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*Article*

# Documentary Criminology: Expanding the Criminological Imagination with "*Mardi Gras—Made in China*" as a Case Study (23 Minutes)

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the central role of documentary filmmaking as a methodological practice in contemporary criminology. It draws from cultural criminology to develop emerging, open-ended practices for conducting ethnographically inflected audiovisual research that crafts sensory knowledge from aesthetic experience. First, it demonstrates how documentary criminology is an ethnographic practice that embraces audiovisual technologies to inflect, render, and depict the aesthetics of material, sensory, and corporeal experiences of crime and transgression as knowledge production. Second, it explores a particular type of lived experience that John Dewey terms "aesthetic" to demonstrate the sorts of tangible and intangible entities that documentary criminology can interpret, record and depict as knowledge. To demonstrate this approach, the article employs a variety of examples from cultural criminology and from the documentary *Mardi Gras: Made in China*. The final part of the paper turns to an analysis of *Mardi Gras: Made in China* itself to illustrate the overlap of theory, methods, and reflexive practices of documentary criminology within four broad aesthetic domains: temporality, topography, corporeality, and the personal. The inclusion of documentary within an open-ended methodological sensibility, both as a mode of analysis and as a means of producing sensory knowledge, can expand the criminological imagination.

**Keywords:** documentary; documentary criminology; cultural criminology; aesthetic experience; *Mardi Gras: Made in China*; sensory

## 1. Documentary Criminology: Audiovisual Experience as Sense Making

This article builds on previous research in visual criminology to demonstrate how an emerging "documentary criminology" actively interprets, crafts, and depicts lived experience with ethnographic sensibilities [1–18]. *Mardi Gras: Made in China* is cited as a case study in documentary criminology that crafts and depicts ethnographic knowledge alongside written knowledge [19–32]. Documentary criminology is the practice of using audiovisual methods to interpretively craft lived experience as media; it riffs on and extends cultural criminology's exploration of the situated meaning of experiential crimes and transgressions in their wider context by producing experiences in the form of a documentary. The inclusion of actively crafted media from lived experience into a documentary reverses the standard approach in which scholars study and interpret the meaning of media made by others [33]. As in cultural criminology, in documentary criminology meaning is not "the outcome of reflection on experience but necessarily *includes* the experience. In part, then, the experience is the knowledge" [34]; [35] (pp. 27, 79). Documentary criminology's naturalistic grounding in "interpretive and phenomenological undertakings put[s] a strong premium on the meaningfulness of sensory experiences, the significance of the skillful practices through which we make sense of the world, and the importance of aesthetically-rich expressions through which life-worlds are made and represented" [36] (p. 10).

Documentary criminology embraces an interpretive analysis of lived experience, and adds to written scholarship by actively producing and disseminating audiovisual experiences as sensorial knowledge to help shape a criminological imagination. The substance of sensory knowledge is the fleeting patterns of lived, aesthetic experiences recorded as movements, sounds, colors, and atmospheres. Criminological filmmaking explores, records, and crafts these aesthetic experiences into a documentary with interpretive sensibilities and cinematic conventions that can be disseminated as public criminology. The documentary is an innovative object and also a vibrant representation of knowledge in the public sphere [1]. Documentary criminology therefore creates a vibrant object (e.g., the documentary itself) that can be digitally disseminated as public criminology in various audiovisual formats and popular venues. Examples of public and privatized venues include the Internet (e.g., iTunes, Netflix, Amazon, Fandor, Vimeo, online journals), film festivals, DVDs, classrooms, and television. Viewers encounter the documentary through their own corporeal, perceptive, and interpretative faculties, which add to its aesthetic meanings.

MacDougall [4] (p. 245) refers to this active aesthetic approach as the "cinematic imagination" in that it involves "a desire to create an interpretive space for the reader or spectator…Structuring a work in this way involves a multi-positional perspective that acknowledges the fragmentary nature of experience and, by extension, the constructed nature of human knowledge". Open-ended interpretive spaces activate the audience's imagination, allowing viewers to fill in the gaps with "non-language-material" [4] (p. 259). Active interpretation of lived experience in a documentary format can enliven multiple sensory possibilities such as smell, touch, taste, and memory. The methodological crafting of audiovisual experiences as a documentary is what Paul Stoller calls "sensuous scholarship" [37].

Sensuous scholarship includes an understanding of "how people perceive their material environment and interact with it, in both its natural and cultural forms, including their interactions with others as physical beings" [4] (p. 269). Sensuous scholarship in documentary criminology locates the phenomenological experiences of emotions, the body, gestures, and expressivity in transgressive and

criminal interactions. In sensuous scholarship, these interactions are understood through audiovisual verstehen, a methodology in which aesthetic experiences of crime and transgression are empathetically approached from the point of view of the event participants; this methodology constitutes both a practice-oriented approach and a hermeneutic endeavor born out of ethnographically inflected aesthetic experience. Documentary criminology can depict how choreographed environments are assembled, how objects are made and circulate, who is involved, and how objects are infused with culture, experience, and the political economy of crime or transgression through an immersion in the lived experiences of crime and transgression: all central characteristics of cultural criminology.

