AGAINST THE NEW ENCLOSURES: COMMUNICATIONAL INSURGENCIES AS PRACTICES OF ANTI-FEAR

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the communicational dimensions of fear in neoliberal globalization, focusing on the problem of democracy when fear becomes the major lexicon and practice of politics. This study seeks to demonstrate how socio-cultural fear not only produces both fearful people and terrifying forms of political repression but also vital practices of anti-fear. The refusal of top down political fear, I argue, became increasingly significant in oppositional cultural practices in the context of the new enclosures of neoliberal globalization.

Situated in the "long 1990s", between the enormous social upheavals following 1989 and the launching of the "War on Terror" in 2001, my dissertation proposes two lines of theoretical and methodological renovation. The first is based on a critique of the tendency to analyze communication processes as a problem of technology and argues for the importance of looking at communication from the perspective of the protagonists of culture. The second renovation tackles the totalizing, top-down tendency that predominates in much of the fear scholarship where fear itself is treated as a complete cultural project. This problem is exemplified in the fear literature's neglect of social agency – the diverse strategies of contestation and insubordination that have always confronted the politics of fear. I argue that this inadvertently reproduces the dominant political use of fear because people, in this view, are not the protagonists of culture but receptacles of it.

To think about practices of anti-fear from the perspective of the protagonists of culture, I develop the concept of "communicational insurgencies" to theorize the role of communication politics in contemporary anti-enclosure movements. Drawing on examples from Vancouver, Los Angeles, New York and Ciudad Juarez, I use a grounded approach to analyze some of the ways in which the circulation of fear is contested and how this refusal is also an affirmation of dignity, democracy and social justice.

Keywords: Fear; Democratic Communication; Social Movements; Neoliberalism; Global Cities; Cultural Politics

DEDICATION

For Pablo Mendez

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INTRODUCTION

Past in the Present: Fear amidst the Enclosures Old and New

On a Sunday in the spring of 1649, a group of poor, landless women and men gathered on Saint Georges Hill outside of London and began to dig the uncultivated waste. Appropriately, the group called itself the Diggers. They planted crops and issued manifestos calling for the "earth to be a common treasury". They circulated pamphlets condemning both the enclosures of the commons and the authorities that oversaw them. Within days of the original group's arrival, the number of Diggers started to swell, with thousands of landless, hungry people arriving to join the effort. The local clergy and lords of the land, along with the authorities in nearby London, were tormented by the consequences of such transgression. Given the encampment's proximity to London, any poor person wishing to common could reach it with little difficulty. Those fears could only have escalated when, within a few months of the occupation of Saint George's Hill, people calling themselves Diggers began planting on land in Kent, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Gloucestershire. According to social historian Christopher Hill, "the early months of 1649 had been a terrifying time for the men of property" (2002: 19). As word spread and more and more dispossessed commoners joined the squat on the Hill, the anxious lords and clergy dispatched vigilante gangs to evict the commoners. Within months the authorities in London sent in its military to evict the Diggers. The soldiers descended savagely on the encampment, dispersing the terrorized farmers.

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In 1652, one of the Diggers, George Winstanley, wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*, and designated the document as "a draft constitution for a communist commonwealth" (ibid.: 56). Winstanley's manifesto represented a counter-vision to Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, which had been published the previous year. Hobbes' book outlined a theory of the modern state, for which fear occupied the centre.

As a philosopher of the absolute state, Hobbes appreciated the productive role of fear in curtailing dissent from below. In his view, the political use of fear would halt the breakdown of authority represented in the dangerous transgressions of autonomous movements like the Diggers. Amidst the violence and insecurity of the enclosure movement, he argued, fear would provide a common ethic among the dispossessed who had lost not only their access to the material commons but also a commonality of being (Robin, 2004). According to political theorist Corey Robin, Hobbes' state, "succeeded when its subjects merely stood still or got out of its way. Their immobility was the outward sign of their fear – a fear signalling their unwillingness to take up arms against the state" (2004: 45-46).

While Hobbes responded to the upheaval of the times by thinking about fear and the disciplining of desire to ensure the stability of the absolute state, Winstanley presented a program of freedom. Opposite to Hobbes' useful, unifying fear, Winstanley's projection of a common political renewal was one explicitly free from the pervasive fear that accompanied the grinding insecurity that so plagued the poor during this period of enclosure (Hill, 2002). "What need have we of imprisonment, whipping or hanging laws to bring one another into bondage?", Winstanley asked (cited in Hill, 2002: 26-27). As the better known among a succession of movements against the original

enclosures of the commons that emerged around the world, the Diggers' oppositional

cultural practice introduced forms of political confrontation to challenge the disciplining

use of fear. Then, as now, communication practices played a vital role in the elaboration

and circulation of social struggles against the politics of fear upon which the capitalist

enclosures relied.

I start with a juxtaposition of the Diggers and Thomas Hobbes to highlight this

dissertation's effort to think about the socio-cultural legacy of these competing

philosophies on freedom and fear. My focus, however, lies in relation to the continuation

of the enclosures in and their contemporary manifestation as globalizing neoliberalism.

In other words, this dissertation grapples with the relationship between fear – as a

political category and tool of social discipline and separation – and the oppositional

cultural practices of the subjects on whom fear is unleashed. The concept of the new

enclosures provides the theoretical and methodological apparatus of this investigation

into the communicational aspects of those particular practices of insubordination. I argue

that of all the categories through which to analyze the politics of fear, refusal is becoming

increasingly relevant today. This introduction sets up the intersecting literatures,

theoretical debates and controversies that are explored throughout this dissertation.

In the post-Cold War context, the terminology of the commons and enclosures has

resurfaced in both the language used by social movements and in social theory. In 1992,

the British journal *The Ecologist* dedicated a special issue to elaborating the concepts,

connecting structural adjustment in the Global South with Thatcherism in Britain and the

myriad of displacements and dispossessions that have underwritten capitalist

development. By emphasizing the urban as well as the rural and the persistence of

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enclosure in the Global North as well as the South, this analysis made a vital contribution to thinking about the continuous nature of the enclosure movement in the historical present. The journal's critique also foreshadowed what would become, throughout the decade, the increasing centrality of questions of security. It argued that from the perspective of the commons, security depended on strong communities of mutual aid, in contrast to the understanding of security as military force. The process of global enclosures, *The Ecologist* perceptively warned, would require the expansion of a global police to enforce it.

Around the same time as *The Ecologist*'s special issue was published, Mexican scholar Gustavo Esteva (1992) was also using the language of the commons and enclosures in his trenchant critiques of the development industry. In the U.S., the political philosopher Thomas Dumm (1993) used the concept of the new enclosures to theorize the politics of representation surrounding the 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion. A few years later, social theorist Zygmunt Bauman (1998) also began using the term new enclosures to refer to the effects of globalized neoliberalism. Communications scholar Dorothy Kidd (1998) innovatively used the framework of commons and enclosures and applies it to what she calls the "media enclosures" and to analyze the growing planetary movement for media democracy. By 2001, in an early reflection of the extent to which the language of commons and enclosures has gained currency in the lexicon of global movements against neoliberalism, journalist Naomi Klein (2001) also began to use the terminology of reclaiming the commons in her writings. All of these commentators and scholars use the terms commons and enclosures to theorize the relationship between neoliberal

restructuring, generalized social insecurity and the erosion of democracy that these processes entail.

One of the first and most theoretically developed use of the conceptual terminology of commons/enclosures in the neoliberal period was composed in the late 1980s by a group of radical historians, philosophers and sociologists writing under the pen name of the Midnight Notes Collective. The group developed the concept of the new enclosures as a way of theorizing contemporary capitalist globalisation through the lens of the original creation of the proletariat, both waged and unwaged, during the original enclosures of the commons in sixteenth century Europe. In a publication entitled *The New Enclosures* (1990), Midnight Notes further elaborated the concept to theorize the emergent post-Cold War context and to argue for a conceptualisation of globalization "from below". "The debt crisis", "homelessness", and "the collapse of socialism", the group wrote, "are frequently treated as distinct phenomena by both mainstream media and left journalists. For us at Midnight they but deceptively name aspects of a single process: the New Enclosures, which must operate throughout the planet in differing divisive guises while in reality being totally interdependent" (1990: 2).

Drawing on Marx's theoretical apparatus, Midnight Notes' concept of the new enclosures poses a challenge to conventional Euro-centric Marxian historiography, whose static theory of "the transition" from feudalism to capitalism ignores the pillage, displacements and proletarianizations taking place through the five centuries of capitalist

globalization into the present[1]. Hence, Midnight's conceptualization is especially useful

for analysing the reorganization of societies in the 1990s according to the neoliberal

principles of privatisation, free trade and the attacks on the social commons[2]. Here, these

processes are considered along the historical trajectory of the original enclosures, the

process of separation that produced free wage labour and which Marx (1976) theorized as

"so-called primitive accumulation" in the later part of Volume One of *Capital*. Through

this process, displaced farmers were turned into paupers, vagabonds, and beggars and

eventually transformed into waged workers as the land was put to work for industrial

agriculture for the commodity markets. Separation from the land meant separation from

access to an independent livelihood, the imposition of the wage, and ever more elaborate

divisions and separations between people. Hence, Midnight's application of the concept

to the contemporary context represents an argument for understanding the processes of

neoliberal globalization as connected to the continuous character of so-called primitive

accumulation (De Angelis, 2007).

Generally seen to have begun in early 1970s, the neoliberal phase of the capitalist

enclosures represents a period of capitalist counter-revolution that sought the radical

retrenchment of the communal rights transnationally. In practice, this has meant a

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[1] The "transition" was first theorized by British social historians of the 1940s and 1950s who used the term to describe the period roughly between 1450 and 1650, which they theorized as a time when feudalism in Europe was breaking down and capitalist society was beginning to take shape yet no new integrated system was fully in place. Former Midnight Notes member Silvia Federici (2004) has critiqued the way the term suggests a gradual, linear process, when in fact it was among the most violent and discontinuous periods in world history.

[2] I am using the term social commons here to refer to what is traditionally identified as the redistributive activities of the state and classically expressed in the body of rights and entitlements that are more or less guaranteed by the welfare state: education, health, pensions and unemployment benefits. The term is taken from Massimo De Angelis who defines the social commons as "[...] those commons that have been created as a result of past social movements and later formalized by institutional practices" (2007: 148). For me, this terminology defetishizes the state and suggests a more precise, open and historically grounded conception of social welfare.

sustained and vigorous effort to privatise and monetize those aspects of social life that constitute what Marx referred to as the "social barriers" to capital accumulation. This process has included a reinvigoration of physical enclosure, such as that found in the privatisation of communal land-tenure systems in countries like Mexico and in the growing trend towards the enclosure of public spaces in many cities around the world. The neoliberal enclosures have also focussed, with differing degrees of intensity, on privatising and monetizing the social commons, including everything from social welfare and public healthcare and education to water and other resource rights. Generally, this neoliberal phase of primitive accumulation means new impositions of private property where there was none previously and the erosion of communal rights that were the result of social struggles.

It could be argued that neoliberalism's vanguards were the International Monetary Fund and World Bank-directed Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) of the 1970s and 1980s and the free market dictatorships, such as General Pinochet's in Chile that also flourished in this period. Prior to the global free trade-oriented structural adjustment of the 1990s, these institutions were neoliberalism's secret army in the Global South. But under neoliberal globalization, the structural adjustment travelled to the rich countries of the Global North as well. This movement for free markets with strong states to implement sweeping privatisation on a global scale surged to ascendancy during the post-Cold War period.

As a way of conceptualising the primacy of resistance, thinking about the enclosures as a historical and still ongoing process compels us, in the spirit of Marx, to consider these as a social relation as much as a physical enclosure of land. For this

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reason, the new enclosures provide a theoretical basis to consider the effects of capitalist development as they take place "on the ground" and to identify the constant production of new social subjectivities that occur simultaneously. In other words, the new enclosures make the more typical use of the abstract language of global flows (i.e. Appadurai, 1996; Castells, 1996) concrete. As a theory of circulations and connections, the term helps us to consider, for example, the stock market surges that occur with mass worker layoffs, or the relocation of an Export Processing Zone, both of which are fuelled by capital's desire to escape the organization of workers and expand its field of operations.

In this dissertation, Midnight's conceptualisation of the new enclosures provides a central theoretical and methodological anchor where heterodox Marxism, ecology, feminism, indigenous, anti-colonial and anti-slavery struggles meet (Midnight Notes, 2004). Moreover, the terms neoliberal globalization and new enclosures are used interchangeably to emphasize the historic connection between them. While the terminology of neoliberalism refers to the dominant strategy and policy apparatus of capital accumulation in the historical present, the theoretical language of the *new* enclosures is meant to signal the historical location of my argument. By involving both a spatial and a non-economistic terminology, the language of enclosures/commons used here seeks to populate the study of contemporary global capitalism and its oppositions in a way that immediately suggests the historic centrality of resistance and refusal and their global circulation. It is my contention that the terminology of the new enclosures immediately suggests a history to capitalist social relations and hence challenges the neoliberal treatment of capitalism as both transhistorical and geographically and socially complete. It therefore provides a framework for analysing contemporary social change

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from the perspective of oppositional movements and the creative, generative role of refusal.

Total Fear at the End of History: From the Cold War to the "War on Terror"

If the Cold War period was self-defined as a time of protracted fear (fear of 'the Other' geopolitical camp, fear of nuclear annihilation), the 1990s was a time when fear became an immediate concern in political discourses of liberal and so-called "transitional" democracies alike. In the Global North, right wing populism and reactionary law-and-order movements gained strength through the 1990s as neoliberal restructuring precipitated a marked intensification of socio-economic insecurity. In Latin America and in the former Soviet Union and its satellites, dictatorships and detention centres were replaced with an everyday fear of social violence and a profound intensification of socio-economic insecurity (Rotker, 2002; Castells, 1998). In general, neoliberal restructuring meant the in/securitization of social life as governments increasingly retreated from redistributive activities and right wing movements searched for appropriate scapegoats upon which to project society's fear.

But a more distinctly Hobbesian experience of fear emerged in North America in the wake of the 2001 terrorist attacks. In North American mainstream discourses, the attacks were vociferously denounced and war duly declared. But the echo of Hobbes quickly surfaced. Perceptible among the media pundits and the political class was a kind of reserved joy about the unifying, meaning-making possibilities that lay in the now-shared experience of bracing fear of terrorism (Robin, 2004). For a number of commentators, this new and sinister enemy promised to create meaning and unity at

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precisely the moment when the whole notion of society seemed to have been cast adrift with the neoliberal declaration of the "End of History" (Fukuyama, 1992). For some, two decades after Margaret Thatcher's pronouncement that there is no such thing as society, fear seemed to provide a Hobbesian unifier to face both new incomprehensible enemies and growing social insecurity in rich and poor countries alike.

Indeed, for the advocates of neoliberalism, this fear would create unity by reigning in the intransigent and growing global justice movement, along with other dissenters. Soon after 9/11, many governments implemented sweeping anti-terror legislation, expanded surveillance systems and suspended civil liberties, effectively curbing the spaces of oppositional political practice. In North America and the UK, all of this was complemented with alarming daily alerts and warnings about impending attacks. In the months following 9/11, a succession of "scares" about anthrax, biological weapons, suspicious-looking bags and so on, repeatedly inflected daily life in urban centres with a discourse of fear. In cities, especially imperial power-centres like New York and London, public spaces became objects of fear and excessive militarization (Graham, 2004). All of these developments were re-circulated over and over in the commercial media. In addition to providing a context for the enclosure of newly opened democratic spaces and debates, the circulation of fear discourses and practices of securitization following-9/11 highlighted the extent to which the spectacle of fear is a highly effective accumulation strategy. This fear-as-capital equation became immediately evident in North America as new markets were created for a myriad of products and services – from gas masks, emergency response kits, home and office security systems to publically-funded investment in combat equipment and drastically

increased national and municipal security budgets – that promised to deliver private and public safety.

The launching of the "War on Terror" did not only provide the pretext for governments to use the climate of fear to embark on domestic wars against "internal enemies". It also brought the discourse of fear to the centre of political debate about the meaning of society. This is evidently the organizing logic of the *National Security Strategy of the US* (2002), a document published by the White House one year after 9/11. It explicitly characterizes the "War on Terror" as a Herculean battle between freedom and fear. This epitomizing text of "War on Terror" propaganda constructs fear as the enemy of freedom through the deployment of a fear-infused discourse. The document is rife with dire warnings and promises of eternal war in the name of security and freedom: "Freedom and fear are at war, and there will be no quick or easy end to this conflict" (2002: 7).

While this Hobbesian conception of total fear may be useful to the powerful and its ideologues, this totalising top-down approach to thinking about fear is not limited to the advocates of the absolute state. Curiously, it is also routinely so conceived by its critics. Consider, for instance, another influential current of thought on the cultural politics of fear articulated at a 2004 conference in Vancouver sponsored by the Law Commission of Canada, entitled "Law in a Fearful Society". The keynote speaker was US sociologist Barry Glassner, the author of the best selling book *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things* (1999). Glassner's address, much like his influential book, focussed principally on the framing role of the media industries in propagating this so-called culture of fear. However, this "real-threats-versus-imagined-

fears" binary, a staple in the North American fear literature, evacuates questions of political struggle from any problematization of fear. And this media-as-culture scenario, another central trope in the fear literature, points to a central problem with the "culture of fear" discourse. namely the totalizing assumption that culture is a unified experience of exact equivalence to its representation by the cultural industries. This issue will be taken up in Chapter one.

Throughout this dissertation, I argue that this totalising approach to culture and the related lack of engagement with social agency theory in analyses of the politics of fear are inseparable, and that they represent the most serious yet rarely recognized predicament within the literature on socio-cultural fear. I suggest that this problem is rooted in the dominant top-down methodological and conceptual approach to examining social change. Hence, through a theorization of specific social movement practices of communication, this dissertation endeavours to challenge the totalising, culturalist framework for thinking about the politics of fear.

This approach takes up Jesus Martin Barbero's (1993) critique of the technological explanations of communication and social change rooted in mass society theory. Drawing on the varied and complex adaptations of Antonio Gramsci's work by Latin American communication studies, Martin Barbero argues for the study of communication from the perspective of (popular) culture. His analysis brings to light the dynamic, contradictory and deeply contested production of culture and society by people in action in their lives. His move away from a theory of cultural reproduction and towards a theory of cultural protagonism locates the media and technologies of communication not as central but rather as one among many active entities within the

broad cultural field of communication *processes*, themselves a rich, ambiguous and contradictory space of cultural and social transformation. One of the principal values of this critique of media- and techno-centric analyses is that it endeavours to populate communication studies while recognizing the often-ignored differences between communication and the circulation of information—a distinction that is essential to this dissertation's theoretical and methodological approach.

Populating Popular Culture Studies and Communication Studies

What does a critique of mediacentrism and technological determinism contribute to the theorization and better understanding of the problem of socio-cultural fear? Communication studies invariably starts from the position of seeing communication as a positive, necessary and even democratic process that is integral to social life. The essential ethical, cultural and political value of communication is the basis of the discipline. It contends, obliquely or explicitly, that it is through communication that relationships are possible and that politics and culture happen. I would like to suggest, however, that in conditions of pervasive social fear, democratic communication is not possible because democratic relationships are not possible.

The dominant technological explanation of communication that is expressed most explicitly in the terminology of mass society theory is itself an historical product of a top-down politics of fear. Martin Barbero (1993) shows how the theory of mass society emerged to articulate ruling class fears of the popular urban movements that flourished amidst the staggering upheavals of early industrial capitalism. The depopulating bias in the language of massification, itself a symptom or strategy of the urgent sense of fear entailed in the technological explanation of communication, is revealed, he shows, in the

typical periodization of the concept of mass society given in standard Communication

textbooks, which situate it somewhere between 1930 and 1940 (ibid.). While this

timeline is rooted in the transformative impacts of the technological innovations and

cultural massifications of that period, Martin Barbero finds that the concept actually

appeared a century earlier.

In effect, Martin Barbero argues, the theory of mass society began to take shape in

Europe between the turbulent post-Napoleonic period and the revolution 1848, a period

in which the spectre of the urban multitudes caused great anxiety among the dominant

classes. "Capitalist industrialization had changed the lives of the lower classes

enormously, far beyond what the bourgeoisie had expected. The whole structure of

society changed, shaken by mass movements that appeared to endanger the 'foundations

of civilization'" (Martin Barbero, 1993: 23). In other words, the concept of mass society

did not abstractly reflect top-down technological changes, but rather emerged out of fear

of bottom-up expressions of social and cultural agency.[3]

The de-populated terminology of the masses and mass society would prove

pivotal to the right's hegemonic re-assertion of itself against the social movements that

threatened its rule (ibid). This period of agitation and social turmoil prompted a

movement of rightwing French and English intellectuals to try to understand those

changes and give meaning to this fear by theorizing the relationship between the masses

and society. Fear of the insurgent crowd inspired them to elaborate a theory that justified

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[3] Certainly, ruling class fear of the "masterless mob" had been a subject of deep anxiety for the aristocracy
and the emergent bourgeoisie since the early enclosures, and especially from the sixteenth century onwards.
As the work of A.L. Beier (1985), Peter Linebaugh (2003) and Silvia Federici (2004) demonstrates, the
promulgation of vagabond laws, the witch-hunts, and the spectacle of public capital punishment were
instruments to contain the new multitudes by a ruling class living in constant fear of the lower classes. As
enclosure engulfed the fragmented lands of Europe, influential thinkers such as Francis Bacon
characterized the dreaded figure of the new urban mob as monstrous (Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000).

their fear by connecting the multitudes with the inevitable denigration of culture. Beginning with De Toqueville, the conception of the dangerous mob went from being a threat coming from the outside to one much more perilously springing from the inside, causing chaos, devastating the social world and destroying "culture" from within. In his two volume *Democracy in America* (1835 and 1840), De Toqueville asks a central question about modernization: is it possible to separate the popular movements for equality from cultural homogenization? (Martin Barbero, 1993). In De Toqueville, Martin Barbero asserts, this question is raised within a framework of fear through a language of threat and imminent bedlam.[4] It was through this sort of re-conceptualizations that intellectuals like De Toqueville were able to theoretically erase the social content of the people and of popular movements.

This brief outline of a critique of the technological explanation of communication shows its origins in the fearful conservativism of mass society theory. To be clear, this is not an argument that seeks to underestimate the importance of developments in communication technologies. Rather, it is an argument for examining those changes from the perspective of the articulation of practices of communication and social movements. In place of an instrumental conception of communication as constitutive of the technologically driven circulation of information, we ought to start from the social and historical foundation that gives communication practices their social and cultural meaning. In ignoring or minimizing the social origin of this theory of the masses, the technological explanation of mass society is an explicit way of *not* talking about people.

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[4] Conversely, at a similar moment, Fredrich Engels raises the same question, but without the element of fear, in his *Condition of the Working Class* (1845). In the expansion and intensification of socio-cultural massification brought about with the homogenization of exploitation, Engels perceives the possibility of developing a new society (Martin Barbero, 1993).

This problematizing of communication studies connects with the temporal

framework of this dissertation, which is situated in the 'long 1990s', the post-Cold-War

years strongly associated with the emergence of the celebrated "communications

revolution". The enormous growth in communication industries and information

processing technologies in the world capitalist economy of the post-Cold War years

infused the concepts of communication and information with a utopian content that was

heavily reliant on techno-centric understandings of social change (Schiller, 1995; Mosco,

2003). It also prompted what I would argue has been a notable "communicational turn"

in both social theory and in public debates on globalization and cultural

transnationalization, where communication became widely recognized as playing a

decisive role. It was during this period that "communication" itself came to be associated

with the decade's other major socio-cultural and political economic phenomenon:

globalization. A wide range of writers have keenly articulated the relationship between

new communication processes, the strategic valorization of "information" and processes

of transnationalization at the turn of the 21st century. Critical communication scholars

such as Armand Mattelart (1996), Manuel Castells (1996), Vincent Mosco (2003) and

Dan Schiller (2007) have variously argued that globalization is increasingly a profoundly

communicational process. In other words, the communicational turn has made central the

role that the communication industries and relations play in the political economic, socio-

cultural and ideological production of capitalist globalization.

