Reterritorialisation and Antiproduction in Harun Farocki's *Eye/Machine* Trilogy

Claudio Celis Bueno

Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Westminster. London, UK. claudio.celis@mail.udp.cl

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Abstract: Produced between 2001 and 2003, Harun Farocki's trilogy *Eye/Machine* offers a systematic investigation of how visual technology is being used as an essential element of "intelligent weapons" which give birth to new "wars at distance". This article uses a series of conceptual tools developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in an attempt to analyse the internal relation between images and war in Farocki's *Eye/Machine* trilogy. On the one hand, this article recurs to the notions of antiproduction and reterritorialisation to explain how the emergence of new visual technologies in the field of industrial production is connected to the application of new technologies of destruction within the military apparatus. On the other hand, this article uses the concept of war machine as a means to interpret the political and ethical dimension of Harun Farocki's strategies of found footage appropriation.

1. Introduction

A large part of Harun Farocki's films and video installations delve into the link between images and war. In similar fashion to Paul Virilio's book *War and Cinema* (1989), Farocki explores how war always implies a given "logistics of perception". In one of his earliest works, *Inextinguishable Fire* (1969), Farocki reflects upon the capability of cinema to represent the (unrepresentable) horrors of war. By burning his arm with a cigarette in front of the camera, Farocki tries to account for the unrepresentable character of the effects of Napalm in the Vietnam War.[1] Subsequently, in his 1988 film *Images of the World and the Inscription of War*, Farocki explores the internal connection between different technologies of representation and their military application. Following a similar argument to that put forward by Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (2002), this film unveils how each new tech-

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[1] For an analysis of Farocki's *Inextinguishable Fire,* see George Did-Huberman's essay "How to Open Your Eyes" (2009). According to Didi-Huberman, this piece represents a "strategic pivot" in Farocki's entire oeuvre (2009, 41).

nology of representation (literally of "enlightenment") operates simultaneously as a new power device that allows for surveillance, control or destruction to be achieved (Keenan 2004, 206-7). Nevertheless, it was the first war in Iraq in 1990 that radically changed the relation between visual technologies and war. What is unique to the first Iraq war is not only that for the first time a war was being broadcasted live on television, but also that the images that were being shown "were not originally intended to be seen by humans but rather were supposed to function as an interface in the context of algorithmically controlled guidance processes" (Blumenthal-Barby 2015, 329).

Produced between 2001 and 2003, Harun Farocki's trilogy *Eye/Machine* offers a systematic investigation into how visual technology is being used as an essential element of "intelligent weapons" which give birth to new "algorithmic wars".[2] This article uses a series of conceptual tools developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in order to analyse the internal relation between images and war in Farocki's *Eye/Machine* trilogy. On the one hand, this article recurs to the notion of antiproduction to explain how the emergence of new visual technologies in the field of industrial production is connected to the application of new technologies of destruction within the military apparatus. On the other hand, this article uses the concept of war machine as a means to interpret the political and ethical dimension of Harun Farocki's strategies of found footage appropriation.

The overall aim is to show that Harun Farocki's video installations introduce a non-representational theory of the image from where a new understanding of the relationship between images and power can be offered. The first section introduces the *Eye/Machine* trilogy. In particular, this section examines Farocki's concepts of operational images and vision machines and their importance when it comes to understanding the notion of power that is at stake in these video installations. The second section presents Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation as the twofold movement that defines capitalism's core contradiction. The third section uses the distinction between deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation with a view to offer an interpretation of the *Eye/Machine* trilogy. The main hypothesis is that Farocki's video installations conceptualise war as a concrete mechanism of antiproduction that reterritorialises the productive forces liberated by the technical development of capitalism. The final section uses the notion of war machine to argue that Farocki's strategies of found footage appropriation entail an ethical and political dimension that challenges the appropriation of vision machines by the industrial and military apparatuses.

2. *Eye/Machine*: Operational Images and Vision Machines

Between 2001 and 2003, Harun Farocki produced three double-projection video installations known as the *Eye/Machine* trilogy. In these installations, Farocki appropriates and recycles "sequences of images from laboratories, archives, and factories"

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[2] The notion of "algorithmic war" was introduced by Louise Amoore in a 2009 article that explores how technologies that deploy algorithmic calculation are being used in the war on terror.

in order to "document the uses and effects" of new technologies of visual representation and automated image processing in the fields of industrial production and military institutions (Farocki 2003, 197). Even though each of the three video installations focuses on a specific aspect of the relation between automated visual machines and the military-industrial complex, the *Eye/Machine* trilogy can be read as a unified project that explores the complicity between productive forces and destructive power which has been unleashed by automation and information technologies in the form of so-called "intelligent weapons".[3] Farocki's trilogy is the result of a strategy of appropriation and repurposing of found footage from a series of sources (images from "filming bombs" as they hit their targets; computer simulators used for military training purposes; images from security cameras analysed by automated software; robotic cameras used to automate industrial production, etc.). Their general aim is to depict a world characterised by the "fading importance of the human as referential centre in favour of intelligent machines [and intelligent weapons] that render decisions autonomously" (Blumenthal-Barby 2015, 330). According to Farocki, unlike the pre-automated weapon systems that operated "blindly", "the pictures from the warhead of the missiles of 1991, together with the expression "intelligent weapons", are so distressing, or so gripping, precisely because the bullets are not blind anymore" (Farocki 2004, 16).

A key concept to understand the *Eye/Machine* trilogy is that of "operational images". Farocki writes that while working on *Eye/Machine I*, he came across a series of images that were made "neither to entertain nor to inform [...] images that do not represent an object, but rather are part of an operation" (2004b, 17). He called them operational images.[4] These images can be used for surveillance, medical examination, or as a key aspect of a military, industrial or logistic process. Furthermore, Farocki argues that with the development of automation and informational technologies more and more of these operational images are being produced and processed by "vision machines".[5] What is unique in these new images is not just the absence of a hu-

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[3] According to Farocki (2003, 197), *Eye/Machine I* "addresses the concept of autonomous systems" that "adapt their performance in response to the data they receive, rather than repeating a task the same way each time"; *Eye/Machine II* "addresses the concept of 'battlefields by numbers' and how "high-tech wars are simulated more often than they are fought"; and finally, *Eye/Machine III* "addresses the concept of operational images", that is, "images that do not describe an operation but rather are an integral part of it". Farocki (2003, 197) suggests that the montage that resulted from his work of appropriation ("a juxtaposition of the purity of ideal war combined with the impurity of real conflict") transforms a technology of "recognition" into one of "representation".

