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Introduction

Carceral worlds now

Hanneke Stuit, Jennifer Turner and Julienne Weegels

This book begins with the premise that carceral practices, spaces, imaginaries, techniques and experiences are increasingly widespread. In the past, as much as today, processes of incarceration are not only distinct to the spaces and bodies associated with the prison but are found in a range of places and scales beyond the prison as ‘the site of the highest concentration of a logic of power that is generally diffused throughout the world’ (Hardt 1997: 66). The carceral – by which we refer to a tri-part condition of spatiality, detriment and intent (see Moran et al. 2018) – confines more than those directly subject to law enforcement. So much so that scholars speak of the emergence of particular carceral geographies (Gilmore 2007), carceral *states* (Garland 2013; Wacquant 2000) or even a ‘carceral *age*’, which is ‘characterized by unprecedented fluidity between forms of confinement, be they state-sanctioned, quasi-legal, ad-hoc, illicit, spatially fixed, mobile, embodied or imagined’ (Moran et al. 2018: 668, emphasis added). The expansive scale at which these carceral techniques and infrastructures are deployed demands our critical attention (Moran et al. 2018), and we do so by turning our gaze to the interdisciplinary study of carcerality.

In unpacking the histories and geographies of our increasingly carceral lifeworlds, we recognize that they are often rooted in the physical and epistemological violence of coloniality, which lives on in contemporary forms of population management and prison policy, as well as in the everyday precarity of necropolitical subjecthood produced by the neoliberal conditions of the now. How did carcerality become such an inextricable aspect of our societies, unevenly distributed as its effects are across the racialized, gendered and classed axes (Crenshaw 2015) that continue to structure the everyday experience of contemporary social, political and economic conditions? And, once carcerality is viewed as both a fundamental aspect of

modernity and as an increasingly common state of life, how might resistance against it be formulated (even) more effectively?

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Working from the recognition that the carceral always pertains to the lived and the experienced, within and beyond the prison, this volume is concerned with the *concept* of carcerality rather than with specific spaces, experiences or imaginaries that tend to be deemed carceral a priori. As Mieke Bal (2002) has argued in the context of developing cultural analysis as an interdisciplinary academic field, concepts serve two crucial and interrelated purposes. First, concepts can travel across moments in time, geographical locations and academic disciplines, picking up new associations along the way. To be aware of this travelling quality entails acknowledging that ‘concepts are hardly every used in exactly the same sense’ (Bal 2002: 29) – they are never stable and the assumptions that go into the types of knowledges that they group together are always open to debate. We approach carcerality as a concept with distinct disciplinary uses and trajectories but which, through its travels, opens up distinct possibilities for theorization both within and across a variety of humanities and social science disciplines. This volume is therefore purposely set up as a multivocal, transdisciplinary conversation that does not propose a singular ‘right’ way of thinking or researching carcerality.

Second, concepts serve a crucial methodological purpose in the sense that they focus interest around a group of phenomena. In our case, we refer to phenomena that can all be considered carceral but that tend to be studied separately. Though there are differences in both the methodologies deployed and the types of research questions asked across the humanities and social sciences – which often preclude us from venturing onto each other’s ‘terrain’ – the impetus to consider the carceral has grown in both fields over the past decade. This has led to increasing collaboration and exchange among and between prison scholars, carceral geographers, law and literature scholars, historians, cultural analysts, critical and border criminologists and anthropologists alike (e.g. Bosworth et al. 2016; Darke et al. 2021; Fludernik 2019; Geltner 2011; Moran et al. 2013; Moran and Schliehe 2017; Turner and Knight 2020; Weegels et al. 2020). This volume’s focus on carcerality as a concept serves to bring together a variety of perspectives that make visible how carceral phenomena structure the present through curating a set of chapters across disciplines *and* the world. Purposely juxtaposing work from different geographical settings, the volume seeks to gauge the truly global scope of our carceral present.

