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Lines, traces, and tidemarks: further reflections on forms of border

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Conceptually, borders are nowadays more often understood as being processes and acts of the imagination rather than as being objects. Indeed, I myself have participated in that kind of discussion.[1] The debate has been part of a critique of the idea of borders as fixed, relatively self-evident things placed in the landscape by political authorities to mark territory. It has also involved a critique of the idea that borders are lines – an idea that, according to many historical accounts, is the defining characteristic of Westphalian-style borders, the kinds of borders that are built by states, and particularly by nation-states – which includes most contemporary forms of border, with some significant exceptions, such as European Union (EU) borders (Del Sarto 2010; Linklater 1998; Hassner 2002).[2] The key argument is that the idea of border as line is part of a particular political concept of border; it is not something that belongs to borders as a natural characteristic, but is instead historically and ideologically specific. As a result, many border scholars have replaced the idea of line with a panoply of other metaphors to describe a much messier and more complex, fluid, and shifting reality: networks and rhizomes are among the most common of those metaphors.[3]

Given the focus on the discursive construction of the concept of border in this debate, it is unsurprising that the way these fluid or rhizome-like metaphors relate to the material form that borders take has been much less discussed. Of course, that non-materiality is a core characteristic of these debates, which often argue that borders are not things, but activities. Here border is better thought of as a verb, 'to border', rather than as a noun, 'a border' (Van Houtum, Kramsch, and Zierhofer 2005).

An alternative perspective is that borders exist everywhere and nowhere simultaneously and that there is no fixed location for borders, which are discursive rather than material entities (Robinson 2007). That approach has tended to mean that the actual physical entities that are built in the landscape, and which are referred to by most people as 'borders', have been relatively neglected by this conceptual debate. At the same time, those working on the actual architecture of border practices have

repeatedly noted not only the visceral power that these objects, techniques, and constructions can exercise, but also how rapidly and sometimes radically these material characteristics are changing (Andersson 2014; Vaughan-Williams 2015; Weizman 2007). My aim in this chapter is to bring that intellectual work on the historically variable, discursive concept of border into relation with the material forms that contemporary borders take in practice, to think through what aspects of the material and immaterial become entangled here.

One of the important departures I will take is to retain the concept of 'line' in thinking about contemporary borders. This is not because I disagree with all the scholarship demonstrating that border thought of as a line is a historically contingent concept. On the contrary, I am retaining the concept because I entirely agree with that analysis (Green 2012), and I want to extend it in order to think through the material implications of imagining borders as lines, as well as considering what kinds of material forms that borders not considered as lines might take.

The geometry of lines

It is important to note from the beginning that, strictly speaking, the physical objects marking the geographical locations of political borders (the walls and fences) are not actually lines, and neither are the borders themselves, for that matter. In mathematical terms at least, lines are a one-dimensional abstraction: they are part of geometry, and they do not have a material (three-dimensional) form. Borders as geometrical lines appear only in images of borders (i.e. on maps). This is worth noting both because it points to the importance of political cartography in the development of the concept of border as line (Cosgrove 1999; Monmonier 1996; Pickles 2004; Jacob and Dahl 2006); and it highlights how easy it is to take an abstract concept (an epistemological entity, like a line) and assume that it is a thing (an ontological entity, like a wall) when discussing borders.

As many have noted, this confusion between cartographic and geographic realities of borders as lines has had some dramatic performative effects at times. The most obvious example is the bizarre straightness of many borders between African states: they have been literally drawn onto a (colonial) map using a ruler, and then made into a geographical reality. Maps showing the divisions between Egypt, Libya, and Sudan, or between Mauritania and Mali, amply demonstrate this territorial effect of the use of a ruler to draw a straight line on a map. As Ingold notes in his phenomenological work on lines as 'wayfaring', the trails left by people as they traverse the landscape are never straight (Ingold 2007). The straightness of the African borders is an indication of how colonial power could ignore any social, political, historical, cultural, or environmental considerations in deciding on the location of a border, and opt instead for what seemed most logical in technical terms: if borders are to be thought of as lines, then in creating new ones they should be drawn as such.