[4] The primary function of operational images is not to represent an object for contemplation but to organise a concrete and specific technical operation. Farocki (2004b, 17-18) claims that this term was coined by displacing Roland Barthes notion of operational language to the visual domain. See Barthes' essay "Myth Today" in his book *Mythologies* (1972). According to Christa Blümlinger (2014) another important reference for tracing the origin of Farocki's term operational images is Vilém Flusser's (2000) concept of technical image.

[5] The term vision machines was first introduced in 1988 by Paul Virilio. Virilio writes: "After all, aren't they talking about producing a 'vision machine' in the near future, a machine that would be capable not only of recognising the contours of shapes, but also of completely interpreting the visual field, of staging a complex environment close-up or at a distance? Aren't they also talking about the new

man author or creator, but also that of a human spectator or reader (Bulmenthal-Barby 2015, 332). As Farocki puts it, "just as the robots in factories first used manual labourers as their model until they outperformed them and rendered them obsolete, [new] sensory automatons are supposed to replace the work of the human eye" (Farocki 2004, 17).

In a conversation with Antonio Negri, Gilles Deleuze (1995, 175) raises the issue that the analysis of a new machine or technology "does not explain anything in itself" unless it is understood from the perspective of the "collective apparatuses of which the machines are just one component". In similar fashion, Farocki's strategy of appropriation of found footage in his *Eye/Machine* trilogy explores the link between operational images and the broader military-industrial complex to which these images belong. This means that operative images are portrayed as part of a network of power relations that shapes and governs given bodies and subjectivities. If Rodowick's statement, according to which Farocki develops a "critique of images by means of images", is correct, it must be emphasized that this critique is never reduced to an aesthetic dimension but is rather an analysis of the "networks of forces that produce, disconnect and recombine images as we encounter them today" (Rodowick 2015, 197).

The relation between power and operational images in Farocki's work should not be explained through the notion of ideology. To understand why, it is useful to recall Michel Foucault's criticism of the notion of ideology and his advocacy for an analysis of the concrete power mechanisms that shape the subject. Foucault states:

> We thus arrive at the very important and at the same time cumbersome notion of ideology. In traditional Marxist analyses, ideology is a sort of negative element through which the fact is conveyed that the subject's relation to truth, or simply the knowledge relation, is clouded, obscured, violated by conditions of existence, social relations, or the political forms imposed on the subject of knowledge from the outside. (2000, 15)

For Foucault, the notion of ideology refers to an illusion, a veil or deceit that prevents the subject from accessing the truth. The problem with this notion is that it presupposes that the access to the truth is granted by a natural capability of the subject, a natural capability which is disturbed by social and economic relations. Against this presupposition, Foucault contends that "in actual fact, the political and economic conditions of existence are not a veil or an obstacle for the subject of knowledge but the means by which subjects of knowledge are formed, and hence are truth relations" (2000, 15). Foucault attempts to develop an immanent critique of the notion of truth.

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technology of 'visionics': the possibility of achieving sightless vision whereby the video camera would be controlled by a computer? The computer would be responsible for the machine's – rather than the televiewer's – capacity to analyse the environment and automatically interpret the meaning of events. Such technology would be used in industrial production and stock control: in military robotics, too, perhaps" (1994, 59). According to Blumenthal-Barby (2015, 333), "Farocki's installations from the early 2000s can be considered an update of Virilio's prognoses from the late 1980s".

This means that the subject of knowledge does not exist outside economic or social relations, but rather that the subject of knowledge is the result of a concrete process of production. This process of production is inseparable from the power relations that traverse the institutional networks which shape the subject.

Similarly, Farocki develops an immanent analysis of the relation between images and power. From Farocki's perspective this relation should not be understood from the standpoint of ideology, deceit or false consciousness. On the contrary, Farocki's notion of operational images refers not to the meaning of an image but to its technical function. Furthermore, as mentioned above, operational images are never disconnected from an institutional power relation. This means that operational images play a key role in the production of subjectivity. As such, operational images achieve a twofold goal: they contribute to the production of the subject of knowledge while at the same time producing knowledge about this subject. Surveillance and medical and military images create new forms of knowledge that enhance the enforcement and application of power relations. As Farocki shows in *Prison Images* (2000), for example, the technology used to surveil prisoners can later be applied to examine consumer behaviour at supermarkets.[6]

The connection between Foucault and Farocki makes it possible to reassess the claim that Farocki develops "a critique of images by means of images" (Rodowick 2015). It could be argued that this claim is correct, but only provided that two additional stipulations are considered. First, it is essential to think of this critique of images by means of images as an immanent critique.[7] This means that Farocki's films never assume an external perspective from where he develops a normative judgement of the relation between images and power. On the contrary, Farocki explores the immanent complicity between images and the production of subjectivity by constructing a genealogy of operational images which functions also as an archaeology of the relation between subject and history, between power and images (Elsaesser 2004, 144). In this sense, the descriptive nature of the voice-over in each of Farocki's films is a significant aspect of his immanent and non-normative approach. Farocki's commentary maintains a rigorous descriptive tone which never becomes normative. This means that Farocki never assumes the position of the external observer which is judging from the distance. His task is merely to describe the images that his films display.

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[6] In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault examines this twofold relationship between knowledge and power. He suggests that the generalised application of disciplinary techniques "attained a level at which the formation of knowledge and the increase of power regularly reinforce one another in a circular process" (1995, 224). The circular relation between knowledge and power refers to a double process: "an epistemological thaw through a refinement of power relations; a multiplication of the effects of power through the formation and accumulation of new forms of knowledge" (1995, 224).

