insurgency and one of the world’s largest military occupations. In the instability of numbers, laws, and habitation, a different kind of aesthetic occupation begins: the attempt to build a new intellectual community in the writing workshops that led to its first multilingual print magazine (*The Melayu Review*), but also the expansion of two art galleries (De ‘Lapae Art Gallery Narathiwat and Patani Artspace) to channel presence amid the instability of local

representations. Most recently, a convergence of the nation's most renown filmmakers, such as Pimpaka Towira—who made the 2015 feature length film *Island Funeral* in the region, returned to partner with local youth to make a series of collaborative films. I am suggesting spaces of political rupture evolve toward the space of fictionality where statelessness can be addressed. The shift recalls Laura Mark's search for a nomadic cinema in Arabic film, "not as an ideal but as the only viable option."⁸ In one example, the "blocked energies" of the narrative reconfigure the impromptu partitions of Israeli roadblocks.⁹

Bodies and Voices

I would like to briefly sum up my general line of inquiry in several themes 'at work' in the cinema of statelessness:

- a. Statelessness is not one thing and resists formalization;
- b. This formlessness can be understood in the operations of what Rancière calls *fictionality*;
- c. We might read statelessness as a significant area of the political, precisely as a cinematic poetics waged against the totalizing ideologies of states.

In these three dimensions, the geopolitical deforming of the world is re-formed in the responsiveness of cinema. Cinema is capable of recording, but the aesthetic form of a world adapts to the oversight of its conventions. In interviews, Vandeweerd points out that his early ethnographic work in Africa was confronted with expressive dead-ends.¹⁰ Ethnographic writing inscribed boundary markers and cultural metrics that structured colonial power in mapping commissions and civilization discourses, but also in the primacy of the ethnographer as framing representation through so-called field notes. Michael Taussig, in his own critique of ethnographic writing, claims that prolific writing undertakes the function burying appearance—a relationship that rests at the center of the nation-state system.¹¹ Though Taussig finds refuge in the simplicity of the sketch—to somehow reignite the workings of memory, we might also test the possibility of camera becomes political in its undoing representation. In other words, does a camera give voice to the inexpressible, illuminating spaces of formlessness that are neither ideal nor natural, but linked to trajectories of violence?

Drawing attention to the fractured landscape of unresolved boundaries, Vandeweerd's *Lost Land* (2011) priorities and connects intensities, figures and mobility. The film begins with a black and white disorientation of movement in space, but also a materialization of the grainy 16mm celluloid medium. Noise becomes both visual and, throughout the film, a dominant feature of the film's sound design. To reverberate noise is to emphasize amplification. The sequence recalls Michel Serres's *Parasite*, where music and noise operate as an interruption to the signal of a communication system, where host and parasite bring death to the organic whole. In this sense, sonic relations and geopolitical positions push against another: historic silence and cartographic division are modulated across a mythology of walled-states. These intensities move in a time of their own almost as if the filmmaker struggles to remove his own imprint. In a stunning sequence, approximately 16 minutes into the film, we enter a deeply affective sound design in a 3-4 minute montage evacuated of words. Each of



Fig. 1 (*Lost Land*, Pierre-Yves 2011)

the shots is framed in close-up faces that comprise a political community of faces and hands embracing. The cuts of cinematic montage build toward a collective manifestation of voice. Here, we don't simply 'see' citizens of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and their postcolonial plight for self-determination. Instead, we

connect to them in close-up, linked together by the black and white 16mm film reel. I sometimes wonder why a slower and seemingly obsolete medium of capture imprinted upon the noisy grain of the film strip might be effective in cinematic projection of the political.¹² Vandeweerd explains that the medium determined a temporality of subjecthood, a reel for each person to be organized according to how they themselves chose to be framed.¹³ They seek to be recognized as a people, but the filmmaker chooses to recognize singularity in the multiplicity of reels. Noise is implicit to a historic legacy of disconnection while the sonic layer of montage provokes the intensity of collective resonance.