But as the communicational turn in both the political economy of contemporary

capitalism and social theory has put communication processes at the centre of the debate

about globalization, we have also witnessed the rise of a reified language of

communication and information as constitutive of technological change, a trend most emblematically evoked by the techno-fetish discourse of Nicholas Negroponte. In his widely read and cited book, *Being Digital*, that appeared at the beginning of the apogee of the dotcom economy, Negroponte (1995) argued that the Internet would provoke a revolutionary transformation in the manner in which politics and culture were conducted, because it would place communicational tools in the hands of individuals and groups. On the distopian side, some argued for the sinister implications of the expansion of communication technologies and capacities. For example, terrorism analysts Paul Wilkinson (2000) and Bruce Hoffman (1998) have both argued that the "democratisation" of information technologies was putting powerful communication tools into the hands of nefarious characters. Ironically, such reifications of communicational technologies blended seamlessly with the seductive and contradictory language of revolution, transcendence and catastrophe, thus rendering the technological explanation of communicational globalization enormously powerful ideologically as well as politically and economically.

By pursuing an approach to communication studies that starts from the perspective of the protagonists of culture, this dissertation seeks to challenge the instrumentalism that drives the technological explanation of communication. In exploring the oppositional cultural practices of social movements, I hope to draw on the communicational turn in the study of social change more broadly, to populate communication studies and to elaborate a bottom-up approach to studying the new enclosures. This methodological and theoretical approach, I will argue throughout this

study, represents a challenge to the dominant totalising conceptions of socio-cultural fear in the context of the new enclosures.

Communication Insurgencies as Practices of Anti-Fear

Thinking against the ahistorical fetishism that underwrites the "Information Society" discourse, the most cursory look at the long histories of oppositional movements immediately reveals that communication practices have always been integral to social movements and social change. It is through practices of communication that oppositional movements articulate meaning and assert a politics of presence. Throughout this dissertation, I engage with several scholarly literatures on social agency and the politics of fear to re-think their linkages from the perspective of the protagonists of oppositional popular culture. Elaborating on the refusal of hierarchical and militaristic conceptualisations of struggle, my dissertation uses the concept of communicational insurgency to theorize practices of anti-fear. I argue that this communicational insurgency is organized around two central movement practices: visibility and encounter. Through three case studies that look at different contemporary anti-enclosure movements, I demonstrate how these practices are both intensive and extensive. In other words, the diverse communicational practices I explore in this dissertation are meant to build-up the visibility of the movements and their critiques, as well as to open up new spaces of encounter.

I use the term 'anti-fear' to link the critique of the politics of fear to broader intellectual currents, movements and practices of opposition[5]. As a philosophically

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[5] While I am approaching the concept quite differently, I would like to acknowledge the use of this term as a concept by the philosopher Hasana Sharp (2005).

negative term, it is meant to dialectically situate practices of refusal within ongoing processes of global transformation. This terminology connects with autonomist currents of thought and political activity that, I argue, distinguishes the new anti-enclosure movements of the post-Cold War period from traditional vanguardist or Leninist understandings of social movement. As a dialectic concept and practice, this refusal is both active and in possession of a vital positivity that is appropriately encapsulated in one of the prominent slogans of the 1990s global justice-movement: "One No, Many Yeses". This affirmative 'no' represents an uneasy but critical recognition of actually existing diversity and difference. It is also a perspective that opens up important critiques of conventional theories and practices of "resistance". By reworking the notion that all manner of refusal reveals the power of the oppressed, this conceptual framework opens space for a renovation in radical theory's preoccupation with oppression and resistance to oppression, to explicitly include the identification of the fundamental fragility of relations of oppression (Holloway, 2002) and make it an object of political practice.

In essence, then, this dissertation is about the politics of fear amidst the contemporary enclosures. It is situated in North America during the "long 1990s", between the period of tremendous social upheaval following 1989 and the marked shift brought with the launching of the global "War on Terror" in the months following September 11, 2001. This period, following the collapse of "actually existing socialism" in the former Soviet Union and China's growing embrace of market reforms, marked the apogee of the initial phase of the neoliberal project. During this time, privatisation, free trade, "structural adjustment" and the dismantling of the welfare state became ascendant virtually everywhere. Reminiscent of the early modern period enclosures of the

Commons in England, our current period is marked by displacement – what David Harvey (2005) has described as "accumulation by dispossession" – processes that have galvanized unprecedented urbanization as well as subnational and transnational migrations, growing social inequality and traumatic scales of social violence. In this context, social fear and economic insecurity increasingly became a structuring aspect of political discourses and everyday life for a growing number of people around the world. It was also during this time, particularly from the second half of the 1990s onwards, that the world witnessed the rise of a planetary web of anti-enclosure movements. The intensive and extensive communication networks that emerged in this period are among its most salient features. The diversity and scope of the movement is recorded in its enormous output of cultural production, including innumerable books, magazines, film and video, Internet and radio projects.

As I intimated earlier, the perspective of oppositional politics is strikingly absent from the existing literature on the politics of fear, which has been overwhelmingly focussed on the fear-inducing activities of the powerful. By focussing on social movement practices of anti-fear, this dissertation engages with persisting evidence of social hope and examines formal transformations in the styles of political confrontation that have emerged in the post Cold War context. It considers how a politics of anti-fear is enacted through a renaissance in oppositional cultural practices where the politics of communication are primary. Hence, this dissertation represents an effort to populate communication studies through the examination of what social movements are doing to confront the pervasive social fear that occupies the cultural landscape of contemporary urban North America.

This conceptualisation of communication from the perspective of oppositional cultural practices suggests two lines of renovation, one in the fear studies literature and the other in communication studies. The first tackles the culturalist, top-down tendency that predominates in much of the fear literature, both critical and mainstream. This approach has resulted in a totalising conception of socio-cultural fear that, by eliding social agency, reinforces rather than detonates the disciplinary effects of politicised fear as a strategy of enclosure. The second addresses the tendency to look at communication as a technical question rather than as a socio-cultural and historical one (Martin Barbero, 1993). Here, against the technological and mediacentric explanations of communication, I seek to ground my analysis in people in action in their lives, that is the exact opposite of a reified conception of "information". This renovation is framed around the articulation of practices of communication and social movements.

The questions driving this study pivot around two intertwined problems that have been sketched out briefly in this introduction: the intellectual and political limitations of totalizing, top-down conceptions of socio-cultural fear, and the de-populated, technological explanations of communication which occlude social agency. With this in mind, I ask: In what ways does political fear represent a strategy of social discipline amidst the new enclosures? How does the "culture of fear" discourse relate to the search for a meaningful social existence in the context of the new enclosures or neoliberal capitalism? How is fear itself communicational? How does fear turn into a language, a new commonality? Can communication challenge the dominant totalizing conceptions of socio-cultural fear amidst the new enclosures?

I approach these questions by drawing on three major threads of theoretical and methodological inquiry. First, I adopt the autonomist perspective of the primacy of refusal in processes of social change. The extent to which the autonomist approach is varied and comes from multiple directions makes it difficult to define categorically. For example, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's (2000, 2004) organizing concept of immaterial labour tends to focus on the "high end" of the globalized production hierarchy, such as the precarious, affective labour found in the cyber world. The Midnight Notes Collective, on the other hand, concentrate their analysis on the "low end" of the global hierarchy: peasants, factory workers in the Export Processing Zones, sex workers, housewives, the displaced, criminalized and pauperized (Dyer-Witheford, 2002; De Angelis, 2007). My approach here is more aligned with the "margins at the centre" (Lotringer, 2004) focus of the latter. Second, By engaging in a critique of technological explanations of communication, I forward an argument for approaching popular culture from the perspective of social movements, as represented in the work of Martin Barbero among other Latin American communication studies scholars. Third, I use a grounded theory approach, rooted in the materialist analyses of ethnography which emphasizes the interpolation of micro and macro levels of analysis.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter one locates the scholarship on fear within a communication studies framework that draws on the discipline's intersectional and interdisciplinary approach. It presents an historical background and literature review of the relevant scholarship on the politics and culture of fear. It then introduces and elaborates the central argument of this dissertation: that the pervasive totalizing, top-down analysis of socio-cultural fear is both

intellectually and politically problematic because it ignores both the cultural complexity of fear as a strategy of enclosure and the very real existence of social contestation. One of the principal intentions of this chapter is to re-envision the study of fear and anti-fear through the lens of refusal.

This approach is elaborated further in the second chapter, which is dedicated to creating a theoretical grounding of the concepts of communicational insurgency and the new anti-enclosure movements that came to prominence during the dramatic changes of the post-Cold War 1990s. I discuss the various ways these movements seek to protect spaces from enclosure and open up new spaces for social movement. Against the technological determinism that underpins the discourse of the "Information Society", I argue that the communicational insurgency is a counter practice of globalization "from below" that is made possible not by the abstract circulation of information but by social movement practices of communication that pay attention to the politics of production and circulation of their own information. These movements, I argue, elaborated new modes of political confrontation and oppositional cultural practices that became increasingly relevant to confronting the political uses of fear as a strategy of enclosure. In the context of the neoliberalizing 1990s, this chapter argues, communication became an increasingly important aspect of their practices helping them articulate notions of horizontalism, organization, social protagonism, direct or radical democracy. The term communicational insurgency is therefore meant to indicate this communicationally centred shift from a hierarchical conception of revolution to a horizontal one. This, I argue, relates to a shift away from a state-oriented vanguardist politics of constituted power and towards a politics of constituent power. To help develop a framework for

understanding the emergence of new political practices, the chapter sets out a topographic map of contemporary anti-enclosure movements by highlighting a number of shared characteristics and overlapping currents.

This typology begins to take more concrete shape with the first of this dissertation's three in-depth case studies. Starting in Chapter Three, I apply the concept of communicational insurgencies to analyze the anti-fear practices of the Bus Riders Unions (BRUs) in Los Angeles and Vancouver. Drawing on interviews, participant observation and archival research, I situate the humble city bus as not only an unacknowledged communicational space, but as one that is historically rich as a space of anti-fear social movement practices. I ground my discussion of the bus as a site of anti-fear within the context of the US Civil Rights movement and the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955. From there I explore the myriad ways that the two Bus Riders Unions extend these oppositional cultural practices within the context of the new enclosures. The chapter situates the activities of the BRUs within the context of the heightened fear associated with public transportation that accompanies the post-Cold War expansion of Zero Tolerance Policing theory and the "War on Terror" discourses of public security. These official discourses are concretely problematized through an extensive discussion of Vancouver BRU's Fare Strikes and its campaign to restore the late night bus service.

Chapter Four turns towards the relationship between surveillance and fear through a discussion of the activities of the New York City-based political theatre group, the Surveillance Camera Players (SCP). The proliferation of public surveillance systems over the last 20 years is among the most emblematic representations of the climate of enclosure and socio-cultural fear in urban North America. However, much of the

growing scholarly literature and public debates surrounding surveillance tends to focus on the uses of video surveillance as a technology of control and safety. While this important literature is often critical, it routinely employs an analytical approach that renders invisible numerous and diverse practices of contestation. Here, I assert that another useful analytic strategy situates the rise of video surveillance in public places as a practice that projects and animates social fear. The SCP's Situationist-inspired tactics and writings, I argue, represent an insurgent communicational practice that challenges the discourse of public consent for video surveillance. The SCP's anti-fear practices, I hope to show, work to dismantle the artifice of surveillance culture and its role in the enclosure of public space and the circulation of fear in the authoritarian imagination.

This exploration of the relationship between visibility and fear continues in Chapter Five by turning towards documentary practices of anti-fear. I discuss Lourdes Portillo's *Señorita Extraviada* (2001) ('Missing Young Woman'), a documentary film about Ciudad Juarez – the city on the Mexico-US border that has, since 1993, been terrorized by serial sex murders. Drawing on the groundbreaking work of film scholar Rosa Linda Fregoso, I extend her analysis of Portillo's work and of the murders in Juarez to look at how documentary practice can be a communicational insurgency against fear and effectively open up space for encounter against the new enclosures. I argue that *Señorita*'s re-appropriation of the space of representation from the state and the commercial media represents a skilful confrontation with the "problem of interpretation" (Taussig, 1987). As a strategy of representation and circulation that adheres to Brecht's "fighting" notion of popular culture, I argue that Portillo provides an important example of the communicational significance of documentary cinema that is capable of both

galvanizing a movement and also challenging the dominant totalizing approaches to socio-cultural fear.

A Note on Methods

This dissertation uses a qualitative approach, specifically drawing on the Cultural Studies tradition of emphasizing interdisciplinary methods that endeavour to uncover and connect with lived experience, social context and analysis of texts and discourses (Saukko, 2003). This approach entailed a combination of in-depth interviews with the public spokespeople from social organizations, participant observation and the study of a range of texts, some produced by the movements themselves and others culled from a wide and interdisciplinary literature on fear, urbanism, communication, political theory and social movements. My methodological inspiration is rooted in the "from below" approach of social history, Cultural Studies and the heterodox Marxist traditions that seek to analyze social phenomena from its inner logic and to situate the margins at the centre of social analysis. I started this research process from the position that oppositional practices and movements are constantly producing new knowledge as well as ways of being in the world, and that as researchers we can learn a great deal about the future in the present through a direct engagement with movements. As historian Robin D.G. Kelley points out: "Social movements generate new knowledge, new theories, new questions. The most radical ideas often grow out of a concrete intellectual engagement with the problems of aggreviated populations confronting systems of oppression" (2002:8).

This dissertation uses a grounded theory approach to the study of fear and anti-fear in the context of the new enclosures. Because it emphasizes the interpolation of

micro and macro levels of analysis, grounded theory is particularly relevant to the interdisciplinary study of the global and especially for investigating the concrete ways in which the global is produced in the local (Burawoy, 2000). It is particularly concerned with exploring social phenomena as they take place in the everyday life of the micro scale and how they extend into the macro scale and vice versa (Burawoy, 1991, 2000; Morely, 2000). Accordingly, all of the processes generally associated with the global are experienced at the local level in both material and imaginary ways. Furthermore, by pursuing a grounded theory approach within particular urban contexts, the methodological approach of this dissertation reflects a desire to do cultural and social analysis of the political beyond the nation-state framework in which so much of our understanding of the world has been historically situated. Moreover, as a research strategy that starts from the ground, from where people are, grounded theory is particularly suited to feminist methodologies, which are concerned with the everyday, the valorization of experience and the social agency of the subjects involved.

This grounded approach to studying global and macro processes enacts a critique of what ethnographer Michael Burawoy calls "globalism" (2000). The term seeks to challenge dominant discourses, both celebratory and critical, of globalization that fetishize the global as a total, inexorable and pre-determined process governed by invisible forces. A grounded approach enables us to challenge these de-populated conceptions of macro processes and thereby to challenge dominant ideas about marginality. As an extension of this goal, it also enables us to concretely take up the task of thinking not only about subjugation and resistance to domination but also about the vulnerability of domination (Holloway, 2002).

This study touches down on four distinct urban contexts: Vancouver, Los

Angeles, New York and Ciudad Juarez. All of these sites, like virtually everywhere I

imagine, are home to numerous and significant anti-fear struggles. Within these cities, I

focus on three different but overlapping sites where the fear/anti-fear dialectic becomes

visible: the bus, the screen and the street. To do this, I employ a multi-sited approach to

studying fear and anti-fear in an effort to draw connections not only between the diverse

social spaces and cities but also to track the confrontation of fear across these places and

movements that themselves have different constituencies and represent rather divergent

ideologies, forms of socio-cultural intervention and political practice. Each have possibly

never encountered one another, but the issues they are tackling, and specifically their

various struggles against the politics of fear and the new enclosures, intersect in a number

of important ways. The aim of looking at practices of anti-fear across different sites and

modes of political confrontation has been to draw attention to the manner in which a

social phenomenon is grounded in and changes according to its context, yet it can often

be located within a wider social and global context (Saukko, 2003).

Ultimately my methodological approach is anchored in the notion that "the best

information comes from direct involvement" (Mosco, Meehen and Wasko, 1996: 113).

For this reason I have used a participatory approach to researching fear. However, while

I have had direct contact with all of the groups and projects discussed in this dissertation,

the extent and intensity of my involvement and interaction with each of these case studies

varies substantially. This is due to the obvious constraints and practicalities of doing

comparative research across such a wide geographical space. Fortunately, one of the

things that enriched my ability to understand the significance of these activities is the

groups' prolific output of printed and audio-visual material. As a result, my participation is as much rooted in the communication practices of the struggles as it is in direct observation.

My analysis of the anti-fear activities of the Bus Riders Union is grounded in years of involvement with the group, at times as an active participant and others as a supporter. In 2001, I attended the formative meetings of the Vancouver BRU, a process that is briefly described in Chapter Three, and since then my level of involvement has varied according to all the usual constraints. Indeed, my inability to devote more time to what the BRU calls "transit justice" has been a source of frustration over the years; nonetheless, I have been surprised to discover how doing research on the BRU's anti-fear activities has actually helped me to focus my participation. Throughout a three-year period, I poured over the BRU's prolific printed and audio-visual material, conducted interviews with some of the key organizers, participated in various actions, including two "fare strikes", and I attended numerous meetings, political and cultural events.

My research with the Surveillance Camera Players was substantially different. This case study entailed my participation on one of the SCP's surveillance camera tours in New York City. In addition to spending several hours walking around Greenwich Village looking at and learning about the neighbourhood's startling array of surveillance cameras, I also conducted an extended interview with SCP co-founder Bill Brown in New York City. The SCP devotes enormous efforts to researching, writing about and collecting information on surveillance-related issues, and I benefited greatly from the group's commitment to circulating this material through its website. Indeed, the SCP's website makes publicly accessible what may be one of the most extensive collections of

critical surveillance-related material available on the Internet. I also benefited from various email discussions with Brown throughout the writing process.

My research on documentary politics and the movement to stop the gender terror in Juarez involved a different kind of participation with the subject. While I have been engaged with the anti-femicide movement in different ways over the years, the research for this chapter did not involve travelling to Juarez to do interviews or conduct participant observation. This was due not only to the predictable limitations of time and money, but can be explained by the nature of the chapter, which is specifically devoted to analysing the possibility of documentary cinema as a communicational practice of anti-fear. From this perspective, documentary cinema is an approach that is grounded in questions about the possibility of communication of struggles across borders and contexts. I have been present on a number of occasions, in both Canada and abroad, where this documentary was screened as part of truly global feminist effort to publicize the story. In one instance, I witnessed a screening as part of a conference in Mexico where a mother of one of the missing women was also in attendance. The effect of the documentary and the harrowing testimony by the victim's mother was striking, moving conference attendees into a deeper engagement with the issue. In this dissertation, my analysis also benefited from the presence of cinema scholar Rosa Linda Fregoso at this conference, a scholar who, along with Lourdes Portillo, has been instrumental in circulating the documentary in Mexico and internationally.

This dissertation focuses on the activities of specific groups as a way to think about and hopefully generate further questions about confrontations with political fear. I have chosen not to explicate the structures or ideological commitment and debates within

the groups beyond what was necessary to the analysis of their various anti-fear practices. This is done as a way of emphasizing that my focus is on the interface between oppositional practices and the larger society, as a way of thinking about anti-fear cultural practices and new forms of political confrontation; Given the highly idiosyncratic character of activist groups and the particularities of their spatio-temporal environment, further explication of specific groups' structures and ideologies would distract from this fundamental point. Further, this stance is also rooted in my contention that we are witnessing some of the most interesting political and cultural renovations in contemporary anti-enclosure struggles: that is, a profound crisis of traditional, vanguardist conceptions of politics that put the party or the ideologically coherent organization at the centre. To a large extent, what appears to be so significant about the anti-fear practices that are discussed throughout this dissertation is the degree to which they represent an effort to mix emancipatory politics and ideas into the wider society rather than pull society into the orbit of one particular movement. This rapidly shifting context provides one more reason to focus on the politics of events and moments rather than on specific organizational imperatives, goals and structures.

CHAPTER ONE: PRACTICES OF FEAR IN THE EVERYDAY STATE OF EMERGENCY

The history of the political uses of fear in the last five centuries of capitalist development is full of examples of how this practice has been directed at the expropriated and the vulnerable in times of intensified unrest. It is a history of the extra-economic effects of capitalist development that has been documented by many scholars, among them Michel Foucault (1979) on the birth of the prison, Peter Linebaugh (2003 [1991]) on the role of capital punishment, and Silvia Federici (2004) on the centrality of the witch-hunts. I mention these three studies in particular because they all document the political use of fear during the periods of popular insurgencies against the enclosures of the commons. They belie modernity's political promise of freedom from fear (Bauman, 2006), suggesting instead the intimate relationship between them.

This link between modernity and fear extends into the present, as evident in the global rise of oppositional movements against the new enclosures over the past decade-and-half. Two specific moments stand out in this respect. First, the profound upheavals that came with the formal end of the Cold War and the traumatic expansion of "free market democracy" introduced through neoliberal "shock therapy" were instrumental in shaping the socio-cultural and political-economic backdrop to the final decade of an exceptionally violent, fearful century. Second, following the terrorist attacks on the US in 2001, a political climate of generalized insecurity took on a more overt and anguished

form with the launching of the "War on Terror" and US President George Bush's declaration that "freedom and fear are at war".

Much has been written about the meaning and implications of these utterances. Rarely noted, however, is the fact that this statement crystallized a dynamic already in motion throughout the 1990s, whereby practices of anti-fear among social movements took on a more overt form as governments increasingly re-organized national security discourses within this framework. Already before 9/11, freedom from fear was the state's utopian counter-offer as the spectre of chaos became a standard of political discourse in the post-Cold War period. But in the aftermath of 9/11, as Adam Curtis (2005) observes in his documentary series *The Power of Nightmares*, Bush's declaration provided the justification for a campaign of fear in the name of freedom.

A review of newspapers of record over the past six years would show how quickly this inversion of the discourse on freedom and fear precipitated a powerful backlash against perceived non-conformists. Among other horrors, this entailed the mass incarceration and deportation of Muslim and Arab men, the sudden appearance of "reasoned" debates on the merits of torture, and the normalization of surveillance and racial profiling as public policy. A crucial question that emerges out of this terrifying context is: how does fear operate as an instrument of social separation that benefits the powerful and weakens movements for democracy?

To answer this question, it is necessary to examine the contemporary authoritarian circulation of fear and establish a theoretical and historical framework for situating the significance of practices of anti-fear within it. This is the purpose of this chapter. My analysis is strongly influenced by the insights of Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker

(2000), Silvia Federici (2004) and Alicia Schmidt Camacho (2005), whose work shows, against the culturalist analyses of capitalist development, that state violence is not aberrant but essential to and productive of it. Following on these authors' footsteps, I seek to demonstrate how political fear fulfils similar functions in a contemporary context. Arguing that the more spectacular examples of political fear as a technique of neoliberal enclosure have a background in the everyday, I develop a framework for analyzing the cultural politics of fear in relation to communication studies.

I start by reviewing the interdisciplinary scholarship on fear, through which I hope to uncover and begin to address some of the shortcomings of this literature. The principal problem that I am concerned with here is the fear scholarship's neglect of social agency – the diverse strategies of resistance and insubordination that in fact have always confronted the politics of fear. This disregard of such a crucial fact is more than an oversight; as I have discovered, it relates to a common problem in the study of fear whereby fear itself is treated as a complete and totalizing cultural project. This view from above inadvertently reproduces the political use of fear by adopting the standpoint of the fear mongers. People, in this view, are not the protagonists of culture but receptacles of it.

This tendency to de-populate culture leads to a number of interconnected conceptual problems in the study of socio-cultural fear, which I will identify and address sequentially in what follows. The first problem is the way in which the scholarship on the "culture of fear" conflates culture and fear. The second arises out of the application of North American positivist sociological approaches to fear studies, which tends to situate fear within a false binary of rationality and irrationality. The third is a mediacentric view that, much like a deterministic view of culture, positions the role of an all-pervasive

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media as the principle incubator of fear. All of these conceptual shortcomings in the fear literature, I will argue throughout this chapter, point to the necessity of examining the role of agency.

