



Out of Sight, Out of Mind:
Invisibility of the Worker
in Alex Rivera's *Sleep Dealer*

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About the Film

Sleep Dealer is a 2008 science fiction film by Alex Rivera. It follows Memo Cruz as he travels to Tijuana to work in a *infomaquila* as a node worker.



Why Cybraceros/Bracero Program



Bracero workers, 1956 <https://timeline.com/bracero-mexican-worker-program-f1316f183bc8>



"Cybracero" drone picking oranges - clip from "Why Cybraceros" by Alex Rivera

Borders in Sleep Dealer



The film takes place on the Mexican-U.S. border. Memo is working in an infomaquila in Tijuana, but his labor is being performed on a building in San Diego.

→ We see two borders here - the physical border in *Sleep Dealer* that divides human from labor, and the one constructed by society that attempts to do the same.



Border Theory

- Borders after globalization - eliminated or strengthened?
- Hybridity - something “new” created at the border, the world that exists in that space.

“I work in a place I’ll never see.
I can see my family but I can’t
touch them”.

→ Migrant workers in the
U.S. - *in* the U.S., but
never *part of* the U.S.



Alienation of Labor

Karl Marx's *Estranged Labor*, 1844

Worker is alienated from product of their labor

- Borders escalate this by suggesting worker is alienated from labor itself.
- Labor seen as something that can stand alone



On the Other Side of Borders



https://www.highlandnews.net/business/part-the-bracero-program-life-and-times/article_ff4d5fbe-56cd-11e7-99df-635986fb90ba.html



<https://maquiladoras-educateyourself.weebly.com/the-environment.html>

Visibility

Consuming Mexican Labor, Visibility of Bracero workers' living conditions

- Visibility as opposite of border
 - ◆ Necessary to see consequences of power or profit

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