[7] It is interesting to note that in the work of Harun Farocki, the idea of an "immanent critique" has a twofold origin. On the one hand, Farocki's analysis of the relation between images and power follows the immanent analysis of power and institutions developed by Michel Foucault. On the other, Farocki's interpretation of the connection between progress and destruction is closely linked to the immanent critique developed by Theodor Adorno. In this sense, Harun Farocki's work could provide a fertile ground to explore the internal relations between Foucault's "Nietzschean" genealogy of power and Adorno's "Hegelian/Marxist" notion of immanent critique.

Furthermore, the fact that Farocki works strictly with recycled images implies another dimension to his immanent approach.[8] Images remain intrinsic to the institutional apparatus that his films explore. At the same time, however, the novel connections that emerge from the montage of these images function as the pivotal point from where the immanent critique is deployed. Hence, Farocki's films work as "audiovisual ready-mades" in which operative images are displaced from a merely functional dimension to a contemplative one (Blümlinger 2004a, 321). In Farocki's works the spectator is forced to introduce the question of meaning into the merely immanent plane of operational images (Blumenthal-Barby 2015, 344).

Second, Farocki's "critique of images by means of images" is grounded on a very particular notion of image. As mentioned earlier, Farocki is interested not in the meaning of images, but in their technical function within an institutional network of power. From this perspective, it could be argued that Farocki develops a non-representational approach to images.[9] This means that an operational image does not communicate a message; it functions as part of a concrete technical operation. Farocki's immanent critique of images by means of images is thus not a critique of the deceptive power of images but a critique of their concrete role within a given power relation and a given process of subjectification. As Christa Blümlinger puts it,

> Farocki outlines an audiovisual history of post-industrial civilisation and its techniques, in which he positions the convergence of war, economy, and politics within the social sphere. If the assemblage of existing images distinguishes Farocki's work, it is because he analyses this social space by way of the images that circulate within it. (2004a, 319)

This twofold understanding of Farocki's concept of critique places us at the heart of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's methodological concerns. For Deleuze and Guattari (2004a, 35), a truly immanent critique of capitalism should be a non-representational political economy of desire. This implies at least three premises.

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[8] For a historical account of Harun Farocki's work as a new form of immanent critique, see Brenez (2009). Brenez traces the genesis of Farocki's visual critique back to the romantic principle of immanent critique. She argues that "Harun Farocki's visual studies are inscribed in one of the most fertile, active and reflective traditions of critique that we shall trace through an elaboration of the notion of 'immanent critique' at the turn of the 18th century by the German Romantics, beginning with Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis" (2009, 131).

[9] We should add that a non-representational account of the relationship between images and power does not necessarily exclude the perspective of ideology critique. On the contrary, they both represent two poles of capitalist power formations. Maurizio Lazzarato (2014) has identified machinic enslavement (operating at the level of non-representational and asignifying signs) and social subjection (operating at the level of representation and meaning) as two complementary aspects of the reproduction of capitalist social relations. Correspondingly, Farocki's critique of operational images from a non-representational point of view does not exclude the possibility of deploying a critique of the ideological function of those same images. A good example of this would can be found in Farocki's film *Prision Images* (2000), a film which can be read both as an analysis of the role of operational images within the disciplinary apparatus as well as a critique of the ideology of securitization that characterizes modern societies.

First, a critique of capitalism needs to overcome the representational understanding of value and labour introduced by political economy and later pursued by Marx's own critique. Second, an analysis of how society reproduces itself must begin from the question of the organization of its flows of desire (2004a, 35). Third, the way in which a society organizes desire cannot be analysed from the point of view of what desire means (as in psychoanalysis or in any form of ideology critique) but from the perspective of how it functions (2004a, 197). As Deleuze and Guattari put it, desire "does not mean anything [...] it does not speak, it engineers. It is not expressive or representative, but productive" (20014a, 197). Therefore, the sole analytical question of an immanent critique of capitalism should be: "how does desire work?" (20014a, 197). Likewise, in Farocki's treatment of operational images, what matters is not what these images mean (the message they communicate), but rather their specific function as part of a technical process and an institutional network of power.[10]

To further the analysis of the *Eye/Machine* trilogy, the following section will introduce Deleuze and Guattari's notions of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. As will be shown, these notions make it possible to interpret the military vision machines depicted by Farocki as concrete mechanisms of antiproduction aimed at the reterritorialisation of the productive forces unleashed by post-industrial capitalism.

3. Deterritorialisation and Reterritorialisation

In their 1972 book *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the task of every society is to "codify the flows of desire, to inscribe them, to record them, to see to it that no flow exists that is not properly damned up, channelled, regulated" (2004a, p. 35). Each society, depending on its specific relations of production, inscribes, organises and administrates these flows differently in order to reproduce itself and its power relations. In similar fashion to Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari's social theory challenges the notion of ideology as a suitable framework for explaining the reproduction of a given social order (2004a, 114). They refer to ideology as "an execrable concept that hides the real problems, which are always of an organizational nature" (2004, 378). The connection between Farocki's concept of operational images and Deleuze and Guattari's methodology becomes clear: like social machines, the relation between operational images and power should not be understood from the perspective of ideology. How operational images reproduce a given power relation is always a question of their "organizational nature". Hence, the problem for Farocki is not what a particu-

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[10] When considering the work of Farocki from the methodological perspective introduced by Deleuze and Guattari, it is important to note that the question of desire seems to be absent from his political reflections. At the same time, and with the exception of Kaja Silverman (1996) who offers a Lacanian interpretation of Farocki's *Images of the World and the Inscription of War* (focusing on the distinction between the look and the gaze), the reference to psychoanalysis and to the specific question of desire constitutes a major theoretical gap within the theoretical body devoted to Farocki's work. In spite of this, I want to suggest that Deleuze and Guattari's non-representational critique of capitalism remains a useful and productive methodology from where to interpret and explain the political dimension of the work of Farocki.

lar image means or represents, but what function it fulfils within a given social machine.