Lines and borders

The difference between lines and borders becomes clear when one considers cases in which borders are one-sided. It is logically impossible, geometrically speaking, for lines to be one-sided (although they have no thickness, they always bisect), but it is perfectly possible for borders to be so. An example is the current separation between the southern and northern parts of Cyprus (Papadakis 2005; Navaro-Yashin 2003). For the northern side (which is called, in the north, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, or TRNC), the separation constitutes a state border. For the southern side, which does not recognize the north as a state (indeed, internationally, only Turkey recognizes the TRNC), it is an illegal division of the island, so the separation is not a border. After it became possible to legally travel between the two sides in 2003, the northern side set up a checkpoint with border guards and issued visas (Dikomitis 2005). The southern side has police officers controlling the movement of people from the north, but no border checks. The police in the south are controlling the potential movement of people who have arrived in Cyprus via what the southern authorities define as an illegal route: that is, any route where the first port of entry into Cyprus is located in the northern (TRNC or occupied) territories (see also Demetriou, Chapter 2 above).

In sum: if the political authorities on the one side of a wall or barrier do not agree that it represents a border, which would require recognition of the political authority of the other side, then the border will be one-sided. Of course, no borders are supposed to be one-sided, and in contemporary geopolitics, one-sided borders are also always 'unfinished business'. Work always needs to be done to try and either make the border two-sided or remove it. In Cyprus, there is currently still a UN-operated buffer zone, called the Green Line (as it was drawn on a map with a green pen), between the northern and southern parts of the island, which has been there since 1964 and was extended in 1974, after the conflict that led to the current division of the island (Papadakis 2005; Papadakis, Perisitianis, and Welz 2006).

Incidentally, these kinds of one-sided places make clear that the meaning and even material operation of borders are relative: neither people nor governments can define a border entirely by themselves. To have a fully operational contemporary border requires international recognition. That is important, because it points to a simple but often neglected fact: the location and meaning of borders are always established as a relation, as well as a separation, between locations. This is something that I have regularly referred to as 'relative location' in other work (Green 2012; 2013b).

Here, my main point is that it is important to maintain a distinction between the abstract concept of lines and the materiality (and political contingency) of borders. Three-dimensional objects such as walls and fences, which are intended to mark the geographical limits or entry and exit points of many contemporary state territories, are symbols or representations of the geometrical, cartographic, abstract concept

of border as a line, rather than being the line as such. When the issue is looked at that way, it does not really matter that it is impossible, or prohibitively expensive, to build a wall or fence around the entire outer limits of most countries. A map of the entire outer limits, combined with a little bit of wall and a policed border-crossing, will do to make the point that a conceptual line, which has cartographic, legal, spatial, and territorial characteristics, relates to some kind of material reality in the landscape that the authority which built those objects wishes to assert. The crossing point or wall is the part that symbolizes the whole.

At the same time, and as the Cypriot example illustrates well, these walls and checkpoints are not only symbols that represent the location of borders. They are also physical objects that have an additional role in materially controlling how the border is maintained, policed, and crossed (which can include transgressive crossing, of course). So there is also something metonymic about these objects; they are not only metaphorical. As Caren Kaplan noted in her critique of the concept of the potentially radical or transgressive quality of travel in some postmodern thought, if a person does not have the right passports and visas, let alone the money and physical means to travel, they may not be able to go anywhere at all (Kaplan 1996). In that sense, the material presence of checkpoints, walls, fences, surveillance, and the management of borders matters in a visceral, as well as symbolic, way.

Towards traces and tidemarks

Given this combined metaphoric and metonymic characteristic of the physical objects that mark the locations of borders, I suggest that it might be helpful to think about them as traces. Unlike lines, traces have material forms, and they also evoke the passage of time in a way that lines do not. In material form, traces can be fragments of the whole entity, or a physical mark of it – the crumbs left from a loaf of bread that has been eaten, footprints in the sand, or a guarded checkpoint which stands for the full extent of the (mostly invisible) separation between one form of modern legal location and another. The point I want to emphasize here is that the metaphor of traces can help us to think about the entangled relation between symbolic, material, and legal forms.

In addition to the way traces can imply material forms in a way that lines do not, traces can also leave much room for doubt, speculation, and interpretation. This is in contrast to lines, which are usually evoked to assert clear divisions between two sides. Indeed, I begin from the premise that a crucial aspect of imagining political borders as lines is part of an effort to create unambiguous cuts: to mark clear, binary, separations between here and not-here. Borders thought of as lines are never intended to mark multiple, fluid, networked, rhizomatic, and constantly shifting differences or relations, but precisely to conceal any such messiness. In that sense, borders as lines are always an effort at simplification: the whole point is to mark a binary separation, backed up by power which officially polices and manages that separation.