Fig. 2 (*Lost Land*, Pierre-Yves 2011)

Lost Land provides several intertitles to address representational layers of silence in the region's a post-colonial context. One intertitle explains that after Spain withdrew in 1976, Morocco entered, thereby bombing and occupying most of the Sahrawai territory. Morocco then built a 2,700 km wall to create its "southern provinces." This cut into disputed territory, as read cinematically, materializes as a partitioning of the sensible because we know the boundary can only exist through its militarization and history of violence. The wall is a visual marker of an exception, since those residing beyond constitutional protection are also stateless, whether or not they are marked within the new Moroccan partition. In order to prepare for the wall, now manned by intermittent

military bases, airfields, and surveillance systems that extend far beyond it, a campaign of disappearances, torture, and fear ensued. This is perhaps one reason why we never see the subject of *Lost Land* speak. We hear their voice-over in mouths that don't move, projecting words that should circulate far and wide in humanitarian discourse. The Western Sahara is disputed, but Morocco draws its borders around it, into Mauritania and below the wall that marks its southern provinces. On maps, there are many dotted lines. State zones are thereby formless, illustrated in-form—information—an architecture of the impromptu. And this formation of states begins with exceptional acts of violence, in the same way that Stephen Morton argues that states of exception link the times of colonial regimes with the legal trajectories of nation-states.¹⁴

Politics must re-organize, or—as Rancière writes—redistribute the landscape as a possible world that emerges as a regime of visibility. Vandeweerd orchestrates this politics in two primary ways: first, in the reorganization of the state as text through intertitles; and secondly, in a montage that reconnects these figures beyond the body of the state. White intertitles organize the space and time of the film. They indicate distance from prior residences in kilometers.

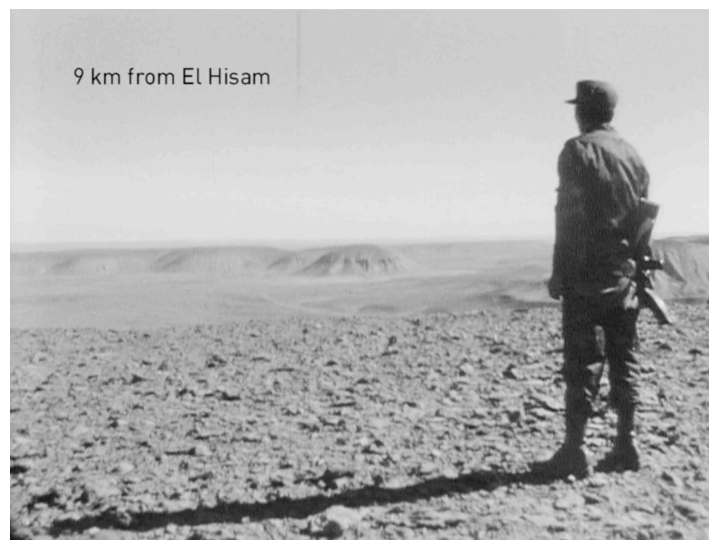


Fig. 3 (*Lost Land*, Pierre-Yves 2011)

But they also establish an unfinished politics of resistance to the existing representation of Moroccan space.

The montage sequence is about reconnection and the recovery of a tribal community lost in the state's orchestra, which is suspiciously called a social contract.¹⁵ *Lost Land* weaves a people together and, intermittently, connects headshots with hands embraced. Richard Skelton's post-classical sound bridge layers resilience and traditions of mobility on top of dislocation and exile. I will return to this point below to suggest that the musicality of statelessness attempts to intervene in a dialogue that has been increasingly militarized. In such cases, a human rights discourse needs an aesthetic language to reach beyond the universality of an international community that begins and ends with states. This point reaches across a variety of examples of contemporary cinema, so let me first continue with Vandeweerd's work.

Vandeweerd reconnects voices to bodies in a manner that dignifies the Sahrawi on their terms. Rather than framing his interviews in the fashion of a human rights testimony, the subject voices are recorded separately and later edited into a three-minute reel that recalls Andy Warhol's Screen Tests (1964-1966). In Warhol's case, the iconic still image snapped in close-up is refashioned through the moving image's capability for capturing affect: a tear, a subtle gesture, and a shy aversion to the camera is tested by the duration of the medium. But unlike the Screen Tests, *Lost World* dignifies the less-visible global subject. In Vandeweerd's work, we hear the massacres and feel the resonance of words; in the wind, in the desert, in the camp; but not in the same colors or normalized frame of dialogue and background that links their singular story to the timeless subject of non-citizens. They retain some semblance of community and this is what they fight for. Ultimately, the film is not a narrative collage of testimonies that lay claim to disputed international space, but instead a brilliant work of audiovisual poetry that works as a collaboration between a community, the medium of cinema, and the audiovisual pull of voices from a desert landscape. And unlike an ethnographer who works to translate the interplay of cultural signs for an interpretive community, the post-ethnographic turn invites meditation on the statelessness of time and space.

