Mapping moving media: film and video

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Conclusion

An Inverse(d) Voyage, Back to the Waves

> *Hang your eyes on the sail of my sleeves*
> *The way is open on the murky path*
> *Ten thousand waves take us to the shore*
> *Home will arrive under our feet*
>
> (Wang Ping, "The Great Summons," in: *Ten Thousand Waves*)

This study started with the claim that many contemporary visual objects combine features which are specific to the media of film and video. Such intermedial pieces, I argued, can be better understood if the differences between film and video are not overlooked. For the meanings, effects, and affects contemporary moving image objects give rise to are often to a large extent shaped by combinations of videomatic with cinematic elements. However, the aim to gain insight into these combinations called for a delineation of the separate components of the combinations: film and video. In the four chapters, I explored how film and video can be defined as closely related, yet distinct media; an exploration that necessarily entailed an investigation of the concept of medium specificity itself.

As it turned out, the relation between film and video could not be analyzed without expanding and rewriting definitions of the medium. In Chapter One, the differences between film and video concerning their production of the reality effect turned out not to lie in unique properties, but in typicalities and commonalities; in dominant versus marginal functions and applications. Therefore, Rosalind Krauss' definition of medium specificity as a changeable layered structure was expanded with George Baker's notion of "field" in this chapter. Unlike Krauss' predominantly temporal definition, Baker's

spatial notion of the field offers us the possibility to account for the sometimes internally conflicting heterogeneity of media, as well as the overlapping functions and shared abilities of different media, without losing sight of their specificity.

In Chapter Two, the concept of the medium was rewritten along the lines of Jean-Louis Baudry's notion of *dispositif*, in order to investigate how the differences and similarities between film and video lie in the ways in which they (dis)embody their viewer. Not only did this concept prove helpful in explaining the (dis)embodiment of the film and video viewer; it also formed an important contribution to definitions of the medium by including the viewer as well as the spatial, institutional, and conventional aspects of the viewing situation into the structure of the medium. In addition to the fact that this inclusion formed a welcomed breach with dominant theorizations of the medium as an autonomous material entity, an inclusion of the seemingly contextual features of the viewing situation within the notion of the medium also enabled the investigation of a realm of intermediality often left undiscussed. As I have demonstrated in this chapter with the help of cinematic video installations by David Claerbout and Douglas Gordon, intermedial interactions, including mutual specification, between film and video often take place at the level of the *dispositif*.

My discussion of the differences and similarities between film and video in the social field were preceded by a reflection on the relationship between medium and society in Chapter Three. In this chapter, I defined this relationship according to Raymond Williams' idea of soft determination. With this notion, Williams makes clear that although media technologies produce social structures, they are not all-powerful. Technology is never immune to or even untouched by the agency of human subjects. Therefore, it doesn't ever stand apart from the social, cultural, and historical conventions and expectations which shape the way in which humans envisage, create, and apply technology. Williams' understanding of technology points out that Krauss' division between the technological and conventional layer of a medium implies that technology might be a pristine origin. The idea of soft determination forecloses such an essentialist return to the idea of origin. Moreover, it informed my analyses of video and film in relation to the social realm: in Chapter Three, I discussed how the two media produce social relationships and how they are produced by social structures, occupations and needs.

Chapter Four rests on Williams' idea of soft determination in many respects. However, the violent features of film and video that are the topic of investigation in this chapter cannot be explained by the reciprocal relationship between technology and socialized subject alone. Some of the most prominent harmful and oppressive effects of film and video are wedded to specific scientific, medical, colonial, disciplinary, and misogynist discourses. Some of which, moreover, arose even before the invention of the two media, as they circled around the progenitors of the lens-based media such as the camera obscura and photography before they tied up with or informed the use of film and/or video. Foucault's concept of "discourse" is thus indispensable in understanding some of the most notable differences between the violent features of film and video, as those

features spring from the manifold ways in which medium and discourse are entangled. Moreover, together with the notions of field, *dispositif* and soft determination, the concept of discourse forms a last breach with the modernist idea that this study aimed to undermine and rewrite; the idea of medium specificity as an autonomous, unified material essence.