By positioning documentary criminology as theoretically and methodologically informed by cultural criminology, I now aim to connect its interpretive, craft-enterprise-based approach to a specific experiential strand of aesthetic pragmatism outlined by Dewey in *Art as Experience* [2]. Dewey's work is crucial to informing the development of documentary criminology presented here; as such, understanding this work can help identify exactly what content of lived experience documentary criminology explores, inflects, and depicts. Merging the interpretive tradition of verstehen in cultural criminology with the pragmatism of Dewey provides an ethnographic orientation to documentary criminology that explores and crafts aesthetic experience as an audiovisual method of inquiry. Below, I situate documentary criminology within Dewey's understanding of aesthetic experience to further develop methodology as sensuous craft. By reimagining experience as aesthetic—something people, objects, and animals expressively enact—criminologists can use audiovisual technologies to craft non-fiction expressive experience with similar vitality.

## 2. John Dewey: Art as Experience

Dewey locates imagination at the limits of reason. The edge of reason, according to Dewey, is where imagination affirms itself; it is a temporary and arbitrary line that invites engagement with uncertainty. The merging of uncertainty, doubt, half-knowledge, and lived experience turns "experience upon itself to deepen and intensify its own qualities—to imagination and art" [2] (p. 35). Dewey refers to imagination as an aesthetic process that occurs when one "has an experience." Here I quote Dewey at length.

> "Experience in this vital sense is defined by those situations and episodes that we spontaneously refer to as being 'real experiences'; those things of which we say in recalling them, 'that *was* an experience.' It may have been something of tremendous importance—a quarrel with one who was once an intimate, a catastrophe finally averted by a hair's breadth…In such experiences, every successive part flows freely, without seam and without unfilled blanks, into what ensues…There are pauses, places of rest, but they punctuate and define the quality of movement. They sum up what has been undergone and prevent its dissipation and idle evaporation. Continued acceleration is breathless and prevents parts from gaining distinction. In a work of art, different acts, episodes, occurrences melt and fuse into unity, and yet do not disappear and lose their own character as they do so" [2] (p. 36).

An experience, according to Dewey, is the continuous duration of unbroken activities in time and space punctuated by a beginning, middle, and end. Sniadecki [35] (p. 27) points out that the expansive potential of Dewey's approach to lived experience makes it readily adaptable to documentary

filmmaking. Dewey "expands aesthetics beyond the confines of the highly specialized realm of fine art and its cultivated appreciation by an educated few, and locates it within the rhythms and activities of the everyday, thereby investing aesthetic experience with new, broader significance and relevance beyond galleries, museums, and universities" [35] (p. 27). Thus, factory workers in *Mardi Gras: Made in China* who mold, sew, and assemble strands of plastic beads is an example of aesthetic experience, and so do revelers who expressively vie for beads and exchange them for nudity on Bourbon Street in the documentary.

Aesthetic experience is part of the dynamic routine of everyday raw phenomena and, according to Dewey, "one must begin with it in the raw" [2] (p. 4). Examples include "the sights that hold the crowd: the fire-engine rushing by; the machines excavating enormous holes in the earth; the human-fly climbing the steeple-side; the men perched high in the air on girders, throwing and catching red-hot bolts" [2] (p. 5). The indexicality of everyday raw and immediate sounds, perceptions, and movements within environmental spaces, such as a factory or a festival, accumulate as aesthetic experience that sensuously expands the imagination [35] (p. 27). Dewey writes: "aesthetic experience is imaginative … It is what *happens* when varied materials of sense quality, emotion, and meaning come together in a union that marks a new birth in the world … When old and familiar things are made new in experience, there is imagination. When the new is created, the far and strange become the most natural inevitable things in the world. There is always some measure of adventure in the meeting of mind and universe, and this adventure is, in its measure, imagination" [2] (p. 267). Documentary criminology, employing ethnographic methods with audiovisual verstehen into immersive experiences, can estrange viewers by making the familiar unfamiliar, the unfamiliar familiar, and the familiar strange. Audiences encounter Dewey's examples of aesthetic experience to see and hear the common and the dull in wider political-economic circumstances of power and contestations of symbolic meaning. Documentary criminology draws from Dewey's aesthetic experience to foreground corporeal experiences of crime and transgression as image and sound. I now turn to an outline of four possible audiovisual approaches in documentary criminology production to craft aesthetic knowledge: 1. audiovisual verstehen; 2. extended sequences; 3. inhabitation; and 4. tacit sensibilities

## 3. Audiovisual Verstehen and the Crafting of Aesthetic Experience

Audiovisual verstehen may be understood as the act of placing oneself in proximity to criminal and transgressive flux while attempting to interpretively understand and digitally record the sonic, visual, and spatial meanings of the immediate moment and of the broader timescale. According to Ferrell, verstehen "denotes a field researcher's subjective appreciation and empathic understanding of crime's situated meanings, symbolism, and emotion, in part through the sorts of directly participatory research that can foster a methodology of attentiveness" [38] (p. 400). By embracing an audiovisual verstehen, documentary criminologists create nuance portraits situated in particularities that evoke experiences of criminal and transgressive immediacy. Written research, by contrast, is limited in its ability to create a sense of immediacy for audiences. By combining audiovisual verstehen with craft-practice, documentary criminology can evoke multimodal aural, visual, and embodied impressions, complex movements, and the expressivity of aesthetic experience alongside language and written text.