In *The Eternals* (2017), Vandeweerd moves to color, highlighting a complex array of details to express a different kind of documentary realism. Here the reality is the wound, the remainder, the consequence of violence. But any realism entails limits, since even if one sees soldiers, this vision does not guarantee any concrete political knowledge of who is involved. The majority Armenian region represented in the film sits along a disputed mountain range in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Here, at the Nagorno-Karabakh highlands, a traumatized military unit patrol the impromptu boundaries of a “state” within a state. The soldiers range from the elderly to the recent young recruit who maintain the right for a community to exist in their ancestral homelands (and, the film shows, never without consequence). This balance is overshadowed by a history of systematic extermination during World War I, Stalin’s attempt to reorganize the “nationalities,” and the post-Soviet Nagorno-Karabakh War in 1994. Vandeweerd does not pursue these details as much as the formlessness of the political body as internalized by the soldier body. The eternals, unlike eternal soldier of Chapter 1 of Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Community*, is an ongoing textual center of transgenerational experience, more like a disrupted nervous system than a meditative trope for nationhood. Hands shake with shell-shock as the appendage of gesticulating figures. The ‘eternal ones’ precariously rest their fingers near triggers that, in montage, break the coherence of any rational system. In other words, each of these components is oriented around a politics of statelessness in a fictionality that questions the real. Let us congeal this meeting point between the post-ethnographic and the fictional in three primary gestures: an attentiveness to the surfaces of the real, the kinetic critique of the limits of fixed representation, and the sonic response to legacies of silence.

First, we observe a refusal of the conventions of ethnographic filmmaking, that sometimes prey on the exotic appeal and mystique of the visual text. The best example of this is Jean Rouch’s ethnographic portraits of Africa that sometimes recall the colonial surf cinema of *The Endless Summer* (1968). Instead, Vandeweerd works toward the gravity of the unspoken and the limitations of what an anthropologist can know in the claim to document a people (here, we might turn to Arjun Appadurai’s description of the ethnoscape, where the disjunctures of globalization assure the differences

between “tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups and persons [that] constitute an essential feature of the world”.¹⁶ These are essentially landscape films that complicate how states order nationalities. However, the films also seem to problematize the rational state’s war on so-called “tribalism,” a constituent and indigenous container of our transgenerational connections. This war seeks a systematic and rational order of the international system, which relies on walls and a fixed sense of territory. Dispersion is its precondition.

Second, we observe the limits of representation. There are limits to what one can say on behalf of others, and the challenge of a film is to recover rather than embellish those stories. This recovery entails several conceptual possibilities for the cinema of statelessness addressed here. First, a cinema of statelessness might resist subordination to the graphic of writing even as, in geopolitics, the emergence of the modern map produces a convergence of place and text in the image of states. But the two-dimensionality of maps betray alternative experiences of what Thomas Nail calls “kinetic” mobility. Here, a violent tension surfaces when the kinetic mobility of marginal subjects (e.g. barbarians, vagabonds, and proletariats) are beset by a “juridical kinopower” structured around the logic of stasis.¹⁷ In one of his more interesting cases, the vagabond circulates in the egalitarian mode of pedesis, where connectivity and collectivity emerge in opposition to the juridical artifice of divided space. Nail refers to these oppositional manifestations as “wave motion.” Whereas maps champion and naturalize a fixed mode of vision, Vandeweerd’s cinematic world recaptures the tension between the fixed and the kinetic, especially in the impromptu: refugee camps, tents, and the movement from one stateless group to the next.