In the *Eye/Machine* trilogy, operational images and vision machines are examined in relation to the contemporary military and industrial complex. As mentioned above, Deleuze has argued that the analysis of any technical machine needs to be considered from the perspective of the collective assemblages to which it belongs. Accordingly, Farocki's immanent visual critique of operational images has to be interpreted as a systematic exploration of the internal relationship between technologies of visual representation, the changes in the field of industrial labour and the emergence of a new form of "war at distance". In this sense, the *Eye/Machine* series poses the question regarding the internal relation between the automation of industrial production put forth by post-industrial capitalism and the automation of the war machine as it was first witnessed in the 1990 Iraq War. To develop this interpretation, Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual apparatus appears as a powerful toolbox.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari contend that what differentiates capitalist society from other forms of social organization is that instead of coding and territorializing the flows of desire, capitalism "is faced with the task of decoding and deterritorialising flows" (2004a, 35). Non-capitalist social orders are defined by the way in which they code and territorialise the flows of desire. This means that non-capitalist societies reproduce themselves by establishing fixed codes, norms, and values that determine the specific relations between its constitutive elements. Capitalism, by contrast, "is the only social machine that is constructed on the basis of decoded flows, substituting for intrinsic codes an axiomatic of abstract quantities in the form of money" (2004a, 153). In other words, the abstract (quantitative) character of capital challenges the fixed codes, norms and values that secure and regulate social order in non-capitalist societies. These fixed codes are thus replaced by decoded flows that measure everything according to a single abstract quantity. According to Eugene Holland (1999, 64), every society comprises "a specific form of organizing flows of matter and energy". The difference between non-capitalist and capitalist societies is that the former organizes these flows in qualitative (symbolical) terms whereas the latter does so quantitatively, that is, economically (1999, 64). While non-capitalist social orders are organized symbolically "via codes and over-codes" that fix the flows of desire to stable norms and values, capitalism is organized economically "via axioms" that replace each fixed code with an abstract quantity (Holland 1999, 64).

Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between the fixed codes of non-capitalist societies and the decoded capitalist axiomatic is based on Marx's own analysis of the versatility of capital. In an unpublished chapter of *Capital* Marx refers to the versatility and fluidity of labour under capitalist conditions as the "axiomatic" that governs political economy (1982, 1014). According to Marx, the more capitalism develops,

> the greater the demand will be for versatility in labour power, the more indifferent the worker will be towards the specific content of his work and the more fluid will be the movements of capital from one sphere of production to the next. Classical economics regards the versatility of la-

bour power and the fluidity of capital as *axiomatic*, and it is right to do so, since this is the tendency of capitalist production which ruthlessly enforces its will despite obstacles which are in any case largely of its own making. (1982, 1014)

As Holland notes, the main difference between codes and axioms is that the first one relies on qualitative and symbolic values, while the second one relies on merely abstract and quantitative processes (1999, 64). Holland writes: "what sets capitalism apart from other modes of social-production, which code and over-code value, is that its social organization is based on the process of *axiomatization*" (1999, 66). Axioms, Holland explains, "directly join together heterogeneous flows of matter or energy that have been quantified. Axiomatization not only does not depend on meaning, belief, and custom, but actively defies and subverts them, giving capitalism its distinctive dynamism and modernism" (1999, 66). Consequently, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that capitalism's singularity lies in its deterritorialising force. This singularity stems from the fact that capitalism was in fact born from the encounter of two decoded flows:

> the decoded flows of production in the form of money-capital, and the decoded flows of labour in the form of the free worker. Hence, unlike previous social machines, the capitalist machine is incapable of providing a code that will apply to the whole of the social field. By substituting money for the very notion of a code, it has created an axiomatic of abstract quantities that keeps moving further and further in the direction of the deterritorialisation of the socius. (2004a, 36)

For this reason, and unlike previous social orders, capitalism has been able to overthrow the stratified power formations and to replace them with abstract money and abstract labour. Nevertheless, despite its tremendous revolutionary force, Deleuze and Guattari claim that capitalism requires certain mechanisms to prevent the decoded flows from eroding its own foundations, thus allowing the reproduction of its relations of production. What capitalism deterritorialises "with one hand", it must "reterritorialise with the other" (2004a, 279). According to Deleuze and Guattari:

> If it is true that the function of the modern State is the regulation of the decoded, deterritorialised flows, one of the principal aspects of this function consists in reterritorialising, so as to prevent the decoded flows from breaking loose at all the edges of the social axiomatic. (2004a, 280)

As mentioned above, these mechanisms of reterritorialisation differ from the traditional notion of ideology. This means that the reproduction of the relations of production is not a problem of "false consciousness" (2004a, 114). Capitalism reterritorialises the productive flows (i.e. abstract labour as a deterritorialised flow), privatizing

them (2004a, 281) and reducing them to the sphere of representation (2004a, 29). According to Deleuze and Guattari, the deterritorialising force of capitalism ("the subjective essence of wealth") is discovered "only in the forms of property that objectifies it all over again, that alienates it by reterritorialising it" (2004a, 281). From the perspective of *Anti-Oedipus*, private property appears not as the origin of society and value (as political economy postulates), but rather as a concrete mechanism of reterritorialisation through which capitalism prevents its own flows from "breaking loose" (2004a, 281).[11]

The conceptual couple deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation makes it possible to explore the broader theoretical dimension surrounding Farocki's notions of operational image and vision machine in the *Eye/Machine* video series. In general terms, it can be argued that both operational images and vision machines constitute specific mechanisms of capitalist deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. First, the concept of operational image no longer focuses on the meaning (code) of an image, but rather on its function within an abstract and decoded (deterritorialised) technical process.