Alert to carcerality's conceptual and empirical multiplicity then, a common thread running throughout many of the chapters in this volume is the broadly held cognizance that modern prisons and prison systems perpetuate colonial modes of governance and reproduce the discontents of capitalism (McKittrick 2013; Gilmore 2022). Such criticism is levelled against, for example, the criminalization of the (racialized) poor (Gledhill 2015), the emergence of 'carceral circuits' (Gill et al. 2018) such as the ghetto-to-prison and school-to-prison pipelines (Wacquant 2000, 2009) and against what Didier Bigo (2008) has called the professional 'management of unease' in the context of European immigration policies. These colonial forms of governance can also be discerned in emerging urban carceral worlds in the Global South, as for instance Karina Biondi and Bruce Stanley point to in critically discussing pervasive crime and population management techniques in Brazil and the Gulf (this volume). In these various contexts, technologies of surveillance and the growth of legal, state-sanctioned punitive systems increasingly 'enable a carceral "fix" to operate beyond conventional carceral spaces' as Dominique Moran, Jennifer Turner and Anna Schliehe heed (2018: 666).

Our use of the carceral is therefore not intended to dilute the concept beyond recognition or to offer an abstracted philosophy of carcerality that disembeds it from the lived experiences and the structures of oppression it is built on. Rather, the concept here serves to bring into view how the (historical) imbrications of economic interest, technological progress in surveillance regimes and state-powered relations between inequality and spatial organization have resulted in lifeworlds that look and are increasingly experienced as carceral (e.g. Browne 2015; Shabazz 2015). As prison abolitionists have warned (Davis et al. 2022; Gilmore 2022), we do not propose that any solution to such carceral fixes consists of 'simply' taking down walls, removing fences and abolishing the role prisons play in keeping populations criminalized across the world – although this certainly needs to happen. Alongside this, we maintain that understanding the carceral and reducing its influence in the world involves taking its spatial, embodied, imaginary and emotional imbrications seriously. Where concepts like surveillance, security and (im)mobility already crucially focus on strategies and technologies of population management (e.g. Ghertner et al. 2020), the concepts of carcerality this volume engages with allow for a thorough and sustained focus on the fact that carcerality is both an infrastructure *and* an experience, both a material *and* immaterial manifestation, both a lived reality *and* a metaphor for feelings of entrapment that might otherwise remain outside of the realm of analysis and study. Understanding these imbrications of space, matter and imagination – that is, taking seriously a definition of the carceral as 'relating to, or suggesting a

jail or prison' (Merriam Webster) – makes visible *how* carceral forms influence a common carceral world. A world that we hold in common simply because we all live on planet earth at the same time but also because a carceral logic, so we argue, differentially structures realms of individual and shared experiences but invariably damages 'all those that come into contact with it' (Coyle and Nagel 2022: 7).

Such carcerality 'seeps' into everyday spheres and systems in different, often unequal, ways. As several chapters in this volume show, carcerality has a decidedly metaphorical quality that, for better or worse, recasts both personal issues and ideas about structural violence in terms of the prison. Although it is easy to critique the fact that people express personal suffering in a sentimental language of confinement, these expressions are actually quite ubiquitous (Fludernik 2005, 2019; Stuit 2020) and, as such, their social circulation dictates critical scrutiny. Metaphoric uses of the carceral indicate, in this sense, 'structures of feeling' that reflect a pre-emergence of living processes that are 'at the edge of semantic availability' (Williams 1977: 134). From this perspective, carceral metaphors that pop up beyond the prison do not suggest false consciousness on the part of their users but rather point to wider experiences that are 'active and pressing but not yet fully articulated' (Williams 1977: 133). As Monika Fludernik argues about the use of prison metaphors during the Covid-19 pandemic in this volume, language users are often perfectly aware they are speaking of the prison metaphorically and consciously use these metaphors to express both profound reflection on the nature of the lockdown and social critique of government policy at a time of globally felt crisis. In other words, this volume consciously works with a wider interpretation of the concept of the carceral (or rather carceral concepts) to examine *lived* qualities and experiences emerging in the textures of present-day precarity, rather than reducing the carceral only to the abstract or imaginary.