Fig. 4 (*The Eternals*, Pierre-Yves 2017)

Finally, *sound design is crucial in the recovery of intensities*: in soundscapes of political conflict, dialog does not reign over ambience, music, or other elements of the sound design. A filmmaker will note that Vandeweerd does not conduct interviews in his documentary, or even record location sound at the same time as he is recording the visual image, except when dialogue is not present. The reason is two-fold: first, he wants to allow the voice to determine its own direction—not simply a Westphalian a claim to self-determination, but a demand for recognition and connection based in the zoomed-in faciality discussed above. In dialogue, we get the sense that the people behind the voices have written their script, rehearsed it, and then record themselves. Today's borderlands extend into so-called states through a network of checkpoints that do not simply turn people away, but engage them in a heavily-regulated dialogue: where are you from, what do you do for a living, why are you here? Dialogue itself is coupled with other forms of violence to deter mobility. Music is often a movement into an autonomous space beyond these limitations of speech. One of the musical sequences I like best in the cinema of statelessness comes from Pedro Costa's *Ossos* (2006), where remnants of a former Portuguese colony dance at night in the Fontainhas slum of Lisbon. When the viewer hears the first notes, they might already sense the segmentation between homeland and metropole that demand these moments of reconnection. The scene is a simple moment of being together. This

kind of scene is refashioned an hour into Nicolas Klotz and Elisabeth Perceval's *The Wild Frontier*, a 2017 documentary film that tracks the last days of "The Jungle" where 12,000 stateless residents live in an impromptu city somewhere outside of Paris. In this more contemporary staging of migration, three Ethiopian characters have just narrated the horror of dead friends, kidnappings, stab wounds, etc., incurred as they passed through Libya's warzone on their way to Italy. Their memories prompt them toward suicide and the desire to close off from others as they journey through uncertain destinations, brutal winter winds, and the securitized soundscape of surveillance helicopters. Below, the barren landscape maximizes visibility for state surveillance and journalistic zoom lenses that minimize clandestine lines of flight.¹⁸ So when we watch them float into a dreamy song sequence (Christophe's "Dangereuse" was probably not their first choice), we can better sense the projection of their pain and suffering in this moment of reconnection in the possible formation of a new community.

Conclusion

Our submission to the internationally-accepted vocabulary of refugee status sometimes undermines the different transnational temporalities of being without a 'state.' In this sense, I am intentionally writing beyond the officially-sanctioned status of stateless people since that status relies on the determination by official actors. Vandeweerd's work attests to this point. But there are many other cases, such as Wang Bing's *Ta'ang* (2016), a documentary film about the Ta'ang minority who must move back and forth according to the intermittent escalation of Myanmar's numerous insurgencies. A state is materiality, and also the transformation of form from one thing to another. My friend, a poet named Zakariya Amataya, first brought me to his home along the Thai-Malaysian border, and encouraged me to see statelessness as an increasingly common feature within states themselves—a fragmentation that persists within borders that are assumed to congeal in images of place. One of his descriptions, in the defiant genre of free-verse, reads like this:

Even without certainty of the future	แม้ไม่มีใครคาดเดอนาคต
What is there in proximity	แต่บางครั้ง สิ่งที่อยู่ใกล้ออกไป

Is like reflections off pieces of glass เหมือนภาพสะท้อนจากเศษกระจก
 Where the broken whole has shattered ส่วนเต็มทีขาดหาย ตกแตกสลาย
 If there is some imagination left หากพอมีจินตนาการอยู่บ้าง
 Beyond visions of a time to come แม้มีอาจแลเห็นอนาคต
 The here and now radiates in our eyes ทว่าปัจจุบันแจ่มชัดในดวงตา

Zakariya's poetry interrogates of modes of seeing, "there in proximity," under martial law in southern Thailand. The regime unfolds through airport security enforced by arming soldiers with non-conventional firearms and DSLR cameras. These modes of capture oversee the impromptu regulation of space in hundreds of checkpoints designed to externalize a specific kind of dialogue. We might refer to these check-point dialogues as soft interrogations, but they very often take the shape of a daily line-up. On the other hand, a politics of response surfaces in "reflections off pieces of glass" to reflect a shattered landscape where the multidimensionality of everyday life must filter through the mediated representations of a legal purgatory. This is where an independent cinema is most significant. While official actors await a state-organized dialogue where an opposition is characterized in the vocabulary of insurgency, a stateless visual culture of the random moment, fills this precarious duration with fictionality. A cinema of statelessness captures times a common duration to re-channel the fixed spatiality of martial law in the flow of the everyday. These voices exist beyond constitutional protections as their own sense of self-determination defies the shift from impromptu security to the fixed repetitions of states.