Frauley and Hayward encourage a practice-oriented methodology to expand the criminological imagination within a craft enterprise approach. Drawing on the fusion between phenomenology and

cultural criminology's relationship to transgression in late modern culture's mediascape, Hayward situates documentary as a creative practice "that recognizes images as carefully crafted moments" [39] (p. 14). Frauley suggests that "craft practices, informed by craft norms, are time-intensive, rigorous, and methodical practices" [18] (p. 21). Frauley demonstrates how craft-centered tools can be technologies or devices that "produce interpretations, descriptions, explanations, and experiences of social phenomena" [18] (p. 24). Frauley's craft-enterprise-based methodology, combined with audiovisual verstehen and Hayward's methodology of visual and aural constitution, can employ audiovisual tools to access lived experience and create an innovative new research space in which criminologists drift with interaction, reimagining image, sound, and video recorders as devices to *produce* experiential and aesthetic knowledge. Documentary criminology's particular focus on producing or crafting aesthetic experiences involves immersion in the immediate and expressive dynamics of crime and transgression. The ethnographic documentation of criminal immediacy is an inherently active process of co-construction and reciprocity within an experienced, choreographed environment [40].

## 4. Extended Sequences

A technique often used by documentary ethnographers to record and understand the continuity of aesthetic experience is the long-take extended sequence. An extended sequence is a continuous unbroken shot, recorded over a prolonged duration, which evokes part of an aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience consists of visible interactions—sounds, movements, gestures, exchanges among objects and people—that fluctuate between subjects and objects, the seen and unseen, the tactile and the corporeal. Documentary criminology interpretively documents and crafts these inflections of aesthetic experience in an attempt to understand their activity. Aesthetic experience has the characteristics of intensity, friction, and an active ongoing shape. Scott MacDonald [41] (p. 8) clarifies Dewey's understanding of active aesthetic experience: "That which distinguishes an experience as aesthetic is conversion of resistance and tensions, of excitations that in themselves are temptations to diversion, into movement toward an inclusive and fulfilling close." Aesthetic experience is similar to the criminalization process identified in numerous works of cultural criminology. Labeling behaviors "unwanted" or "problematic" occurs; friction and conflict takes place between antagonistic groups; excitations result; and individuals or groups work to include and exclude activities as closure through more confrontation, frictional encounters, and efforts to elude or control. Time and time again, aesthetic experience plays out in the work of cultural criminology: Ferrell's dumpster divers; Lyng's edgeworkers; Kane's ethnographic disruptions; Hayward's urban planners who re-organize space; Campbell's stalkers and transgressive urinators; Katz's phenomenological bad-asses; and revelers and factory workers in *Mardi Gras: Made in China*.

Documentary criminology highlights active contestations of power, symbolism, and transgressions as part of the interpretive rendering of aesthetic experience. According to MacDonald, aesthetic documentaries that focus on everyday experience "reveal how things happened to certain people at a particular time. This experience occurs on two levels simultaneously: we understand that the subjects in the film are going through specific experiences that we are in some measure witness to, *and* we, as members of an audience, are *experiencing* these cinematic versions of the subjects' experiences. Whatever conclusions the subjects might draw from what has happened to them, we, as spectators, must decide not only what their experiences, as rendered through cinema, might have meant to them and to

the filmmakers, but what they do mean to us" [41] (p. 9). Documentary criminology, in this sense, also overlaps with cultural criminology in its emphasis on double interpretation and experiential presence as activities occur. Documentary criminology does not follow a positivist model of social scientific research and therefore does not reduce images and sounds to a static view of the social. Instead, documentary criminology provides interpretive gaps that offer viewers the chance to actively make sense of the lived experiences of contradictions and shifts in ambiguity of understanding. The messiness of aesthetic experience is permitted to flourish so that audiences can imaginatively understand nuances, rather than foreclose them, in wider multi-ethnographic contexts—all of which are key aspects of the criminological imagination.

## 5. Inhabiting Aesthetic Experience

Documentary criminology can also enliven the criminological imagination by inhabiting and indexing the ambiguity and flux of lived aesthetic experience and placing it in wider institutional and structural contexts. Lived aesthetic experience is inseparable from the cultural, material, or social context in which expressivity occurs. Young, in *The Criminological Imagination*, addresses the importance of locating lived experience in an interpretive framework rather than a scientific one [42]. He describes two imaginations: one is crime science, which is the dominant ethos of quantitative and positivist criminology that develops myopic lenses, and the other is an imagination that expands the lens of criminology [42]. The criminological imagination, according to Young, is a descendent of the naturalistic approach to expressivity developed in Matza's *Becoming Deviant*, which also finds echoes in the cultural criminological tradition and MacDougall's work cited here [43]. For instance, Matza's notion of "vision," which champions a deeper appreciation of naturalistic endeavor, resembles the concept of ethnographic documentary presented in this article [43] (p. 67). Matza explains the difference between vision and sight with reference to C. Wright Mills's *Sociological Imagination*. "Vision, in contrast to mere sight, is the capacity to see things unconventionally and more profoundly than others, partly by possessing a wider visual span. Seeing phenomena in relation to others, or within some wider context, is the very meaning of sociological vision and a certain mode of vision emerged as part of the naturalistic perspective. The general vision of sociology stresses the perception of discrete phenomena in a wider context" [44] (p. 67). To Matza's imaginative use of "vision," I would add hearing/listening as a type of sonic endeavor that places criminal and transgressive sounds in a wider aural, symbolic, and political context.