Yet, the carceral 'seepage' – that is, the various ways in which prison-like features and experiences circulate socially and across spatial, geographical and cultural boundaries – is not only related to states of direct crisis, like the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, it is most often a result of the 'slow violence' (Nixon 2011) that attends major societal structures such as colonialism. In this volume, we therefore employ the concept of the carceral to bring into view the systemic connections between colonialism, modernity, capitalism and what seems to be a general contemporary will to confine whole swaths of the population. As Katharine McKittrick has argued:

Past colonial encounters created material and imaginative geographies that reified global segregations through 'damning' the spaces long occupied by Man's

human others. Here, damning can be understood in two interlocking ways: as a fencing in and as a condemnation of racial-sexual difference. (McKittrick 2013: 5–6)

More precisely then, drawing on the concept of carcerality allows us to build on previous work in denaturalizing the historical and social constructions that drive the continuities between modern/colonial thought (Mignolo and Walsh 2018: 139), plantation regimes and the prison within the capitalist system. In so doing, carcerality helps make visible the constructed nature of punishment and punitive desires in contemporary entanglements of security and capitalist labour. Understanding the intersections between carcerality and other world systems may serve to disrupt the iron grip of the gendered, classed and racialized relationships they tend to keep in place.

The carceral core of modernity/coloniality

If we approach carcerality as resultant from the racially and sexually motivated organization of different 'kinds' of human life, it is possible to recognize its emergence with coloniality, the nation state as well as modernity at large. From this perspective, carcerality becomes a core characteristic of the 'modern' world. As Achille Mbembe has pointed out, 'the history of modern democracy in the West coincides with the period of its history during which this region of the world was engaged in a twofold movement of internal consolidation and expansion across the seas' (2019: 22). This is a history that Mbembe chooses to define, not just through the so-called solar body of modern democracy's enlightenment project but rather through what he calls its nocturnal body: the entwined projects of colonial empire, epitomized in the overseas penal colony and the pro-slavery state, of which the plantation 'at home' is the major emblem. Mbembe makes clear that this embroilment between democracy, plantation logics and colonialism 'lies at the heart of every historical understanding of the violence of the contemporary global order' (2019: 23).

As mentioned earlier, McKittrick has also argued for the need to consider the material, spatial and conceptual continuity of plantation logics through time in the Americas – a continuity that can be easily recognized beyond its US incarnation, too (e.g. Haraway and Tsing 2019). From McKittrick's work, the plantation emerges as a meaningful 'geographic prototype' that draws attention to 'sites of environmental, social and infrastructural deterioration and geographic

surveillance that demarcate many black geographies and their inhabitants' (2011: 951). For McKittrick, both urbicide – the destruction of a Black sense of place through divisions of leisure and labour in the city – and the prison industrial complex are unfortunate yet logical extensions of the plantation's shaping role of present-day realities. The historical development of some of the most infamous contemporary carceral institutions from plantations to prisons, like Angola in Louisiana, underlines McKittrick's observations about this sense of continuity.

Drawing on archival work in France and Indonesia, Ann Stoler has commented on the carceral core of modernity/coloniality by focusing on the conceptual, archival and architectural overlaps between the colony and the camp. In that process, Stoler heeds us not to take the concept of the colony at face value, as if we always already know what it means. In fact, each colony – as a 'physical and social location', a pragmatic 'principle of managed mobilities' and a constant political 'assessment of the value of different human kinds' – is based on forced migration and thus doomed to be profoundly unsettled (2016: 71, 117–8). Because of the unequal distribution of mobilities and the risks (for state security, in relation to fears of contagion, or in terms of civic rights) that those movements are thought to bring, 'a colony is never secure' (2016: 118). Instead, it is a deeply emotional structure, too, that forces its inhabitants to live in an 'anxious future tense' as to their position within it (idem). This anxiety requires a specific spatial, social and technological *design* on the part of the colonizer, which 'announces how much the colony as a political concept commands the pre-emptive, calculates malintent, and assesses future transgressions and potential breaches of security' (idem). In this reliance on design, Stoler argues, colonies were in 'a deadly embrace' with camps from the start – an embrace that signals the extent of the carceral core of the imperial network and the 'multiple political logics it incited and amplified across the globe' (2016: 78). To speak with Kodwo Eshun's reading of the work of the writer Richard Wright, 'the colony is a prison' (Eshun 2017: n.p.).