However, alongside this rewriting of the concept of medium specificity, this dissertation explored the differences and similarities between film and video. The result is, I would say, a map of some of the most prominent ways in which film and video are specified by, and vis-à-vis, each other. A map of similarities and differences, moreover, which can guide the analysis of the many contemporary intermedial films and videos that combine videomatic with cinematic elements. To conclude, I will take up my map, and return to the piece with which I started out: Isaac Julien's *Ten Thousand Waves*. How can the differences and similarities between film and video that were outlined in the previous chapters guide us through the nine screens and three stories of *Ten Thousand Waves*? Which differences between film and video can provide insight into the ways in which Julien's installation produces meanings and affects in its viewer?

Traveling Along

As mentioned in the introduction, *Ten Thousand Waves* interweaves several stories. First of all, there is the tragic story of the 23 Chinese immigrants, who drowned while working as clandestine cockle-fishers because they were unfamiliar with the tides in Morecambe Bay. The second story concerns the Chinese myth about the goddess Mazu, who saves drowning men and escorts them to a beautiful, pristine Chinese island. Thirdly, *Ten Thousand Waves* imitates parts of the classic Chinese movie *The Goddess* (Yonggang 1934), which tells the story of an unnamed prostitute who walks the streets at night in order to provide for her son. Let's first turn to the last-mentioned story, which applies some of the videomatic strategies I discussed with regard to feminist video practices in Chapter Four, namely copying and imitation. As explained, feminist video pieces tend to be more comfortable with critically imitating misogynist narrative fiction films, as the difference between their own medium and the medium of film automatically ensures some critical distance. In *Ten Thousand Waves,* this strategy of imitation with a difference plays an important part.

The close resemblance between the prostitute's story in Julien's piece and that of Yonggang first of all lies in the fact that both take place in the exact same décor. Both the 1934 film and its 2010 version were recorded in the Shanghai film studios. Hence, when actress Zhao Tao is shown to be walking the streets in *Ten Thousand Waves,* these streets are exactly the same as those walked by actress Ruan Lingyu in *The Goddess*. Not only can the architecture of the houses as well as the many shop windows be recognized from the original film; Julien imitates some of Yonggang's close-ups of these façades. Although the images of *Ten Thousand Waves* are in color instead of the original's black-and-white, the atmosphere of the dark streets at night is copied exactly in Julien's

version. In addition, Zhao Tao is dressed and coiffured in the same 1930s style as Ruan Lingyu was in Yonggang's film.

In Yonggang's film, the prostitute falls prey to an evil male gambler, who first helps her to hide from the police, but then considers her to be his property. He forces her to give him her earnings, and threatens to take her son away if she doesn't. The prostitute hides some savings from him so that she will one day be able to escape with her son. However, when she decides to run, the gambler turns out to have stolen all her money. The prostitute kills him in a rage and ends up in prison. She will be forever separated from her son. For, in order to save him from the shame of having a prostitute and a murderer as a mother, she asks his guardian to tell her son that his mother is dead.

The story of *The Goddess* is copied only partially by Julien's installation. *Ten Thousand Waves* most comprehensively mimics scenes from *The Goddess* in which the prostitute is walking the streets at night, and travels through the old city during the day. Like *The Goddess*, Julien's installation shows how the woman waits painstakingly to be picked up by a stranger in the dark streets. In *Ten Thousand Waves*, however, these scenes are not embedded in a story about blackmail and murder. Although Tao is shown to be accompanied by a man who looks somewhat like the evil gambler in *The Goddess*, this man doesn't seem to be treating her in an overtly aggressive way. Whereas the gambler is constantly frightening or humiliating the female protagonist in Yonggang's film, the man in *Ten Thousand Waves* (played by artist Yang Fudong) just silently sits with her at a table. Although the woman doesn't seem comfortable or happy in any way, she isn't as violently approached by men in Julien's story as she is in Yonggang's. She isn't robbed, chased, laughed at or scolded.