The fact that few political borders in the world are anywhere near as clear-cut or straight as the ones drawn up by former colonial powers in Africa demonstrates that political borders are always work in progress. In practice, the location and meaning of borders are highly contingent; they also leave traces of previous efforts at marking a separation between locations; they regularly co-exist with cross-cutting attempts to define places differently; and they are also buffeted by the activities of people going about their daily lives, who may either understand borders differently or deliberately choose to contradict whatever is intended by those who built the border. This is where the metaphor of tidemark comes in. I will be suggesting that tidemark, as an idea, combines line and trace in a way that helps us to think through the ongoing metaphorical, metonymical, and material elements of 'border-ness'.

The original version of this chapter was written for the first meeting of EastBordNet, a network of researchers that was funded by COST working across the Eastern peripheries of Europe on various aspects of political borders.[4] The original paper was intended to begin a conversation about how to rethink borders, how to bring together people's experiences of 'border work' in their everyday lives with the conceptual and political elements of borders. This introduction has brought in many elements of the rethinking that occurred in the subsequent four years, and some changes made to the remainder of the paper similarly adjust my initial thoughts into ones that have developed from the experience. Yet the work is not yet done, so I am leaving the chapter as one that still opens out a conversation, rather than closing one down. The remaining sections, which discuss lines, traces, and tidemarks as concepts a little further, are intended to add some additional detail to the framework I have just outlined.

Critique of border as line: replacing it with transgressive identities

As I implied above, the main complaint against depicting borders as lines is that it confuses a political ideology with an ontological reality. The location and form of political borders are obviously politically determined, and they shift according to the vagaries of political fortunes and conflicts. Three recent, and very different, examples are: the independence of South Sudan in 2011; the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014; and, most recently, the United Kingdom referendum held on 23 June 2016, in which the majority voted to leave the EU. The first one involved the creation of an independent state out of part of the state of Sudan; the second involved the separation of part of the state of Ukraine and its incorporation into the Federation of Russia; and the third (which is still in discussion as this chapter is being written) involves the separation of a sovereign state from a political, economic, and legal union of sovereign states (the EU).

The creation of an independent state of South Sudan was recognized internationally; the annexation of Crimea is internationally disputed; and nobody quite knows what will happen when the United Kingdom ceases its membership of the

EU, assuming that the plan to leave goes ahead. As several researchers including myself have noted, the EU has developed highly unusual, if not unique, forms of border regime (Del Sarto 2010; Green 2013a). One distinct characteristic is that the EU's border regimes overlap in varying levels of inclusion and exclusion. For example, there are twenty-six states in the Schengen area, within which there is free movement across state boundaries. These Schengen states do not include all the EU member states (e.g. the United Kingdom and Cyprus are outside Schengen) but do include some states that are not members of the EU (e.g. Norway and Switzerland). Two other examples: the euro is the currency of only seventeen of the twenty-eight member states; and the EU Customs Union includes all the EU member states plus four others, including Turkey. And so on. When one looks at the border practices of the EU, it seems obvious that the idea of border as a line has been overlain (rather than replaced, for all the states involved are still sovereign states) by something else.

In this context, it is intriguing to look back at the earlier critiques of the notion of borders as self-evident lines, which were based on studies of the US–Mexican border in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Once people ceased to think of borders as reflecting something self-evident about the relationship between territory and peoples, the possibilities of altering the realities that borders marked became clear. For anthropology, Alvarez summarized this as follows:

> Rather than maintain a focus on the geographically and territorially bounded community and culture, the concepts inherent in the borders genre are alert to the shifting of behaviour and identity and the reconfiguration of the social patterns at the dynamic interstices of cultural practices. ... we need to examine paradox, conflict, contradiction, and contrasts. (Alvarez 1995: 462)

In short, the idea was that border was the location of all kinds of relations and experiences that could challenge the hegemonic story of what kinds of identities border represented. By focusing on movements across, and transgressions of, the US–Mexican border, rather than on what the border contained and separated, a whole slew of hybrids, fluid identities, and mixtures would be revealed.