Thus, 'democracy bears the colony within it, just as colonialism bears democracy, often in the guise of a mask' (Mbembe 2019: 27). If these relations between democracy and coloniality are kept analytically separate in considerations of the carceral, we allow one to hide behind the other to save face. That is, colonialism and its carceral core go unnoticed as it becomes normalized into democracy. Trapped in thinking that modernity continues to signify progress for all through the means of technocratic democracy, we then stand at risk of remaining, to speak with David Scott, 'conscripts of modernity'. Even if prisons can be ameliorated, authoritarian regimes pacified and surveillance techniques

perfected to cause as little harm as possible, carcerality and the systems that underpin it continue to proliferate. Scrutiny of carcerality's imbrications with the colonial and the modern could help us see how its domination might be subverted, even if in modest ways. Indeed, as McKittrick reminds us in the context of the United States, these are 'legacies of normalized racial violence that calcify, but do not guarantee the denigration of black geographies and their inhabitants' (2011: 950). As the contributions by Josh Weeks, Paolo Grassi, Luisa Schneider and Sarah Nuttall indicate, people will resist the script they are caught up in by rewriting their position in it.

Accordingly, this volume engages with carceral worlds – worlds writ through modes of modernity shaped by colonial practice – to ask how carcerality manifests in various geographical locations and at different scales, engaging with case studies from Guyana, Brazil, Chile, England, Germany, France, Italy, Nicaragua, South Africa, the United States, Australia, the Netherlands, and the Gulf region. *Carceral Worlds* also aims to take seriously the carceral seepage between different moments in time, localities and systems of thought and practice. How does the persistence of carcerality in these settings converge with ongoing debates about a world that is increasingly and, arguably, ever more subject to the desire to secure? What does the prevalence of carcerality signify in a world in which people are unequally affected by protracted capitalist and ecological ruin? And, finally, what are the likely ongoing legacies for living in such a carceral world? Will and can carceral forms be undone or rendered obsolete through the efforts of abolition?

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The volume is organized in four parts. The first three reflect a temporal analytic, addressing carceral legacies, textures and futures. This is not to say that these analytical categories can be neatly separated – much less that they should be conceived of chronologically – but taking a temporal approach to carcerality is pivotal to address its distinct histories, imaginaries and empirical realities in our globalized present. Each section also purposely brings contributions from different disciplines and regional contexts into conversation to think through and develop the concept of carcerality across distinct spaces, times and societies. In the first part of the book, 'Legacies', we foreground coloniality and modernity as carceral structures. Here, the chapters facilitate understanding of how carcerality has 'come to be' in the present and to critique its construction and persistence. As Jacques Derrida explains, legacies both 'call for and at the same time defy interpretation' (1994: 16). Because we cannot, as Derrida

has emphasized, help but to inherit these structures, we seek to unearth their operations and understand how these legacies impact not only the present but also the imagination of future articulations of our world. In the second part, 'Textures', we move to explore the carceral forms of the present arising from carcerality's metaphorical and real presence in people's everyday experiences. In doing so, we particularly seek to elucidate carcerality's expansive qualities – its increasingly ubiquitous omnipresence – including both the disruptive and the seemingly benign forms it takes on in people's lives. Grounded in the realities of carceral expansion, the third part 'Futures' then looks squarely at the technological, social and infrastructural developments that are likely to determine the futures of our carceral world. Though the prospects may seem grim, they also illuminate forms of political and epistemological resistance emanating from a critical engagement with our current carceral worlds. In between these parts, three interludes – one by each editor – offer alternative perspectives on and implications of the issues raised in the individual chapters. Deliberately free in form, these interludes further explore carceral systems beyond materiality and infrastructure, assess how carcerality reverberates sensorially and diffracts across people's relations and ask what the potential gains are of thinking carcerality in stronger conjunction with the materiality of the rural. The fourth part contains two provocations, which offer political and epistemological steps that challenge the notion of carcerality from within and in doing so seek to further the interdisciplinary engagement with our current carceral worlds.