The documentary endeavor advocated for in this paper also bears some resemblance to Young's [42] (p. 173) notion of a transformative research that "traces the concealed links between observer and observed, makes visible the invisible, seeks to break down the barriers between the social scientist and their objects of study, its success is to defamiliarize the investigator and to facilitate change in the investigated." The transformative research undertaken in documentary criminology may be seen as an attempt to adhere to C. Wright Mills's admonition to "know that human meaning of public issues must be revealed by relating them to personal troubles—and to the problems of individual life" [44] (p. 226).

Embracing naturalistic methods provides a structural emplacement of individual expressivity that expands viewers' interpretive understanding beyond what is immediately seen, felt, and heard. Examples include perception as an engaged connection (e.g., understanding workers' visual concentration on sewing beads together with needles and thread in a broader context of consumer capitalism); embodied

movement as a way to touch and create the material world (e.g., connecting the hands and fingers that craft plastic beads to wider economic conditions); and sound as a crucial fabric of experience (e.g., contrasting the constant sounds of buzzing and humming machines in the bead factory with the electrifying and effervescent atmosphere of Carnival) [45–47]. These aesthetic experiences can be placed, visually and sonically, in the wider, contentious contexts in which they symbolically and materially occur [46,48]. What ensues is the careful crafting of beads; bodies crafting and crafted by an environment of manual labor; the ongoing circulation of material and cultural objects used for expressive hedonism and discipline; the active creation of excess and toxic waste as part of a complex political-economic system. Juxtaposing these lived, aesthetic experiences with their physical, historical, and political-economic ramifications is just one possible outcome of documentary criminology. In all cases, the important assumption to be made is that the ethnographer is not above or outside the field of experience, separate from it as an all-seeing eye, observing from an omnipotent or objective viewpoint. Rather, documentary filmmakers ethnographically immerse themselves in the aesthetic experiences of their subject matter.

## 6. Tacit Sensibility

The movement of bodies, how one embraces the camera as an extension of the body, where one places the camera, how one hears while recording, how one touches experience and becomes touched by experience, and how one embodies the dynamics of a situation: all these choices contribute to the crafting of a malleable aesthetic experience as a *tacit sensibility*. Tacit sensibility is the process of developing intimate relationships over time between bodies, the camera, aesthetic experience, and immersion as a technique of reflexive movement. Tacit sensibility is the ability of documentary filmmakers to ethnographically shape aesthetic experience as they observe, interact with, and record its textures by how the filmmaker moves through and inhabits a space.

Alison Young's rendering of "criminological aesthetics" [49] (pp. 22–23) is relevant to this discussion of tacit sensibility in documentary criminology. Ethnographic filmmakers reflexively and interpretively approach aesthetic experience and direct the audience's attention to where the filmmaker places the camera, how the image and sound is inflected and addressed to the spectator through movement, and how the characters are bound up in this affective relationship [49]. "Looking and interpreting has dynamism; responses are, by definition, responses…Crime as image connects bodies" [49] (pp. 22–24). Young couples aesthetics and crime with cinema and affect to demonstrate how "cinematic form (that is, how a film constructs its images) is irrevocably intertwined with cinematic narrative (that is, the story told by the film)" [49] (p. 25). Consequentially, the documentary, as a vibrant object, is an edited as an accumulation of tacit relationships between lived experiences, style, sound, movements, gestures, and aesthetics that connects bodies [49].

Dewey clarifies the process of tacit sensibility: "Every individual brings with him…a way of seeing and feeling that in its interaction with old material creates something new, something previously not existing in experience" [2] (p. 113). Tacit sensibility encounters wild experience—that is, experience prior to cognition or reflection—haptically as contact between bodies (researcher/filmmaker, character/subject, and audience/spectator). The documentary starts as wild experience and is crafted into open-ended aesthetic knowledge. Dewey, like Frauley and Hayward, suggests that a documentary, as a

work of crafted experience, also works through sensible or tacit touch and encounters rather than overt verbal exposition or didactic explanation. The four areas of audiovisual approaches to production in documentary criminology identified above inevitably raise the following question: which conceptual domains of lived experience are suitable to expressively depict in documentary criminology? I demonstrate through a case study of *Mardi Gras: Made in China* the four interrelated domains of aesthetic and transgressive experience with which documentary shares an expressive affinity: topographic, temporal, corporeal and the personal as cross-cultural communication [4] (p. 271).