As interesting as that focus upon uncertainty and transgression was, the perspective offered by Alvarez did not discuss the qualities or characteristics of borders, as such. Many of the approaches within this genre in fact appeared to take for granted what constitutes the concept of 'border': it is the location of the meeting of differences, and therefore border is a site for conflict as well as holding the potential to generate hybrids and other forms of border-transgressing entities.

Researchers who have continued that genre – particularly those in American studies and in cultural studies (e.g. Saldívar 1997) – took the critique of the naturalness of 'border' as key to developing a politics of unsettling the notion of natural identities – particularly raced, gendered, and sexual identities. Note

that the identity of borders is not the point here: it is the identity of people that is the point.

This genre of border studies became rapidly involved with post-colonial studies, subaltern studies, and, perhaps particularly, the work of Deleuze and Guattari, especially *Nomadology* and *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1986; 1988). Their work seemed to carry a promise of escape from the constraints of border through their ideas of nomadism and the Spinoza-inspired idea of singularity – of everything existing on a single fabric of space and time – so that any divisions and subdivisions within the fabric (the constant proliferation of differences), what many people understood as border, were in fact all part of the same entity, in the end all interconnected like a rhizome in a field (see also Pulkkinen, Chapter 4 above).

It was not long before critiques of the more idealistic versions of this perspective began to emerge. As I mentioned earlier, Caren Kaplan questioned the reliance upon the idea of travel, migration, and wandering in this literature, arguing that the idealized notion of being able to travel and wander was borne of a rather old modernist belief that you can transform yourself by travelling (Kaplan 1996). This kind of view does not, Kaplan argued, take into account the political, legal, economic, and social conditions in which travelling, or the inability to travel, radically affects people's lives. She also argued that a failure to distinguish between tourism, enforced travel, documented and undocumented migration, and rather romantic colonial visions of the expatriate made the idea of the singular fluidity of border inadequate to the task of understanding travel, let alone what 'line' might mean in relation to border.

Beside those debates, there were also a number of scholars, including Donnan and Wilson, who pointed out that questioning the naturalness of political borders was a little older than the US–Mexican borderlands studies suggested (Wilson and Donnan 1994). Indeed, a book published in 1973, Cole and Wolf's *The Hidden Frontier*, focuses squarely on border as an entity that is locally generated by historically variable social, political, and economic relations, and is not simply a line drawn by the state (Cole and Wolf 1973). In Cole and Wolf's view, people who live their everyday lives generate border as much as any formal legal or political entity does. Here, the issue still concerned people's identities, but Cole and Wolf pointed out that it was as much local people getting on with their everyday lives that attached identities to borders as it was the states that placed them in the landscape.

In sum, the 1990s debate about borders focused mostly on the transgressive, rhizomatic, fluid, and hybrid identity of people, and as a result, neither the conceptual nor the material character of borders themselves, as entities in the landscape, was really resolved by this debate. What was interesting about borders for this discussion was the way people's identities became entangled with them; what the building of a wall might mean in terms of the concept of border, as such, was somehow beside the point.

Back to spatial borders

Here, I am going to return to the significance of retaining the concept of line in making a start towards trying to understand the actual walls. What that lengthy debate about identities, subjectivities, and rhizomatic relations demonstrated is that the world is highly cluttered: it is full of people moving, interacting, and creating a range of discourses and diverse ways of understanding themselves and their relations and separations with their locations and with each other. It is into that kind of cluttered world that post-Westphalian political authorities attempt to impose clear, simplified cuts: the border as line, the border as wall, a distinction between here and not-here, backed up with law, police enforcement, surveillance, and an ideology that justifies the possession of territory. It is the opposite of a rhizome or network: it is an attempt to stop the endless proliferation of relations and to impose a cut.