Fear and the Violence of Neoliberalism

The 1990s was a period of intense and accelerated enclosure and of growing popular discontent with the dominant project of neoliberalism. Indeed, there is much to protest in the violence of neoliberalism. The increase in poverty and the gap between rich and poor that developed in the neoliberal 1990s is stunning. The discrepancy in average living standards between the richest and poorest nations has grown from a ratio of approximately 10 to one a century ago to 75 to one under current conditions (Bonefield and Psychopedis, 2004). It is not just between countries that we witness this phenomenon, but within them too, as whole populations live below subsistence levels in the poorest and the richest countries alike. In the United States, the richest country in the world, an estimated 33 million people live in poverty (ibid). The implementation of neoliberal reforms that provoked punishing debt among farmers and joblessness among public sector workers, and the surge in prices for basic services such as water and electricity – the very things that the Cold War developmentalist and social welfare states built to secure the so-called "social pact" with its popular classes – launched a cycle of social struggle. This intensification and expansion of pauperization and social discord has led proponents of neoliberalism to now argue for the necessity of a shift towards a state logic that gives prominence to public order and the promise to citizens of security from crime (Hornqvist, 2004), especially in places where the gap is particularly wide.

From the mid-1990s onwards, resistance to neoliberal globalization was expressed in a worldwide surge of general strikes, direct actions, land occupations, and popular uprisings. In turn, the authorities responded with declarations of states of siege, massive investments in security operations at international meetings of supranational organizations like the World Trade Organization, and widespread suspensions of the law. The same period witnessed a rise in authoritarian nostalgia in many parts of the world, including North America, as one response to the experience of socio-cultural and economic insecurity. One example is the former Soviet Union, where just a few years after the celebrated "democratization" and the shock of radical market reforms, there emerged a nostalgia movement for a return to the Stalinist era. Similarly, in a number of Latin America's "new democracies", nostalgia for strong rulers who promise stability amidst the social chaos that accompany neoliberal restructuring has been expressed in innumerable election campaigns (i.e. Otto Perez Molina's *Mano Dura* (Strong Hand) campaign in Guatemala) and in street demonstrations against "insecurity".

In North America, Europe and Australia, conservative Law and Order movements have accompanied the accelerated implementation of neoliberalism. The urban management doctrine of Zero Tolerance, which blossomed in the 1990s and continues apace as a "global discourse", harnessed a nostalgic lexicon of social discord born from the breakdown of traditional authority. According to its proponents, the insecurity that people were experiencing in neoliberal restructuring was not the responsibility of the powerful corporations and groups benefiting from it, but of the permissive lifestyles produced by the dissident culture unleashed in the 1960s and 1970s.

By raising the spectre of chaos, fear has been used by the authorities – aided by the increasingly powerful commercial media and the security industries – to reassert order against insurgent democratic claims. In the North American context, for example, in a May 2001 congressional report entitled "Threat of Terrorism to the United States", US Federal Bureau of Investigation director Louis Freeh included anti-neoliberal globalization groups and events such as *Reclaim the Streets* and the *Carnivals Against Capitalism* among the extensive list of potential threats to US security. As the movement against neoliberalism escalated and intensified, this view was overwhelmingly reiterated in the commercial media's reporting (Warren, 2004; Juris, 2006). Major news outlets engaged in speculation over the supposed involvement of motorcycle gangs in the protests against the Free Trade Area of the Americas at Quebec City in April 2001, and reported on rumours that Osama bin Laden was planning on assassinating President Bush at the G-8 meetings in Genoa the following August. In general, the official, media and security agency conflation of terrorism with any large urban assembly of people became *de rigueur* practice in the 1990s, but especially so following 9/11 (Warren, 2004). This equation of two unrelated phenomena provides the justification for militarization, surveillance and suspension of the law, all in the name of freedom and security.

In this context, it seems pertinent to examine what is the connection between the circulation of fear and the experience of insecurity. Fear and insecurity are neither equivalent nor mutually exclusive. The experience of generalized social insecurity (economic precarity, social instability, loneliness, surveillance, fading prospects of social mobility) is viscerally connected with the circulation of the experience of fear (of crime, of being bombed, of torture, of eviction, of political and interpersonal violence, of the

police and imprisonment, of ecological and economic catastrophe, of the Other). In turn, both are inextricable from socio-cultural and political economic processes and struggles. It is in this complex and contradictory conflation of experiences, practices and discourses of fear and insecurity that this dissertation seeks to intervene.

Fear/Insecurity

Fear, we are told by sociologists, media scholars and filmmakers, is everywhere. From the micro level of the individual to the global system, fear apparently penetrates every aspect of modern life. While deployed to explain a massive range of social phenomenon from geopolitics to the nocturnal habits of pedestrians, fear is typically portrayed as either an atavistic expression of pre-modern sensibilities or as a product of modern bureaucratic rationality itself (Gold and Revill, 2003; Massumi, 1993). Fear, like all concepts that try to capture or explain human experience, is very difficult to define categorically. Indeed one of the problems of defining fear is that the very act of definition implies an authoritative appraisal of some kind, a delineation of worthy and unworthy fears, or of rational or irrational ones. And indeed this rational-irrational binary is a staple of positivist Euro-American fear literature. The problem this framework presents is deeper than its Manicheanism, for it tells us very little about the production of fear. Similarly, it tells us even less about the deeply uneven and socially complex processes surrounding its production. It is for this reason that "Arguments framed in terms of fear may easily be represented as irrational and therefore illegitimate in terms of political debate" (Gold and Revill, 2003: 30).

Hence, the "real" threats versus "imagined" fears binary is problematic not only because it can be used to establish, reify and commodify a hierarchy of acceptable and

unacceptable fears, which can, in turn, be so defined to consolidate the position of the powerful. This binary does not provide an apparatus for a sustained examination of how the experience of fear works in society. Nor does it allow us to conceptualize this experience as a dynamic and contradictory practice and not an inert object. But most significantly, at least for the purposes of this dissertation, this definitional framework cannot account for the inevitable cracks and fissures in the social production of fear.

To address the question of how the experience of fear is translated into practice I will examine the politics of fear from the standpoint of *refusals*. This effort to grapple with fear not through definitions but through enactments of its refusal enables us to treat fear as a matter of political struggle. Therefore, rather than defining fear itself, at this point it is perhaps useful to name some of the conceptual categories that have been used in the scholarship of fear studies over the last three decades. First, we can draw on the intellectual map of fear research provided by Gold and Revill (2003), who designate seven prominent uses that appear in the literature: *Anxiety* (Giddens, 1991; Lasch, 1980); *Awe* (Foucualt, 1973; Rose, 1990), *Insecurity and Uncertainty* (Beck, 1986, 1992), *Threat* (Bryant, 1991; Chapman, 1999); *Hate* (Ignatieff, 1994; Allen and Seaton, 1999); *Loathing* (Williams and Chrisman, 1993; Child and Williams, 1997) and *Trauma* (Sontag, 1983 and Schivelbusch, 1986). Numerous ethical positions and orientations are invoked in these literatures but, according to Gold and Revill, they all grapple with a basic perspectival division in western philosophy on the nature of humanity and its need, or not, for governing. In one vision, humans are basically moral, ordered and self-organizing. In the other, humans are amoral, dangerous and in need of regulation. Here,

the role and place of fear as either a regulating or coercive force is decisive in debates about the nature and purpose of government.

Second, we can briefly sketch seven additional concepts and their corresponding literatures, all of which I draw upon throughout this dissertation: *Terror* (Taussig, 1989; Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000; Federici, 2004; Schmidt Camacho, 2005); *Intimidation* (Corradi et. al. 1992; Lechner, 1992; Robin, 2004); *Carceralism* (Davis, 1998; Sanchez, 2001; Graham and Marvin, 2001); *Abjection* (Rapping, 2003; Bauman, 2006); *Social In/security* (Reguillo, 2002; Rotker, 2002; Martin Barbero, 2002) and *Paranoia* (Morely, 2000; Hage, 2003; Bonelli, 2005). These concepts can be distinguished from those offered by Gold and Revill in a number of general ways. First, as will be shown below, they help situate my use of the concept of fear within this dissertation's broad temporal framework of the post-Cold War period. Second, these categories represent an engagement with literatures that do not necessarily fall within a distinct category of "fear studies" but that do tackle the problem of fear and insecurity. Third, all of these uses emphasize the socio-cultural and the political over individualized psychological and primordial culturalist arguments. Fourth, they offer a pathway for thinking through the relationship between the dynamics of capitalist globalization and the production of fear and in/security. Fifth, they can help us to think about fear as an object of political struggle versus a problem to be resolved through its identification, definition and evaluation. Finally, these categories help us to consider fear and insecurity as social relations, and not simply afflictions, that are both immobilizing and a catalyst to action.

Fear Studies at the End of the World

An end to fear as a way of political life was high among the democratic promises that went with the end of the Cold War. However, it took until the late 1990s, on the eve of the millennium, for "Fear Studies" to begin to gain prominence in North American social science research[6] (Davis, 1998, Gold and Revill, 2003). In both academic and popular accounts of the prevailing zeitgeist, the destabilizing effect of this mythic epochal shift became a trope for the spectre of poly-crisis wrought by an imminent ecological, technological and informational apocalypse. Reflecting the political-economy of the hyped context in which it emerged, the communication of this anxiety was driven for the most part by the quintessentially 1990s language of the "Information Society", encapsulated in a new overwrought computational lexicon of "Y2K" disaster. On New Year's Eve, military units and police forces fanned out to secure cities from the predicted rioting and terrorist attacks[7], and legions of computer experts stood on high alert. But the postmodern catastrophe failed to materialize at its designated moment. Instead, almost two years later, the cosmic fear once associated with Y2K arrived in the extraordinary, wrenchingly visceral spectacle of violence of 9/11. This moment marked a decisive turn in the literature on the politics of fear.

But while it is true that the attacks on New York and Washington prompted a flurry of debate and concern over the role of fear in public life, it is important to note that the end of the Cold War had already ushered in a period of scholarship on fear. This research discussed the experience of globalized insecurity that seemed to be haunting the

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[6] To exemplify the point, in June 2001 geographers John R. Gold and George Revill (2003) conducted a computer search using the International Social Sciences database. They discovered 981 titles that used "fear" as a keyword between 1981-2000. Over 700 of those dated from 1997-2001.

[7] In Vancouver, the mayor ordered people not to come downtown for New Year celebrations unless they had some designated place to go. Police officers gathered in city parks, alert to the impending mayhem.

end of the millennium and the "culture of terror/fear" that ruled much of Latin America during the rightwing dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s. Hence, new approaches to the study of fear opened up in the period of the 1990s that brought the disintegration of various kinds of dictatorship, the devolution of states virtually everywhere under neoliberalism, and the rise of new claims for democracy. Along with the state, the Cold War discourse of fear versus freedom as a struggle between nuclear superpowers also began to disperse.

The aftermath of the Cold War was also a period of enormous violence. The world appeared beset with famines, genocides, civil wars, tyrannies, pre-emptive war, ecological crises and a stream of humanitarian emergencies. Arjun Appadurai (2006) characterizes the 1990s as the decade of "superviolence" in a violent century, where civil warfare inflected the most intimate aspects of everyday life in many societies and in practically all continents. Accordingly, it seems pertinent to ask whether one of the main collectivities to emerge in this decade as an affective force were not the increasingly global and potent collectivities of fear?

There are myriad examples to draw on to help us think about this question. We can identify a collectivity of fear in the growth of civilian "Law and Order" movements in the cities around the world. Or, if we focus on North America, in the rapidly growing presence of anti-immigrant vigilante groups guarding the US border who are united in their fear of the unregulated mobile Other, or in the so-called "survivalist" movement to which the Oklahoma Bombers were associated and which peaked in the late 1990s[8]

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[8] One of the movement's key texts is the novel *Patriots: Surviving the Coming Collapse* by James Wesley Rawles the editor of "survivalBlog". The novel is about the socio-economic collapse and subsequent invasion of the US Millions of copies have been sold and downloaded from the Internet.

(Castells, 1997). While not historically new, the notable appearance of a variety of vigilante justice movements in many places in the world precisely during the 1990s suggests a link with a more general experience of insecurity under neoliberalism.

Out of this serious turn towards increasing anguish and social disjuncture emerged a number of serious attempts to understand what has historically been an important category for both social theory and politicians alike. Indeed, philosophical reflection on the political dimensions of fear is not new; modern political philosophers from Thomas Hobbes and Alexis de Tocqueville to Hannah Arendt are among the most well known who have grappled, in various ways, with the role of fear in politics[9]. In different ways, their work is concerned with how fear has often been treated as a unifying affect that can galvanize a sense of purpose among a population cast adrift in modernity. But despite its centrality for philosophers of the modern state, much of the contemporary North American academic and popular treatments of fear, Robin (2004) points out, displays a marked tendency to separate fear from the political and ideological context in which it circulates.

Fear in the Euro-American liberal tradition, Robin shows, has predominantly been treated as a primeval, "subpolitical" emotion[10]. By treating fear as an individual psychological affliction rather than a highly political and contingent relationship, he argues, people's interpretations and reactions to the experience of fear can be treated as

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[9] All of these philosophers were writing about fear in the aftermath of violent eruptions, war and enormous civil strife. Hobbes wanted to provide an antidote to the revolutionary ferment circulating around 17th century Europe and he saw fear as an essential instrument of the absolute state. The sovereign's skilful mobilization of popular fears, he argued, is the necessary recipe to instil fearful obedience in the population. Writing in the wake of the French Revolution, Toqueville, on the other hand, saw fear as the foundation of liberty. For the early Arendt, writing amidst the trauma of Nazism, fear of fascism would guard against the return of the camps and galvanizing a new politics (Robin, 2004a).
[10] Juan Corradi (1992) also makes this point.

personal responses, driven by unconscious desires[11]. "But how men and women interpret and respond to their fear – these are more than unconscious, personal reactions to imagined or even real dangers. They are choices made under the influence of belief and ideology, in the shadow of elites and powerful institutions" (2002: 1). Moreover, the treatment of a selection of societal fears, such as terrorism or crime, as commonsense, "real" fears renders them outside of the realm of political debate.

Robin's analysis of political fear is immensely valuable. But virtually absent from his impressive body of work is any accounting for the innumerable cracks and fissures in the landscape of contemporary fear. The reason for this could very well be connected to disciplinary traditions. Robin writes about fear as a political scientist, a scholarly tradition that is overwhelmingly preoccupied with systems, both of political organization and thought. This emphasis on systems raises two major problems. First, it projects a conception of fear as an all-encompassing, unified experience. Second, and relatedly, it is insufficient for thinking about fear as an object of people's political resistance. Arguably, this transformation of social relationships into systems is itself a product of the modernist treatment of culture as outside its protagonists. And it is here, I would like to suggest, that communication studies provides an avenue for opening up the scholarship on the politics of fear.

The Culture of Fear and the Problem of Agency

In the 1990s, the problem of social agency was explicitly taken up by a number of Latin American scholars trying to politically apprehend the devastating experience of the

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[11] He makes a distinction between private and public fears (2004b). While the former, it can be argued, are a manifestation of our own psychologies and do not have a significant impact beyond ourselves the latter manifest social conflicts and struggles.

right wing dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s. They made some of the most expressive and important interventions in theorizing the "culture of fear". The concept then migrated north and was a subject of sociological studies of urban angst in the aftermath of Reagonomics and the combined cultural force of neoliberalism and neoconservativism in North America. This migration is relevant for this study in that it sharpens the conceptual lens through which we can examine the dialectics and communication of fear and anti-fear in contexts that are not necessarily immersed in total terror.

Still, the editors of one important anthology on fear as a way of life in South America during the 1970s and 1980s argue that by the early 1990s, there was still a major geographical gap in the literature. This was especially acute, they argued, in the Global North, and particularly in the US, where they noted a steady reluctance to examine fear as something other than a personal emotion[12] (Corradi et. al. 1992). Later in the decade, critical authors like Mike Davis (1998) and Barry Glassner (1999) began to rectify this gap and apply it to the North American context.

But when we examine the work of these North American authors we see that both have us thinking about fear in a way that recognizes its political dimensions but that largely revolves around a rational-irrational binary. This binary plots the politics of fear along a trajectory of real and unreasonable fears. A major problem with this mode of representation is that it relies on an instrumentalism that renders fear a totalizing experience that is devoid of agency or contestation. Glassner, whose analysis came to prominence with his best-selling 1999 book, says it directly in the title: *The Culture of*

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[12] Indeed, this volume is among the few works in the fear literature published in English to make a connection between fear and political resistance. However, as I discuss below, the problem of agency is difficult to resolve within the "culture of fear" framework.

Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things. His work performed a central

narrative thread in Michael Moore's blockbuster documentary *Bowling for Columbine*

(2002). In the film, Glassner points out how people's everyday "natural" fears are

appropriated by the powerful in order to *not* talk about the really scary things that are

taking place around us and pose actual, significant dangers to society[13]. As his book's

title suggests, Glassner's positivist, humanist sociology endeavours to prove that much of

the US public's reported anxieties of street crime, drug dealers, aliens, single mothers,

illness, airplanes, youth and so on, are not only irrational but they are deliberately driven

by a corporate media, for which fear is an accumulation strategy. He uses statistics to

disprove the dominant fear narratives routinely used by politicians, "security experts" and

in the commercial media to argue that the manipulation of fear functions as a way of

displacing urgent public debates on what people should really be afraid of. In this

process, he suggests, it is the powerful who remain unchallenged.

Glassner's large-scale data analysis is useful for the study of fear as a cultural

construct. But it also falls into the trap of a totalizing conception of culture which

inadvertently carves the cultural dynamic into three distinct camps: the fearful, the feared

and the fear mongers. Furthermore, his conception of culture assigns disproportionate

power to the commercial mass media's role in producing and animating false fears. This

media focus, while it is both compelling and undeniably important, falls into an old trap:

while his critique of the media's use of fear as a commodity is certainly important to

understand its construction, consumers of commercial media are construed as one

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[13] This critique is powerfully illustrated in one scene in *Bowling* where Glassner describes how air pollution is a more serious threat to the Los Angeles public then crime is but the commercial media's obsession with street crime takes precedence over public health. As Moore and Glassner consider the greenish sludge hovering in the skyline news reporters from a number of television stations are scrambling for footage of an alleged crime.

dimensional receptors. People are seen as passive objects of messages that they have no

say in creating and hence no capacity to resist. As a result, the actually existing

insubordination is summarily erased. We, who are presumably separate from the

researchers who understand what is happening, are left without agency.

To engage in a critique of this mediacentric approach is not the same as claiming

that channel surfing is resistance, however. Rather, it is a methodological critique that, in

the spirit of Martin Barbero (1993) situates people as the protagonists of culture. This

totalizing conception of media culture has nevertheless continued apace in the otherwise

critical North American literature on the relationship between fear, culture and politics

(see for example, Altheide, 2006; Macek, 2006).

While US sociology and media studies' approach to fear have lacked a critical

approach to the dialectics of culture, US anthropologist Michael Taussig's (1987)

groundbreaking work on the materiality of terror introduced a lexicon of fear into critical

anthropology and interdisciplinary studies (Margold, 1999). Taussig's writing on the link

between total terror and capitalist development in Latin America introduced a way of

thinking about fear as a colonial strategy that continues into the present. In this way, it

helps us to think about the relationship between fear and the continuous character of

primitive accumulation.

Published in the late 1980s, Taussig's study of colonial violence and primitive

accumulation as it was exacted in Colombia's early twentieth century plantation economy

established a powerful critique of conventions of anthropological representation, but for

our purposes a vital contribution was his conceptual elaboration of "cultures of terror".

Most importantly for us is how Taussig's study elucidates the relationship between

communication and the politics of truth making amidst regimes of fear where reality itself is in crisis. Colonialism, Taussig shows us, throws reality into crisis through various strategies of violence, social disruption and displacement. To further ground this analysis in history, we can point to Federici (2001, 2004) and Linebaugh and Rediker's (2000) writing on capitalist terror, which also demonstrates the ways in which this strategy of reality disruption is a persistent feature of "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey 2005).

In this way, thinking about the contemporary politics of fear through the analytical framework of the new enclosures and its effect upon social experience connects us with what Taussig identifies as a core characteristic of the culture of fear: the problem of interpretation. Taussig argues that a culture of terror operates both through the atomizing effects of violence set upon the individual, "yet there is also the need to control massive populations, entire social classes, and even nations through the cultural elaboration of fear" (1987: 8). One of the effective ways this regime of total terror operates, he argues, is through rendering its logic unintelligible to its subjects. In this regard, Taussig raises a problematic that is crucial for analyzing the socio-cultural and communicational significance of fear:

> For me the problem of interpretation grew ever larger until I realized that this problem of interpretation is decisive for terror, not only making effective counterdiscourse so difficult but also making the terribleness of death squads, disappearances, and torture all the more effective in crippling people's capacity to resist. The problem of interpretation turned out to be an essential component of what had to be interpreted, just as resistance was necessary for control. Deeply dependent on sense and interpretation, terror nourished itself by destroying sense. (1987: 128)

Taussig describes the colonizer's hallucinatory fantasies of subaltern resistance that drive the oppressor to greater and, from the standpoint of the imperatives of capitalist production, seemingly irrational scales of violence. This narration of the dialectics and ambiguity of political fear is vital to the elaboration of a theoretical conception of anti-fear. The colonizer's violence is driven by his fear, as well as his greed. His fear is driven by his lucid confusion over the spectral resistance that constantly threatens the artifice of his rule. Hence, the fearful colonizer confronts this ambiguity with greater terror and deliberate strategies of confusion to conceal his dread. Taussig's detection of confusion and obfuscation as an animating force in the politics of fear is also a helpful way to consider the very social nature of communication practices. Prominent in dominant discourses of the "Information Society" are arguments that connect an abstract notion of communication, considered here as the expansion of technological capacities of information circulation, with democratic elucidation and social clarity. But just as violence and terror are productive of capitalist enclosure, the separation of subject and object, so can be confusion and ambiguity. As Taussig shows, because ambiguity is productive and communicational, we need to pay attention to how people confront it.

The late Chilean philosopher Norbert Lechner (1992) also grapples with the cultural confusion created by regimes of fear in ways that are prescient for thinking against disciplinary fear. He draws on the example of Chile's military dictatorship to analyze the authoritarian appropriation of fear. General Pinochet's state, he argues, deftly exploited society's 'natural' fears, especially popular fears of social chaos, to sustain their power. The natural fears are everyday insecurities that are at once produced by the dictatorship and attributed to the nation's 'internal enemies' committed to its

destabilization. Hence, the dictatorship reproduced itself to keep everyone 'safe' from

the danger that lurks in the murky entity of the political left and all its attendant

subversive challenges to the 'natural' order of hierarchy, authority and tradition. Lechner

proposes that this is how, at the height of the state of siege and amidst looming economic

crisis, the population reportedly feared crime and drugs more than repression and

unemployment. This, he points out, strikes at the core paradox of how dictatorships

create demand for security. "The fixation on crime and drugs, although startling, is

plausible", Lechner argues. "It allows people to trace their anxiety to a concrete origin,

maybe to a personal experience. When the danger is confined to a visible, clearly

identifiable cause that has been officially stamped as "evil," the fear can be brought under

control" (1992: 27). Indeed, the officially sanctioned object of fear in a dictatorship

would appear to be the safer place to project one's fears, given the experience of

disappearances, torture and ravaged bodies left on the streets for people to recognize the

genuinely chaotic consequences of dissent.

But it is the politics of fear's potent combination of dissent and rationality that

anthropologist Jane A. Margold (1999) raises in her critique of the "culture of fear"

discourse. While it has been enormously useful for thinking about culture and fear

politically, the concept's development through a range of applications, she argues, needs

to be revised to rectify its totalizing conflation of culture and terror. For, if terror is

culture and culture is terror, she asks, can we conceptualize where and how effective

resistance can emerge? Drawing on the example of Argentina's Mothers of the Plaza de

Mayo and her own fieldwork in the Philippines, Margold argues that the problem of

equating terror and culture conceals both questions of agency and the actual cultural

resources that people use to resist. Margold's problematization of the "culture of fear" discourse in relation to agency is crucial to this dissertation's analysis of the relationship between fear, culture, communication and oppositional politics, as I hope to show in the succeeding chapters.