Second, operational images and vision machines belong to specific technical processes which already put forward a deterritorialising movement: surveillance, logistic and military images all belong to broader processes that reduce social organisation to abstract calculation.[12] In the specific case of the military apparatus depicted in the *Eye/Machine* trilogy, the deterritorialising force of technology has put forth what Farocki calls "war at distance", that is, a new form of war based on automated systems that disconnects the soldier from his target both technically and ethically (Blumethal-Barby 2015, 337). Today, the extensive use of drone technology and algorith-

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[11] *Anti-Oedipus*'s twofold movement of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation is grounded on Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*. In the 1848 text, Marx and Engels claim that "the first condition of existence" of pre-capitalist societies was "the conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form" (1978, 476). This tendency towards "conservation" is analogous to what Deleuze and Guattari define as the coding task of non-capitalist societies. At the same time, Marx and Engels suggest that capitalism "cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society" (476). For Marx and Engels, capitalism imposes a homogeneous abstract quantity as the measure of all things, challenging all previous social orders based on fixed, unaltered systems of production. In other words, capitalism deterritorialises the fixed codes and systems that were essential to social reproduction in pre-capitalist societies. At the same time, however, Marx and Engels argue that despite its revolutionary role, capitalism turns the unleashed social powers into a new mechanism of exploitation, substituting "naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation" for exploitation that is "veiled by religious and political illusions" (1978, 475). This is so because capitalism considers capital an end in itself: in capitalism, living labour appears merely as a means "to increase capital" (Marx and Engels 1978, 485). Capital thus becomes a new form of reterritorialisation through which capitalist social relations are preserved.

[12] In his essay 'Controlling Observation' (2004, 293), Harun Farocki refers explicitly to the notion of deterritorialisation with a view to characterising electronic technologies of surveillance and control. For a thorough analysis of how contemporary capitalism makes use of asignifying semiotics and deterritorialising machines, see Lazzarato's book *Signs and Machines* (2014).

mic computation for military purposes takes the idea of a "war at distance" even further.

Third, despite their deterritorialising character, operational images and vision machines function as concrete mechanisms of reterritorialisation that are aimed at capturing the enormous productive powers unleashed by post-Fordism through the application of information technologies and automation. This means that despite their revolutionary technical character, vision machines remain at the service of the accumulation of surplus value. As such, vision machines continue to operate as a concrete power mechanism aimed at the reproduction of the given relations of production. Similarly, the fact that today drone technology and algorithmic computations are being deployed to such a degree by both police and military apparatuses helps illustrating how a technology of deterritorialisation can be used to reterritorialise given power relations in a fixed territory. The *Eye/Machine* video series connects the process of reterritorialisation to the automation of vision for military purposes. Following Deleuze and Guattari, this complicity between vision machines and the military apparatus could be interpreted through the following manner: the State apparatus deploys automated military technologies as a mechanism of antiproduction that immediately absorbs (reterritorialises) the forces of production that have been liberated (deterritorialised) by the automation of vision within the industrial arena.

4. War as Antiproduction

When reflecting upon the notion of vision machine, Paul Virilio suggests that the invention of automated visual technologies can be used not only in "industrial production and stock control" but also in "military robotics" (1994, 59). In other words, he adds, the emergence of vision machines "is a mutation that not only affects civilian life and crime, but also the military and strategic areas of defence" (1994, 67). These references are important because they highlight the link between industrial production and the military apparatus that lies at the heart of Farocki's account of vision machines in his *Eye/Machine* video series. Farocki's work explores how operational images and vision machines have been captured by the State apparatus as means of surveillance, destruction and military propaganda, that is, as mechanisms of reterritorialisation.

In methodological terms, there is a correspondence between Farocki's method (i.e. the analysis of the link of visual technologies to the collective apparatuses that make use of these technologies) and Deleuze and Guattari's account of technical machines. As the latter reminds us,

> the principle behind all technology is to demonstrate that a technical element remains abstract, entirely undetermined, as long as one does not relate it to an assemblage it presupposes. It is the machine that is primary in relation to the technical element: not the technical machine, itself a collection of elements, but the social or collective machine, the machinic assemblage that determines what is a technical element at a

given moment, what is its usage, extension, comprehension, etc. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 439)

In accordance with Deleuze and Guattari's methodological guidelines one could argue that operational images and vision machines must be understood from a broader perspective capable of establishing a connection between the technical element and the collective assemblages (the social machines) that appropriate and make use of these visual technologies. This means that in order to understand how vision machines operate as concrete mechanisms of reterritorialisation in the *Eye/Machine* trilogy, we need to see how this technology is being appropriated by the military assemblage of the State apparatus. Just like the State captures the war machine in the form of war power (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 461), it also captures the emerging visual and informational technologies as concrete apparatuses of war. Vision machines hence operate as mechanisms of antiproduction whose main function is to reterritorialise the productive forces liberated by post-industrial capitalism.

In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari note that given the radical transformations put forth by post-industrial capitalism in the form of automation and informational technologies, the questions that emerge are: how can one ensure that these transformations will entail a rise in profits? How will the immense deterritorialised forces of production put forth by technological development be absorbed and realised in the form of profit? (2004a, 255). In volume three of *Capital*, Marx suggests that although the answer to these questions depends on capitalism's own capacity to counteract the tendency of the falling rate of profit, the limited scope of these counteracting mechanisms would eventually lead to an inevitable crisis (1991, 375).[13] Deleuze and Guattari contend that in order to prevent crisis, capitalism introduces mechanisms of antiproduction that play an essential role in the reproduction of the capitalist social order (2004a, 256).[14] According to Deleuze and Guattari:

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[13] For Marx, some of the counteracting mechanisms at work which keep the tendency to the falling rate of profit from becoming a law of capitalist development are: the intensification of the exploitation of labour; the reduction of wages below their value; the cheapening of the elements of constant capital; the creation of a relative surplus population; foreign trade; and the increase in share capital (Marx 1991, 339-348). For a further analysis of how post-industrial capitalism counteracts the contradictory tendency of industrial capitalism (and thus turns Marx's predictions into a reality not of revolution but of an intensified form of capitalist exploitation), see Paolo Virno's *A Grammar of the Multitude* (2004).

[14] Deleuze and Guattari's term antiproduction is an attempt to bridge conceptually the analysis of the countering measures of capitalism put forth by Marx in the third volume of *Capital* and the notion of "non-productive expenditure" developed by Georges Bataille in *The Accursed Share* (1988). According to Bataille, the most basic law of a general economy is that, in order for any society to reproduce itself, concrete mechanisms of non-productive expenditure must be in place. These mechanisms should be able to dispose of the amount of surplus that cannot be absorbed by "productive expenditure" and which would otherwise disrupt the continuation of the social order. For different approaches to the question regarding the difference between antiproduction and destruction from a Marxist perspective see Postone (1980) and Arendt (1962).