Here, Marilyn Strathern's paper 'Cutting the Network' provides an excellent way to think about how this cutting works. In a discussion about Latour's idea of networks and hybrids, Strathern made the point that in order to understand anything as being an entity, it has to be cut out of potentially endless connections:

> Interpretation must hold objects of reflection stable long enough to be of use. That holding stable may be imagined as stopping a flow or cutting into an expanse … 'Cutting' is used as a metaphor by Derrida himself … for the way one phenomenon stops the flow of others. Thus the force of 'law' cuts into a limitless expanse of 'justice'. (Strathern 1996: 522)

Strathern's point is that there are various (epistemological, legal) mechanisms that make 'cuts' in the potential endlessness of networks or rhizomes – and it is those cuts which allow an entity to appear as a 'thing'. The examples she uses are patent law, which cuts out all people involved in creating an invention other than those named in the patent; and kinship rules such as exogamy, sister-exchange, or cross-cousin marriage, which limit who can marry whom. The patent effectively creates an invention, and the marriage rules effectively create kin. It is the cutting, not the network, that does this work, that has this creative effect.

I would like to suggest that such cutting is the intention of political authorities who both legally identify the location of borders and build things in the landscape to both symbolize and police such borders: these are attempts at creating a 'thing' (a country, a nation, a state, a territory, a people who belong to that territory, and any number of other things). And like the rules of patent law and the rules of kinship, this form of cutting exists within a recognized system for how to do such things: international protocols, regulations, oversight by the UN, ideologies about what might justify the claim to territory, and so on. The 'line' may be symbolized and physically policed by crossing points, walls and so on; but it also remains an abstraction, a conceptual way of distinguishing here from not-here, mapping that

onto the landscape and calling it a thing. In that sense, the concept of line as border is used to cut the network in contemporary border work – meaning the work done, both formal and informal, in creating the spatial and territorially marked realities with which we live (Reeves 2014; Green and Malm 2013; Rumford 2009). For that reason, I think that it is important to retain the concept in thinking about the work that contemporary borders do in practice. It is not, by any means, the only way to do border work, and in a sense, that is the point: it is historically contingent. It is simply a very powerful way that border work is currently done.

This brings me to Tim Ingold's *Lines: A Brief History* (Ingold 2007). Ingold, who takes a strongly phenomenological approach, argues that the whole of life could be seen as the creation, or following, or wandering around, of a series of lines (which are usually not straight in his definition of lines), and that anthropologists should focus on the lines rather than on points. For Ingold, neither networks nor kinship diagrams are about lines, because both focus on the points in between the lines. He prefers the term 'meshwork' to network, to get away from the idea of points with connectors, as opposed to lines interrelated with other lines.

Meshwork, Ingold suggests, more accurately reflects lines as experienced in the world, which are open-ended, curly, intertwined, not necessarily hierarchical. In this discussion, Ingold distinguishes repeatedly between wayfaring and transportation: wayfaring, he suggests, is a form of wandering, whereas transportation is a movement between one point and the next point. His argument is that lines are about the process of travelling and the experience people have while doing it, whereas transportation is about the points – starting point A and destination point B.

This is obviously a starkly different understanding of line from that which I have presented. I began from the geometrical properties of line, and I did so in order to draw out the logic that informs the use of line as a historically specific (post-Westphalian) political metaphor to describe borders. And that was in order to try and understand what kind of work defining borders as lines achieves, both materially and symbolically. I have suggested that the assertion that border constitutes a line can be seen as an official attempt at cutting through the meshwork, rather than constituting the meshwork. And, drawing on Strathern's understanding of network, I have suggested that this cutting is an attempt to carve out a certain reality from the clutter of the world, to simplify and clarify, to remove the knots and tangles, and thus to define what has been cut out of the mess. The act of cutting in the case of border might even be called an effort at performativity: to declare that the difference between here and not-here is a particular kind of thing (e.g. a nation, as Pulkkinen discusses in Chapter 4 above).

In short, my interest in line is as an epistemological and discursive concept that has been deployed in the building of particular kinds of political borders (modern state borders), which I have suggested are efforts at imposing a certain reality onto a cluttered world. In contrast, Ingold's focus is on the cluttering, on the process through which the world becomes enmeshed. Ingold stretched the meaning of line

far beyond the logic of geometry to which I confined it; in geometrical terms, most of Ingold's lines are curves and tangles, not lines.

Having linked my use of the term 'line' to its geometric epistemology, I cannot draw upon the term to imply any kind of passage of time, as Ingold does with his much wider metaphorical use of line. So, in order to think about the fact that borders involve not only historically specific conceptualization, but also ongoing 'border work' – all the practices and activities that occur, both officially and unofficially, in generating a particular quality of 'border-ness' at any given time – I am introducing a separate metaphor: the idea of trace.