Another important collection of studies on the cultural politics of fear in post-civil war Latin America grapples with the materiality of communication, the legacy of military states, and the trauma of neoliberal restructuring that accompanied the region's "transition" to democracy. Coming out of a seminar held in Mexico with cultural studies and communication studies scholars, the book's title, *Citizens of Fear: Urban Violence in Latin America*, suggests an important discursive shift from the more totalizing conception of culture that Margold rightly questions. Indeed, many of the authors focus on 'ambient' insecurity and generalized social fear in the context of neoliberalism and the associated crisis of democracy it has exacerbated (i.e. Martin-Barbero 2002; Rotker, 2002; Reguillo, 2002). Jorge Balan links this scholarship to the groundbreaking work of Lechner (1992) and Corradi et. al., (1992) arguing that a central contribution of that research was to explain how the culture of fear is not just a product of authoritarianism but a mechanism for ensuring its longevity. "Fear" he maintains, "is now as much a threat to democracy as violence itself, since it may again justify repression, emergency policies that circumvent the constitutional rule, and, more broadly, alienation from the democratic political process" (2002: 5).

This conceptual shift towards a more contingent, relational and subjective formulation is important. Further, the terminology of citizenship in the book's title suggests a specific project of problematizing the concept in relation to broader struggles

of democracy, post-colonialism and the radical urbanization process, a consequence of the rural displacements wrought by civil wars and, more recently, of those exacerbated in the neoliberal 1990s.

The fact that many of the authors' discuss fear in cities that are themselves recovering from war is instructive for examining the social impact of fear on the built environment. The authors' focus on urban contexts and struggles provides a textured and theoretically grounded example of possible avenues for exploring the materiality of fear from the perspective of culture and communication. Since it is an affective process that may have quite divergent effects of intensity and form, it also helps us to think about comparative studies of urban fear as it is experienced and expressed in the context of neoliberal restructuring.

Urban Fear

The construction of the city as an excessive site of fear and insecurity has arguably been one of the most significant developments of the 1990s. Today, the simultaneous domestication and urbanization of the "War on Terror" is evident in cities everywhere from Paris to New York City, Baghdad to Rio de Janeiro, or Ciudad Juarez to Vancouver. "For the first time since the height of the Cold War", notes urbanist Stephan Graham, "issues surrounding international, military and geopolitical security now penetrate utterly into practices surrounding the governance design and planning of cities and urban regions" (2002: 589). Certainly we are seeing an alarming expansion and intensified securitization of everyday life in urban centres: from the use of surveillance cameras and other tracking devices on urban transport and public spaces to metal detectors in private office buildings in cities like New York and Washington to electronic

billboards on US highways urging drivers to "Report Suspicious Activity". Government posters scattered around London and New York urge people to report suspicious or unusual behaviour to the police. Nonetheless, I would argue that urban-landscape changes reflecting a new the climate of fear represent not an epochal shift but a new high point in a continuous process of enclosure in globalizing capitalism.

As I discussed earlier, a blossoming of scholarship on urban fear emerged out of the aftermath of 9/11, but many of the securitization initiatives that were put in place in North America under the auspices of the new fear of global terrorism were already in motion prior to the "War on Terror". The ascendant discourse and cultural-spatial management of urban security in the decade prior to the New York and Washington D.C. attacks revolved largely around crime and behaviour management. While this identification of the city with fear shares some continuity across regions and cities, it is also expressed and organized in different ways. In North America, the 1990s witnessed, along with the development Zero Tolerance approaches to urban management, the militarization of police forces (Mitchell, 2003). In Mexico, we see in conjunction with the crisis in the state-party and the trauma of neoliberalism a precipitous intensification of social violence and impunity (Reguillo, 2002). And writing about anxious Europe, Laurent Bonelli deploys Foucault's terminology to help us understand the intensifying focus on the desire to control urban crime as an effect of the more general insecurity being experienced by people, but for which there is no recognition in formal political discourses:

> We observe a new form of governmentality which changes the political management of fears. The development of the State was linked (particularly in the postwar Welfare states) to the building of institutions in order to reduce the social fears and the uncertainty of citizens...It is

therefore not very surprising that the real problems involved in uncertainty are reduced to the fear of crime, which becomes a *new technology of power*. (2005: 205)

In this way, the post-Cold War city is an instructive site for examining the connections between the globalization of fear and the neoliberal enclosures.

Much of the contemporary English-language socio-cultural research on fear focuses on the neoliberal city as a laboratory. Here, the effect of a post-Cold War in/security culture, manifested in increasingly privatized, policed and polarized cities, is most recognizable and dramatic (i.e. Morley, 2000; Davis, 2002; Bauman, 2003; Gold and Revill, 2003; Mitchell, 2003). Taking off in multiple directions, much of this new critical research excavates the relationship between insecurity and neoliberal globalization, a relation that we can conceptualize as significantly communicational. Forwarding such conceptualization is one the goals of this dissertation.

To this end, I identify and examine major trends in urban politics and organization by examining grounded processes of privatization and securitization of public space (itself increasingly a site of anxiety and segmentation) and the dramatic rise in discourses and practices of social fear as they are expressed through the mass media, public opinion, and official regimes of "law and order". Here we can see the politics of fear as highly communicational, both through public displays of control and through a discernable securitization of urban media narratives.

One of the problematics that the urban fear literature inadvertently highlights is how difficult fear itself is to define in scholarly terms. As a result, much of the research relies on descriptions of effect. Mike Davis, for instance, is one of the most influential critical US theorists of urban fear. As I explained earlier, Davis has made major

contributions to the study of the materiality of fear. He has been critiqued for failing to

elaborate a theory of fear beyond chronicling instances of what appear to be its often-

irrational expressions (Gold and Revill, 2003). Nonetheless, an important contribution is

his introduction of the evocative concept of the carceral city to describe the experience of

the hardening of urban space and the urban heart – first under the Reagan-era counter-

revolution against the liberal city, and followed by the neoliberal revanchism of post-

1992-revolt LA and Mayor Giuliani's Zero Tolerance policy in New York (1992; 2001).

Such a hardening, Davis shows, was able to unleash the socially corrosive effect of fear,

and its devastating impact, on the city's popular classes and cultural protagonists.

Feminist scholars have critiqued Davis for his strutting, sexist portrayal of the

fearful city as a frontier-like battleground emptied out of women (Deutsche, 1996; Boyer,

1996). While these critics focus on Davis' failure to recognize the gendered experience

of contemporary urban change, their critique also points inadvertently to the tempting

trap found in the totalizing "culture of fear" framework that Davis and others employ. In

peeling away the shiny veneer of the Los Angeles' manicured façade to reveal a rotten,

violent culture of control, Davis replaces it with categories that often make the experience

of fear appear all-consuming, thereby implying an uncontested, entirely top down

process. In conceptualizing fear as wholly about oppression without a consideration of

the constant, active refusals that also shape the urban landscape, Davis describes a world

of consent that is in fact hardly recognizable.

Urban landscape as a medium of communication in the new enclosures

Alternately, Gold and Revill (2003) offer a renovation to the method of studying

fear whose materialism and dialecticism moves away from the hegemonic "real threats"

versus "imagined fears" explanatory frameworks. They propose the "fear-landscape nexus", as a method for researching the materiality of fear in the neoliberal city. While this does not explicitly address the problem of agency, it does insert the centrality of practice, thereby going beyond the often static portrayals of cities as incubators of fear. In this way, it provides a conceptual framework through which to incorporate the built environment into analyses of urban fear by re-orienting the analysis to the protagonists of culture. It introduces a dialectical approach and adds an important critical and communicational dimension to the cluster of scholarship on the relationship between fear and the built environment that has emerged in the last few years[14]. As a medium of communication and a social relation, landscape is a useful method of inquiry into the politics of fear, Gold and Revill argue, because it occupies "the intersection of the practical and the reflexive, the natural and the cultural, and the affective and the rational" (ibid: 36). By populating urban space and its built form, the "fear-landscape nexus" framework adds crucial nuance to this focus on the communicational dimension.

What is particularly relevant to this study is the authors' argument that the urban fear-landscape nexus is constituted around three overlapping social processes: *marginalization, spectacle* and *surveillance*. These three ways of examining the materiality of fear as social and communicational practice, they argue, "also supply possible avenues for exploring aspects of the cultural politics of fear and the rhetorical strategies that justify oppression and articulate resistance." While the authors do not theorize this resistance, they recognize its formative presence. The case studies examined in chapters three, four and five of this dissertation analyze some of the ways in which the

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[14] i.e. *Architecture of fear* (Ellin, 1997). *Fear and Space: The View of Young Designers in the Netherlands* (Hauben et. al. 2004); *(In)Security* special issue of *Open: cahier on art and the public domain* Seijdel (ed.) (2004) and *City of Panic* (Virilio, 2005)

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practices of surveillance, spectacle and marginalization are contested in the neoliberal metropolis. In the process, it is through the lens of landscape as a communicational relation that we examine other scholarship that grapples with the geography of urban fear.

For their part, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri make a case for understanding the spatial dimensions of political fear as a practice of managing inequality in contemporary empire: "Empire is characterized by the close proximity of extremely unequal populations, which creates a situation of permanent social danger and requires the powerful apparatuses of the society of control to ensure separation and guarantee the new management of social space" (2000: 337). Here, Hardt and Negri introduce the explicit language of separation, which resides at the heart of the autonomist conception of the continuous character of primitive accumulation and enclosure. This variation of the "fear-landscape nexus" approach introduces an important line of thinking for our framework of the social and affective dimensions that accompany the spatial practices of the new enclosures.

In her study on anti-prostitution zoning ordinances in the US, cultural geographer Lisa Sanchez draws on the historical concept of enclosure to examine the relationship between the new enclosures and the cultural politics of women's bodies. Sanchez (2001) uses an innovative approach to conceptualizing the logic of enclosure by applying it directly to the population and not just to land, property or the architectural landscape. Her argument is that through the resuscitation of enclosure as a method of analyzing spatial governmentality, we can see the enduring presence of the original enclosure movements in contemporary urban contexts. Correspondingly, she defines the legal efforts to control the movement of sex workers as "New Urban Enclosure Acts" (2001).

Echoing Davis' Foucauldian lens, Sanchez argues that: "[p]ostdisciplinary society engages the logic of enclosure and utilizes the carceral spaces and regimented practices that developed under industrial capitalism. Governmental regimes increase the effectiveness of disciplinary institutions by organizing the built environment to be selective and exclusive" (Sanchez, 2001: 127). This socio-spatial framework is helpful for grounding the politics of fear relationally, where we can see the materiality of communication in its organizing logic.

Another variant on the enclosures-of-fear approach is elaborated by Steven Flusty's (1997) concept of "Interdictory Spaces" which, by analysing urban development following the 1992 Rebellion in Los Angeles, describes new forms of social filtering, categorizing and containment[15]. The concept refers to the targeted and often-subtle expansion of technologies and landscapes of exclusion and regulation enacted through forms of interception integrated into the urban landscape in a way that retains the foundational liberal narrative of free mobility. In sharp contrast to the high visibility logic of conventional warfare, these spaces of interdiction exist in the most mundane, everyday and normalized spaces, from private playgrounds and public parks to shopping malls; they are designed to separate out "undesirable" populations.

Flusty's concept is particularly helpful in providing a schematic map of the myriad ways that reified space is organized as both fear deterring and fear invoking for suspect populations, as these interdictory spaces act as social filters in urban space. Flusty offers a typology for the different kinds of interdiction created to respond to the

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[15] The 1992 LA Rebellion (variously referred to as the Rodney King Riots, the LA Revolt and the Uprising) marked a traumatic turning point in LA's socio-cultural and political economic landscape of fear, the ramifications are still playing out in 2007.

particular needs of the place being "defended" that correspond with the neoliberal urban trend of fragmentation[16]. While celebrated in the "new urbanism" discourse of consumer citizenship for their stealth aesthetic and integration with the urban landscape, Flusty shows how interdictory spaces are designed to divide, segregate and exclude.

From the perspective of communication and democracy, the implications of this fear-driven trend towards normalized enclosure are startling. Such contemporary strategies of interdiction, argues Zygmunt Bauman, are merely the postmodern equivalents of moats, guard walls and turrets, "only rather than defending the city and all its dwellers against the enemy outside, they are built to set the city residents apart and, having stigmatized them as adversaries, to defend them against each other" (2003: 30). In the process, Bauman argues, they destroy, rather than facilitate, communication:

> Spatial separation leading to enforced confinement has been over the centuries almost a visceral, instinctual fashion of responding to all difference, and particularly such difference that could not be, or was not wished to be, accommodated within the web of habitual social intercourse. The deepest meaning of spatial separation was the banning or suspension of communication, and so the forcible perpetuation of estrangement. (1998: 106)

The strategy of zoning ordinances as an increasingly significant technology of social separation has been addressed by scholarship concerned with the correlation between urban segmentations and the political organization of fear (Boyer, 1996; Sanchez, 2001). The growth of flexible, micro-spatial management through the designation of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and their peopled version,

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[16] "Slippery space" is that which "cannot be reached, due to contorted, protracted, or missing paths of approach". "Prickly space" – "space that cannot be comfortably occupied, defended by such details as wall-mounted sprinkler heads activated to clear loiterers or ledges sloped to inhibit sitting." "Crusty space" cannot be traversed on account of walls, checkpoints and other fortifications. "Jittery space" is space that "cannot be utilised unobserved due to active monitoring by roving patrols and/or remote technologies feeding to security stations." (1997: 48-49).

Business Improvement Associations (BIAs), became increasingly influential in North America, Europe, Australia, the Caribbean and South African cities in the 1990s. The idea was pioneered in New York City, the decade's major innovator of conservative "law and order" urban management. It is a strategy that aims to cordon off street crime into designated zones of high crime or drug areas and to re-inscribe those zones as exceptional disciplinary control districts. Legally, the designation combines the city's land use laws and criminal codes for the purposes of justifying intensified police activity to control the disorder produced through this concentration (Boyer, 1996). This cultural management strategy, referred to as "quality of life" ordinances, extends in those places to testing out the Constitutional limits of anti-vagrancy and loitering laws, the expulsion of homeless people and the imposition of dress codes and curfews to regulate and socially cleanse public space under the auspices of citizen safety.

In the UK, another major innovator in urban securitization, this practice is enacted through Private Town Centre Management (TCM) strategies designed to cleanse urban space of "undesirables" (Graham and Marvin, 2001). These zones are characterized by the heavy presence of video surveillance, private security, so-called "street theme-ing" and careful management[17]. These "malls without walls", Graham and Marvin (2001) demonstrate, operate as separate, privatized cities within cities. They are micropolities

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[17] The trend towards "themed" cityscapes is significant and an expression of soft enclosure. According to Graham and Marvin, major transnational media conglomerates are increasingly placing theme park attractions in major cities which are themselves competing to attract tourists and middle class consumers back to the city and away from the putatively safer suburban mall. "The city media complexes are a crucial part of the efforts of such corporations to stimulate higher returns and greater out-of-house consumption by the middle classes. This, in turn, increasingly ties themed city spaces seamlessly with in-house consumption in what is termed an "inside/outside strategy"" (2001: 265)

that produce successionary streetscapes that operate a separate regime with its own self-proclaimed rules and regulatory framework[18].

These successionary areas are the commercial equivalent to the gated community, the quintessentially fearful residential form that bloomed in cities around the world in the 1990s. Indeed, this is a global trend: while spatial separation and confinement have for centuries been an organized response to difference (Bauman 1998), several researchers demonstrate the extent to which cities around the world are undergoing a profound process of privatized segmentation (i.e. Wacquant, 1994 on Chicago; Boyer, 1996 on New York; Caldeira, 2000 on Sao Paolo; Flusty, 1997, 2001 on Los Angeles; Graham and Marvin, 2000 on London; Low, 2003 on Houston; and Dawson, 2006 on Johannesburg). While Latin American cities, where the super-poor and the super-rich often live in close geographical proximity, were pioneers of modern gated communities, they exploded in the US in the 1990s. In 2000, the number of enclaves had surpassed 20,000, boasting a population well over eight million (Graham and Marvin, 2001)[19].

In her extensive study on the phenomena of residential enclosure in the US, Setha Low (2003) situates the gated community within the sweeping changes in the political economy of the late twentieth century urban US. The effect of these changes, she argues, does not stop at the gates of the fortress but penetrates the entire logic of the city: "The creation of gated communities (and the addition of guardhouses, walls, and entrance gates

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[18] Writing about New York City, urbanist Sharon Zukin (1996) demonstrates how these publicly supported and privately policed urban enclosures are indicative of the neoliberal trend towards privatized public spaces in the era of "public-private partnerships." This trend is also apparent in cities all over North America where private security managed by local business associations are flourishing as part of a movement towards flexible policing.

[19] According to Graham and Marvin (2001) in the late 1990s up to 50 percent of housing developments in the US South and West were built as "common interest developments". An exclusive private residential complex in California named "Desert Island" has gone as far as surrounding its anxious inhabitants with a 25-acre moat (Bauman, 2005).

to established neighbourhoods) is an integral part of the building of the fortress city, a social control technique based on the so-called militarization of the city" (2003: 17). The vigilante culture that is required to maintain these separations, she found, heightens resident's fear, anxiety and sense of isolation, rather then making them feel safer.

National Fortresses of Fear

The contradictory processes of weakening and hardening public space in conjunction with the expansion of private forms of living seems to suggest a re-concentration of state power under neoliberalism[20]. The elaboration of the micropolitical spaces of controlled communication discussed above appears designed to offset a generalized sense of besieged security. One of the places this is most starkly demonstrated is at the boundaries of the nation. Here, the sub-national processes of segmentation and enclosure extend to national borders where the urban and suburban fortress culture has its national and regional expression. This development grew throughout the 1990s with the expansion of trade pacts among regional trading blocs, coinciding with the building of "Fortress Europe" under the Sheingen Agreement and "Fortress North America" under NAFTA.

The movement towards fortress continents, often strongly supported by national citizens, suggests a strong connection between neoliberal insecurity and fear-driven nationalism (Morley, 2000; Hage, 2003). Writing from an increasingly border-anxious Australia, Ghassan Hage (2003) connects this problematic to a deeper dilemma of community. He attributes the current cycle of what he calls "paranoid nationalism" in

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[20] Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell (2002) see this as a phase of what they have called "roll-on" neoliberalism, in contrast to the previous "roll-back" stage of ruthless deregulation.

part to a more general crisis of social hope wrought by the "conditions of hope scarcity generated by transnational capitalism", which fosters an excessively defensive national imaginary as social redistribution is abandoned (2003: 32). For Hage, the West is running a deficit in the production of social hope. The implications of this are critical, he warns, because when the already profoundly unequal distribution of hope in capitalist societies reaches an extreme, certain groups are excluded from the possibility of any hope whatsoever. In neoliberal capitalism, this disintegration of hope provokes not the threats to national sovereignty or identity as many critics of globalization claim, but a more catastrophic decline of the social more broadly. This paucity of hope produces an excess of fear, which in turn produces the conditions for rising nationalism and xenophobia as "globalization" proceeds apace.

Hage's vital critique of the connection between xenophobic nationalism and fear in globalization is important to this dissertation because it draws us closer still to thinking about the continuous process of enclosure and to the relationship between culture and agency. Hage brings us to the national borders and then back again to the city, where globalization manifests itself in the everyday experience of a growing number of people. Just as Low's study on gated communities points to seeping effects of fortress culture beyond the gates, Hage helps us think about the dialectics of national, global and local scales. In the mediation of this neoliberal city, we can see reflected Hage's contention that "the aesthetics of globalization is the aesthetics of zero tolerance" (2003: 20).

Mediating the New Enclosures

Drawing on these intersectional spatial analyses of the relationship between fear and enclosure, we can turn to look at the mediation of the new enclosures. The

representation of the city as a site of concentrated dread became a dominant trope of post-Cold commercial media narratives. In North America and in Latin America, crime took central stage in news discourse (Martin Barbero, 2002; Altheide, 2006). Here, the figure of the mobile Other that may penetrate the space of security, whether of the neighbourhood, business improvement zone or nation, is again overwhelmingly the target of politicized fear narratives. Along the way, everyone becomes re-cast as a victim, or potential victim, of crime. To think of urban processes as communication, Martin Barbero argues, "we must think about how the media has turned itself into a part of the basic fabric of urbanity, and about how fears have recently come to form an elemental part of the new processes of communication" (2002: 27). To do this, he maintains, we have to confront the belief that communication processes can be understood through studying the media. Rather, the media – he is expressly talking about the role of television here – and what it does and how it affects people can only be understood in relation to transformations in urban forms of communication more generally[21]. Specifically, he is referring to the way the mass media, and especially television, has to a large extent eclipsed public spaces of communication. In other words, to understand the relationship between television and culture it is important to ask not only what the television does but to ask why television is replacing spaces of communication. This odd but important formulation helps us think about the mediation of fear in non-mediacentric terms.

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[21] Martin Barbero's focus on television is grounded in his work on communication practices in Colombia, where private ownership of computers and access to the Internet is much more circumscribed than it is in North America. As in most places, television, or sometimes the radio, are the most pervasive popular media. In the North American context, we could add the computer to his formulation. Nonetheless, in North America too television is still arguably a more suitable referent too, given its cross-class and cross-generational presence and enormous cultural power.

To ground this problematic by means of an example, we turn briefly to North America's quintessential urban fear genre of the 1990s: *Cops*. Thinking back to Hage and at the level of the urban, we can look at how this pioneering "reality" genre mediates the figure of the abject upon which the security of subjecthood relies. First appearing in March 1989, the show reflects a number of important trends in commercial media aesthetics as they related to the profound changes occurring in cities. That those transformations were being projected in the form of grainy amateurish footage from the perspective of the police patrol car is suggestive of a more general cultural milieu that in the proceeding decade began to be articulated in the language of Zero Tolerance.

As *Cops* so vividly portrays, the aesthetics of Zero Tolerance swirl around the forces of authority and the hydra-headed spectre of social chaos. The show's innovative delivery of short, intense nightly doses of hardscrabble realism projects a mythic, but apparently real, nighttime world of inexplicable social derangement. In many ways, we can position *Cops* at the forefront of a broader trend in North American commercial culture of the 1990s that depicted an image of the city as a seething cauldron of social chaos ready to burst out without notice (Macek, 2006). *Cops*, argues media theorist Elayne Rapping, is "set in a metaphoric border territory – literally, 'out where the buses don't run'" (2003: 56). She elaborates on the border theme as a narrative of fear of the proximate urban stranger:

> The creatures portrayed – inscrutable, uncontrollable, and beyond the ken of traditional criminological "expertise" – are after all "somewhere" very near to us, for we see actual road signs identifying actual American locations. And because of this visually implied proximity to "normal" society, they are likely, so it is ominously implied, to seep through our borders and spread their chaos to our own vulnerable communities if left unchecked. (2003: 60-61)

In this context, the figure of the abject outsider inside the borders becomes the most accessible target of fear, upon which the subjectivity of security is therefore constructed.

It is this abjection, which is among the most perilous threats for human beings, and why it's threatening, spectral presence, either in mediated representation or in the organization of lived built landscapes, serves as both disciplinarian and community-builder. "Fear", media theorist David Altheide argues, "is one of the few things that Americans share" (2003: 22). This community of fear may appear to be a product of the specific atomizing force of neoliberalism, but it reaches back to the Western philosophy's major theorist of constituted power, Thomas Hobbes.

Invisibilization of Fear as Social Discipline

Paradoxically, fear's very appearance as apolitical can be attributed to Hobbes' influential theory of the state. In his philosophical treatise, this defender of the absolute state argued that fear was one passion among three necessary for peace: "The passions that incline men to peace, are fear of death; desire of such things as are necessary for commodious living; and a hope by their industry to obtain them" (cited in Midnight Notes, 2001: 1). Hobbes was writing about the politics of fear during the insurgent democratic moment of seventeenth century England, and his principle concern lay in quelling this fever (Robin, 2004). The meaningful circulation of collective fear, Hobbes felt, could broker an essential, socially pacifying marriage of passion and rationality (ibid).