> The State, its police, and its army form a gigantic enterprise of antiproduction, but at the heart of production itself, and conditioning this production. Here we discover a new determination of the properly capitalist field of immanence: not only the interplay of the relations and differential coefficients of decoded flows, not only the nature of the limits that capitalism reproduces on an ever wider scale as interior limits, but the presence of antiproduction within production itself. (2004a, 256)

Antiproduction is thus essential to capitalist production. On the one hand, "it alone is capable of realising capitalism's supreme goal, which is to produce lack in the large aggregates, to introduce lack where there is always too much, by effecting the absorption of overabundant resources" (2004a, 256). On the other, antiproduction "doubles the capital and the flow of knowledge with a capital and an equivalent flow of stupidity that also effects an absorption and a realization, and that ensures the integration of groups and individuals into the system" (2004a, 256). In this sense, antiproduction creates both "lack amid overabundance" and "stupidity in the midst of knowledge and science" (2004a, 256). For Deleuze and Guattari, this twofold outcome of the mechanisms of antiproduction in capitalist societies becomes most evident in the case of the military apparatus where "the most progressive sectors of scientific or technical knowledge combine with those feeble archaisms bearing the greatest burden of current functions" (2004a, 256).

In Farocki's *Eye/Machine* video installations, vision machines appear as part of a military apparatus which absorbs the immense forces of production that have been liberated by those same technologies. In doing so, vision machines bring capitalism closer to what Deleuze and Guattari define as "full output within [capitalism's] given limits" while also "widening these limits" (2004a, 255).[15] According to Farocki, one of the main purposes of his video installation was to show that "there is a necessary correspondence between the technology of production and the technology of destruction, of manufacturing and war" (2004, 18).[16] At the level of production, Farocki was highly concerned with the processes of automation that where replacing not only manual work but also "eye work" (2009, 70). At the level of destruction, Farocki fo-

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[15] Similarly, Christian Marazzi (2008, 150-151) argues that war represents an opportunity to absorb part of the surplus produced by the disproportion between production time and labour time that characterises post-Fordism. He calls this a shift from the "New Economy" to the "War Economy" (2008, 151).

[16] Towards the end of the *Eye/Machine III* video, Farocki introduces a clip from a *Texas Instruments* film which promotes a precision-guided missile based on an economic rationale: it is cheaper and more efficient to throw one "intelligent" bomb that will hit its target rather than hundreds of "blind" bombs that may or may not hit its target. Farocki writes: "A Texas Instruments advertisement argues that it is economically cheaper to drop computer-guided bombs and even cheaper still to use precision-guided missiles. A productive misreading of the message provides us with the interpretation that, with fewer bombs, there would be a drop in sales that would have to be compensated. If there were a connection between production and destruction, they would have to sell less hardware and more guidance systems" (2004, 22).

cuses on how intelligent weapons such as precision guidance systems are replacing the "blind", less efficient, technologies of war.

In formal terms, the correspondence between productive and destructive technologies is explored mainly through the parallel montage produced by the double screen.[17] The second *Eye/Machine* video, for example, begins with a montage that compares the repetitive movement of industrial labour with an automated missile. Farocki describes this sequence in the following terms: "In the image on the left, in black and white, a man is seen feeding a die-cutter with small metal pieces. [...] In the image on the right, a red guided missile is seen, filmed against the forested terrain" (2009, 70). Both sequences, he explains, were taken from promotional videos. The latter belongs to a promotional video for the "Atlas guided missile", while the former was taken from a 1949 Swiss film that explains the virtues of a slight modification to the die-cutting machine (the introduction of a built-in guide) that simplifies the motor skills required from the worker and hence "increases the output of production by 16%" (Farocki 2009, 70). According to Farocki this simple development of the machine not only accelerates the working speed, but also reduces the complex abilities that were previously needed "to coordinate eye and hand" (2009, 71). This creates a new productive scenario in which the "eject-insert function was mechanised" and the worker was no longer necessary: "a mechanical arm could have loaded and unloaded the machine" (2009, 72).

The parallel montage between the Swiss film from 1949 on the left and the Atlas guided missile on the right can be read in the following terms: the automation of labour in industrial and post-industrial capitalism creates a surplus of productivity while rendering human labour redundant; this opposition between an increase in productivity and a reduction of the ratio of the amount of human labour involved in production creates a tendency towards crisis (what Marx called the "law of the tendency of the falling rate of profit"); the production of automated weapon systems and its deployment appear as counteracting mechanisms aimed at the absorption of the surplus of productive powers created by automation; hence the military industrial complex reterritorialises the liberated productive powers without having to disrupt the given relations of production. In relation to the effects of this parallel montage from *Eye/Machine*, Farocki concludes:

> A montage must hold together with invisible forces the things that would otherwise become muddled. Is war technology still the forerunner of civil technology, such as radar, ultra-shortwave, computer, stereo sound, jet planes? And if so, must there be further wars so that advances

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[17] Farocki (2009, 72) calls this parallel montage that results from the double projection "soft montage". He states that while working on the *Eye/Machine* trilogy, he was confronted with the question if the two-image track format "could be justified by the subject matter itself" (2009, 74). He concluded that this "mode of presentation" would allow him not only to establish a visual comparison between the automation of industrial processes and the automation of destructive powers, but also to multiply the possible connections between images and hence multiply the possible interpretations triggered by his montage.

in technology continue, or would the simulated wars produced in laboratories suffice? And, moreover, does war ever subordinate itself to other interests; does it not always find – according to Brecht – a loophole? (Farocki 2009, 74)

5. The War Machine

The use of found footage in the *Eye/Machine* trilogy makes it possible to raise the issue of the critical value of Farocki's video installations. According to Martin Blumenthal-Barby (2015, 330), Farocki's work appears to simply document the logic of modern warfare "by linking large quantities of 'found footage', footage that remains uncommented on and uncritiqued". In this sense, Blumenthal-Barby adds, there is a risk of Farocki being complicit with the "ominous logic of war" that he aims to describe (2015, 330). Put differently, Blumenthal-Barby claims that the video series carries the risk of being interpreted as a work that does not assume an ethical stance on the relation between technologies of representation and new forms of war at distance. This "complicity with the business of killing and its portentous logic" (340), he contends, seems "most obvious if one considers that the material upon which he draws consists almost exclusively of found footage" (2015, 338). Inasmuch as operational images "enter the installation as found footage", Blumenthal-Barby puts forth, "they tend to work against Farocki's authorial stance and against spectatorial involvement" (339).