## 7. Documentary as Case Study

*Mardi Gras: Made in China* depicts a broad range of crimes and transgression, each offering different qualitative affects and scales of harm ranging from flashing naked body parts and sex in public, to the toxic production and disposal of plastic beads [see 1 for an extensive discussion of this scale]. Specifically, the documentary embedded in this article depicts nudity, sweatshop conditions, toxic production, wasteful disposal, and harm done to the body due to unregulated working environments. However, green criminologists have eloquently demonstrated how the measurement of such intensities and impact of harm is difficult to accomplish given the variety of indeterminate subjective experiences and objective conceptual nuances of defining harm. Equally, each viewer will bring his or her own unique interpretation and analysis of harm, transgression, and crime depicted in the documentary. The purpose of the case study isn't to define what is or is not criminal or transgressive, or to collapse crime and transgression into the realm of relativism; rather, it is to extend cultural criminology as a filmic and practice-oriented approach by demonstrating how the four overlapping domains identified above can be depicted aesthetically, empirically, and experientially. As Ferrell and Sanders explain, these four domains of aesthetic experience are not meant to exclude other domains of interest [5] (p. 298). The intent is for documentary criminology to develop and establish its own frameworks in open-ended ways to explore and depict crime and transgression.

Engaging with these four domains of aesthetic experience (topographic, temporal, corporeal and the personal) allows documentary criminology to visually, aurally, and cognitively map the textures of transgressive activities and objects across space and time or within a single location (one can imagine topographic transgressions, temporal transgressions, corporeal transgressions and personal transgressions here). Expressive events in one region of the world can be depicted in relation to other events across time and space. By mapping the textures of aesthetic experience, documentary criminology allows audiences to draw explicit connections between objects in separate locations due to the filmmaker's tacit and explicit reflexivity. Therefore, in this section I briefly illustrate how filmic reflexivity is present in each domain. To do so I include examples of how an imprint is retained on the final product during the actual process of making the documentary. Ethnographic filmmakers participate in the co-construction of experience and are thus inseparable from its process of depiction. It is important to film and depict aesthetic experience in ways that demonstrate how the filmmaker's personal experience contributes to the creation of the documentary.

## 8. Topography

Topographic aesthetics include a sense of place and space [4]. Topographic depiction merges well with Ferrell's notion of drift [17]; Hayward's spatial terrains [46]; Young's exclusive society [42]; and Campbell's foregrounding of choreographies of sonic and spatial environments [40]. A topographical approach is particularly compatible with the experiential dimensions and tactile expressivity of everyday transgressions that documentary criminology aims to interpretively record. For example, unexpected conflicts, transgression, and tensions occur when people experience mass migration, become displaced, and drift across unknown cultural, experiential and geographical terrains [4,17]. Documentary criminology connects the audience to the sounds, movements, tensions, and pleasures of people, animals, and objects in these conflicted topographical spaces. The distinct style and substance delivered by a criminological documentary is affected by how it composes the visual and aural particularities of these topographical places and how people, animals, and objects experience them. In *Mardi Gras: Made in China*, the repetitive movements of a teenage worker with red scars on her fingers from sewing beads topographically contrasts with the repetitive exchanges of beads transacted through revelers' hands. As a filmmaker and ethnographer, I am responding reflexively to these particular topographical situations of harm motivated by a broader international perspective as I too drift from region to region. Therefore, my own embodied imprint of these sensations is illustrated by how I've edited these seemingly isolated topographical incidents in a series of juxtapositions. Rather than confining them to singular locations such as the factory or the festival, I have chosen to juxtapose the topographical features against each other. Doing so enhances the documentary's stylistic focus on textures and the shapes of hands in different regions of the world that touch the same object—including my hands as a filmmaker.

These "narratives of topographical places" are fluid and reflexive renderings of the expressive rhythms of everyday festival and factory aesthetic interactions that are crucial for criminologists to document as they interpret them. In *Mardi Gras: Made in China*, the explosion of topographical transgression that occurs during Carnival fragments revelers' fun into elements of visual social control. New technological devices extract and remove revelers' transgressions from one location, fragment those transgressions into bits and pieces of fun, and then circulate and distribute them to other spaces through digital media.

Factory workers who make beads reside inside several layers of topographical discipline. The factory, the compound, and the Special Economic Zones in which these people live and work are all organized around panoptical details, regulation, and stylized social control (consider, for instance, the red hats that workers wear: these hats are not for style, but so the managers can easily spot undesired movements). Obedience and conformity in the factory are achieved through topographical control. *Mardi Gras: Made in China* depicts how the owner of the factory has erected barbed wire fences and inescapable walls to keep workers inside the space. The entire compound, in turn, is contained within a Special Economic Zone, a physical region exempt from environmental and labor regulations. These topographical demarcations demonstrate how the seduction and spectacle of carnivalesque spaces in New Orleans exist alongside, and are inseparable from, coercion, surveillance, and discipline in the factory. Beads that traverse these seemingly separate spaces actually connect their topographical characteristics. *Mardi Gras: Made in China* depicts these topographical aesthetics by following the circulation of beads inside multiple spaces.