Hobbes' convocation of passion makes fear difficult to recognize, within this framework, as politics. And this separation was, in his political imagination, essential to

the effective constitution of state power. In other words, fear's political effectiveness resides in the making of the political character of fear invisible. Echoing the observation of Juan Corredi et. al. (1992) discussed above, Corey Robin (2004) argues that the treatment of fear as a "cultural-psychological" phenomenon in traditional Euro-American political philosophy has historically relegated it to a subpolitical category. Conversely, he asserts, fear is the *foundation* of modern politics (Robin, 2004). Today, writes Robin, fear is seen by Hobbes' political and intellectual offspring, specifically those in the US neoconservative movement, as an integral political instrument of socio-cultural renewal.

At a time of great social upheaval, Hobbes argued, fear would provide a common ethic among those who, amidst the trauma of enclosure, found themselves cast adrift. An appropriately rational and passionate fear of death, Hobbes thought, would re-orient the potential insurgent democrat into a self-preserving subject of the state whose job it was to provide some insurance against death in exchange. "Hobbesian state power", Robin writes, "was not intended for greatness, but to curtail challenges from below. It succeeded when its subjects merely stood still or got out of its way. Their immobility was the outward sign of their fear – a fear signalling their unwillingness to take up arms against the state" (Robin, 2004: 44-45).

Hobbes' odd but influential formulation of the de-politicization of fear shows why it is difficult to think about the political uses of fear in its everyday manifestations, as both a technique of control and as a site of insubordination. As Hobbes advocated in the most direct philosophical terms, the political purpose of the state's inducement of fear, and its treatment as subpolitical, is to immobilize rebellious impulses and produce consensus or social cohesion in its apparent absence. This combined construction of fear

as apolitical is central to the powerful discourse of neutralizing dissent, especially in moments of crisis. Following 9/11, for example, the dominant narrative in the US was one of cohesion and necessary consensus, a spirit most stridently summed up by President Bush's "either you're with us or you're with the terrorists" ultimatum. Lechner analyzes this strategy in his discussion of the use of fear during Chile's dictatorship: "The instrumentalization of fears is one of the principal mechanisms of social discipline. It is a strategy of depoliticization that does not require repressive means, except to exemplify the absence of alternatives" (1992: 31). In other words, the de-politicization of fear is the secret of its political power.

However, the political efficacy of fear for military dictatorships may be difficult to conceal and hence make it more effective than it is in formal democracies where subordination is mediated less by force than by freedom. Here we can look at how the de-politicizing effect of fear in the sensational discourse of the "War on Terror" (and its historical variants that we have seen in campaigns against social Others, crime, migrants, women, communists, and so on) is appropriately exemplified in the mundane, everyday necessity of going to work in a capitalist society.

Through a discussion of the dramatic rollbacks in workers' rights under the auspices of security imperatives of the "War on Terror" economy, Robin (2004) argues that the US workplace is a good place to examine the invisible political economy of intimidating fear. "For all our talk today of the fear of terrorism, or, before that, of communism, the most important form of fear is that which ordinary Americans have of their superiors, who sponsor and benefit from the inequities of everyday life" (2004: 20). While the business press openly recognizes the integral role of fear in producing a

disciplined workforce – with the Wall Street Journal claiming that "fear can be a powerful management tool" (ibid) – the workplace (perhaps even more than other sites of normalized hierarchy) is exempt from the state's claims to fight fear in the name of freedom. Among the examples Robin cites was the post-9/11 firing of 30,000 airport baggage screeners under the US Transportation Security Act. A sweeping example of de-certification that would have been very difficult to implement under the same pretext on September 10, 2001, it was justified on the basis that a "flexible" workforce was necessary to ensure public security.

Of course, fear at work long pre-dates the all-encompassing "War on Terror". For the purposes of this discussion we can point to the fact that one of the hallmarks of the neoliberal nineties was an effective campaign of labour discipline through the implementation and normalization of precariousness as the dominant experience of working life. Unlike previous moments in capitalist labour market restructuring where specific intransigent sectors were targeted, mass layoffs and deep renovations of the work world was integral to the 1990s neoliberal restructuring process. This restructuring spanned the labour hierarchy, from factory work to farm work, to white collar jobs in the computer and university sectors, to the service industry. In turn, workers' fear of losing their jobs to "technology" or being "outsourced" at lower wages and diminished benefits made for powerful leverage from management's point of view.

The Bank of America's "adopt an ATM" program provides but one example of the effectiveness of fear as a strategy of labour discipline. Following a round of massive layoffs, the remaining employees were asked to "volunteer" for this company program. This meant taking responsibility for cleaning and maintenance of an Automated Teller

Machine during unpaid time. Twenty eight hundred employees volunteered (Robin, 2004). Again, what is significant about this is not its historical uniqueness but relative invisibility of the fear factor thanks to its depoliticization under neoliberalism's artifice of freedom. While in Hobbes' time an intransigent worker, pathologized as a vagabond perhaps, would be flogged, today she could simply be fired if she refuses to "volunteer" her free time to an ATM or is otherwise uncooperative. And the fear of unemployment, of the poverty, homelessness and abjection that this condition threatens, repeatedly keeps strongly felt (and occasionally acted upon) democratic passions in check.

Communication and Fear

It is this impossibility of democracy whenever fear is the major lexicon and communicational practice of politics that is the major concern of this dissertation. My contention is that it is in the realm of communication where politics and fear most powerfully intersect. Indeed, "communication" itself has become, over the last decade especially, a potent substitute term for "democracy" itself. Perhaps the most powerful discourse of freedom in the post-Cold War context was that of the celebrated "communication revolution". Throughout the 1990s, the radical expansion in information processing technologies and transportation infrastructures, and the incremental elaboration of quite abstract but nonetheless powerful discourses of "communication" as the practice of globalization (as expressed in popular culture, radical transformations in the workplace, in publishing, cinema, politics and so on) brought the materiality of communication and globalization into sharper focus.

But as Armand Mattelart (1994; 2002) continues to remind us, communicational globalization is not a technical matter but something intimately linked to a process of

power and incorporation: "The ideology of corporate globalization is indissolubly linked to the ideology of worldwide communication. Together, they form the matrix both for the symbolic management of the worldwide scheme and for the further, unacknowledged reality of a world ruled by the logic of social and economic segregation" (2002: 591-2). It is in this context that the "information revolution" and "communication networks" have become the language of the globalization of both fear and hope.

Perhaps more so than its uses in the neoliberal corporate lexicon, the terminology of networks and global communication became associated with the 1990s cycle of resistance to enclosure also known as the anti-globalization movement. But following 9/11, it became meaningful in new and often frightening ways. The terms and forms of organization that suggested the possibility of revolutionary circulation that Marx predicted so long ago also became code words for terrorist violence (think of "al-Qaeda networks"), and a pretext for worldwide political repression in the name of public safety.

The experience of 9/11 and especially the "War on Terror" transformed the experience of the celebrated "communications revolution" in notably concrete ways. Today, a terrorist bombing in London or Madrid provokes immediate high alert in Paris and New York City. The bus, the metro, the street, the web, tall buildings, airplanes and ports, sports stadiums, car parks, nightclubs, workplaces, gas stations and police stations are all vulnerable and all become nodes of fear and anxiety. These spaces are suddenly infused with meaning, and the spectre of violence against them increasingly produces a network of shared meaning if they occur within the spaces in which the "West" has defined itself. The bombings of trains in Mumbai, for example, do not raise the terror alert in New York to a code Red, but a bombing in London does.

As many critics have pointed out, despite the reality of terrorism, the "War on Terror" may be more dangerous to democracy than terrorism itself. Drawing on Spinoza's relational ontology, philosopher Hasana Sharp (2005) examines the shifting landscape of fear through, in part, a discussion of the global communication of politicized fears. "The development of an increasingly efficient and complex global network of communication, and wider-reaching economic systems, have opened contemporary finite beings to being more immediately and easily affected by others" (Sharp, 2005: 597). In this context, the cultivation of fear is a more effective way to impose order than the encouragement of an affective regime where people's powers are amplified rather than squashed. For these reasons, Sharp argues, the elaboration of strategies to subvert fear is an imperative of democracy.

Sharpe points to what Spinoza calls "sad passions", of which fear occupies the top rung, as productive of estrangement which in turn is generative of distrust and fear. This separation and estrangement is a disempowering affect and hence an anti-democratic force driving the circulation of fear: "The way to disarm the people is to galvanize corrosive relationships of fear, making them both afraid and terrifying" (Sharp, 2005: 606). This social breakdown makes the sustenance of human relationships necessary for democracy unattainable, much like happiness, according to Spinoza, becomes unattainable in such conditions. As a result, in a state of radical fear, the dream of borderless social relationships, which is the underlying utopian promise of communicational globalization, can seamlessly turn into the nightmare of the "War on Terror".

Terrorizing Dissent

The discourse of freedom has historically been the purview of the political left, but increasingly in the neoliberal 1990s it became the mobilizing discourse of rightwing conservatism. In the context of neoliberalism, 'freedom' came to be discursively entwined with the desires of transnational capital. Following the attacks of September 11, the neoliberal discourse of freedom became ever-more conflated with national security: "We will defeat the terrorists by expanding and promoting world trade," President Bush promised on his way to China for the APEC summit one month after the launching of his "War on Terror". 9/11 also gave neoliberalism's increasingly strident advocates a clear language that linked terrorism to dissent. Maria Livanos Cattuai, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Commerce, stated that if that fall's 2001 "Doha round" of the WTO failed, it "would be acclaimed by all enemies of freer world trade and investment, including those behind the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon" (cited in Levidow, 2002: 1). One week after 9/11, Canada's conservative *National Post* newspaper also drew this connection: "Like terrorists, the anti-globalization movement is disdainful of democratic institutions…Terrorism, if not so heinous as what we witnessed last week, has always been part of the protesters' game plan" (cited in Panich, 2002: 40). Statements like these were the early warning signals that political dissent against neoliberalism would from now on be equated with terrorism (Levidow, 2003).

This dramatic turn was not, of course, without a recent history. A lexicon dedicated to criminalizing politics appropriate for the post-Cold War context was already being crafted since the first round of massive protests against the World Trade

Organization in Seattle in 1999. The terrorist attacks simply gave the language an urgent clarity. Occurring six weeks after 500,000 people protested the G-8 Meetings in Genoa, the attacks occurred at an apex moment in the anti-globalization movement[22]. At that point, the anti-neoliberal globalization movement entered the camp of "enemies of western civilization" (Caffentizs, 2001).

In this atmosphere, a number of countries, particularly those identifying with "the West", adopted highly controversial anti-terrorism legislation[23]. Critical legal experts sharply condemned the legislation as promoting a permanent, normalized state of emergency. Generally, the changes broadened definitions of terrorism, conflating it more directly with oppositional politics. They also created new crimes of association, restricted civil liberties, and increased police powers (Levidow, 2002; Panich, 2002). Certainly, these measures were effective in promoting paranoia and fear among political dissidents. But while the climate of the "War on Terror" criminalized politics, it also effectively politicized everything else in public life.

The attacks on the anti-globalization movement immediately following 9/11 also highlighted the authorities' growing anxiety about the communicational openings that were the celebrated fuel of neoliberalism's "Information Society". The 1990s was a time of opening, with air transportation, global communication infrastructures and transnational coordination now increasingly available to informal groups. This

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[22] The Genoa protests marked a serious escalation of violence by the state. In addition to the Sheingen Agreement's free movement laws being suspended to keep protesters out and unprecedented millions of Euros spent on security, one young man was killed by the police, hundreds were detained and tortured and thousands were beaten by security forces. The protests were not limited to Italy. Solidarity actions took place outside Italian embassies and consulates around the world.

[23] Among these were: the USA. PATRIOT Act (United and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism), Canada's Anti-Terrorism Act (introduced as Bill C-36), the Council of the European Union's Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism, and the UK's Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act.

heightened connectivity and resulting circulation of movements was demonstrated in countless instances. In North America, the communicational networks that began with the anti-NAFTA mobilizations and the Zapatista uprising converged into a succession of initiatives: from the movement to defeat the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), to the Seattle, Quebec City, Prague, Genoa and Cancun protests, to name a few. Moreover, as the Zapatista uprising in 1994 and the escalating fracases from Seattle in 1999 to Quebec City and Genoa in 2001 demonstrated, the agencies in charge of advancing and regulating neoliberalism were finding their project of global integration in serious crisis. In the same FBI report discussed near the beginning of this chapter, where *Reclaim the Streets* and *Carnivals Against Capital* are cited among the possible terrorist threats to the US, director Louis Freeh also pointed to this paradox of globalization:

> Fast-paced global changes, such as the widespread growth in international trade and commerce; greater international openness and exchange of ideas brought about by improvements in communications and the Internet; shifts in the balance of political/social/economic forces in developing and established countries; and a growing international financial dependence, among others, continue to present the FBI with new challenges in the area of terrorism prevention. (2001: 8)

By September 2001, the terrorist attacks facilitated a profound re-assertion of control over the communicational field.

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This chapter has provided some historical and theoretical background for thinking about fear as a political, cultural and communicational relation within the context of the new enclosures. It endeavoured to situate the scholarship on fear within a communicational framework by drawing on the discipline's interdisciplinary and intersectional approach while also attempting to develop a critique of mediacentric

conceptions of communication. Another principle goal of this chapter was to situate the study of practices of fear through the autonomist lens of the primacy of resistance. As I have repeatedly pointed out here, questions of agency have been woefully absent from the study of the politics of fear. This oversight is due, I argued, to the influence of a totalizing conception of fear that tends to preclude agency. If I introduced this critique at this early stage in this dissertation, it is because it relates to my goal of elaborating and making concrete John Holloway's (2002) contention that radical theory's preoccupation with studying oppression and resistance to oppression has made it blind to the fragility of oppression. Hence, the framework presented here lays the foundation for the following chapters, whereby I start to theorize practices of anti-fear amidst the new enclosures. To think through this, we turn now to take a closer look at the rise of autonomism, whose influence on social movement theory and practice increased remarkably during the globalized social upheavals of the 1990s.

CHAPTER TWO: "TOMORROW BEGINS TODAY": COMMUNICATIONAL INSURGENCIES AMIDST THE NEW ENCLOSURES

Resistance to the new enclosures, the Midnight Notes collective (1990) has argued, demands the re-appropriation of enclosed spaces and the opening up new spaces of social movement for the restoration and expansion of the common. Used in this way, the concept of the new enclosures is an analytic that describes and historicizes the neoliberal phase of global capitalism that became increasingly ascendant starting in the early 1970s and intensifying during the post-Cold War 1990s. While on the one hand, the post-Cold War period was itself marked by extreme violence and dislocation globally, the ensuing decade witnessed a surge in anti-enclosure movements around the world. It launched a period of great social renovation as non-party social movements began to confront the politics of fear in a number of direct and innovative ways. As I will discuss throughout this chapter, the ideological vacuum created with the crisis in "actually existing socialism" provoked an aperture to elaborate a political vision based on radical democratic pluralism, horizontal networks, democratic communication, autonomy, dignity, mutual aid and subversive laughter.

During this time, the language and practice of the enclosures and commons became increasingly present in the diverse global justice and solidarity movements that were struggling against a myriad of enclosures: from mega-development projects to the

dismantling of the welfare state to "humanitarian interventions" to land privatisations[24].

In this context of capitalist liberalism's declared triumph, and against its self-representation as a spontaneous expression of human nature and equilibrium restored, the re-emergence of this language of enclosures signalled a public recognition of the tremendous effort and violence that goes into its making.

As the decade wore on and the neoliberal enclosures intensified under the auspices of international treaties such as the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), diverse movements began articulating these connections more directly, elaborating forms of political confrontation that challenged the state, capital and conventional hierarchical notions of revolution alike. As I will argue in this chapter, it was during this period of renovation that the world witnessed a notable shift away from vertical and monological militaristic conceptions of revolution to a lateral and dialogic communicational one.

This chapter documents this moment of enclosures and apertures in an effort to theorize practices of anti-fear within the context of the revolt against neoliberalism and its culture of radical insecurity. It grounds this discussion within the resurgence of autonomous thinking and practice that coincided with the political and ideological crisis that marked the end of the Cold War. To consider an alternative conception of the celebrated "communications revolution" from the perspective of the protagonists of

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[24] These acts of enclosure were not, of course, unique to the post-Cold War 1990s. Rather, that decade marked a period of notable acceleration and intensification of the processes of neoliberal restructuring that, from the early 1970s onwards, were was being implemented in the Global South in the form of World Bank and IMF mandated Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and in the Global North through substantial outsourcing of jobs, attacks on wages and cuts to social services. While there was much popular opposition to this restructuring throughout the 1970s and 1980s, especially in the Global South (see, for example, Walton and Seddon, 1994), it was in the 1990s when the movement against the new enclosures took on a specifically planetary shape.

culture rather than technological change, I elaborate the concept of communicational insurgency. This counter-practice of globalization "from below", I argue, is made possible not by abstract technologies but by oppositional practices of visibility and encounter that endeavour to open spaces for social movements. This renovation in both movement and communication practices, I maintain, is given maximum clarity in the example of the Zapatista uprising against NAFTA in 1994, which is considered by many scholars and movement activists to be the opening act of the new cycle of insurgent social movements that developed from 1994 onwards (Holloway and Pelaez, 1998; Lorenzano, 1998; Midnight Notes, 2001). In that period, an unprecedented scale of planetary circulations emerged, as did an equally remarkable political creativity both in thought and practice. To demonstrate the formative role of visibility and encounter, I sketch out a general topography of this contemporary anti-enclosure movement and locate the important place of discourses and practices of anti-fear. Finally, I highlight two important practices in this-planetary anti-enclosure movement that can help us to think about practices of anti-fear power and social agency: dignity and laughter.

Zapatismo's Revolution of Speaking and Listening: A Communicational Critique

In the first hours of January 1st 1994 – the day NAFTA officially went into effect – a group calling itself the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) surged out of Chiapas' Lacandon jungle and entered the world stage and iterated two immediate declarations: "Here we are!" and "Ya Basta!" (Enough Already!) Their remarkable articulation of common problems was cathartic. In the days following the uprising, while the military descended on Chiapas and financial markets grumbled, hundreds of

thousands of protestors packed Mexico City's massive public plaza shouting, "we are all Zapatistas!" Demonstrations supporting the EZLN – if not their tactics then their demands – and denouncing neoliberalism took place around the world. Activists and journalists flocked to Chiapas to witness what some commentators labelled the "first revolution of the 21st century" (Lorenzano, 1998).

Two weeks after the EZLN's appearance, amidst the din of continuous popular protest against a military confrontation, the Mexican government declared a ceasefire and agreed to enter into negotiations with the rebels. This remarkable shift in the terms of the conflict is commonly attributed to this outpouring of uprising "civil society". While the enormous public support for the Zapatistas was undoubtably pivotal to the government's reluctant aquiessence to demands for a negotiated settlement, it is important to also acknowledge the significance of the grave political-economic circumstances confronting Mexico's financial and political elites. With the stock market tumbling in its wake, the uprising exposed the vulnerability of Mexico's financial markets and starkly revealed was the country's structural and growing dependence on US and European investment. Mexico's decade and a half of neoliberal restructuring had rendered its markets dangerously susceptible to unfavourable publicity and panicky international investors which could, and did, withdraw their money without notice. The urgency of those circumstances, in concert with the outpouring of public support for the Zapatistas and their demands for equality, was instrumental to the state's surpising agreement to halt its military assault on Chiapas and enter into peace negotiations.

It is out of this complex and conflictive milieu that the Zapatista uprising galvanized a renaissance in oppositional culture in Mexico and internationally (Holloway

and Pelaez, 1998). The movement's communicational politics have been central to their remarkable influence on debates and practices of the global justice movements that flourished in the wake of their uprising against neoliberal enclosures. Zapatismo, as it developed both within the Zapatista political commune and in its rhizomatic circulation in the alter-globalization movements, provides a guiding conceptual and practical framework for this chapter. In particular, it is the movement's remarkable reflection of, and influence on, the contemporary global justice movement's ideas of social transformation and communication that is our guide.

Much of the analysis of the Zapatistas' philosophical and tactical impact on the contemporary anti-enclosure movement has focussed on the rebel's savvy "media strategy" and the revolutionary possibilities hidden in the harnessing of new information technologies. This view stems from three overlapping factors. First, the enormous media attention the Zapatistas garnered in Mexico and internationally. Second, the vital role of the Internet in the movement's remarkable transnational dissemination and the way the uprising coincided with the waxing of the so-called "Information Revolution". Third, Zapatistas garnered immediate and enormous popular resonance, in Mexico especially but also internationally. All of this rendered the movement virtually synonymous with "communication". By reflecting on the influence of the Zapatista communication revolution on the contemporary anti-enclosure movement, here I would like to propose an alternative interpretation that helps us to problematize this technological explanation of the relationship between communication and oppositional politics.

Several months after the Zapatistas' appearance, US media activist Deedee Halleck sympathetically wrote: "In Marcos' prose, one senses an expertise and familiarity

with computer-based text, if not directly with email. For a press corps clutching their modem-connected laptops, Marcos became the first super hero of the net" (1994: 30). Similarly, sociologist Manuel Castells (1997), in his influential study on the rise of identity movements in the context of 'informational' globalization, labelled the Zapatistas "the first informational guerrilla movement". The Zapatistas' "ability to communicate with the world, and with Mexican society, and to capture the imagination of people and of intellectuals", he argued, "propelled a local, weak insurgent movement to the forefront of world politics" (1997: 79). A less sympathetic, but equally impressed, assessment came from the conservative think tank the RAND Corporation, which conducted a major study (commissioned by US military intelligence) on the Zapatistas and what the authors term their "social netwar". In the section entitled "Implications for the US Army and Military Strategy", the authors state: "The fight over 'information' has made the Zapatista conflict less violent than it might otherwise have been. But is has also made it more public, disruptive and difficult to isolate; it has had more generalized effects then if it had been contained as a localized insurgency" (Ronfeldt and Arquilla, 1999: 128). They assert that the Zapatistas' surprising success is due to their relationship with civil society groupings in Mexico and internationally, achieved through a strategic access to a variety of communication media.

The media-centric interpretation of the Zapatistas evokes the intense ambiguity of political violence and struggles over political power in the context of the new enclosures. This ambiguity has a specific relevance to the problem of communication practices. While the Zapatista movement is armed and calls itself an army, the uprising and its aftermath marked a significant turn away from the conventional militaristic conception of

revolution into a politico-communicational one. Communication has always been central to revolutionary thought and practice, however the Zapatista example is notable because of the vital role played by communication practices in the movement's public profile and in its organizational conception of democratic practice.

Hence the Zapatista communication practice is not consigned to the dissemination of information and analysis, but rather it is the centrepiece of an intensive as well as extensive democratic practice. Indeed it is this specific centrality of communication, not the relatively humble arms that they possess, that has protected the Zapatistas from annihilation over the years. This is evidenced in the fact that the contest between the insurgents and the state has been primarily communicational, not military. "As they say in these mountains, the Zapatistas have a very powerful and indestructible weapon: the word", explained Zapatista spokesperson Marcos (1994) in the days following the uprising. "It is not our arms that make us radical," he wrote two years later in a letter addressed to international civil society, "it is the new political practice which we propose and in which we are immersed with thousands of men and women in Mexico and the world: the construction of a political practice which does not seek the taking of power but the organization of society." (1996)

What the above statements clarify is that a communicational conception of revolution does not claim to resolve the problem of political violence. It is a critique of constituted power rather than an argument for a technological solution to social inequality, repression and violence. It is my contention that the fulfilment of democratic desire has little to do with "arming" everyone in the world with a laptop, a video camera and high speed Internet connection to document their oppression and then miraculously

transmit it to an abstract audience. Instead, they provide important nuance for understanding the articulation between practices of communication and social movements from the perspective of the protagonists of culture and not reified technologies.