Contrary to Blumenthal-Barby's interpretation, I argue in this final section that Farocki's strategy of found footage appropriation and recycling is precisely what defines his ethical and political stance. Farocki's immanent critique of images by means of images appropriates operational images and displaces them from the sphere of a technical process (inscribed always in an institutional network of power) towards the sphere of contemplation. In doing so, Farocki forces the viewer to assume an ethical and political stance without prescribing a normative judgement (which necessarily entails an external perspective from where this ethical and political critique is deployed). To develop this argument, this final section uses Deleuze and Guattari's notion of war machine. The main contention is that Farocki's strategy of appropriation and repurposing of found footage works as a war machine that disrupts the normalizsation of the processes through which the State apparatus captures operational images and vision machines in order to reproduce the power relations that constitute it.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari identify a conceptual difference between the war machine and the war power of the State apparatus (2004b, 387).[18]

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[18] According to Deleuze and Guattari, there is a radical difference between war power and the war machine. For these authors, war takes places when the war machine is appropriated by the State apparatus in the form of the military (2004b, 461). Referring explicitly to Clausewitz's famous treatise on war, Deleuze and Guattari write: "The State has no war machine of its own; it can only appropriate one in the form of a military institution […] Clausewitz has a general sense of this situation when he treats the flows of absolute war as an Idea that States partially appropriate according to their po-

In order to do so, they use the distinction between smooth and striated spaces: whereas the war machine defines a form of social organization characterised by multiplicity and becoming that runs along a smooth space, the State apparatus imposes a striated, homogeneous and static space (389).[19] The war machine refers always to a given rhythm, that is, to a qualitative speed (slowness and rapidness), while the State apparatus imposes measure, calculability, and a quantified conception of movement (409). Deleuze and Guattari write:

> One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns, or to utilize smooth spaces as a means of communication in the service of striated space [...] This is why Paul Virilio's thesis is important, when he shows that the political power of the State is polis, police, that is, management of the public ways, and that the gates of the city, its levies and duties, are barriers, filters against the fluidity of the masses, against the penetration power of migratory packs, people, animals, and goods. (2004b, 425-426).[20]

The problem, however, is that with the irruption of the State, the war machine becomes confused with war power. When this happens, the war machine can only be understood "through the categories of the negative, since nothing is left that remains outside the State" (391). Deleuze and Guattari see the State as a social machine aimed at the organization of flows. From this perspective, what is unique about the capitalist State is that instead of coding these flows it deterritorialises them. At the same time, however, in order to prevent these decoded flows from undermining its continuity, the modern State must reterritorialise them through different mechanisms that capture and absorb the liberated productive powers. Thus, the State is defined by its tendency to remain identical and reproduce itself (397). By contrast, the war machine exists only where there is a continuous process of metamorphosis: "it exists in an industrial innovation as well as in a technological invention, in a commercial circuit as well as in a religious creation, in all flows and currents that only secondarily allow

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litical needs" (2004b, 355). Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari contend that "discipline is [not] what defines a war machine: discipline is the characteristic required of armies after the State has appropriated them" (2004b, 395). For an extended analysis of the difference between the war machine and the State apparatus, see chapter four in Gerald Raunig's book *A Thousand Machines* (2010) and Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc's book *State and Politics* (2016).

[19] In general terms, these concepts refer to two forms of distributing movement within a given space: smooth (or nomad) space defines movement freed from any fixed or hierarchic trajectory, whereas striated (or sedentary) space structures and organizes movement according to stable points which delimit its range and extension. Put differently, smooth space tends to absolute movement in which variation is intensive, while striated space organizes movement in a way that variation can only manifest itself extensively. To a certain extent, it could be said that smooth space tends towards the deterritorialisation of movement and striated space towards its reterritorialisation.

[20] In his book *Speed and Politics* (2006, 39) Paul Virilio contends that contemporary power is no longer concerned with disciplinary confinement but with urban planning and management. As Deleuze and Guattari (2004b, 623, n63) put it: "Virilio concludes that the issue is less confinement than the management of the public ways, or the control of movement".

themselves to be appropriated by the State" (398). It is in this "perpetual field of interaction" between exteriority and interiority, and between change and reproduction, that we must conceive of "war machines of metamorphoses and State apparatuses of identity" (398).

Deleuze and Guattari use the distinction between war machine and State apparatus in order to differentiate between "nomadic thought" on the one hand and the "dogmatic image of thought" characteristic of what they call "State philosophy" on the other (413). To develop this distinction, Deleuze and Guattari cite Heinrich von Kleist's 1805 essay "On the Gradual Formation of Ideas in Speech". Unlike solitary meditation, Kleist suggests, speech exposes us to a dynamic form of thought in which the excitement of the mind leads to the formation of new ideas that would otherwise remain latent. While speaking, the mind acts "like a great general in an awkward position, reaching an even higher tension and increases in capacity" (1951, 43). Deleuze and Guattari interpret Kleist distinction between speech and solitary meditation as an opposition between the exteriority that defines the nomadic thought of the war machine and the interiority which characterises the State's dogmatic image of thought. For Deleuze and Guattari,

> Kleist denounces the central interiority of the concept as a means of control – the control of speech, of language, but also of affects, circumstances and even chance. He distinguishes this from thought as a proceeding and a process, a bizarre anti-platonic dialogue, an antidialogue between brother and sister where one speaks before knowing while the other replies before having understood: this, Kleist says, is the thought of the *Gemüt*, which proceeds like a general in a war machine should, or like a body charged with electricity, with pure intensity. (2004b, 417)

Deleuze and Guattari call for a nomadic thought in which fixed concepts do not have control over language. The "war machine", they argue, is a form of exteriority that introduces the need "of being a foreigner in one's own tongue" in order to "bring something incomprehensible into the world" (2004b, 417).