She is looked at though, in both works. As a prostitute, she is gazed upon – visually inspected, so to speak – by male passers-by who occasionally pick her up. In addition, the prostitute is looked at by the man who accompanies her the most; the evil gambler in *The Goddess,* and the silent male table-companion in Julien's installation. In both pieces, these male gazes can be witnessed within the frame, when the prostitute is shown with men in a single shot. However, she also becomes the object of the male gaze through the cinematic procedure of suture. Although *Ten Thousand Waves* doesn't completely do away with this procedure, it seems to protect the female protagonist from an objectifying gaze in two ways.

First, the sutures aren't tight in Julien's installation. Like many cinematic video installations, *Ten Thousand Waves* sutures images spatially instead of temporally. The videomatic *dispositif* of the multi-screen installation offers artists and filmmakers the possibility to attach the look of characters to opposing screens. Instead of being stitched to a temporally preceding or succeeding shot on the same screen, their gaze is sutured to another screen; the screen they seem to be looking at in the exhibition space. In *Ten Thousand Waves*, this form of suturing first appears when the gaze of goddess Mazu is sutured to adjacent images of the billowing sea. When the technique is employed in relation to the prostitute, however, the male gazes that rest upon her seem to "misfire."

Whereas the eyes of Mazu can hardly miss the surface of the sea, which fills entire screens, the gazes of men never seem to fall precisely on the figure of the prostitute. Because the match between their gaze and the female protagonist depends both on the position of the spectator in front of the screens, as well as the precise angle between screens, the men in *Ten Thousand Waves* often seem to look slightly *past* instead of *at* the prostitute when they do not reside in the same frame. Although the viewer is likely to understand that the male gazes are aimed at the female protagonist, the sutures don't fit precisely enough in space to be effective.

These "missutures" not only protect the prostitute from the male gazes within the diegesis; they also disable the installation's viewer from looking at her as an object of desire. As sutures forcefully invite film viewers to share the looking character's point of view, the visitors of *Ten Thousand Waves* will look past the prostitute if they adopt the gaze of her male onlookers. In this respect, the installation hinders the viewer. What is more, like the missutures caused by the installational video *dispositif,* this second form of hindrance can again be understood as a videomatic intervention in a cinematic quality. Although the prostitute mostly appears in bright, sharp and smooth cinematic looking images of a high quality, they are occasionally drastically out of focus. Although the old, original 1930s version of *The Goddess* has its own small haptic blots and scratches, the extreme opaqueness which Julien's installation displays is not common to the popular cinema which *Ten Thousand Waves* refers to. It can rather be recognized as a quality that has become well-known through video.

The result of the blurred opaqueness is that the female protagonist is hardly visible anymore. Whereas the projected images first invite the viewer to plunge visually into the depth of the illusionistic spaces on screen, they cast the viewer out as soon as the images are out of focus. The depicted prostitute can no longer be mastered or appropriated with the eyes. This is not only relevant in relation to the male gaze; it is also a significant strategy when it comes to the occidental gaze. With the exception of one show in Shanghai, *Ten Thousand Ways* has been exhibited in Western countries alone. The resulting Western point of view holds the risk of being orientalist in the contemplation of Julien's installation which, very basically, is "about" China – or, to put it slightly less narrowly: about China's social, political, and economic history, and the resulting Chinese migration to the West. The haptic, opaque image surface disables the Western viewer from visually obtaining the oriental other. Moreover, it prevents the spectator from a disembodied mode of looking in which the viewer forgets herself. Instead, it invites an embodied mode of looking in which the beholder is aware of her own position in time, space, as well as place.