Legacies

In this part, our authors demonstrate that prisons are deeply colonial constructs in terms of their infrastructure and social position (Kerrigan et al.); that urban policing and incarceration is heavily steeped in travelling notions of population control, which are reproduced through the social sciences (Biondi); and that carcerality can be seen as a labyrinthine configuration that structures life under neoliberal precarious conditions (Weeks).

The contributions commence with Chapter 2 where Dylan Kerrigan, Kristy Warren, Kellie Moss, Mellissa Ifill, Tammy Ayres and Clare Anderson develop the concept of the biopolitics of colonial carcerality as a means of exploring the legacies of prison systems in British Guiana in contemporary Guyana. Kerrigan et al. draw together historical, anthropological and criminological research

in the colonial and post-colonial archives of Guyana, with primary data from prisoners and prison officers collected between 2019 and 2022, to illustrate how colonial logics have been established, extended and reinforced in Guyana's prisons. In unpacking a variety of infrastructures, directions and consequences of these colonial logics, the chapter reveals the myriad impacts upon individual bodies and collective lives, from mental health concerns to substance addictions.

In Chapter 3, Karina Biondi explores the ways in which the daily lives of people in the marginalized *quebradas* of São Paulo are impacted by the social technologies and analytical tools of modernity once produced by the Chicago School for Urban Sociology. In doing so, Biondi places a finger on the ways in which particular social science epistemologies have served to anchor the carceral logics of population control. Developed to deal with the issue of crime, these technologies and tools – decomposition, individualization, classification, fixation, description, analysis and documentation – were widely adopted across the world. Yet through ethnographic research, Biondi demonstrates how these epistemologies produced fundamental misunderstandings around the workings of crime. Police, prosecutors and social scientists alike have, for instance, analysed and thereby attempted to contain Brazil's largest prison gang by associating particular economic activities with particular territories. They not only attempt to fix the gang's inherent movement into the neat boxes of organizational models but also associate people to territories, which serves to condition their movement, organize containment and produce carceral social control. This way, Biondi makes explicit the connection between knowledge production and carceral city management technologies in Brazil.

In Chapter 4, Josh Weeks pinpoints the structuring imagery of the labyrinth beneath the surface in Chilean author Roberto Bolaño's work. The figure of the labyrinth varies between a poorly concealed torture chamber in *By Night in Chile* to a laboratory for the production of zombies in 'The Colonel's Son'. The fact that such labyrinths and spaces of confinement are both hidden and easy to find in these stories ties together the national level of Pinochet-era Chile and the transnational level of neoliberal globalization that the dictatorship ushered in, allowing Bolaño to untangle and express the necropolitical subject formation that these two moments in time have in common. The fact that the labyrinths are permeable, however, does not mean that the carceral production of neoliberal subjecthood is weakened or subverted. Instead, the labyrinth frustratingly bleeds conceptually into the 'open prison' of the neoliberal system itself, which, Bolaño's fiction seems to suggest, can only be navigated by taking seriously the temporary rest and refuge within the labyrinth itself. In this way, the labyrinth,

in Bolaño's fiction and beyond, serves to think through the carceral premises of neoliberal modernity, while also suggesting a heterotopic entry point into 'the alternative world(s) that haunt neoliberalism's grotesque, necropolitical legacy' (Weeks, this volume).

Textures

In this part, authors dig deeper into how the precarious present of our world embodies fundamental carceral conditions. This holds true for the sustained crisis experienced during the Covid-19 lockdowns in France, Germany and the United Kingdom (Fludernik); for the young rappers and the nostalgic elders living in San Siro, Italy (Grassi); and the rough sleepers in Leipzig, Germany, whose everyday lives under neoliberal responsabilization feel so carceral that they deliberately seek imprisonment to feel like a productive part of society (Schneider). A common denominator across these chapters is their attention to the scripts of escape – whether physically or in imaginative and creative terms – that the precarious present seems to dictate. These scripts range from the use of prison metaphors as social critique, to incorporating rebellion against the police in cultural production, to the mobilization of nostalgia for a lost past, to, finally, incurring prison sentences in order to give structure to a life confined by having to live at the receiving end of a frayed welfare state.