The Zapatistas did not simply exchange traditional arms for postmodern computers and hope for the best. Rather, they proposed a new practice and language of political confrontation that can help us to think beyond this evasion. While the Zapatista political community retains its arms in a defensive posture against the belligerence of the state, its precarious security has been attributed to the movement's ability to make itself visible and to elaborate new forms of encounter that brings ordinary people together to discuss the building a new world. The pairing of visibility and encounter as the locus of Zapatista activities refers to the manner in which the movement has focussed the struggle for democracy on the problem of communication, representation and power. In other words, the Zapatistas' "armed peace" privileges communication not in the technical sense but in order to "build networks of speaking and listening among all groups and individuals seeking radical democratic transformation" (Lorenzano, 1998). In this way, they have revolutionized revolutionary practice with their communicational politics (Cleaver, 1998; Holloway, 1998). Just as importantly, they have also challenged the whole techno- and media-centric conception of communication in politics that have dominated much of the post-Cold War "Information Society" discourse.

This communicational practice uses, but is not subordinated to, mediation as a stimulant to forge dialogical spaces for what the Zapatistas call a "uniting of dignities". Indeed, the enormous cultural and ideological presence of the commercial mass media is

confronted constantly in the Zapatistas' letters and communiqués. One letter addressed to

national and international civil society critiques the pernicious effects of the mediation of

fear as a strategy to quell popular democratic aspirations: "Do not believe those who offer

conformity and fear", implored Marcos (1996). In this way, the Zapatista experience

helps to vitalize communication studies by populating the communication dialectic,

demonstrating that it is not a technological matter so much as an experiential and

dialogical relation that can be both local and transnational and with very diffuse effects.

This conceptualization of communication as social practice brings us to the

significance of the quotation in the title of this chapter. "Tomorrow Begins Today" was

the title of the closing speech given by Marcos at the Zapatista-sponsored Intergalactic

Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism held in Chiapas in 1996. On the one

hand, the phrase is a radical counter to the declaration of the "End of History". More

importantly, though, it evokes the centrality of the present in autonomous social

movement thinking-practice. The phrase evokes an ethos and an historical moment that

saw a notable rise in movements for direct democracy which also increasingly questioned

the practical and ethical problem of struggles for state power. Many of these anti-power

movements may not have ever heard about the Zapatistas but they all emerged at an

ascendant moment of capitalist enclosure and a profound crisis of formal party politics,

including those on the left, which were everywhere increasingly imitating the right.

Indeed, the idea that social practices in the present produce the future is a radical

challenge to both the conventional left and to capitalist culture's ideology of endless

deferral (Zournazi, 2002). This temporal subversion re-orients the question of the future

and situates it firmly in the present by emphasizing the integral place of democratic practice outside of political parties and formal institutions[25].

In movement histories, the Intergalactic Encounter is generally considered another watershed event in the theoretical and practical elaboration of the alter-globalization movement. Over three thousand people from 46 countries joined the Zapatista communities to exchange ideas and experiences and to elaborate a communicational social justice network determined "not to conquer the world but simply to make it anew" (Marcos, 1996). Ideas and practices of the planetary movements against the new enclosures were articulated through dialogue about innumerable instances of humanity in action. Here, middle-age Mexican liberation theologists danced with German squatters sporting green Mohawks, French trade unionists discussed neoliberalism with Mayan women community leaders, South African anti-privatization activists exchanged ideas with Argentina's Madres of the Plaza de Mayo, feminists spared with Communists and so on. The Encounter spawned a number of networks, such as People's Global Action and the International of Hope, which joined the myriad of loose autonomous coalitions that participated in the transnational mobilizations against neoliberal globalization that marked the turn of the 21st century. In this way, the event connects to a much broader renaissance in oppositional culture that was at this time becoming increasingly diffuse and transnational in form.

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[25] Detonated here is the entrenched tradition on the left that has often justified authoritarianism and the postponement of struggle against various inequalities affecting women and other "minorities" until "after the revolution".

Margins at the Centre: Autonomy, Fear and the Fragility of Oppression

The Zapatista repudiation of formal power and institutional politics connects in many important ways with the dissident traditions of heterodox Marxism. This wide-ranging intellectual and political movement associated made vital contributions to the thinking-practice of contemporary anti-enclosure movements. These movements have, in turn, been a central influence on the ideas and practices of dissident Marxism, and the movement associated with Autonomist Marxism in particular, which percolated amidst the great world social upheavals following World War II. This period marked the start of a new phase of world migrations and intellectual and working class militancy. Associated with figures like C.L.R. James, Mario Tronti, Maria Rosa Dallacosta, Silvia Federici, Paolo Virno, Antonio Negri and the Midnight Notes Collective, this dissident Marxism appeared in Europe and in the Americas after the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. It included such disparite groupings as the Situationists and the Italian Autonomists, proposed an explicitly anti-Stalinist transnational theory of anti-capitalist action that emphasized the everyday resistance of self-organized movements and individuals. The movement's criticism of traditional institutional and parliamentary politics, left nationalism and the reformism of institutional trade unions resonated with the non-party movements of the late 1960s and 1970s. As was the case in Asia and Latin America at the time, the growing discord between proletarian movements and intellectual militants and the official organizations that claimed to represent the working class culminated in growing divisions and splits. This prompted the establishment of new organizations and theories for a politics that emphasized autonomy and an expansive, anti-institutional

conception of the proletariat (Cleaver, 1979). The Italian Autonomists' motto became "margins at the centre" (Lotringer, 2004).

This bottom-up conceptualization of history is one of the movement's most relevant contributions to contemporary radical thought and practice. In many ways analogous to the radical British social historians' "history from below" approach, this heterodox Marxism stressed the experiences and innovative capacity of ordinary people and the popular classes. This inversion of conventional accounts of capitalist development, which tended to emphasize the activities and institutions of the powerful, sought to expose the hidden power of the oppressed upon whom the powerful relied and not, as the dominant narrative would have it, the other way around. This perspective produced a methodological emphasis on proletarian movements, conceptualised in the broadest sense of the term to include women's and anti-colonial movements, as the propellants of history. It also created an aperture that challenged the conventional (parliamentary) left's conception of the "working class" as limited to factory workers. Alternately, it sought to elaborate a conception of the world proletariat and anti-capitalist social movements that expanded into the broad socio-cultural field.

One major contribution towards this elaboration came from the Italian Autonomist conception of the global social factory. In building an anti-essentialist theory of social movement, Autonomists argued for the dissolution of traditional separations of labour, politics and intellect (Lotringer, 2004). Around the same time, this analysis also became influential in the New Left Cultural Studies movement's pioneering work to expand the traditional Marxist productivist conception of historical subject-hood in order

to open it up to interrogations of race, gender, sexuality, culture and so on (Denning, 2004).

In North America, open Marxism, and Autonomism in particular, experienced a resurgence in the 1990s with the rise of global justice movement (Dyer-Witheford, 2002). This moment, according to Nick Dyer-Witheford, was highly appropriate for the movement's resurfacing because of its rich theoretical grounding in a number of renovative currents that included a radical combination of heretical, anti-economistic Marxism, the transnational feminist Wages for Housework movement (which argued for the centrality of social reproduction in capitalist accumulation and defied the institutional left's productivist stance), the anti-colonialist perspective of C.L.R. James and others who emphasized the oppressed's history of revolt and refusal, and a diffuse postmodern awareness that seeks to identify and connect planetary circulations of struggle (ibid). These different currents expanded the traditional conception of the proletariat to the unwaged as well as the waged, bringing peasants, housewives, students, sex workers, unemployed people, prisoners, pensioners and so on, into its conceptual orbit.

This broadened understanding of exploitation meant an expansion of conceptions of contestation and of possible subversive combinations. This dynamic is encapsulated in some Autonomist literature in the concept of the global social factory, a term used to describe the subsumption of all of life into the field of capital. For example, taking the bus, doing childcare, and watching television all become subsumed in a capitalist society. While the term theorizes a general tendency that accelerated in the post World War II period of commodity capitalism and urbanization, the 1990s witnessed a profound expansion and dispersion of the work regime. Some Autonomists (i.e. Virno, 1996;

2004), along with other Marxists, used the term post-Fordism to describe this shift in the accumulation regime during the period of capitalist globalization. Also characterized as "flexible accumulation" (Harvey, 1989; 2005), post-Fordism's distinct features (workplace dispersal, the radical expansion of contract, informal and various forms of shift and home-based work) are marked by precariousness, high turnover and the intensification of management control of workers' behaviour.

From an Autonomist perspective, this worldwide labour market restructuring is indicative of capital's continuous flight from the working class, broadly understood, upon which it inescapably relies (Virno, 2004). These transformations made the concept of the social factory more relevant and applicable to these circumstances, where people were interacting less and less at work. As a result, neighbourhoods, schools, streets and even public transit became increasingly important sites of oppositional politics those growing numbers of precarious workers. Hence, by dissolving the separation of the workplace from the rest of life, the concept of the global social factory helps us to consider how the processes of subsumption and resistance to it are expressed in social spaces.

This concept is useful from the perspective of communication studies because it helps us to think about the social totality, exploitation, conflict, and the socio-cultural impact of the transnational capitalism from the perspective of the protagonists of culture. Here, as the cultural Marxism tradition has so effectively demonstrated, communication and culture are not superstructural but inseparable from political and economic considerations and struggles. Moreover, this concept helps us to think about practices of anti-fear among anti-enclosure movements because of the way it dissolves a number of separations. As I suggested in the previous chapter, and as I will elaborate further in the

section below, it is through the myriad and incremental social separations that fear has its most potent political effect. First, the global social factory discards theoretical and practical separations between culture and economy, society and politics. This commitment to intersectional analysis and practice opens the dialogical space for communication with others. Second, it opens up the possibility for a critique of conventional left notions of the privileged "historical subject" that is accorded by virtue of a subject's position in the hierarchy of the capitalist work regime. Again, this provides an opening of the field of oppositional politics by making multiplicity the basis of social transformation. Third, if we include our interactions with the commercial media as part of the global social factory, then we must consider the vital role that fear plays in the mass media, in film, television and the press in particular, as an accumulation strategy.

Another way of applying Autonomism's bottom-up approach to analysing social change to conceptualizing practices of anti-fear is through its grounding in Marxist crisis theory. This urges us to think about capital's dynamic geographical and existential expansion as a reaction to insubordination and social movement. In considering capital's permanent struggle to liberate itself from the insubordination of those it exploits, what immediately surfaces is its reliance on violence and fear as crucial tools of its hegemony. But as history shows, while crisis theory is a theory of fear, it is also a theory of hope (Holloway, 2002). To illustrate, we can briefly draw on a couple of historical examples from two works that have strongly influenced the theoretical framing of this dissertation: Silvia Federici's (2004) *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* and Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker's (2000), *The Many Headed Hydra: Slaves, Sailors, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary*

Atlantic. As exposés of the relationship between capitalist development and patriarchy, racism and colonialism, these two histories "from below" supply vital accounts of the ways in which fear has been an instrument of capitalist discipline and constantly undermined as a strategy of dispossession and separation by its subjects. These histories of early modern enclosure also point to an innovative approach that is highly relevant to our contemporary situation: the extent to which enclosure targets the body as well as the land.

The Witch-Hunts

In her study on the early modern witch-hunts, Federici (2004) shows how this terror campaign against women was not an aberrant "backwards" moment in the movement towards capitalism but rather an integral part of it. In both Europe during the enclosures of the commons and in the Americas during European colonization, the witch-hunts were as much a strategy of primitive accumulation as the institution of private property relations, the extraction of gold and the institution of slavery. This specific form of gendered violence, she argues, was developed first to crush the growing insurgencies against feudalism in Europe and then exported to help crush anti-colonial revolts. "Capitalism", she argues, "was the counter-revolution that destroyed the possibilities that had emerged from the anti-feudal struggle" (2004: 21). Because women were at the forefront of the anti-feudal revolts, Federici argues, destroying women's social power as well as their communities and connections that were the source of their power was essential.

For Federici, the witch-hunt is a story of terror extracted to enclose not only land but also social relations and to turn the body into a work-machine. Turning the body into

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a factory required both violence and terror as well as the theoretical scaffolding of state theorists such as the French jurist and demonologist Jean Bodin, who authored a "handbook" for the witch trials: "We must spread terror among some by punishing many," he advised (cited in Federici, 2004: 185). This terror, Federici maintains, was a reflection of the powerful's profound fear of the popular classes: "The witch-hunt grew in a social environment where the 'better sorts' were living in constant fear of the 'lower classes', who could certainly be expected to harbour evil thoughts because in this period they were losing everything they had." (Ibid: 173). Her study shows how the terror of the witch-hunts was designed to break solidarities and impose consent by force and fear, in order to establish a new world of violent hierarchy. In documenting how much hard work and what resources it takes to make these hierarchies seem natural and fixed, Federici demonstrates how contested and even fragile they continue to be.

The Atlantic's Many-Headed Hydra

This use of fear as a strategy of enclosure and as an existential condition of the powerful is reiterated in Peter Linebaugh's and Marcus Rediker's (2000) bottom up history of the early modern Atlantic. In telling the story of the revolutionary trans-oceanic movements of expropriated commoners, their study also invokes a dialectical conception of crisis where fear and hope intermingle. This history shows how the spaces of greatest repression and fear can also be catalysts for the creation of spaces of emancipation. The narrative's frame is cast from the start of English colonial expansion in the early seventeenth century to the urban industrialism of the early nineteenth. Linebaugh and Rediker articulate their tale around the resurgence of the ancient Greek myth of the Hydra, as a trope to explore the vectors of struggle that accompanied the

development of transatlantic imperial capitalism. A metaphor for the terrifying and always potentially subversive figure of the popular classes or, in the lexicon of the time: the "motley crew", the Hydra myth represents the making of the multitude through expropriation, terror and rebellion. Structured around a narrative of subversive spaces – the ship, the plantation, the prison, the maroon community and the polyvocal tavern – this history is told through its anonymous inhabitants: commoners, prisoners, pirates, sailors, slaves, outcasts, militant intellectuals and freewheeling radicals. Here we discover a hidden history of a popular cosmopolitanism that flourished in oppositional relation to the globalization of capitalist social relations.

Having greatest resonance at a time of intense capitalist expansion, propelled by mass expropriations, imprisonment, impressment and the transnational slave economy, the image of the hydra represents the ruling class' fear of the multitudes. During this period, "rulers referred to the Hercules-hydra myth to describe the difficulty of imposing order on increasingly global systems of labour" (Ibid.: 3). This fear was warranted, they show, as the most intense sites of capitalist discipline – the merchant ship (the first factory), the plantation, the battlefield or the prison – offered the most fertile opportunities for revolutionary collaboration. Indeed, the widespread popularity of this anxiety-myth among the ruling class unearths a deeper plot in the history of capitalist development: the regime's total dependence upon the cooperative labour of the popular classes, which made it acutely vulnerable to its own excess. According to Linebaugh and Rediker, the British ruling class, tormented by the sprawling, incremental and unpredictable threat that the motley crew posed to the imperial task, sought to address its

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fear of the multitude through a regime of terror, "designed to shatter the human spirit" (Ibid.: 53).

Conceptually materialist, like Federici's study, *The Many Headed Hydra* seeks to demonstrate that the violence of capitalism – the displacements, forced labour, prison, and war – are not anomalous moments in its history but integral to it. But, even more significantly, the book demonstrates how every expansion of violent repression was relentlessly subverted, interrupted, refused and overturned.

This manner of grounding the centrality of resistance provides the analytical framework for this dissertation's engagement with what John Holloway (2002) identifies as one of the central problems of radical theory, that is the extent to which its emphasis on oppression and resistance inadvertently conceals the fragility of oppression itself. One way to begin to consider this question is through the diverse practices of anti-fear that challenge totalizing conceptions of power as well as culture. To set out a framework to analyze the communicational insurgencies that arose in the 1990s against neoliberalism, I turn now to examine a series of oppositional movements characterized by their elaboration of autonomous social spaces as spaces of anti-fear.

Communicational Insurgencies: The Renaissance in Oppositional Cultures at the "Beginning of History[26]"

Insurgencies reflect the historical conditions in which they emerge. If the period of 1989 to the first half of the 1990s is associated with the neoliberal "End of History", the surprise appearance of the Zapatistas on the day NAFTA went into effect presented a

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[26] This hijacking of the Fukyama's "End of History" comes from the title of a book by Autonomist political economist Massimo De Angelis'. The *Beginning of History* (2007) is an analysis of value struggles in contemporary capitalist globalization. As its title suggests, the book engages a very pertinent critique of neoliberal capitalist time.

most unexpected challenge. Appearing at a moment of apparent defeat for the world's commoners, the Zapatistas proposed a new practice and language of political confrontation. In keeping with the anti-authoritarian stream of the commoner discourse, they eschewed formal power and thereby put into question the entire logic of the conventions of armed struggle, as well as the notions of hegemony of the social democratic and revolutionary left and their vanguardist conception of the relationship between movements and society. Through the use of terms like seeds, food, land, customs, and language, the Zapatistas articulated a conception of culture as a relation to protect and exercise but also as a means to open up and transform – a dialectical approach that functions through interchange, dialogue, humour and self-critique.

After the mass protests in Seattle and Genoa and the attacks of 9/11, as Leo Panich (2002) points out, those rushing to expose collusion between the alter-globalization movement and 9/11 terrorists failed to detail that the movement, even its most militant groups, explicitly rejected armed struggle like that practiced by the Red Brigade or the Weather Underground. These centralized, hierarchical military structures were considered neither politically appropriate nor socially appealing. Nor was armed struggle seen as remotely historically feasible in the context of the distribution of military power[27]. Moreover, the defeat of the left guerrilla movements in Latin America and elsewhere had led to a dramatic renovation in revolutionary thought and practice (Dagnino, 1998). Appropriate to its diverse and anti-sectarian roots in pro-democracy grassroots politics of the 1970s and 1980s, the autonomous movements that emerged in the 1990s came to be framed in a language and conceptual framework outside the state.

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[27] Indeed the non-state political violence of the 1990s was a distinct strategy of activists on the right as we saw in North America with the attacks on abortion clinics, the Michigan Militia and so on (Panich, 2002)

Among the principal features of these movements was an emphasis on the restoration of a genuine commons, a commitment to direct democracy and radical pluralism, and an increasingly explicit repudiation of Leninist conceptions of political struggle, including its aspirations for state power. Hence, the process of social change came to be understood as the change itself. This ethos is represented in the myriad of different projects and proposals elaborated and circulated most intensively and extensively from the mid-1990s onwards. As practices of what Autonomist linguist Paolo Virno (2005) calls the "non-state public sphere", these autonomous social spaces were created and experimented on in spaces as diverse as the Zapatista autonomous zones, Italy's social centres, North American urban community gardens, the Indymedia movement, at the World Social Forums and a myriad of other social experiments where communicational practices are central and where, I will argue, practices of anti-fear begin to appear with increasing clarity.

The post-Cold War cycle of anti-neoliberal, autonomous social movements transformed the conventional militaristic conception of revolution into a socio-cultural and political one. Indeed, the entire lexicon of social transformation as a process of power taking was increasingly brought into question. This reflects an important conceptual shift in the relationship between movements and society, grounded in a dialogic practice of meshing movement into society in contraposition to the traditional vanguardist conception of social change (De Angelis, 2001). It is this communicational insurgency that I elaborate here to discern a profound transformation in conceptions of power, agency and practices of cultural and social transformation. The concept, I will argue, also allows for a critique of the "Information Society" discourse that fetishizes

communication as equivalent to abstracted information and technological infrastructures, concealing their dialogic and social foundation. In this way, I seek to re-situate communication not only in its increasingly important role in the production of "globalization" as an economic and political-cultural process but in the novel practices of social movements and specifically in the articulation and circulation of practices of anti-fear.

"From Movement to Society"[28]: Visibility, Encounter and the Politics of the Event

The anti-enclosure movements that emerged in the 1990s often coalesced around networks and events more than through formal hierarchical organizations. I would like to suggest that this practice translated into a general tendency towards an anti-hegemonic politics of visibility and encounter. Historically, and especially since the second half of the twentieth century, visibility is what movements strive to accomplish through a range of communicational acts. Invisibility is what they struggle against. The term 'encounter' suggests an active coming together, spontaneous or not, through the active, dialogic practice of opening up spaces for social movements. The sense of conflict inherent in the term is important for our analysis here because it suggests dialectical motion and a coming together in difference. The movements can be defined as anti-hegemonic in tendency in that their practices of visibility and encounter are oriented towards fusing to the social fabric not around harnessing power towards it.

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[28] This phrase is taken from the title of an article written in 2001 by Massimo De Angelis that is a reflection on the direction of the global justice movement after the massive demonstrations and death of a protester in Genoa. This section attempts to elaborate on his challenge to consider what an anti-hegemonic social movement politics could look like.

By coupling visibility and encounter as the locus of the communicational insurgency against neoliberalism, I mean to highlight the manner in which contemporary anti-enclosure movements articulate the problems of communication, representation and power. Visibility is the first step movements take to assert political agency. It enables recognition of the presence of the excluded that makes encounter possible. It opens a process of continuous elaboration of a movement as new visibilities emerge and new dialogical spaces are forged. As the Zapatista experience shows, the politics of encounter that new visibilities provoke involves making spaces for dialogue, regardless of affiliation, identity or ideology (Callahan, 2004). Encounter as a practice therefore represents the direct democracy of presence versus the limited democracy of representation. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that while this communicational practice often utilizes technologies of mediation as a stimulant to forging dialogical spaces, it is not subordinated to a "media strategy".

When we look at the activities of contemporary anti-enclosure movements, it becomes apparent that encounter and visibility are enacted through a politics of the event that seeks to both disrupt the norms of institutional political culture and to open spaces for social movement. This politics of the event is different from the idea of revolutionary rupture sitting on the horizon of a future-world. It is, conversely, a politics of the present and rhizomatic organization. As Holloway argues in his theoretical study of anti-power movements: "But rather than think of revolution as an event that will happen in the future (who knows when) and be relatively quick, it seems better to think of it as a process that is already under way and may take some time, precisely because revolution cannot be separated from the creating of an alternative world" (2002: 179). We can trace an

important strand of this shift to the social insurgencies of the late 1960s and 1970s, when the era's social upheavals brought questions of culture, agency and politics to the forefront, much as it did in the last decade of the century. That eruption brought the margins to the centre, which in turn threw into crisis the dominant conception of culture. This was a conception that separated everyday existence from "culture" and was therefore incapable of understanding the movements and how their activities were engaged in a process of transforming social meaning. As Martin Barbero (1993) points out, the crisis marked a rediscovery of the event in politics and culture. This was linked, he argues, to a change in the understanding of culture as an analytic paradigm to understanding it in relation to socio-political crisis. "The crisis marks a rediscovery of the 'event', that is, culture as the historical dimension and action of different protagonists who are creating culture, discarding a concept of culture limited to code and structure." (Martin Barbero, 1993: 56). What follows is an exposition of the contemporary expressions of the communicational insurgencies, organized around visibility, encounter and a politics of the event, that emerged through the diverse practices of the anti-enclosure movements at the turn of the twenty first century.

Return of the Diggers! Planetary Anti-Enclosure Movements Reinvent History

Looking back we can see that 1994 marks a key moment in an historic arc of movements that confronted the new enclosures on a planetary scale. While they can be characterized by their diversity, these movements shared several general tendencies or characteristics that point to a re-conceptualization of oppositional popular culture and its practices of anti-fear. First, present is a strong current of autonomism and self-

organization among groups and individuals operating outside of the formal organizations of the left. In some cases this seemed to provoke the creation of autonomous groups within formal structures[29]. Second, a desire to create new forms of sociability that break with the individualism, loneliness and insecurity that has accompanied the neoliberal project for many on a planetary scale. This has meant challenging the steady increase in criminalization of migrants and the poor, the growing violence against women, the shrinkage of social spaces that are not mediated by consumption, and the grinding stress of socio-economic precariousness. Third, a discourse of anti-capitalism became increasingly prevalent as it was shaken from the confines of orthodox left asceticism. In the North American context, this was an especially significant development given that an anti-capitalist lexicon had not been so present in oppositional discourse perhaps since the 1930s. This shift was all the more notable in its coincidence with a commercial media culture increasingly dedicated to extolling hyper-entrepreneurialism and fuelled by the "dot com" boom of the late 1990s. Fourth, an ethos locally situated and globally articulated social movement translated into a radical transnationalism that was distinct from traditional left nationalist internationalism.