However, the opacification of the screen has a paradoxical dimension. On the one hand, the screen protects the female protagonist by problematizing visual access to her. On the other hand, the impenetrable screen reinforces that category of the "other." It sets up a boundary between the presumably occidental viewer and the oriental other on screen, behind the limitation of the blurred image surface. This exclusion of the

occidental viewer, and inclusion of the oriental subject, is established through a couple of other features of *Ten Thousand Waves*. First of all, the reference to the Chinese film classic in itself creates insiders and outsiders. As I discussed in Chapter Three, films can create communities amongst those who know them – and exclude those who don't. For many Chinese film viewers, the reference will be obvious. *The Goddess* was a very popular movie, and has recently received new critical attention and acclaim in China. For, in spite of the fact that it can be criticized from a feminist perspective, the film has also been praised as valuable social document. It represents its female protagonist as a victim and object of men, but in doing so, it might be said to critically expose problems of impoverished working class women in early twentieth-century China.

Western viewers might, however, only pick up on the imitation of *The Goddess* through the additional information museums often provide alongside the piece, for Yonggang's film is less likely to be part of their cultural frame of reference. However, the viewer who completely misses the installation's resemblance to *The Goddess* will not feel excluded by the piece – for such a viewer simply doesn't know that she doesn't know the film in question. The imitation of Yonggang's film is more likely to instill feelings of belonging in the viewers who do know the original movie. The occidental viewer who does not recognize that the installation copies a film classic will, however, nevertheless feel excluded from and by the story of the unnamed prostitute because her monologues are inaccessible to most Westerners. Although the basic story of a suffering, sad prostitute can be understood by most viewers, her Mandarin speech is not subtitled or dubbed. Therefore, most viewers will be in the dark when it comes to the prostitute's monologues. Only her lamenting tone of voice forms an indication to the meaning of her words.

In addition to the woman's speech, the installation shows many close-ups of Chinese characters which are unintelligible to most members of an occidental audience. Notably, some of them are written on the surface of the screen by a Chinese calligrapher. The large sweeps of ink drip down on what now seems to function as a besmeared window between the exhibition space in which the viewer resides, and the represented on-screen space in which the calligrapher is painting his human-sized signs. Like the opaqueness of the blurred images, these large written ideograms instill a cleavage between viewer and "foreigner." Only now, the boundary is produced by a presumably illegible sign, a sign of alterity itself.[148]

However, the blurred and smeared boundaries which *Ten Thousand Waves*

[148] Christine Ross (1996) has discussed the act of writing on the video image surface in terms of "contamination." In an insightful analysis of Mona Hatoum's *Measures of Distance,* Ross argues that the contamination of the screen with signs of alterity – in the case of Hatoum: Arabic script which seems to be written in blood – can possibly manifest the instability of the cleavage between viewer and foreign other. I am not adopting her terms of contamination or the resulting instability in my analysis of *Ten Thousand Waves* because, as opposed to the blood on Hatoum's video surface, the ink of the calligrapher in Julien's piece does not evoke a very strong sense of contamination.

occasionally creates between the space of the beholder and the illusionistic space on screen are not permanent. In a manner comparable to the installations by David Claerbout and Douglas Gordon, the represented space on the screens fuses with, or expands into, the space between the screens. One of the most poignant examples of this occurs in a scene in which the unnamed prostitute travels through the old city by tram. Whereas the carriage would have to be mapped out by successive shots and reverse shots in a conventional single screen movie, *Ten Thousand Waves* forms the interior of a tram by way of several, simultaneously projected images in the exhibition space. Six of the installation's screens roughly form a rectangle which resembles a tram in both size and shape. Each screen, then, shows a part of the tram: at the front, we see how the tram driver navigates the streetcar through traffic, while the screen at the back of the rectangle shows how buildings and people in the streets disappear in the distance as the tram continues on its way through town. On the screens which form the sides of the tram, passengers sit on their benches. Although the female protagonist seems to sit alternately on each side of the tram, we see how she travels through the city while powdering her nose or staring out of the window. Her staring gaze is never sutured in the installation. Therefore, as a viewer, you cannot adopt her point of view. In this sense, the depicted woman remains an inaccessible other. However, the viewer of *Ten Thousand World* is occasionally invited into her world. The spectator is not enabled to become the unnamed prostitute through (visual) identification, yet the installation does offer its viewer the impression of traveling along with her. In the tramcar, through town, but also through time.