In Chapter 5, Monika Fludernik scrutinizes the widespread occurrence of similes and metaphors during the Covid-19 pandemic used to associate the lockdown with imprisonment. Analysing such carceral metaphors in newspaper venues from France, Germany and the United Kingdom, Fludernik finds that speakers and writers expressed acute awareness of the metaphoric nature of their language use, but that, at the same time, a general discourse emerged that used the affective charge of culturally ingrained metaphors of imprisonment to express people's emotional and political responses to the situation. Although the hardship endured during the pandemic due to quarantine measures and social restrictions did not affect individuals in the same way, it is also striking that the 'pains of imprisonment' (Sykes 1958) were similarly expressed across the three national settings studied. Although the lockdown differed from general imprisonment in the sense that the punitive factor was missing, the chapter ponders the question whether the Covid-19 pandemic might not become known in future 'as the second great confinement ["le deuxième grand confinement"] à la Foucault' (Fludernik, this volume).

Paolo Grassi then interrogates how carceral conditions and imaginaries are encountered and shaped in San Siro, a social housing neighbourhood in Milan, Italy, in Chapter 6. Grassi traces how the neighbourhood has changed over the course of different phases of urban development and how it has become increasingly subject to territorial stigma and securitarian policies that tend to separate it from the city at large. The way San Siro is engaged with in spatial, cultural and political terms has resulted in it becoming ‘like a prison’ for its inhabitants, who then use different strategies to symbolically escape from it. The chapter compares the lyrics written by a rap crew to the way the elderly inhabitants nostalgically narrate life in the neighbourhood when it was first built. As the analysis shows, the two groups have a lot in common: the one feels repressed and criminalized, the other feels politically abandoned, suggesting that they are both subject to ‘a selective institutional attention that marks communal divisions and personal isolation’ (Grassi, this volume). In this point of overlap, Grassi suggests, lies not only enmity but also a ‘possibility for an intergenerational and multicultural dialogue’ (Grassi, this volume).

In Chapter 7, Luisa Schneider analyses how houseless people in Germany seek out imprisonment. While this may sound counterintuitive, Schneider argues how this decision relates to the lived realities produced by contemporary societies of control, in which post-welfarist logics of responsabilization produce carceral logics in the lives of those unable to properly ‘participate’. In turn, this pushes houseless people to seek and finally access the care they need through the disciplinary, punitive institution of the prison. Tending to the way in which time is experienced by the houseless person ‘Tilo’, Schneider demonstrates that the shift from a Foucauldian disciplinary society to a Deleuzian society of control is neither historically nor experientially absolute but rather mutually constitutive of a larger matrix of social harm. Importantly, in pinpointing exactly where Tilo locates the carceral – in *circumstance*, rather than *space* (Schneider, this volume) – Schneider points to the ways in which affective and moral carceral configurations transcend designated carceral spaces and come to traverse the lives of particular groups of people.

Futures

In this part, the authors most explicitly consider the ongoing impacts of an ever-increasingly carceral world. The section begins with a focus on ‘new’ types of incarceration that result from jail intakes through digital systems (Ludwig),

moving to an analysis of the use of hotels for the purposes of migrant detention and its urban carceral effects (Burridge and Darling) and closing with the central tension brought up by the Gulf Carceral Urban World, that our world futures are fundamentally shaped by a seemingly utopic desire to secure, enclose and confine (Stanley). These three chapters point towards the ways in which our futures *cannot but become* increasingly carceral as they propagate the very epistemologies, infrastructures and mechanisms of population management on which they are built. In order to imagine futures beyond the carceral, these structures of knowledge production must be addressed and unsettled.