Trace and border

Many writers speak of traces; indeed, Ingold does so, in suggesting that lines are not all the same, in that some are threads, with direct links between entities, whereas others are traces, with only hints of connections, and yet others are ghosts, apparitions of previously experienced lines (Ingold 2007: 41–50; see also Myrivili, Chapter 7 below). However, as I have outlined, stretching the definition of line so far that it includes curves, tangles, cuts, traces, threads, and other things may help people to understand the sensory experience of line, but does not assist me in understanding the combined conceptual and material work that contemporary borders do. So I am deliberately separating trace from line, making them into two separate concepts.

In particular, I am interested in how the notion of trace includes a sense of time in a way that line does not. There are several scholars who have worked on that. For example, Michael Taussig regularly speaks of traces in terms of what is left from the past in the present, silently nudging our thoughts and understanding. In an article on the history of indigo, the substance used to make a certain shade of dark blue in clothing (the blue-jeans kind of blue), Taussig considers trace in terms of past relationships with diverse parts of the world that is left in that term, 'indigo', and other similar words that emerged during the height of the period of colonial trade. Even though that particular shade of blue is now mostly made from chemicals that no longer have any relationship with indigo (and in that sense, the trace has been erased), Taussig suggests that the trace is always there in the word, even if it is not always consciously present:

> The tongue remembers, but you do not. Life moves on while all around you lie the traces of lost eras, active in the present, hanging on the wall, covering the windows, not to mention the couch on which you sit or the dress you will wear tonight. *Damask.* (Taussig 2008: 4)

What Taussig is trying to do here is bring back to consciousness the colonial history of colour – in this case, indigo, a blue that came along the same routes as spices in order to arrive here – from the East (here being, implicitly, the West). The words

we use still recall those associations, even though the reliance on the indigo plant for our blues is long gone.

Evocative as that idea might be, it is possible to go further with this notion of trace. Derrida's notion of trace is one of his more obscure concepts, but a couple of aspects are helpful in thinking about contemporary border work. One key point is that trace, for Derrida, refers to something that is always-already absent and may never have actually existed, but that is drawn upon in understanding what does exist in the here and now. In Derrida's words, trace is 'irreducible absence within the presence of the trace' (Derrida 1997: 47). A simple example is the crumbs left from a loaf of bread that has been eaten: the crumbs evoke the whole loaf of bread, but in order for them to act as a trace of the whole loaf, the actual loaf must be absent, and only the crumbs present. In other words, trace evokes something that does not exist in the present, but that helps to make sense of the present – and, in fact, the past and the future as well (Derrida 1997: 65–7). In *Writing and Difference*, Derrida suggests that

> The trace is not a presence but is rather the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates, displaces, and refers beyond itself. The trace has, properly speaking, no place, for effacement belongs to the very structure of the trace … In this way the metaphysical text is understood; it is still readable, and remains read. (Derrida 1978: 403)

And more interestingly for my purposes, Taylor and Winquist directly relate Derrida's notion of trace to notions of border and location:

> trace is conceived of as a radicalized sign: the mark of an event and of a memory that transfigures this event into an 'archive', that is, the *border* of representation itself, its fluid limit. The trace shows the work of time by providing a locus which redefines the 'who' and 'what' questions into a 'where'. (Taylor and Winquist 2003: 404, emphasis added)

This approach emphasizes the irreducibility of historical time in borders, the way time is crucial to experiences of border, and an element that makes clear that border is something that is best thought of as an active entity (and see also Pulkkinen, Chapter 4 above). It also draws out the way the idea of trace could be evoked as a means to understand 'border' as incorporating both time and space simultaneously, as well as evoking a notion of difference (*différance*), without necessarily implying either inequality or separation.

Derrida's notion of trace is interesting for another reason. His notion of *arche-trace*, which refers to traces of the absence of entities that have never existed (crumbs without there ever having been a loaf of bread), echoes quite a lot of scholarship about borders. Borders are replete with the traces of entities that have never existed. One could easily argue that the concept of nation is classically one of those entities. Gourgouris noted that nation has to be always already there: there has to be a sense of its prior existence as an entity, before any legally recognized

territory can be created to make 'nation' a legal reality (Gourgouris 1996). In other words, the lack of nation has to be felt before any nation can come into existence. That, Gourgouris suggests, is what the Greek nationalist movements in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were all about: claiming the eternal existence of a place that had never yet existed in order to bring it into existence. One could easily see that as a good example of Derrida's notion of trace: sensing the signs of something that has never actually existed, and eventually creating a spatial extension, a territory, to mark or create that entity, to cut it out of the mess and clutter of everything else, and thus bring it (the nation) into existence.

