

New Landscapes of the Noir. The Urban Jungle in *The Shield* and *The Wire*.

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Contemporary Serial Culture
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The Wire: five seasons, one city

The Corners



The Port



The City Hall



The School



The Press



The Shield: the back patio of L.A.



Moral ambiguity: Mackey and McNulty



Urban landscape from the conception of both series



Clark Johnson



David Simon

“All the pieces matter”



Many cities in its interior



Power, spatiality, and social life

- ▶ “Relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life” (Edward Soja)

Baltimore (Maryland)



Los Angeles (California)



Staging the real



“She was talking to those people about the actual problems in their neighbourhood” (Jay Karnes)

A new neo-realist space

- ▶ *The Wire* and *The Shield* explore “the mechanisms of documentary” and reveal “that fictional cinema can also give priority to the referential effect when setting characters, things and ideas from the fictional world in a real universe that, geographically and temporally, might have already been perfectly defined” (Angel Quintana)

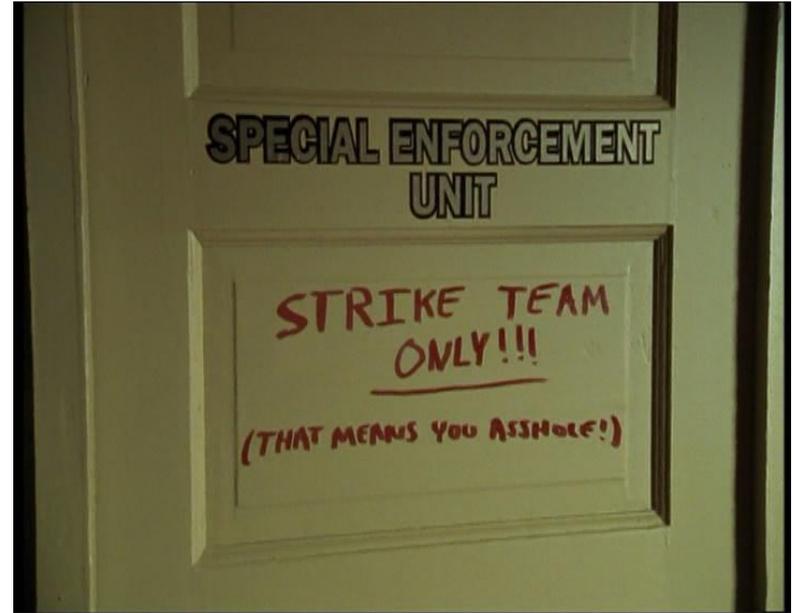
Film-Noir, space, time, city

- ▶ A “fragmented narration” that, “remains well attuned to the violently fragmented spaces and times of the late-modern world” (Dimenberg)

Baltimore police station



Farmington and the “Strike Team”



Alternate spaces



Domestication of non-places



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City/Home (Bubbles)



City/Home (McNulty)



City/Home (Marlo)



City/Home (Pilot *The Shield*)



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City/Home (Pilot *The Shield*)



The abysmal city

- ▶ *The Wire* and *The Shield*'s vision “of the abysmal city flaunts ambivalences about the relationship between the individual and the community” (Frank Krutnik)

Capitalism is Zeus

- ▶ “Capitalism is the ultimate god in *The Wire*. Capitalism is Zeus” (David Simon)

The game is rigged

- ▶ “Underlying *The Wire*’s story–arc is the conviction that social exclusion and corruption do not exist in spite of the system but because of it” (Sheehan and Sweeney, in Jumpcut, p. 4)
- ▶ “I got the shotgun. You got the briefcase. It’s all in the game, though, right?” (Omar)

Law, Morality and natural Justice

- ▶ “By consistently privileging Mackey’s maverick solutions to the problems of law enforcement (...), *The Shield* presents this ‘natural’ Justice as being an essential precondition for the existence of a social order (...), in which we have the luxury of moral principle or ethical law enforcement at all” (Chopra–Gant)

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