Taking an abolitionist science and technology studies (STS) approach, Ariel Ludwig sets out in Chapter 8 to explore the ways in which the New York City jail system's intake procedure produces both digital carceral bodies and abolitionist dreams. Reading the digital infrastructures of the jails' electronic records systems as 'geographies that sanitize and make invisible the violence of their data extraction', Ludwig deploys ethnographic poetry to disrupt and resist the logics and embodied implications of how these digital records are formed. While Ludwig explains both how digital carceral bodies are constituted and how they come to haunt the physical bodies they aim to make legible, the chapter makes explicit the coloniality and embodied resonances of this process, as carceralities are predicated on the white, Western notion of linear time. Carceral abolition then requires unsettling the deeply engrained carceralities imbricated in our knowledge infrastructures and systems. Ludwig demonstrates that poetry is one way through which both carceral residues and abolitionist futures can be made explicit.

Andrew Burridge and Jonathan Darling trigger understandings of the carceral continuum that lead us away from the more 'traditional' space of the prison by offering up the tension-filled space of the detention hotel for readers of Chapter 9. While recognizing that hotels have been a widespread, though often obscured, component of immigrant detention and deportation history, they illuminate and interrogate the hotel as a unique and specific infrastructure for detaining in contemporary destinations including Australia, the United Kingdom and across North America and the European Union. Unlike other mechanisms of immigration control that often seek remote locations such as islands, the use of hotels for migrant detention and accommodation recentralizes the city as a space for the performance of border functions. In exploring this contemporary practice, Burridge and Darling posit this accommodation as a (problematic) crucial functioning of urban life. Here, they argue for recognition of their term 'carceral urbanism', drawing attention to the appropriation of urban infrastructures for

the purpose of containing migrants and raising fundamental questions for urban societies living in proximate intimacy with these forms of everyday bordering.

In Chapter 10, Bruce Stanley also offers provocation on the control of urban space, introducing the Gulf Carceral Urban World stretched across the historical region variously termed the Persian, Arabian or Petro Gulf in Southwest Asia. This carceral urban world considers space as an assemblage of infrastructures and imaginaries generating highly restrictive and precarious spatial relationships with significant impact upon the bodies that live in and pass through them. Here, utopic visions of the world rest on inherent carceral conditions of enclosure, restriction and control. Stanley discusses, in particular, three emblematic carceral lifeworlds: the global superclass dream; those churned through its spaces of confinement; and migrant labourers. In doing so, this chapter reveals a set of 'aggressively assembled' urban spaces, contributing to the problematic futures of our contemporary society.

Provocations

In two chapters that draw together key contentions evident across the book, the last part of the book provokes debate about ongoing tensions in our academic consideration of the carceral world(s) around us. In Chapter 11, Philo and Schliehe address one of the most critical debates in studies of detention and incarceration head on: that of abolition and reform. Drawing from within their situated disciplinary area of carceral geography, they chart the work of Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Dominique Moran to ponder the assumed diametrical opposition of scholarly work emergent from these two philosophies. What their provocation entails is the mapping of an 'abolition ecology', inspired by Gilmore but nevertheless relevant to the spatial approaches of Moran (and others), proposing that these avenues may instead converge in what Philo and Schliehe term a 'non-reformist reform carceral geography'. Such an approach may satisfy proponents on both sides of this epistemological fence, serving as a fruitful agenda for further interrogating and counteracting the violences of our carceral worlds.

Sarah Nuttall closes the volume with Chapter 12 with the suggestion that the term carcerality should, especially in contexts of structural oppression, be thought in conjunction with that of (legal) entrapment, which implies agency and process on the part of authoritative sources, to be sure, but also on the part of those who are entrapped. Entrapment, therefore, may bring into view