Drawing on Derrida to think about trace in this way points to the historical contingency of creating new realities: the trace provides a sign of something that is not here, that is not visible, but somehow provides tangible evidence, and in the case of borders sometimes material evidence, of the existence of the thing that is absent or invisible. The checkpoint and the wall imply the entire border; and the entire border implies the entity that it contains – the state, the nation, the people, whatever. The checkpoint is a trace in that sense. And in Derrida's view, the trace is always contingent – it never hides an ultimate, timeless, reality; what it signifies is always dependent upon the here and now. The case of the one-sided border in Cyprus is an example of how that works in practice (see also Demetriou, Chapter 2 above).

Yet contemporary political borders are not only attempts at creating lines and the evocation of traces across time. They are also located in space. Here, Doreen Massey's highly evocative understanding of space (Massey 2005), combined with Stuart Elden's more recent study of the history of territory (Elden 2013), have helped me to articulate this combination of line, trace, time, and space, as tidemark, a metaphor that might include all four.

Massey and Elden: making space lively

Unlike Derrida, who describes space as 'dead time' (Derrida 1997: 68), Massey argues that space is entirely lively, constituting a 'simultaneity of stories so far' (Massey 2005: 12). At any one moment, she argues, what constitutes space is the outcome of multiple relations, unpredictable happenings, and everyday activities. In simplistic terms, what is going on in Mumbai at this very moment is different from what is going on in Nicosia at this very moment; they are on different trajectories, and are involved in the world in different ways. There is no reason to think that Mumbai somehow sits on a single time line with Nicosia, moving from less developed to more developed, or from now to tomorrow, in the same way. There may be moments when the two are brought into relation with one another, somehow contribute to each other; but there is no guarantee that even if there is contact between them, they will somehow then become part of the same space or location.

To Massey, then, space cannot be an undifferentiated fabric; nor can it be simply representation, which many argue that it is; nor can it be static, and it most certainly

cannot efface time in the sense that Derrida implies. This is because, Massey argues, the mere fact of being spatially positioned means a difference from being positioned elsewhere. Massey also insists that time is historical, and suggests that at any one moment, different and irreversible things are happening. She calls this 'the principle of co-existing heterogeneity. It is not the particular nature of heterogeneities but the fact of them that is intrinsic to space' (Massey 2005: 12).

Massey critiques both the assumption of the naturalness of territorialization and the notion of deterritorialization in this time of globalization – as expressed by Appadurai, for example (Appadurai 1996). She calls the former essentialist, suggesting instead that space should be 'thought of as an emergent product of relations, including those relations which establish boundaries, and where "place" in consequence is necessarily a *meeting* place' (Massey 2005: 68). The imposition of territories over these ongoing relations, Massey argues, is always a political act, part of what she refers to as 'power geometry'.

This approach complements, though is different from, Stuart Elden's detailed study of the emergence of the modern concept of territory (Elden 2013). Drawing on Foucauldian understandings of the history of concepts, Elden argues that contemporary understandings of territory developed out of a combination of epistemological, legal, and political conditions that historically developed in Europe and then spread across the world. The concept combined Western science with politics and understandings of space:

> the notion of space that emerges in the scientific revolution is defined by *extension.* Territory can be understood as the political counterpart to this notion of calculating space, and can therefore be thought of as the *extension of the state's power.* ... Territory comprises techniques for measuring land and controlling terrain. Measure and control – the technical and the legal – need to be thought alongside land and terrain. What is crucial in this designation is the attempt to keep the question of territory open. Understanding territory as a political technology is not to define territory once and for all; rather, it is to indicate the issues at stake in grasping how it was understood in different historical and geographical contexts. (Elden 2013: 322)

The key point for my purposes here is that the emergence of the idea of border as line was something that required both the technical epistemology – the mapping techniques and geometrical knowledge – and the political linking of power with extension – with power over an expanse of land (which was embedded within the Westphalia Treaties), as opposed (say) to power over a people, wherever they happen to be located. In Elden's terms, the idea of territory in this sense, which incorporates the concept of border as line, took many centuries to develop.