This absence of a permanent "state" is the condition for rethinking statelessness as an always unresolved reconfiguration of parts. And whereas this reconfiguration is most obvious in frontiers and borderlands, temporary camps, and communities most often slated for demolition (such as the cityscape of most of Pedro Costa's films or the predatory development of places that lack global cinematic projection), we can follow this process as a guideline for how politics and aesthetics converge. In this wave of change, facts

give way to forms and dominant images are deformed by the sonority of geopolitical uncertainty.

Notes

¹ Shapiro, *Violent Cartographies*.

² Rancière's "ethical regime of art" can be understood as a strictly regulated distribution of roles and assignments of representation within "a hierarchy of functions and virtues." Rancière derives this idea from a reading of Plato's *Republic* in which a normative construct of "the good" determines who can do what within the ethics of an ideal city. This "ethical regime" soon gave way to Aristotle's "representational regime" of practical form, where a hierarchy of order is guided by a practical relationship drawn from the authority of poetic categories. These two regimes circumscribed power's force over ethics and representation. Rancière's work locates a revolutionary impulse in the emergence of an "aesthetic regime," from the fictions of Baudelaire and Flaubert to the films of Pedro Costa and Bela Tarr, where politics and poetics converge in a new equality that he refers to as a partitioning of sensibility. See Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, 13.

³ Rancière, *The Lost Thread*, 37.

⁴ Rancière traces the ordering of political representation from Plato's 'ethical regime of images' to Aristotle's 'representational regime of images.' These regimes persist until the breakdown of representation in 19th century literary realism, which Rancière articulates as the emergence of the 'aesthetic regime of images.'

⁵ Rancière, "Auerbach and the Contradictions of Realism," 232, 237-238.

⁶ The point is based on Marco Abel's reading of Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*. Marco Abel calls for a responsive fiction after 9/11 precisely because the deformed relationship between body and parts, figure and ground, calls for new modes of thought. See Abel, *Violent Affect*.

⁷ Gonzaga, "Introduction: Archipelagic Intermediality."

⁸ Marks, "Asphalt Nomadism," 145.

⁹ Ibid. 137.

¹⁰ The point recalls other post-ethnographic filmmakers like Eric Baudelaire, and early critiques of exoticism in the work of anthropologists like Jean Rouch.

¹¹ Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*.

¹² I'm thinking specifically of people who challenge the documentary form as a politics of representation, especially Thai filmmakers like Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Pathompon Mont Tesprateep. But I'm also thinking of an indigenous filmmaker with a 16mm camera that I observed at the Ku Kia'i protest at Mauna Kea in Hawai'i, since much of

the social movement seems based in the speed of its collective response in social media.

¹³ This carefully designed sonic sequence has become a significant interlude in stateless cinema, where a moment of liberation operates as a prelude to a central conflict. Examples range from diegetic (onscreen) song sequences of Cape Verdean workers in Pedro Costa's *Ossos* (1997) to non-diegetic (off-screen) dancing of three Ethiopian migrants in Nicolas Klotz and Elisabeth Perceval's *The Wild Frontier* (2017). *The Wild Frontier* tracks the last days of "The Jungle" where 12,000 stateless residents live in an impromptu city somewhere outside of Paris. In the scene, three Ethiopian characters have just narrated the horror of dead friends, kidnappings, stab wounds, etc., incurred as they passed through Libya's warzone on their way to Italy. Their memories prompt them toward suicide and the desire to close off from others, while these very recent histories collide with an uncertain future and brutal winter winds, but also the sound of surveillance helicopters and a land made barren to maximize visibility and minimize clandestine lines of flight. So when we watch them float into a dreamy song sequence (Christophe's "Dangereuse" was probably not their first choice), we sense that their expressions envelop so much pain and suffering even as it opens a possible, if only momentary, line of flight.

¹⁴ Morton, *States of Emergency*.

¹⁵ Here I'm thinking of Benjamin Barber's Jihad v. Mcworld, which sets up a false dichotomy between so-called primitive "tribalism" (the extension of colonial thinking into globalization theory) and the American-led surfaces of a connected world.

¹⁶ Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference," 35.

¹⁷ Nail, *The Figure of the Migrant*, 151.

¹⁸ Nicolas Klotz and Elisabeth Perceval spent several months in "the jungle" filming their documentary with a small fixed-lens camera making it necessary to get close to their subjects. On the other hand, they observed, most journalists utilized with zoom lenses set-up at a distance from camp residents.

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