## 9. Temporal

Temporal aesthetics is a quality of the moving image that allows viewers to see, interpret, and understand patterns of experience that emerge over an extended duration of time [4]. A common practice in criminological pedagogy is to teach students how to identify temporal patterns of criminal and transgressive behavior, the criminalization process, and/or the criminalization of cultures (*i.e.*, cultural crimes). Audiovisual methods offer new possibilities for identifying cultures and interpreting temporal patterns of contested behavior through the methodological use of extended juxtapositions as montage. Long-take documentary, together with juxtaposition, cultivates the criminological skill of patient observation. Aesthetic experiences and contested cultures unfolding over time in the form of sounds, gestures, movements, rituals, and emotions are all embedded in temporal rhythms. The long-take documentary technique highlights the temporal fluidity and continuity of culture and experience that produces patterns of behaviors and organizes life.

Beads circulate from Fuzhou, China to New Orleans, Louisiana, and eventually land in the streets as garbage. Documentary criminology allows audiences to sensuously understand the criminal implications of Mardi Gras bead production in the broader context of disposable consumerism. Making a documentary about Mardi Gras beads—or any object—provides a unique way to assist audiences in connecting the risks, consequences, and inequities of production–consumption cycles. *Mardi Gras: Made in China* connects the temporal aesthetic experiences of sweatshops and revelry to the wider political economy.

Documentary filmmaking is an inherently temporal medium; in film, disparate spaces can be connected and disparate times can be collapsed to show how products made in one region of the world have ramifications on another region. Viewers can also indirectly sense how workers and revelers experience time differently as they interact with beads. Engaging with and documenting temporal encounters of aesthetic experience in multiple locations using audiovisual media allows the documentary criminologist to reflexively experience these activities in "real" or physical time by moving through Bourbon Street, walking through the factory, or standing in singular locations to understand the sense of time. The depiction of temporality is sensuous and experiential in ways that textual or written explanations cannot reproduce. The act of being present with a camera and audio recorder allows the filmmaker to present digital media as sensuously *felt* whereas articles or chapters are textually *read*. Multi-ethnographic depiction allows researchers and viewers to sensuously practice temporal connections by visually following the circulation of objects involved in crimes and transgressions while also including examples of temporality in the editing of the documentary as reflexivity.

## 10. Corporeal

Corporeal aesthetics involve material culture, the senses, expressivity, and gestures of everyday life by the body [4] (p. 272). Documentary criminology can go inside transgressive experiences to show and echo them from within (their multiple colors, sounds, affects, *etc*) in haptic ways. The implication here is that all transgressions have temporal, topographical, and corporeal connections. Documentary criminology explores the pre-reflective encounters of transgressions that occur through direct engagement with bodies in a particular place and time. In *Mardi Gras: Made in China*, for example,

each individual's body in Tai Kuen is closely monitored, whereas Carnival provides spaces for corporeal experiences of open-ended, expansive pleasures. Each worker's body is assessed according to an inventory of strict rules, and his or her activities are recorded at the end of each day to determine whether the regimented output corresponds to the quota system; across the globe, the revelers' bodies are freely and ritually exposed, their breasts, penises, and vaginas standing as symbols of corporeal expressivity. Again, when digitally inflected, these expressive dichotomies are seen, felt, and heard—they speak to the body; written descriptions of such encounters, on the other hand, appeal to reason.

Ferrell and Sanders refer to the aesthetics of corporeality as a "criminology of the skin" that entails an analysis of the body, "criminal pleasures", and "criminal erotics" as a locus of political meaning [5] (p. 314). For these researchers, it is important to have an understanding of the participatory pleasures of valuing "aesthetic symbolism" of objects, the illicit pleasures of embodied resistance, and the excitement of exercising skills in dangerous settings that entail "humor and pleasure, excitement and desire, entertainment and emotion, and the entanglement of these human experiences in and around the sensuality of the human body" [5] (pp. 311–312). Ferrell and Sanders also pay attention "to the particularities of the crime, of developing both theoretical and methodological approaches that can take us inside the specific experiences of criminal activity" [5] (p. 312). Here, a statement on reflexivity is crucial. The filmmaker experiences haptic intensities and acoustic encounters differently than those who appear in the documentary. Yet, reflexively, my goal isn't to "represent" or "reflect" haptic or acoustic experiences as much as it is to inflect and enact them and therefore provide an interpretive documentary while simultaneously disclosing to the viewer my filmmaking process by showing hints of how the documentary has been produced. The issue is how much of the interaction to include in the final version of the documentary [4]. Traces of the filmmaker's reflexive process are included in the process making the documentary. After all, it is impossible—in writing or in filmmaking—to avoid selectively constructing a paragraph or editing a scene with choosing what to write about or to edit.