Massey, like Elden, emphasizes the historical contingency of the current arrangements: whatever divisions currently exist, and however powerfully backed up they may be, things could be otherwise. The fairly radical experiments occurring within EU bordering practices that I briefly mentioned earlier, in which diverse functions

of borders have been separated out and distributed across states in a variety of par-
tially overlapping spatial regimes (Green 2012), is an example of the potential for
something different to co-exist with the idea of border as line. But it is important
to note that this is co-existence, not replacement of one kind of regime by another.
And it is also important to note that particular understandings of space as extension
(territory) are being brought together here with various types of rights and obliga-
tions over that space, and rights and obligations cross-cut the state boundaries. The
euro is used in several EU member states, but not all of them; the Schengen Zone is
both smaller than the extension of all the EU member states, but also goes beyond
them.

What Massey adds to Elden's detailed conceptual history of a single concept
(territory) is the idea of multiplicity: the possibility that a number of different ways
of bringing together space, people, and time could co-exist (Massey 2005: 89).
The EU is currently an example of how that can happen in formal, political, and
legal terms; but many borderland ethnographies since Cole and Wolf's pioneering
studies in the 1970s have shown that this co-existence can happen in a variety of
informal ways as well. This is where the metaphor of tidemark finally comes in.

Conclusion: towards the tidemark

The idea of tidemark aims to combine line and trace with Massey's and Elden's
understanding of space as being power-inflected, but also lively, contingent, and
open to constant redefinition. This is a means to try to bring together the metaphor-
ical and material aspects of contemporary border work. What I have explored is the
way in which the dominant contemporary concept of border, in which the idea of
line plays a crucial part, involves a constant effort at simplification and cutting of a
much more entangled social, political, economic, and spatial reality. The concept
of line as a one-dimensional abstraction rather than a thing can be adequately sym-
bolized or represented in a combination of maps and material objects in the land-
scape such as border-crossing points and walls, and through the exercise of various
bureaucratic procedures (the requirements of passports, visas, demonstration of
permanent residence, etc.). The idea of all this is to create a spatially bounded,
political, and ideological reality: usually a sovereign state, and often also a nation.

Yet the attempt at generating those realities, as we have seen in the case of
Cyprus and the current complexities of the EU, is often challenged or cross-cut by
other ideas of how to organize the relation between people and space. The mesh-
work, in Ingold's terms, constantly interferes. So the official attempts to generate
borders and control the meanings they impose upon space always co-exist with a
panoply of other things, both conceptual and material.

The idea of tidemark is a small attempt to metaphorically combine the mesh-
work, the interweaving of everyday life, with that combination of space, time,
materiality, and the ongoing transformation of things and places that this process

generates. Tidemark partially evokes the sense of trace, without specifying how much of that is a Taussig kind of trace, with visceral connections to histories that have been almost erased from view; and/or a Derrida kind of trace, where border-ness is generated from the always-already existence of differences and otherness that are absent here, and may never have existed, but whose traces (the crumbs and footprints left behind) are crucial to helping to generate a sense of border. Tidemark also combines space and historical time, and envisages both space and time as being lively and contingent. Moreover, in English, the word 'tidemark' refers not only to the mark left in the sand by the water that has receded with the tide, but also to the vertical measuring post that measures the height of the tide: the word describes both the material thing and the epistemology used to measure it, to define it as a mark left by the tide. It is that combination of material and epistemological, within a deeply spatial logic, that I am trying to capture here.

Border-ness in that sense concerns where things have got to so far, in the multiple, unpredictable, power-inflected, imagined, overlapping, and visceral way in which everyday life tends to occur.

Notes

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1 A few examples include Green (2010); Anzaldúa (1987); Balibar (1998); Banerjee (2010); Van Houtum, Kramsch, and Zierhofer (2005).
2 See also Stuart Elden's highly insightful study of the development of the concept of 'territory' in the Western imagination (Elden 2013).
3 E.g. Myrivili (2004); Zartman (2010); Robinson (2007).
4 http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/isch/IS0803 (last accessed 9 July 2016).

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