The events that punctuate this topography of refusal of enclosure are as wide ranging as its subjects. Most broadly, they included waves of general strikes (South Korea, Argentina, Bolivia, Spain) and scores of "Carnivals against Capitalism" and "days of action" against the institutions of global capital (i.e. Seattle, Prague, Quebec City, Washington DC, Gothenburg, Genoa). Movements against community displacing mega-development projects (India, China, Mexico, Canada) exploded alongside agitations for

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[29] In Canada, for instance, some rank and file union members started to form "flying squads" that performed as support in the increasingly large demonstrations against the World Bank, WTO, the meetings of the Free Trade Area of the Americas and other institutions of neoliberalism.

the expulsion of US military bases (Ecuador, South Korea) and of resource extracting companies from indigenous communities (Mexico, Canada, Colombia). Countless anti-privatization protests took place in cities and towns around the world and especially in the Global South. A notable number of the actions were led by the elderly and children, suggesting a significant yet rarely recognized shift away from the demographics of the conventional vanguards. Urban re-appropriation movements squatted, fought highway expansions and water expropriations and planted community gardens. Massive, broad-based poor peoples movements became increasingly visible from Brazil to India to South Africa to France. Across very different contexts, these movements of urban slum dwellers, peasants and the unemployed organized against the displacing regimes of privatisation, gentrification and "urban revitalization". Through direct actions like squatting buildings, dramatic incursions into government offices and official meetings and road blockades, the struggles of the growing numbers of homeless and unemployed were made increasingly visible.

The transnational circulations that marked the activities of this period galvanized many innovative combinations. For example, Argentina's Indymedia project came to life through the example of the Zapatistas. Thai farmers protesting the Asian Development Bank said they were inspired by the challenge to global capital at the "Battle of Seattle" in 1999 (Notes from Nowhere, 2003). Hong Kong workers protesting a meeting of the World Bank and IMF explained that they were taking inspiration from workers resisting privatization in China. During the NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia, members of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, one of South America's the most courageous and effective anti-fear movements, travelled to Yugoslavia to extend their solidarity and

message of peace: "dear women who struggle: we are here together with you to struggle for peace and dignity. We, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, will carry our message to the world, because we don't believe that missiles and bombs are the way to build peace. We believe in the word, in dialogue, and in the love of life" (cited in Notes from Nowhere, 2003: 231).

The many expressions of oppositional cultural practice that emerged during this time were particularly novel in the North American context. The innumerable examples of insurgent creativity by de-centralized, self-organized groups appeared in the form of protest bands like the Infernal Noise Brigade that set about playing the "soundtrack to insurrection" at the Carnivals against Capital. Roving squads of "Radical Cheerleaders" began turning up at protests everywhere, encouraging cultural appropriation while playfully challenging heteronormativity. In general, an intermingling of dispersed movements and histories became increasingly present in the symbolism and practices, often experimental, at the Days of Protest against the institutions of neoliberal capitalism. Now we can turn to looking at movement snapshots. Notice here the complex and multiple ways that these dispersed instances convoke practices of anti-fear.

Urban re-appropriation movements

We can start with the emergence of urban anti-enclosure movements to highlight the pervasive, continuous and often difficult to perceive process of enclosure in the present. This is especially the case in the rich cities of the Global North, arguably the most controlled, enclosed and privatised urban centres. Reclaim the Streets (RTS) emerged out of the mid-1990s anti-road expansion movements in Britain; by the end of the decade, it had inspired actions in cities as far flung as New York, Vancouver, Bogotá,

Lubjiana, and Bangalore. Starting in England with the Claremont Road struggle against a highway expansion in 1994, RTS staged a number of spectacular utopian moments around London. These included building transitory autonomous zones to protect communities against enclosure, such as the example on Claremont road where RTS activists and local residents painted murals, set up a café, collaborated on home "renovations" designed to stall the evictions, and held off 1,300 riot police with only their bodies and rave music (Jordan, 2002). Although after four days the police won out and everyone was evicted, the "Do It Yourself" ethos of the movement had a lasting impact. From there, the RTS continued to stage street actions against the ravages of road expansion with thousands of people participating in spectacular actions that included tearing up roads and planting trees under the cover of large and loud street parties. The carnivalesque tactics of RTS created an aperture whereby ordinary people cooperated to protect a 'social common' from enclosure. This space continued to open in the ensuing years and the authorities increasingly struggled with the problem of how to close that opening. As one Claremont participant noted: "This street party was the perfect propaganda of the possible – it was a day full of those priceless moments where everything slips away and immense cracks appear in the facades of authority and power" (Jordan, 2002: 357).

This movement was pivotal in introducing a language and practice of anti-enclosure to the anti-globalization movement in the UK and North America. By the late 1990s, RTS's direct action tactics of urban re-appropriation and their radical politics of treating public space as a social commons were increasingly present. A pamphlet circulated in London by RTS in 1996 declared,

We are basically about taking back public space from the enclosed private arena. At its simplest, it is an attack on cars as a principle agent of enclosure. It's about reclaiming streets as public inclusive space from the private exclusive use of the car. But we believe in this as a broader principle, taking back those things which have been enclosed within capitalist circulation and returning them to collective use as a common. (cited in Notes from Nowhere, 2003: 54)

The spirit of the RTS tactics radiated at the first Carnival against Capital took place on June 18, 1999 at the giant demonstrations against the G-8 meeting in London. Here, organizers distributed 8,000 red, green and gold carnival masks, with Zapatista prose celebrating the spirit of rebellion and hope inscribed on the face side. Splayed across the crowd was a massive banner with a quote from the original Diggers: "The Earth is a Common Treasury of All." This was complemented by the Carnival's historically appropriate global referent: "Our Resistance is as Transnational as Capital".

The Italian social centres represent another important experiment in autonomous urban re-appropriation movements that radiated into the larger global justice and solidarity movements of the 1990s. The social centres represent an effort to build an experimental popular community space dedicated to the elaboration of practices of social autonomy. The centres began in squatted spaces where groups hosted free meals, political discussion and cultural events, bringing together workers, immigrants, students, and neighbours. A recognition of the vital importance of the social and pleasure was reflected in this anti-enclosure activity. Following the eviction of a social centre in 1994, Milan's mayor inveighed, "From now on, squatters will be nothing more than ghosts wandering about in the city!"

With this harangue, he inadvertently provided a catalyst to a movement calling itself the *Tute Bianche* (White Overalls). Dressed in white to symbolize their imposed

invisibility, the group moved through the city with irreverent humour, staging protests, holding street raves, experimenting with local democracy and trying to build spaces of encounter against the urban enclosures. The *Tute Bianche* gave birth to a network called the *Disobedienti*, which gained a high profile during the protests against the World Bank and the IMF in the 1990s because of their funny and unusual tactics of confrontational non-violence. As one of their spokespeople explained, "…we do not have to turn this space of revolt into a war zone. We have to think of the conflict in a different way. We call it 'disobedience', conflict and consensus, an action always open to experimentation, open to transformation and rethinking the movement" (cited in Notes From Nowhere, 203: 112).

The *Disobedienti's* militant humour and refusal to be drawn into the violent logic of the state provides an appropriate illustration of the spirit of communicational insurgency. The manner in which they attempted to mesh their activities to the wider social fabric also represents an important practice of solidarity that was increasingly experimented with during the 1990s. In keeping with its autonomist ethos, the *Disobedienti's* ideas and practices sought to generalize the strike beyond the workplace and the national citizen to include students, unemployed, occasional workers and undocumented migrants (Millburn, 2004).

Urban Commoners
During the 1990s, North American cities became battlegrounds between urban commoners, city planners and private developers. The community garden movement had flourished alongside growing economic precariousness, a surge of migration from the Global South and a wave of urban redevelopment, land privatisations and displacement.

The community- and guerrilla-gardening movements created collective spaces of social reproduction amidst increasingly privatized spaces in major urban centres. Intriguingly, the most impressive examples were found in North America's most neoliberal, expensive and fearful cities: Los Angeles and New York City. Los Angeles' sprawling South Central Urban Farm and the myriad of community gardens in New York's Lower Eastside laid the ground upon which various diasporic and political communities bolstered increasingly precarious lives through experiments in autonomous, self-sustaining livelihoods. As urban land prices rose, the "urban commoners" movement, as the communities came to be known, were also roundly attacked. These spaces have been sites of intense struggle because they constitute a social commons in cities with ever-shrinking access to free public space and where the public spaces that remain are the object of ever-intensifying anxiety discourses.

In New York City, for example, the administration of Mayor Rudolf Giuliani and private developers expended many calories in demonizing and evicting the gardeners to make room for private housing development (Weinberg, 1999; Mikalbrown, 2002). The city's community garden movement was galvanized by New York's fiscal crisis of the 1970s and had grown again throughout the 1990s. The gardens had become a vital resource of social reproduction and autonomous security. To protect the gardens, the city's urban commoners organized, rallied, agitated, and blockaded their gardens while bulldozers bore down on them. Many were arrested for trespassing. In 1998 alone, over 100 city-owned lots were declared "vacant", privatised and slated for re-development. Of the city's 700 gardens, only 60 received permanent status while the remaining lots were lost (Ferguson, 1999).

In Los Angeles, following the 1992 Rebellion, the city apportioned some land to the neighbourhood that had been at the epicentre of the revolt to create a community garden. With 360 plots, the fourteen-acre South Central Farm was the largest urban garden in the United States until it was sold and slated for destruction to make room for a Wal-Mart warehouse. Gardeners and their allies launched an intensive campaign to hold on to the space. Like their New York counterparts, they rallied, lobbied and engaged in civil disobedience to save the place that supplemented the precarious livelihoods of 350 families. In June 2006, there was a dramatic standoff at the farm as the police evicted the farmers and the decade-old farm was bulldozed. Efforts to re-open the land for subsistence urban farming continue as of this writing.

Social Unionism

In the 1990s, a resurgent politics of social unionism and living wage activism emerged in a number of North American cities. Here, the neoliberal turn was increasingly restructuring service economies around low-wage "workfare" and migrant workforces. A number of campaigns organized by the coalitions spawned between labour, religious and community-based groups drew inspiration from social movement unionism in the Global South, and from Brazil and South Africa especially (Moody, 1997). While some of these campaigns were connected with the official labour movement, many initiatives also struck at the heart of conventional North American trade union practice.

Out of these challenges emerged highly innovative movements like Justice for Janitors and the Bus Riders Union in Los Angeles, which posed a stark contrast to the hierarchical and productivist culture of the mainstream union movement. These strongly women-led, multilingual initiatives deployed community-based organizing tactics that

sought to harness the potent political resources of LA's proletarian cosmopolitanism. By

organizing on the streets, buses and neighbourhoods of LA, they challenged conventional

notions of the workplace as a separate sphere of organizing in a way that sought to mesh

the movement with the urban fabric. In this way, they articulated an encounter-based

political logic that mobilized multiple communities on the streets and other public spaces

of the city. The movement's plural strategies often drew on the radical organizing

traditions of the myriad of diasporic communities from El Salvador to South Korea

(Hardt and Negri, 2004). These reconceptualizations of spaces of organizing also sparked

new transnational alliances between students and workers. We witnessed this in the

explosion of anti-sweatshop and fair wage campaigns across a number of North

American university campuses in the 1990s (Armbruster-Sandoval, 2005).

As we can see with the case of Justice for Janitors and the Bus Riders Union,

social unionism in North America is strongly influenced by organizing practices in the

Global South. This influence has circulated through the vectors of oppositional culture as

it moves along with the bodies of migrants. That the appearance of social unionism in

North America has coincided with a great wave of female migration from the South

supports Federici's contention that "migrant women are succeeding in exporting not just

their labour but their combativeness" (2000: 1032). In the case of these two movements,

this anti-fear combativeness has been rendered visible beyond its immediate setting

through films made about them. Ken Loach's (2000) realist drama *Bread and Roses* is

about the lives of women janitors, documented and undocumented, cleaning corporate

offices in downtown LA. The film chronicles the women's struggles, with both the

corporate and the union structures, to organize a union. Haskel Wexler's (2001)

documentary film *Bus Riders Union* travels with the LA BRU as it agitates and organizes the city's first "fare strike". The remarkably wide release of both of these films brought a great deal of international attention to these movements. As we will see in the next chapter, Wexler's was instrumental in sparking the formation of the Vancouver BRU in 2001.

Another exemplary expression of the new social unionism as a practice of anti-fear appropriate to the precarious and complex conditions of the new enclosures was founded in Argentina. There, the elaboration of social unionism took on an especially innovative form with the emergence of the union of unemployed workers called the *Piqueteros*. This movement, whose name refers to its practice of staging roving pickets, appeared in the mid-1990s out of the devastating privatizations and job cuts that spread through Argentina as part of its neoliberal reforms. Starting in Argentina's increasingly abandoned interior towns and in Buenos Aires' sprawling impoverished suburbs, the *Piqueteros* adapted the longstanding industrial union tactic of blockading the workplace. However, in the growing absence of work and therefore workplaces, the *Piqueteros* began blockading roads in an effort to effectively demonstrate the numeric bulk and increasing organizational strength of the unemployed. This tactic sought to halt the exodus of goods and jobs out of the places where people lived. This was also a refusal of the poverty and resurgent repression that increasingly shaped neighbourhood and political life. The movement grew exponentially on the highways, and out of this grew a movement of social autonomy.

As the movement's capacity grew, many *Piqueteros* started to organize, but not around a simple return to the factory. Instead, they began to work concretely on

generating a new mode of living outside of capitalist social relations. The *Piquetero* slogan "Work, Dignity and Social Change" emerged from the experience of building spaces of social autonomy at the neighbourhood level (Witney and Jordan, 2004). Here, the movement focussed on creating new forms of social organization outside of the traditional centralized power structures. With the growing number of neighbourhoods with high levels of unemployment and poverty, the separation between the community and the *Piqueteros* seemed to dissolve, and a number of *Piquetero* groups started autonomous mutual aid initiatives. Following Argentina's economic meltdown in 2001, communities set up bakeries, clothing exchanges, childcare centres and nutrition programs, community media projects, libraries and community gardens. They also began to elaborate autonomous community-based governing structures known as assemblies organized around principles of "horizontalism" (Sitrin, 2006).

Two international observers of Buenos Aires' neighbourhoods with strong *Piquetero* presence explicitly situated the movement's anti-fear practices within the country's long, terrible trajectory of dictatorship: "The fear and mistrust sown by the military dictatorship destroyed connections between people, and since then the dictatorship of the markets has built even more fences and separations. Now, the fences are being pulled down by the strength of sharing" (Witney and Jordan, 2004: 338). The assembly structure that the *Piqueteros* elaborated really took off after Argentina's economic meltdown in December 2001, when many more people suddenly found themselves unemployed and terrorized by the centrifugal effects of the collapse.

No Borders Networks

It is one of the most poignant paradoxes of the new enclosures that the figure of

the migrant is the ultimate subversive in transnational capitalism. The *Sans Papiers* and

No One is Illegal movements gained prominence in Europe, Australia and North America

in the 1990s through their radical critiques of the post-Berlin Wall fortification of rich

nations and continents. This loose network of autonomous groups has become one of the

most important expressions of the planetary anti-enclosure movement. Its practices of

refusal effectively embody the historical continuity of neoliberalism and neo-colonialism

by drawing the connections between privatization, unemployment, debt, mega-

development and structural adjustments to the experience of unprecedented

displacements, racism and forced migrations. The movement's activities have focussed

on the problem of visibility, endeavouring to subvert enforced invisibility by opening up

spaces for free movement and resisting the racialized practices of fear against migrants.

As a member of the *Sans Papiers* in France explained, "The immigrant you reject is

always the one you don't know. We have made ourselves visible to say that we are here,

to say that we are not hiding but we're just human beings. We are here and have been

here a long time" (Cisse, 2004: 44). In highlighting the thousands of deaths that occur at

borders every year, the networks have sought to expose how national borders operate as

spaces of death that penetrate deep inside the nation, by using a myriad of courageous

and resourceful tactics.

In North America, Australia and Europe, migrant advocacy groups appropriated

the safe spaces of community centres, churches and union halls. This has been both a

strategy of making visible the precariousness and routine dangers of being undocumented

in the Global North and a way of drawing diverse sectors into proximity and social

agency. Activists in all three of these regions of high migration have interrupted

deportations by targeting through publicity campaigns the airline companies involved,

and by intervening directly at airports and on airplanes themselves. In Europe, groups

have established No Border camps as close to a border as possible. The camps became

sites for encounter and a range of cultural activities. They sometimes acted as a vector for

safe crossing. One camp was established at Frankfurt's international airport in 2001,

compelling the police to cordon off the airport for a week. The movement's actions also

included spectacular breakouts of the terrible archipelago of refugee detention centres in

Italy and in Australia's notorious desert refugee prison camp in Woomera.

Since the US government's implementation of "Operation Gatekeeper" in 1994,

the wall separating the US and Mexico has also become a growing object of protest and

outrage on both sides of the line. On the Mexican side, an extraordinary mural movement

has crept along in tempo with US border fence. Now the fence is being festooned in

images depicting the long history of social movement and interchange on the border.

More generally, the No Borders communicational practices were increasingly effective in

exposing the undocumented migrant's experience of dangerous and expensive journeys to

face hard precarious work, often under conditions of hyper-exploitation and low pay.

Moreover, these efforts are increasingly being translated through growing number

of widely travelled documentary and feature films. Many of these have made visible the

specificity of the undocumented migrant's experience of harassment by the authorities

and challenged their demonization by the commercial media. Among them are films such

as *Bread and Roses* (2001), *Dirty, Pretty Things* (2002) and *In this World* (2004), all of

which problematize the border as a relation that does not stop at the physical line, but that continuously stalks the undocumented migrant experience.

What for many from the Global South is the quintessential neoliberal experience – open markets and closed borders – also started to become one for many participants of global justice movements in the rich countries. While this experience was by no means equivalent in its dread or consequences to the struggles of the undocumented migrant seeking work, the fact is that by the late 1990s, governments began resorting with growing frequency and intensity to controlling cross-border movement into countries and cities hosting the meetings of the international financial elite. Free movement treaties such as Europe's Scheingen agreement were in effect temporarily suspended and all manner of profiling was implemented to halt the entry of an increasingly mobile movement. People were turned away at borders for things such as having dreadlocks or possessing a black hat (which suggested possible affiliation with the much maligned Black Bloc group of anarchist protesters).

By the time of the mass protests against the fenced-in meeting of the Free Trade Area of the Americas' officials in Quebec City in April 2001, opposition to walls and fences occupied the symbolic centre of the movement against neoliberalism. Border-crossing movements, like migrants in general, started to deploy elaborate strategies to get past the border patrol by using ingenious methods. For instance, to get across the border to reach the Summit, a group of activists from the US impersonated a touring Frisbee team. They wore "team" jerseys, drove a van full of Frisbees and carried with them printed email invitations to a fictitious tournament (Notes from Nowhere, 2003). Other groups reached the Summit through a cooperative alliance with the Mohawk First Nation

in Quebec, who opened the border as a symbolic gesture of resistance to neoliberalism and refusal of the Canada-US border, which cuts across Mohawk land.

Around this time, the No Borders movement's refusal of the global enclosures became increasingly influential in the anti-nationalist cultural politics of the Carnivals Against Capitalism. Their anti-racist critique of neoliberalism, therefore, also posed a crucial challenge to the left nationalism in the North American global justice and mainstream labour movements. The impact of this development was made visible in the spring of 2006, when unprecedented migrant rights mobilizations filled the streets of North America's cities. These actions were explicitly mobilized to challenge the politics of fear that demonizes migrants as scapegoats for the general feelings of in/security.

Feminist Vagabonds

Many of the innovative practices of the undocumented migrant movement and its struggles for visibility and the production of new forms of encounter also underwent renovation in autonomous feminist organizing. This innovation as a practice of anti-fear is evident in the feminist urbanism of groups such as *Mujeres Creando* (Women Creating) in Bolivia and *Las Precarias* (precarious women) in Spain. These are just two of a myriad of examples of feminist anti-enclosure organizing that has asserted a politics of presence through various kinds of actions to re-appropriate the city streets and begin a public dialogue on patriarchy, racism, insecurity, debt, precarity and liberation. Both groups have deployed oppositional visual and performance practices as feminist interventions in public spaces designed to bring people together in new ways and to highlight the patriarchal specificity of the new enclosures. While they are formally unconnected, both groups are important examples of feminism in the streets – that

increasingly privatized place that is supposed to represent the apex of women's fear and which is their principal field of action.

Mujeres Creando was launched in Bolivia in 1992, when several women began carrying out creative street actions around La Paz that were critical of both the state and the traditional left. The group's graffiti and performances invoke an ethos of self-representation, rebellion, creativity and commons. The women started a newspaper called *Mujer Publica* (Public Woman), which provides an autonomous space for feminist communication that is dedicated to critiquing the patriarchy of the right as well as the conventional left. This trangressive spirit is encapsulated in one of *Mujeres'* graffiti slogans: "disobedience is happiness". The purpose of *Mujeres'* performative activities is to both expand the space of women's political visibility and to spark rage, laughter, curiosity and provoke dialogue about autonomy, feminism, power and the culture of power that sustains it. "Political activity", they explain, "does not only happen in political parties or in organized groups; it happens as soon as you are conscious of your actions and your decisions – an intuitive kind of feminism…" (*Mujeres Creando*, cited in Notes from Nowhere, 2003: 260).

In addition to its graffiti and performances, *Mujeres Creando* has engaged in actions against the banks, and transnational corporations like Coca Cola and McDonalds. Bolivia's microcredit program has been a major focus of the group's combative feminism. Microcredit is a neoliberal development initiative that has had a particularly devastating impact on women. Introduced into the Bolivian development economy in 1992, the program specifically targets impoverished women. As a program ostensibly designed to help them manage their poverty by issuing small loans to start a business,

microcredit itself is an enclosure that covers over previous displacements. *Mujeres* has been highly critical of this neoliberal market strategy of "poverty reduction" that has actually exacerbated the poverty of the poorest sector of one of the poorest countries in the Americas (Ainger, 2003).

On a number of occasions, *Mujeres* has collaborated with the women's debtors' movement, itself created by the microcredit system, and together they have engaged in creative actions to rescind its debilitating debts. In one instance, *Mujeres* supplied pots of paint to a group of indebted women who daubed slogans on the walls of the bank holding their loan. When a desperate group of women entered a bank with dynamite strapped to their bodies and held the bankers inside hostage, the military arrived prepared to kill the women. *Mujeres* participated in the delegation that negotiated the rescinding of the debt and the safe exit of the protesters. Since then, *Mujeres* has also established an autonomous social centre with a restaurant, a fair trade market and seminars on movement building and autonomism. One of the centre's vital functions is the provision of safe bathroom facilities for women working in La Paz's extensive street level informal sector (ibid.).

The Spanish group *Las Precarias* performed their first action in 2002, on the same day as the national unions were holding a general strike to protest government social welfare rollbacks. The group's participation in the strike involved a series of Situationist-inspired feminist "drifts" that sought to draw together women involved in various forms of precarious affective labour not considered by the official labour movement to be relevant to the organization of the strike. As *Las Precarias* observed, participating in the strike was not an option for domestic workers, sex workers,

undocumented labour, housewives, telephone operators and contract workers (*Las Precarias*, 2004). Moreover, the institutional left never considered the impact of the strike itself, in its design and organization, on the lives of such workers. Hence the purpose of the drift was to appropriate the strike for these women workers by turning the city streets into an ambulant space of encounter: "[...] to open a space of exchange between some of the women who where working or consuming during that day and with those who were moving in the streets" (*Las Precarias*, 2004: 1). In this way, the action posed a critique within the strike that questioned the appropriateness of this form of refusal within the context of the new enclosures. Specifically, the group critiqued the strike's emphasis on productive labour and the consequent disregard for massive, invisible presence of reproductive and precarious work in the neoliberal economy. In addition, they argued, the general strike strategy not only makes invisible but further marginalizes those women, immigrants and other precarious workers. Since the strike, *Las Precarias* has continued to perform drifts to create spaces of encounter among those groups and individuals not considered by the institutional left, and to make visible the gendered organization of precariousness.