processes of resistance and renewal that otherwise remain unseen. Nuttall explores this question through the radical escalation of the ‘carceral continuum’ (Wacquant 2000) in contemporary South Africa, which consists of the lingering political and relational effects of the prison (during apartheid and beyond), exacerbated modes of social inequality and precarity and contemporary forms of increasing environmental degradation and climate risk. The common element that connects the precarity caused by racist systems, the social and personal afterlives of imprisonment and environmental crisis is the increasingly prevalent but underanalysed element of fire. Using fire as a lens, Nuttall draws together three seemingly disparate ‘situations’: J. M. Coetzee’s 1990 novel *Age of Iron*, the burning of the inner chamber of South Africa’s parliament by Zandile Christmas Mafe in 2022 and the mega-fires that threaten the Cape in South Africa and beyond. With this analysis, Nuttall adds the crucial observation that the effects of climate change entrap some more than others, while also offering modest but hopeful sparks of de-carcerality in the kinds of complex agencies, unusual political processes and profoundly intimate connections that entrapment, despite its use of deception and reliance on power, can also engender.

Beyond carceral worlds

By defining carcerality as an expansive mode of governance as well as a structure of feeling that emanates from the intentional constriction of space and time, we can understand our carceral worlds *now*. We are able to trace the ways in which carceral forms have become institutionalized and legitimated (in prisons, camps and other spaces of physical and metaphorical confinement) and recognize how carceral structures emanate from, and are reproduced through, the jointly operating power-knowledge systems of coloniality, modernity and capitalism. Pivotaly, approaching carcerality as a core concept of modernity that stretches across time and space allows us to disentangle it from the flux of higher or lower incarceration rates and to situate its expansiveness not only geographically but also in the way it has come to be structured by and structures our understanding of time. In the globalized present – that palimpsest of neoliberal globalization built on layers of colonialist extraction and ruin – the clock has become our warden. It is no coincidence, then, that the principal objective of imprisonment is *doing time* and its principle harms are inflicted precisely by the violence of time’s monotonous passing. It is also no coincidence that the principle populations subjected to carceral time are those who are projected to disrupt or simply not ‘fit’

into the time sensitive machinations of contemporary 'order' – the indigenous, the foreign, the Black and brown, the houseless, the addicted, the 'criminal' – whose subjection to carceral time and space is imagined to correct any deviance.

It is for this reason that no degree of legalist reform operating on the premise that we are all equal can correct the skewedness of the systems built to intentionally constrict time and space, as the very purpose of the carceral is to spatially separate and impinge itself on the time, especially the future, of othered populations. In the process, we have fostered the emergence of vast systems of surveillance and control, meant to keep us safe. Yet, under the guise of population management and security – of the colony (Stoler 2016) – carcerality operates both on the free and the unfree. Understanding how it operates, what purposes it serves and what it *does* precisely, both for those directly subject to imprisonment and for those who feel 'safer' as a result, is pivotal to begin locating and dislodging the techniques, practices and even the epistemologies upon which carcerality is built. In other words, we must move towards the liberation of both oppressed *and* oppressor (Freire 1970).

As Nelson Mandela, one of the most famous prisoners of all time, has pointed out, freedom cannot be freedom if it applies to some but not to others; dehumanization makes complicit and is detrimental to both victim and perpetrator. Perhaps in less abstract terms, this volume has shown in several of its individual contributions that the spread of precarity across boundaries ensconced in race, gender and class lays bare the increasingly carceral shape of the world *now*. Themes of escape in the cultural imaginations under discussion in this volume vie with strategies of seeking out further incarceration in order to alleviate the pressure of having to conform to the temporal trajectories of perpetual productivity in order to survive. At the same time, the volume also shows that those pushed to the very edge of such tactical adjustments can find themselves beset by more incarceration still, not least in the form of the import of climate change on what it means to live (and die) on earth.

Importantly, even as the power of the carceral systems that currently order our worlds is not only located in the very real cells of its institutions but also in its metaphorical purchase and the imaginaries it produces and constricts, it is often from within the very bowels of the carceral that modes of resistance and dislocation are also devised. The chapters in this volume take up the task of (dis)locating the carceral core of our times in the lived realities of those it attempts to govern, distinguishing between vastly different carceral systems, structures and experiences. In so doing, they jointly present us with the potentiality of its undoing.

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