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The bureau of operational landscapes

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CODA: FURTHER RESEARCH

What I have shared in this dissertation is more of a start than an end. It implies that there is immense potential for this research to expand and evolve in unpredictable ways. The Port of Rotterdam is a massive territory, and as I have spelled out, it transcends its local configuration for a global one. This means that any intervention in this space will always be partial. However, I believe this is also the purpose of the *Bureau of Operational Landscapes*: to ensure that these landscapes remain unfinished and are seen as an always-ongoing act where multiple viewpoints accumulate and disintegrate, resisting the desire to remain stagnant repositories of the official instead of cultivating the ordinary. The preliminary gestures outlined in this dissertation suggest a greater possibility, and while significant, they are only indications rather than final products. Nonetheless, the “national park” framework has shown, albeit as a prototype, that overlooked sites like a port can be reimaged as vibrant and culturally important. This demonstrates that any site, irrespective of its usage, pulses with meaning that requires prompting for its interpretation. Embracing this perspective not only promotes community stewardship and collaboration but also allows the public to assess their perception and engage with the site as more than an object of sight.

Moving forward, I envision the *Bureau* not only enhancing its work within the Port of Rotterdam but also extending its efforts to similarly marginalized operational landscapes – supply zones, impact zones, or other logistical corridors. These spaces are vital to the health and economic well-being of cities, yet they are often overlooked, disregarded, or considered peripheral to daily life. The *Bureau* aims to intervene in these locations and reveal the interdependencies between the city and the operational spaces on its periphery, and how these landscapes impact both humans and nonhumans alike, influencing resource availability, environmental quality, and social and economic relations. As we become increasingly disconnected from the systems that sustain our

way of life, we allow these systems to infiltrate the fringes of our perception, making it incomprehensible to grasp the brutal consequences of this space invasion. Another goal of the *Bureau* is to inquire how detachment diminishes spatial understanding and how our ability to influence these systems becomes ever more diffuse the longer we rely solely on observation alone rather than engagement and experience.

Operational landscapes have transcended urban space, slipped past the hinterland, and now operate on such a vast scale that they are considered planetary – the local is long past. And yet, the local is still vital, as it is within local communities that these landscapes are both contested and relevant. For example, after expanding the park infrastructure of Park Maasvlakte, imagine a new kind of territory that has its own acronym: CAFO, which stands for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation. CAFOs are large-scale industrial agricultural facilities so massive that they spill across regions. These hyper-rationalized, securitized, and militarized animal slaughter landscapes are integral components of the food chain, yet they remain nothing more than mirages in the imagination. The *Bureau* has the potential to intervene within this landscape, utilizing an expanded repertoire of interpretive infrastructure to advocate for transparency in the food system. As my research into logistical landscapes has demonstrated, demanding legibility is a vital instrument to close the gap between the distant and inchoate agro-industrial complex and its potential for accessibility and oversight. Perhaps, one day, a site-based tour along the edges of these massive feedlots could provide exposure to the stench and penetrating heat and conditions faced by migrant workers and the thousands of cattle, bringing them into view, and with it, a different perception of what we eat, and how.