I have included corporeal evidence of my own reflexivity and involvement in making the documentary. For example, my personal voice is included in the documentary, my presence is revealed orally by asking questions, I am shown giving my own photographs to workers and revelers to elicit their responses, I have included text and placards throughout the documentary to broaden contextualization, and I've included my own "signature" or style of camera movements to demonstrate filmmaker presence to the audience—all of which are corporeal examples. In these scenes I do not objectively pretend to hide or erase my presence, for that would be deceptive and misleading. These examples provide evidence of what and where I've decided to corporeally focus my camera and sound recorder. I have chosen to enact haptic and auditory tension that is shared by the filmmaker, those in the documentary, and those who see and hear the documentary. For example, I have selected ethnographic material in the Tai Kuen bead factory that occurs in the form of embodied discipline and punishment, and also through the repetition of regimented routines designed to minimize workers' bodies and movements. The workers' bodies and movements are subject to corporeal, sensual and tactile control, and I have elected to document these forms of control by where and how long the camera holds the shot. The power of the documentary is its ability to demonstrate in sensory and experiential ways the repetitive, tactile lives of the workers in the factory. The filmmaker's presence in co-constructing these corporeal experiences is implicitly and explicitly woven throughout the documentary.

Corporeal affect, for example, is highlighted in the sonic dimensions of aesthetic experience. The sounds of the bead machine, for instance, permeate the environment as a routine form of embodied discipline—something I noticed immediately entering the factory. According to Couthard, "sound literally touches our bodies, moves and vibrates the inner workings of our ears and echoes through our bodies in order for us to hear…Sound is above all else tactile and corporeal; it not only communicates physical presence, sensuousness or feeling but actually moves outward to quite literally move the body of the spectator, sometimes in aggressive and assaultive ways and sometimes in thought provoking, contemplative and ethically implicated ways" [47] (p. 18). The sound of the bead machines is equated with modernized industrialization and corporeal discipline; within the film, it becomes part of a sonic landscape that emplaces viewers within the factory's landscape. The sounds of the factory are tactile, felt as agitation that reverberates throughout the compound. A physicality of mechanical sounds permeates the enclosed atmosphere and contrasts sharply with the expansive chants, loud cheers, and raucous laughter of revelers who exchange beads for glimpses at bodies. The sonic transgression of a particular environment adds a visceral element to the transmission of the scene: workers sew beads together, pull them from a machine, and practice discipline by not talking to each other. Workers and revelers communicate through sounds, non-verbal body cues, and corporeal gestures, all of which are examples of aesthetic experience. These are all deliberate contrasts selected by the filmmaker.

## 11. Personal: Cross-Cultural Communication

Personal aesthetics implicate audiences in the private perspectives of those who experience the process of crime and transgression by "using shifting points of view, subjective framing, and devices such as the shot-countershot" [4] (p. 272). The personal provides empathetic understanding and helps viewers explore the film's subjects' connection to the social. Documentary criminology can use cinematic techniques such as juxtaposition of personal lives; it can also deliver an immersive understanding of how individuals—as victims or criminals—encounter the aesthetics of transgressive anxieties, conflicts, and/or tensions as lived experiences. Documentary criminology, unlike written textual representations, can also convey "the unique individuality of human beings through their faces, gestures, postures, speech, and interactions with others [and] the forms, textures, intricacies, and sensory qualities of physical objects and the culturally complex configurations" [4] (p. 272). Documentary criminology constructs the personal as a narrative to provide a vicarious means of exploring shared and unshared understandings through cross-cultural communication.

In *Mardi Gras: Made in China*, workers, revelers, and Mardi Gras beads are all brought within the aesthetic domain of the personal through a series of encounters. The juxtaposition of these encounters elucidates the personal qualities of the people in the movie, but also the objects. Cross-cultural communication is cultivated through juxtaposition of the patterns and connections through which revelers and workers personally consume and produce beads. A clear example of cross-cultural communication as juxtaposition and filmmaker reflexivity occurs in a constructed scene in which I ask workers in Fuzhou, China if they know who consumes their beads, and then immediately cut to revelers in New Orleans where I ask if they know who manufactures their beads. The aural and visual juxtaposition overlaps temporally, topographically, corporeally, and personally as a form of cross-cultural communication to help audiences interpretively understand the disconnection between revelers and workers' differing

aesthetic experiences from their respective points of view. The empathic juxtaposition occurs when revelers and workers display their immediate reactions upon discovering how each group uses beads. The emotion of disconnection and disbelief on both ends of the commodity chain is cognitively and sensually accomplished through the repeated juxtaposition of dislocated and fragmented images to create an awareness of alienation for the audience. Audiences recognize and feel this sensation in personal ways, bringing their own interpretation to the scene to fill in the gaps of absent meaning. Audiences are given insight into how I, as the filmmaker, reflexively constructed the scene when I am seen passing out photographs to workers, heard and seen explaining to revelers that I am doing a cross-cultural comparison, and when I am heard interacting with workers as they examine photographs of revelers during Mardi Gras.

Cross-cultural editing allows for the radical juxtaposition of audiovisual images and more obvious reflexivity: workers are introduced to revelers, and revelers to workers, in their respective and separate environments. In this way, documentary criminology allows for the cross-cultural mapping of patterns and connections through the audiovisual juxtaposition of different personal experiences. Workers respond personally and sensually to the experience of witnessing revelers exchange beads for nudity arranged by the documentary filmmaker. Likewise, revelers respond with visceral sensations when they find out where their beads are made and watch the workers make them. This piece of documentary criminology exemplifies one method of constructing, processing, and visualizing sensory knowledge and cross-cultural communication as expressivity.