For, as mentioned in the introduction, the unnamed prostitute appears to move forward through time. First, she seems to belong to the 1930s. However, as she rides the tram through the old-looking city, the cityscape is suddenly exposed as a film set. In the background, men are moving pieces of scenery; house fronts are lifted and some pieces of film equipment enter the frame. These exposures indicate that the prostitute is actually an actress who has been playing a part in a film studio. However, she doesn't escape from her role completely, for when the old setting is left behind, the woman still ends up at a (not so old-fashioned) table with a man who looks like the evil gambler from *The Goddess*.

In this scene at the table, however, historical time seems to have moved forwards by decades. Whereas the scenes in the old film studio were interspersed with black-and-white images of an old city, the scene in which the female actress/prostitute is sitting at a table with a male companion is combined with archival film images of the Cultural Revolution. Both the black-and-white and the color footage of China's Cultural Revolution show that, in addition to its dominant application in the field of narrative fiction film, film is well able to create what I have called a "referential reality effect" in Chapter One. The images have some quality defects (graininess, flickering, color distortion) which give them a documentary, indexical appearance. They signal that what they show is real. Yet, the moment they show is a historical moment from the past, a moment that

subsequently defines the temporal location of the female protagonist as well. While sitting at the table, she seems to have moved from the 1930s to the 1960s.

After the scene at the table, the temporality of the images switches to the "now" in two ways: through architecture and through the temporal indexicality of video. Although the female protagonist remains dressed in a slightly old-fashioned way, the architectural surroundings of the prostitute/actress turn highly modern as her storyline in *Ten Thousand Waves* progresses. She is depicted in what seems to be the contemporary interior of a high-class restaurant or luxurious hotel lobby. In addition, we see her staring out of the window of a hotel room, which offers a magnificent view over Pudong's skyscrapers. The association with prostitution hasn't disappeared completely, for the manner in which the woman is strolling and sitting around in the hotel lobby is not unlike the way in which she was walking the streets before. However, the staring gaze of the woman attaches her to another story – precisely because the gaze itself hardly ever attaches itself to anything. The sad looking prostitute (or actress) keeps staring into the distance as if she is longingly thinking of someone who is not there. So who is she thinking of?

In *The Goddess,* the prostitute was separated from her son. Given the installation's initial resemblances with this early film classic, it seems obvious to suspect that the sad female protagonist might be missing her son. The installation confirms this presumption when shots of the staring actress/prostitute in the modern interior are alternated with shots from a video documentary on the Morecambe Bay victims. These show how an older family member, presumably a parent, of one of the drowned immigrants lays out some of the victim's personal belongings on a blanket, and folds up clothes of the deceased relative. Then, the installation shows a video image of two hands holding a photograph of one of the drowned young men. Although the photograph is clearly not held by the prostitute, the fact that her image is juxtaposed with this shot strongly implies that she is missing a son, too. However, the fact that the picture of the drowned man is shown by way of video embeds the "that-has-been" of the photograph into the "now" of video's temporal indexicality. In addition, the referential reality effect of the video documentary further questions the presumed fictionality of the prostitute's cinematic story. This photographed man is really dead, right now. And the character of the prostitute is related to the reality of this moment in the present.

This presentness is further sustained when images of the female protagonist are mixed with video footage which has an even stronger temporal indexicality: surveillance video footage of the rescue operation at Morecambe Bay. As explained in Chapter One, the genre of surveillance video is strongly associated with live feed. When images of the prostitute are mixed with these images (including the audio recording of a panicking woman begging for help), the story of the female character can no longer be seen apart from present tragedies involving Chinese migrants.