In 1995 Christa Blümlinger published an essay on the work of Harun Farocki titled "Slowly Forming a Thought While Working on Images".[21] In this essay, Blümlinger reflects upon the complex relation between word and image in Farocki's films. In Farocki's work, Blümlinger writes, "word and image are in a constant process of interaction: the textual commentary allows the images to be read, while found images from the past produce new ideas. Farocki tries to find the words on the editing table and to find the editing strategy at his writing desk" (2004b, 164). Despite the fact that Blümlinger makes no reference to Deleuze and Guattari, the connection to Kleist allows us to read Farocki's work as a war machine which appropriates operational images in order to challenge the dogmatic image of thought. In this sense, Farocki's re-

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[21] This text first appeared in French under the title "De la lente elaboration des pensées dans le travail des images" in the journal *Trafic* (13). It is interesting to note how the French title makes an explicit reference to the question of thought in Farocki's films as a form of labour (*travail des images*).

cycling of images produced by machines and for machines operates as a war machine that resists the appropriation of vision machines by the State apparatus. Hence Farocki's *Eye/Machine* trilogy can be interpreted as a nomadic meditation (through images) on the difference between the war machine and the State's military apparatus.

Farocki's immanent critique of images by means of images appropriates and recycles operational images in order to remove them from the mere asignifying dimension of technical operations and places them back in the realm of contemplation and signification. In doing so, Farocki forces the spectator to reflect upon their meaning. Hence, Farocki relocates operational images, originally belonging to the sphere of abstract flows of information, within the realm of interpretation. According to David Rodowick, an operational image "contains all the information it will ever convey; nothing is supressed or invisible" (2015, 195). For this reason, Rodowick adds, operational images "have no ethics" (Ibid;). On the contrary, Farocki's work reintroduces these images into the realm of meaning forcing us to impose our own interpretation of them. In this way, Farocki reintroduces the ethical dimension to a type of image that was completely empty of meaning (Rodowick 2015, 195). As mentioned above, however, the ethical dimension in Farocki's work should not be confused with a normative critique. Farocki's demand for an ethical response from the viewer who is confronted with these operational images remains always at an immanent level. This is so because the ethical question concerning operational images cannot be separated from the institutional network of power on which these images rest. The immanent aspect of Farocki's critique demands an exploration of the social and historical conditions that have made operational images possible. Following Deleuze and Guattari, Farocki's use of found footage can be read as a war machine that interrupts the normalized usage of operational images and vision machines by the State apparatus. Whereas the State apparatus captures operational images in order to accelerate both the production of surplus value and its realization through the mechanisms of anti-production characteristic of the military industrial complex, Farocki's war machines bring operational images back to the realm of contemplation with a view to denaturalise the internal connection between the deterritorialised forces of production and the concrete mechanisms of reterritorialisation at play in contemporary capitalism.

6. Conclusion

In a letter written in 1988, Antonio Negri argues that "art can be distinguished from surplus value to the extent that artistic labour is liberated labour, and the value produced is, consequently, an exceedance of being freely produced" (2011, 48). As a reaction to this deterritorialising force of art, capitalism reacts by investing in artistic value, attempting to reorganize it "for the benefit of the market". In other words, capitalism tries to reterritorialise the deterritorialising force of artistic production: "in its anxiety to organize and dominate everything, never to let anything escape it, not even the principle of an alternative production, capital then tries to turn art into a productive force of its own" (Ibid.). Subsequently Negri concludes:

> When Marx is amazed by the way in which Greek art plucks us out of modernity and delights us in its timeless classicism, he wrongly concludes from this that art transcends historical development. He should have concluded that artistic labour is the index of the human being's inexhaustible capacity to render being 'excedent' – labour liberated. (49)

Is it possible to read Harun Farocki's work of appropriation and reutilisation of operational images as a strategy towards liberated labour? Can we interpret Farocki's films and video installations as war machines that remove images from the sphere of production where vision machines are subsumed under the empire of surplus value and places them in a context of contemplation where the "exceedance of being" produced by the development of technology can be witnessed both as a deterritorialising force as well as a reterritorialising mechanism? If this is the case, then the use of found footage in Farocki's work is both a political and an ethical strategy. It usurps the images produced by machine vision, thus re-appropriating the collective labour contained in technological development.[22] In doing so, Farocki places art in the midst of contemporary capitalism, unveiling the core antagonism between the continuous expansion of the empire of alienated labour and the new forms of critique that stem from capital's own social factory. At an ethical level, Farocki reintroduces the meaningless and decoded images produced by vision machines into the sphere of meaning and interpretation that art forces upon them. Confronted by Farocki's found footage strategies, we are thus compelled to assume a political and an ethical stance regarding the role of images in the crossroad between contemporary warfare and postindustrial capitalism.

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[22] According to Matthew Stoddardt (2013), images should be understood as part of the "means of production" (183) in the age of cognitive capitalism and immaterial labour. This means that archival material constitutes a "reservoir of fixed capital, that is, dead labour" which can become actualized by the living labour of a filmmaker's appropriation and resignification (2013, 183). Consequently, Farocki's found footage strategies can be read as a form of living labour which captures the collective labour accumulated in the archive in order to create new images and new meanings.

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About the Author

Claudio Celis Bueno

Claudio Celis Bueno is an International Research Fellow at the Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Westminster. He is also a Fondecyt postdoctoral researcher at Diego Portales University, Chile. He holds a PhD in Critical and Cultural Theory from Cardiff University. He is the author of the book *The Attention Economy: Labour, Time, and Power in Cognitive Capitalism* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016). His current research focuses on the politics of found footage cinema, in particular on the problem of labour in the films of German artist Harun Farocki.