## 12. Conclusions

This essay has provided a methodological outline for documentary criminology that borrows from aspects of cultural criminology, ethnography, and Dewey's notion of lived aesthetic experience. Exactly twenty years ago, Ferrell and Sanders laid out a prospectus for what an emerging cultural criminology might look like. They write: "Our intention … is not so much to define cultural criminology narrowly as to establish a series of starting points, and to invite other scholars and scholarship into this process" [5] (p. 297). Like cultural criminology in the mid-90s, documentary criminology today is in its infancy, born out of the criminological imagination that intersects new media, cinema, and cultural criminology. Documentary criminology, like cultural criminology, starts in situated events with a variety of methodologies—conventional and feral. Its open-ended experimental tendencies invite constant exploration into the shaping of its features. I have demonstrated through a case study of *Mardi Gras: Made in China* how documentary criminology can invite audiences to sensuously understand the criminality involved in the material and toxic implications of objects manufactured and circulated for disposable consumption. Making a documentary about Mardi Gras beads—or any object—provides a unique way to assist audiences in drawing connections among the risks, consequences, and inequities of the socioeconomic world in which we live. *Mardi Gras: Made in China* connects topographical, temporal, corporeal, and personal aesthetic experiences to the wider political economy as a case study in documentary criminology.

A few implications for the criminological imagination can be briefly surmised. First, documentary criminology emerges out of cultural criminology's orientation towards visuality, space, and choreographic encounters as interpretive, sensuous, and phenomenological methods of enquiry [8,9,19,38–40,45,46,48]. Cultural criminology's ethnographic and phenomenological immersion provides documentary criminology with a methodological starting point that places researchers as close as possible to crime

and transgression [38] (p. 400). As a set of methodological sensibilities to conduct research, documentary criminology employs audiovisual devices to interpretively record, render, and craft the aesthetic experiences of criminal or transgressive culture as distinct ways of knowing that can reside alongside textual forms of representation.

Second, documentary criminology's sensitivity to the foregrounding of tactile interactions, aural and sonic environments, and everyday pleasures and pains woven into institutional structures of power and inequalities resembles Ferrell and Sanders' methodology of the skin [5]. A documentary practice of ethnographic immersion produces rich textures of audiovisual knowledge that direct attention to lived experiences captured as digital images, colors, sounds, and movements to engage the viewer's senses and expand their criminological imagination. Viewers interpret the composition of images and sounds as an audiovisual experience and thus rely on multi-sensory participation to work through the documentary's impressions as embodied participants. A sensory way of knowing is epistemologically distinct from a textual way of knowing, which requires that audiences ingest sentences that flow from left to right, up and down, as a way to guide and engage their understanding of phenomena [45].

Third, while not entirely "representing" the real—that's not the goal—documentary criminology aims to depict and craft aesthetics of the real from particular experiential locations. Methodologically, as an immersion into the particular, documentary criminology adapts to dynamic circumstances-in-progress with an open, reflexive, and flexible sensibility rather than a set of prescriptive and mechanistic heuristics. Its malleable, non-prescriptive, and porous approach to understanding aesthetic experience occurs as a series of overlapping topographical, temporal, corporeal, and personal encounters. Survey and quantitative research cannot grasp these crucial aesthetic experiences in flux. Formally, the recording of lived aesthetic experience is edited, shaped in qualitatively distinct ways, and rendered empirically. This approach verges on empirical art, or an "aesthetics of the empirical", in the sense that it radically aestheticizes empirical observations as new forms of knowledge that enhance the criminological imagination. Documentary criminology re-couples the senses with topography, temporality, corporality, and cross-cultural communication in personal and embodied ways. Audiovisual technologies are used to record experiences in these aesthetic domains in order to create documentaries as expressive modes of inquiry. In turn, the dynamism of the documentary medium produces sensory knowledge that enhances the audience's active engagement and ability to extract individual meaning from the movie.

Last, documentary criminology draws attention to the motions, sounds, presence, shapes, and colors of sensuousness in flux, as well as how the filmmaker reflexively co-constructs and depicts them. At the same time, it assembles and crafts these aspects as aesthetic materials, and depicts them as object-oriented "vibrant knowledge" through which the world of (for instance) the bead, the factory, and the carnival are experientially constituted and understood. As such, documentary criminology becomes its own refraction of vital experience while simultaneously containing fabrics of aesthetic experience. Documentary criminology creates publics similar to how Barak's "newsmaking" criminology is participatory: both invite a variety of people to help alter images of crime and influence public opinion [50]. Thus, this article has extended Barak's notion of newsmaking criminology as public criminology to help frame its interpretation. Documentaries, as a series of sound-images, are created by re-making aesthetic experience out of lived experience and crafting it into an object-oriented ontology that acts with material and sensory force. Documentary criminology is attuned to the recording of aesthetic phenomena in experiential ways that traditional methods, such as interviews, survey research, quantitative analysis, or

content analysis, cannot render while also disseminating documentaries as public criminology in new avenues of digital distribution. These unique methodological facets are perhaps documentary criminology's most important contribution to expanding the criminological imagination.

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The author declares no conflict of interest.

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