In the Same Boat

Although the installation doesn't establish an implicit link between the prostitute and a

specific victim of the Morecambe Bay tragedy, it suggests that many contemporary Chinese women lost relatives because of migration to the West. *Ten Thousand Waves* makes clear that the lethal disasters which happen to Chinese migrants are manifold. While the nine screens of the installation are filled with images of traffic circling on an incredibly complex cloverleaf between high rises, a staccato female voice rapidly recites one of the poems Chinese poet Wang Ping contributed to Julien's piece:

> We know the tolls: 23 – Rochaway, NY; 58 – Dover, England;
> 18 – Shenzen; 25 – South Korea and many more.
>
> We know the methods: walk, swim, fly, metal container,
> back of a lorry, ship's hold.
>
> We know how they died: starved, raped, dehydrated, drowned, suffocated, homesick, heartsick, worked to death, working to death.
>
> We know we may end up in the same boat.

In sum, *Ten Thousand Waves* creates a relationship between Yonggang's film classic and migratory tragedies which are pointed out by poems like this one, as well as by video footage that affirms their presentness. In doing so, *Ten Thousand Waves* seems to suggest that the problems of China's working class are not new. In the 1930s, poverty ripped families apart as it (for instance) forced mothers to prostitute themselves and distance themselves from their children. In the twenty-first century, after the Cultural Revolution, family members try to cross the ocean in the hope of a better life. Julien's installation points back in time even further when it comes to the problems of China's working class. For, as mentioned in the introduction, it relates the Morecambe Bay tragedy to the mythical goddess Mazu. This goddess, who is known for saving jeopardized fishermen at sea, rescues three of the drowning cockle-fishers in *Ten Thousand Waves*. By representing this myth, which dates back to centuries before the Ming dynasty, Julien's installation indicates that "working to death" (or at least nearly to death) is of all centuries in China.

The fictionality of the Mazu myth, as well as the imitation of Yonggang's *The Goddess,* may seem to stand in the way of such a conclusion, though. Whereas the Morecambe Bay tragedy is what we call a real story which was recently relayed on news channels and in newspapers, the Mazu myth and *The Goddess* are less firmly tied to what we understand as referential reality. Although both stories are certainly related to real social and economic circumstances of China's working class, the stories of Mazu and the tragic prostitute are more fictional than the 23 drowned cockle-fishers in Morecambe Bay. This is not so much, or not merely, an ontological distinction; Julien's installation presents the Mazu myth and the prostitute's story line as more fictional than the

Morecambe Bay tragedy. First, both stories are told by way of sharp and colorful cinematic-looking images. These images partially create a reality effect by their smoothness, but this reality effect is what I have termed a "constructed reality effect." The high resolution of the images hides the materiality of the medium, but at the same time points out that the images are probably part of a *fictional* film story, as this reality-effect producing device is typical of conventional fiction film.

Secondly, the constructedness of the film stories is revealed in the case of both goddesses. As mentioned previously, the prostitute suddenly appears to find herself in a film studio where the set is remodeled as she passes by. Mazu, in addition, does not only fly around skyscrapers and through green valleys; she is also depicted hanging between a large ventilator and a green screen. Her appearance in the sky, with waving hair and fluttering robes, turns out to be the result of highly professional digital video keying and CGI. Thus, in spite of the cinematic smoothness and sharpness of the Mazu scenes, these shots are high-definition digital video images manipulated and partly generated by the computer. Insofar as the images of Mazu flying through the air are still indexically tied to something, they can only be a trace of Maggie Cheung dangling on ropes in a green-screen studio.

However, paradoxically, this exposure of cinematic digital constructedness not only separates the Mazu myth and the prostitute's struggle from the Morecambe Bay tragedy. In fact, it emphasizes that these old fictional stories are tied to the present reality of Chinese workers. For they are re-presented, re-told, today, by Julien's installation. Moreover, the fact that the Mazu myth is told by way of state-of-the-art digital video imagery appropriates the centuries-old myth as a contemporary story. A story that deals with a topical theme (Chinese men risking their lives at sea in order to make money), as well as a story that can offer comfort, satisfy a longing for home, and instill a sense of belonging – all of which are dearly needed by Chinese migrants and/or their (surviving) relatives today.

Hence, the overtly digital character of the images may point out that the cinematic image is severed from referential reality in the sense that it is no longer a trace of a pro-filmic event as analogue film images used to be. Yet, at the same time, the digital constructedness functions as a temporal index in *Ten Thousand Waves*. For the contemporaneity of the technology points to the "now" of the image production. In this sense, the reality effect of the grainy surveillance video footage which appears in between shots of Mazu does not merely function as a rhetorical strategy which lends the digital film images with some of their lost indexicality, as Thomas Levin would argue. For the temporal indexicality of the grainy surveillance video footage not so much supplies the film images with something they do not have, but the video images are rather complementary to the temporal indexicality which the cinematic-looking images, to some extent, already possess because they turn out to be generated with the help of a video-specific technique that usually remains invisible when it is applied in contemporary digital narrative films.

Although the smooth digital artificiality of contemporary HD chroma-keyed images in no way resembles the rough look of the video surveillance footage, but rather looks exactly like high-quality film, both of these image types are video forms that point to the present. However, the temporal indexicality of keyed video images is not a general given. As mentioned previously, digitally manipulated HD video images cannot always be recognized as such. Therefore, they are often understood by their audience as fictional film images whose indexicality is simply uncertain in the digital age: they could refer to something which caused them, they could be entirely computer-generated. The temporal indexicality of HD digital video images depends entirely on the explicit confirmation that the chemical indexicality of the cinematic images in question is indeed non-existent. In other words, their indexicality depends on the exposure that, in spite of their filmic look and their embeddedness in a cinematically told fictional narrative, the images in question are in fact the result of state-of-the-art digital video manipulation. This state-of-the-art manipulation, moreover, especially signals "now" in Julien's installation because its contemporaneity stands in contrast to what it helps to represent: an age-old myth. In *Ten Thousand Waves*, the ancient myth of Mazu is both presented as an actuality by the fact that is narratively tied to the drowned cockle-fishers, and through the (disclosure of the) technological way in which it is tied to those Morecambe Bay victims.

In relation to the theme of migration, the coarse video images differ from the cinematic looking ones in one important respect, however. The medium-typical low image quality and hand-held character of the videomatic material produce an embodied mode of viewing which shapes the way in which the spectator can relate to the Chinese migrants. When the nine screens of the installation are filled with rapidly moving grey video pixels and black surging waves, the viewer loses the ground under her feet. Without a horizon or recognizable point of orientation, the spectator of Julien's installation is likely to feel lost and disoriented in between the screens. Previously, I described how the piece doesn't enable its spectator to identify with the character of the prostitute through the conventional film strategy of suture, because her point of view is not made accessible or visible to the viewer. However, the viewer is occasionally offered the possibility of seemingly traveling along with her, to accompany her in the tram, for instance. The same goes for the video footage of the rescue operation. The high angle from which most of the surveillance images are recorded indicate that they do not represent the immigrants' point of view. However, their disorienting effect enables the viewer to share the experience of the immigrants to some extent. This goes for the particular Chinese men who were lost at sea in Morecambe Bay, but can also be understood in a more general sense; the experience of migration is often described in terms of disorientation and being lost.

The installation's devices of exclusion I described before can be regarded in this light as well. When the high-quality cinematic images in the installation occasionally opacify and turn haptic, this change from cinematic image qualities to video-specific

features excludes the viewer from the depicted world, and puts up a boundary between the viewer and represented other. This visual exclusion of the viewer from the world on view can in itself be understood as an act that makes the viewer more like the other: similar to migrants in a strange country, the viewer is not allowed to visually enter the onscreen world. This exclusion is, of course, strongest in the case of Western viewers, who are not only excluded by the impermeability of the videomatic image surface, but who are also left in the dark when it comes to the spoken and written Chinese signs. Moreover, in addition to the fact that the Mandarin language is incomprehensible to the Western spectator, she may be unable to grasp the installation's culturally specific cinematic references. As a result, the viewer will to some extent experience a few of the most dominant negative feelings that can accompany migration. Through *Ten Thousand Waves'* specific combination of film and video features, we may end up in the same boat, indeed.