Las Precarias has developed a style of militant research that elaborates theoretical approaches to understanding the relationship between fear and the new enclosures. Through these activities the group has discovered how the macropolitics of insecurity wrought by neoliberalism take the form of a micropolitics of everyday fear. Not surprisingly, the group argues, this is rooted in the current context of labour market deregulation and the instability that it creates. In this context of growing insecurity, the experience of precariousness is not solely the experience of the poorest workers, but it is

an increasingly general condition that extends far beyond the actual workday. For this reason, *Las Precarias* consider precariousness as a condition that traverses the entire society, from conditions of employment and unemployment, to social networks and the dwindling resources of social welfare. Precariousness is, therefore, a condition that reproduces itself as a climate of generalized fear and insecurity. "The logic of security founds itself in fear, concretizes itself in practices of containment, and generates isolation that persists in present social problems as individual ones" (2006: 40).

The practices of anti-fear that *Las Precarias* propose are communicational: "We need to communicate the lacks and the excesses of our working and living situations in order to escape from the neoliberal fragmentation which separates and debilitates us, turning us into victims of fear, of exploitation or of the individualism of 'each one for herself'" (*Las Precarias*, 2004: 2). Towards this end, *Las Precarias'* activities endeavour to open spaces for a necessarily broader process of recuperating and reformulating the feminist logic of care that is applied on the macro-scale of political engagement as a way to combat the micopolitics of fear, isolation and hopelessness.

Autonomous Media

A significant feature of post-Cold War oppositional practice was the surge in autonomous media projects. Independent communication activities and movements flourished in a context of growing accessibility of new communication technologies and platforms as radical media practices joined the proliferating flows of people, movements, ideas and aesthetics. The autonomous communication movement has been pivotal in elaborating a media practice based on an ethic of self-representation and independent production. One important role that this movement began to play was to directly counter

the fear narratives of the commercial media and political officials as they increasingly resorted to demonizing dissent in the face of the swelling transnational protest actions against neoliberalism.

The best-known global communication network of this generation is Independent Media Centre (IMC) movement, also known as Indymedia. The IMC burst onto the scene in 1999, at a crest of the alter-globalization movement, to provide daily web-format dispatches leading up to and during the protests against the World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle. The increasing availability of inexpensive communications technologies, video cameras and computers in particular, opened the space for non-professional journalism that the Indymedia movement quickly came to personify with its dramatic appearance in 1999. Following Seattle, the network spread around the world with remarkable speed and coordination and soon Indymedia nodes were present on every continent and in scores of cities within them. Today there are over 150 IMCs around the world, each operating with undulating levels of intensity and participation. While organizationally autonomous, these nodes are connected through the network's website which publishes reports on the emergent global anti-enclosure movement from a perspective of autonomous action and self-representation.

But at this point it is important to emphasize, if we are to consider communication practices from the perspective of the protagonists of culture, that it is not the availability of the new technologies that makes the Indymedia movement such a significant actor in the contemporary anti-enclosure struggles. Rather, as communication scholar Dorothy Kidd asserts, "This kind of autonomous communications did not begin with the IMC, but followed a centuries long trajectory of radical media" (2003: 330). Indeed the global IMC

network is but one example of an enormous surge of place-specific insurgent communication projects whose refusals of commercial media norms challenge traditional monological modes of production, reception and narrative to open spaces for encounter and to make visible the struggles of the global subaltern.

The remarkable expansion of the autonomous media landscape over the last decade has been vital for the projection of anti-fear practices across borders and movements. It has spawned innovative and diverse independent communication projects, many of which document the violence and repression of the new enclosures and use their material to connect with others, raise the visibility of their respective struggles, and open new dialogical spaces.

Consider, for instance, New York City's I-Witness Video and the Chiapas Media Project based in Mexico City, Chiapas and Chicago. I-Witness Video is a group of trained activist videographers that document police violence at peace, global justice and solidarity protests in New York City and other northeastern US cities. From its launch in 2001, the group has used the material that it videotapes to support the legal cases of victims of police brutality and to agitate against police impunity. According to I-Witness spokesperson Eileen Clancey, both of these problems have markedly increased in New York City since the "War on Terror" was launched (Interview, New York City, June, 2005). Working in collaboration with the National Lawyers Guild, I-Witness also trains amateur videographers to perform this documentation. This training entails teaching people to shoot video in the complex and often chaotic atmosphere of a large demonstration and using techniques that make that footage admissible in court as evidence (ibid.). With the growing presence of amateur videographers at demonstrations,

Clancey explains, those with cameras are increasingly targets of police violence themselves.

Training amateur videographers in a context of violence also comprises the basis of the work of the Chiapas Media Project (CMP). As part of a bi-national solidarity effort to support the Zapatistas, the CMP supplies rural communities in Chiapas with video equipment and computers as well as training in shooting, sound and editing documentary. The initiative began in 1998 at the height of government and paramilitary repression against the Zapatista-affiliated indigenous communities of Chiapas. Despite, the rhetoric of the Zapatistas' being a high-tech movement, these impoverished, often-isolated communities have in fact little access to new communication technologies. The videos are used in two ways. The first is analogous to I-Witness Video's tactical documentary approach to chronicling violence and impunity by the authorities. The second is the production of narrative video whose communicative purpose is both intensive and extensive. In other words, the material that is produced, much of it educational, is used within the Zapatista commune, but it also travels around Mexico and abroad as a way of showing the movement and its most quotidian manifestations, educating people about Zapatismo.

An Open Typology of Refusal

To summarize this general and partial sketch of some of the practices of anti-fear and autonomy among contemporary anti-enclosure movements, and to demonstrate the existence of a certain level of coherence among these movements in the historical present, I will identify six general tendencies that they share.

First, these movements are organizing outside of the conventional understanding of the industrial workplace. These are "working class" movements in the broad, Autonomist sense of the term, and hence their organizing focuses on forging autonomous spaces within the global social factory. Second, these movements tend to be organized into broad networks that specifically reject strict centralized organizations, such as the political party, cadre or the traditional labour central. Third, an ethos of radical pluralism and an embrace of multiple identities is a common feature of these movements. To be clear, the identification of this tendency is far from claiming that the challenges of patriarchy, heterosexism, racism and so on have been vanquished in some notion of privileged social spaces. Rather, what we find is that these chauvinisms are more frequently openly addressed as problems of power to be subverted through a politics of the present, rather than postponing the struggle against them until the putative arrival of a propitious future. Fourth, the cultural politics of these movements are dedicated to elaborating new forms of political confrontation that revolve around visibility and encounter. Fifth, we can discern within the practices of these movements a common emphasis on the everyday and ordinary as the privileged site of culture and politics. Sixth, all of these movements highlight the political-cultural centrality of democratic communication. This is a privileged site of politics both within groups and networks, through dialogical practices such as consensus decision-making and assembly formats and in their communication with the wider society.

In this way, practices of building autonomous social spaces are seen, ideally, as a radial process whereby the movement meshes with society. This practice is a reversal of the traditional vanguardism of hegemonic politics dedicated to pulling society into the

movement, be it a political party, a trade union, or a revolutionary armed group. In this way, we can think about communicational insurgencies as animating culture through practices that collapse the historic separation between spectator and subject. From here, I will turn to a discussion of two other apparent tendencies that have a specific relevance to the shape and direction of practices of anti-fear.

Laughing at Fear

In the days following the Zapatista uprising in 1994 when the Mexican military descended on Chiapas, over one hundred thousand demonstrators descended on Mexico City's enormous public plaza. They chanted "First World Ha Ha Ha!" and demanded an immediate halt to the government's violent response. At the beginning of 1994, the post-Cold War period appeared in Mexico and elsewhere as distinctly humourless, with all its raging violence and spreading inequality. But from this moment on, subversive humour and laughter appeared as an especially resonant aspect of movement politics. Perhaps because of the intensification of insecurity, humour appeared especially transgressive. Through events like the Carnivals against Capitalism we could see the central role of humour among the many ways that the cultural politics of the communicational insurgencies diverge from the hegemonic organization. Here, we could see how carnival and laughter themselves, with their logics of self-creation, participation and autonomy, represent a collective strategy of refusing fear.

Laughter is not given much consideration in radical social theory. In communication studies humour is generally conceptualized in the more narrow terms of audience and reception theory. In neither case is it theorized as a vital component of oppositional politics. The work of Mikhail Bakhtin provides an important exception to

both oversights. Through his study of sixteenth century carnival, Bakhtin shows us how humour, parody and ridicule are central to the subversive language of the medieval public square, where moments of carnival offered the opportunity to laugh at the ruling political and ecclesiastical classes (Martin Barbero, 1993). Through Bakhtin we can think about laughter in the context of carnival as an oppositional communicational practice that is, in its oblique way, about collapsing separations between subject and object. In other words, as an act of anti-enclosure:

> Carnival laughter is the laughter of all the people. Second, it is universal in scope; it is directed at all and everyone, including the carnival's participants. The entire world is seen in its droll aspect, in its gay relativity. Third, this laughter is ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives. Such is the laughter of carnival. (Cited in *Notes from Nowhere*, 2003: 178)

In his approach to popular culture from the perspective of its internal logic, Bakhtin's emphasis on the strange and outside to official culture is important for us here. It helps us to think about how events intervene in and mesh with the everyday and the ordinary. How, in discernable or indiscernible ways, events transform the everyday. His space of cultural subversion is the medieval public square, where distinctions between spectator and participant blur. This is also relevant for our thinking about how practices of anti-fear seek to create social apertures through which the collapse between political society and civil society can occur. Laughter mediates social connection; it is a bridge of experience and even a conspiracy in the appropriate circumstances. Bakhtin's medieval laughter at the dour, self-important culture of serious politics is highly relevant to contemporary expressive practices of encounter to confront the atomizing and self-reproducing effects of sociocultural fear:

The laughter of the people, according to Bahktin, is a 'victory over fear' because it emerges in the effort to make laughable and subject to ridicule all that causes fear, especially the holy with its power and its moral condemnation. It is the holy which is at the heart of the strongest censure. While solemnity is related to fear, prolonging and projecting it, laughter connects with freedom. (Martin Barbero, 1993: 66)

Political theatre took on a vital role in contemporary anti-enclosure movements and accordingly, laughter and parody became central in the movement's invocation of the carnivalesque. At the alter-globalization demonstrations, ordinary people dressed as clowns, nurses, turtles, fairies, medieval jousters and even water to perform surreal parodies of confrontation with the increasingly scary appearance and behaviour of the riot police. Here, the collective experience of laughter was increasingly convoked to disarm the fear.

Consider, for example, the 2001 demonstrations against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in Quebec City. Amidst the clouds of tear-gas, military helicopters flying overhead and the often terrifying super-violence of thousands of heavily armed police, a group calling themselves the "Medieval Bloc" used a homemade catapult to launch teddy bears over the massive security fence that separated the leaders from the protesters. Elsewhere, members of an anarchist affinity group parodied the officially sanctioned civil society representatives partaking their "seat at the table" while barricaded in the meetings with the world leaders, protected from those they claimed to represent. They laughed openly at the ambient fear with a series of sardonic call-response chants. *Call*: "What do we want?" *Response*: "Minor Concessions!" *Call*: "When do we want it?" *Response*: "Whenever it's convenient!" Using the same rhythm, they also laughed at the predictable, disconnected patterns of conventional left discourse by hijacking traditional protest chants: A raucous cry of "The Pizza United will Never be

Reheated!" was followed by an equally enthusiastic: "Three Word Chant! Three Word

Chant!....". Interestingly, as the repression intensified at these demonstrations, so did the

laughter. At another global justice protest in Philadelphia, the "Revolutionary Anarchist

Clown Bloc" joined the demonstration on unicycles, wearing giant clown shoes and

wielding squeaky blow up mallets. The clowns' irreverence confused the police when,

instead of attempting to charge through the police line, they suddenly all wheeled around

and started attacking each other in a frenzy of blow up mallet squeaks (*Notes from*

Nowhere, 2003).

The strange humour spawned in this context of asymmetrical power is also

evoked outside of the large, increasingly militarized demonstrations against

neoliberalism. For example, alongside the Carnivals, from the mid-1990s onwards pie

throwing at political, financial and institutional leaders of the global economy became a

much-publicised practice of protest in the increasingly fortified Global North. The

reckless "pieing" of all manner of financial scions – from Bill Gates to Milton Freedman

to World Bank-head James Wolfensohn to the CEO of Monsanto – made them look silly

and vulnerable. A pie splayed across the face of a world powerbroker revealed, if only

momentarily, the fragility of their power. This increasingly prevalent tactic required

nothing more than the appropriate ingredients, a stealthily acquired press or delegate pass

to a high-powered business meeting, and good aim. At a 1999 meeting of the WTO, the

People Insurgent Everywhere (PIE) division of the Biotic Baking Brigade lemon-pied

WTO director General Renato "Rocky" Rugiero. When it hit its target, the throwers

whooped "that's a present from the dispossessed!" As one self described "phantom flan-

flinger" explains in a "how-to" guide for throwing pies at world leaders, "The pie may

not have changed the world, but the sheer nerve of the act has shed light on some shady corporate (or state) crimes, opened up space for discussion of related issues, and delivered just desserts to an unaccountable and powerful person" (cited in Notes from Nowhere, 2003: 262). This is just one of a myriad of examples of the anti-enclosure movement's creative use of humour to laugh at power and at its tactics of fear.

Dignity as the Historical Subject

The immediate post-Cold War period provoked diverse proposals in radical theory to re-conceptualize the historical subject of revolutionary possibility. At this moment, the traditional identitarian conceptualization of class seemed to have reached its historical limit. Yet at the same time, the mounting global impoverishment, inequality and injustice under neoliberalism seemed to suggest that class itself could not be more relevant than ever before. What, if anything, could replace the narrow, economistic definition of class in the historical present? Who or what would constitute a democratic collectivity within this fractured and fraught world?

The Zapatista lexicon convoked the concept of dignity as a way of connecting with the myriad of disparate groups and individuals with whom they affiliated, including housewives, gays and lesbians, youth, intellectuals, trade unionists, indigenous communities, elders, and so on. In the North American context, it was the civil rights movement that gave 'dignity' a radical resonance. While the concept has had many uses in a number of social, political and religious discourses, it brings us back to the new anti-enclosure movement.

Before addressing that question, let us first turn to the question of the historical

subject as it emerged after the Cold War ended and imploded many conventional

categories. Drawing on Spinoza's development of the concept of the multitude, Michael

Hardt and Toni Negri (2000, 2004) adapt the figure of the multitude to the historical

present in an attempt to re-locate an insurgent revolutionary subject. By resurrecting a

figure that can encompass limitless subjectivities and identities, the multitude represents

an effort to renovate the economistic notion of class. This is because conventional

Marxism's treatment of class, at least since the advent of "actually existing socialism",

has been plagued with the problem of ossifying rather than overcoming class society

(Holloway, 2002). Alternately, the pluralistic and open-ended concept of the multitude is

intended to encapsulate a dialogic subject. It is created in the space of communication

and through collaborative interaction. Generally, the concept reflects the autonomist

reversal of the traditional conceptualization of the labour-capital relation as one where

capital rules and labour resists its rule. Here, the multitude is a historical subject that

formed amidst capital's efforts to escape its dependence on the working class through the

creation of increasingly immaterial forms of both production and consumption.

As an infinite and relational concept, the idea of the multitude sets us on our way

towards thinking about the fluidity of class. However, the problem with the use of the

multitude in this way, according to Holloway (2002), is that it fails to avoid externalizing

the capital-labour relation. Further, he argues, it is premised on the assumption of capital

as an economic category alone. "Autonomist theory has been crucial", he argues, "in

reasserting the nature of Marxist theory as a theory of struggle, but the real force of

Marx's theory of struggle lies not in the reversal of the polarity between capital and

labour, but in its dissolution" (2002: 166-7). This project of dissolving separations, to go beyond that externality, points to Holloway's important counter-proposal that we consider dignity as a historical subject. This concept can, I will argue, help us to theorize not just fear and oppression but its fragility.

The concept of dignity as a category of social thought proposes an alternative to the rigid definitional conceptions of class struggle or the revolutionary subject. It can help us collapse the separation between public and private, or put differently, between politics and ethics (Holloway, 1998). For Holloway, dignity is an anti-identitarian concept. It is not a negation of difference but a category of struggle that is collectively asserted in the movement against its negation. Dignity is at once the basis of a historical subject and a refusal. This is the basis of its conceptual strength. Moreover, one of the principal separations that dignity helps us to overcome is the privileged figure of the militant. Conceived in this way, dignity is the domain of all ordinary people. This is what the Zapatistas have called a "uniting of dignities". "The critique of the 'them-against-us' externality of radical theory" Holloway maintains, "is not some obtuse theoretical point but the core of the Marxist understanding of the possibility of revolutionary transformation of society" (2002: 202). Dignity strikes at the heart of the question of separation because it belongs to subjects, not objects.

How, we may ask, does dignity relate to the shift from a monological conception of revolution to a dialogical one? One answer resides in the conception of dignity as a way of thinking about and acting upon detonating the separation between subject and object. This can provide an alternative map for thinking about political and cultural practice. Dignity as practice that demands the overcoming of separation requires not just

refusal and a program to defeat the powerful, but the elaboration of alternate ways of doing to change the experience of social life more generally. As I explored earlier in my topography of movements, this conception of dignity, whether explicitly expressed in that terminology or not, is central to the new anti-enclosure movements. Hence, it is a concept of historical subjectivity appropriate to the new enclosures. This integral connection with agency is the source of dignity's subversive power.

It is in this way that dignity relates to practices of anti-fear. In writing about the role of dignity in social theory, Werner Bonefeld and Kosmas Psychopedis (2005) argue not only that critical theory teaches us to think without fear, but also that its focus on the human being is its essential subversive ingredient, because here the subject comes into sharpest focus. This notion of the subject as refusal to be an object is the basis of subversion. In this affirmative refusal, negative human conditions are negated. This critique of the separation of subject and object, Bonefeld and Psychopedis argue, is necessary to maintaining an analysis of anti-enclosure (they use the term globalization) that does not descend into old binary frameworks:

> There should be no "understanding" of nationalist forms of anti-globalization, of violent and indeed terrorist means of anti-globalization struggle, of forms of resistance that do not respect human life, and that therefore mimic, in their means and aims, capitalism's indifference to human values, and that, as a consequence, base their calculations on that same constituted instrumental rationality which recognizes humanity only as a means, never as a purpose. (2004: 7)

As the neoliberal enclosures proceed apace, autonomous practices for dignity and a world without fear of violence, insecurity, detention or expulsion are central pivots of the contemporary anti-enclosure movements. While the movements expanded and developed on a planetary scale, it is important to note that, predictably, they were also the

object of escalating repression. Accompanying the surge of social movements in the 1990s was a constant cycle of states of emergencies. The period saw a surge in pre-emptive arrests, demonization campaigns in the commercial media, and unprecedented public resources spent on security for the global financial, industrial and political elites. Nonetheless, this counter-insurgency of anti-democratic repression is instructive from an autonomist perspective. It not only exemplifies the threat posed to the heavily armed and powerful by dignity embodied in unarmed ordinary people, but it also underscores the fragility and unsustainable nature of that top-down violent power.

* * *

This chapter introduced the concept of communicational insurgency to conceptualize the contemporary anti-enclosure movement and its practices of anti-fear from the perspective of the protagonists of culture. Against the technological determinism that underpins the discourse of the "Information Society", I have argued that communicational insurgency is a counter-practice of globalization "from below" that is made possible not by abstract technologies but by social movement practices of communication.

In the post-Cold War period, we began to see how these movements articulate new practices of communication that seek to bring together new modes of confrontation and political collectivities against enclosure. To theorize the emergence of post-Cold War oppositional culture, I drew on the rich and diverse theoretical field of Autonomist thought. To ground these ideas, I proposed a general typology of contemporary anti-enclosure movements and drew on examples from a number of important currents of thought and action. The examples I used are far from exhaustive but they indicate some

general tendencies in social movement practices. Specifically, I focussed on those movements whose novel and overlapping practices of autonomy, lateral communication and anti-fear are central to the elaboration of new forms of political confrontation.

This diverse and dispersed constellation of movements, I argued, cohere around six general characteristics or broad tendencies. Generally, these tendencies include: organizing outside of the conventional left's privileged spaces of the industrial workplace; a horizontal network structure that values pluralism and emphasizes radical democratic practice; an ethos of radical pluralism and multiple identities; the centrality of communication in organizing; an emphasis on the present and the quotidian.

Finally, I asserted that these movements begin to take us some way towards identifying not just oppression and resistance to oppression in capitalist society but also the fragility of that oppression. Similarly, they help us to consider how to realize the urgent task – if we are to overcome the socially corrosive effects of fear – of recognizing the self in the other. As the case studies that follow will demonstrate, this is one of the principal features of contemporary anti-fear practices of movements that are situating themselves against the new enclosures. The following chapters draw on the themes introduced here and in Chapter One, taking a more grounded look at how practices of anti-fear amidst the new enclosures are transforming the socio-cultural landscape.

CHAPTER THREE: "WE WON'T RIDE WITH FEAR!" THE BUS RIDERS UNION'S JUSTICE ORGANIZING ON THE "FACTORY ON WHEELS"

In April 2006 the Vancouver Bus Riders Union launched a campaign entitled

"Justice for Bus Riders: We Won't Ride with Fear!" The assertion refers to the

December 5, 2005 launch of Canada's first armed transit police force mandated to patrol

Greater Vancouver's public transit system. This initiative is a central pillar in the public

transport authority's own highly public "Safety and Security" campaign. The campaign

entails a multi-pronged securization program involving the expansion of video

surveillance throughout the system, including buses; the establishment of Canada's first

armed transit police force to patrol the system; massive increases in fines and

punishments for infractions and a publicity campaign urging riders to be vigilant and

report all "strange" or "unusual" behaviour to the authorities. In the context of racialized

securitization of the city within the sweeping logic of the "War on Terror", many riders,

the BRU reports, including those with their fare paid up, are terrified of being stopped

and perhaps locked up or deported. The "low intensity intimidation", the BRU's Zailda

Chan maintains, is to spread a climate of fear to make people complacent in the process

of privatization of the public transit system (Interview, Vancouver, April 20, 2006).

Organizing to overturn this dual process of privatization and militarization of the public

transportation system in the name of "public safety" is at the centre of the Vancouver

BRU's campaign for "transit justice".

The BRU was initiated first in Los Angeles in 1993 and then in Vancouver in 2001. Its emergence is suggestive of the socio-cultural context of the post-Cold War period where the intensification of neoliberalism put increasing pressure on public services and galvanized new forms of urban social movement. The emergence of the city bus as a site of social movement, indicated by the appearance of the BRU among a number of innovative urban movements, reflects the larger post-Cold War crisis in traditional organizational politics. In this context, the city itself increasingly became a space for the articulation of new claims on a subnational and transnational scale, often eclipsing such traditional spaces of organizing such as the workplace. Given its everyday social significance, public transit is an evocative site for thinking about practices of urban fear and anti-fear as communicational practices. But there is little scholarship on public transportation as a space where practices of communication and social movement articulate. It is even less studied as a place for investigating the materiality of socio-cultural fear despite the fact that public transportation is a primary target of contemporary urban fear discourses and practices.

In this chapter, I examine the bus as a site for practices of anti-fear and insurgent communication from the perspective of its protagonists: bus riders. I do this through an exposition the insurgent social unionism of the Bus Riders Unions. I examine how the two BRUs articulate new forms of political confrontation that is both a reflection of and a challenge to the radical transformations in the post-Cold War city of fear. I argue that it is in the socio-cultural space of the humble city bus where we can see fear, the new enclosures, race, class and gender intersect in crucial ways.

Through the example of the BRU, I show that the bus, as one of the most cosmopolitan and proletarian public spaces in the neoliberal city, is an important space of communicational insurgency. The movement mobilizes various practices of visibility and encounter to organize against enclosure. This is exemplified in the group's multi-lingual theatre, posters, pamphleteering and "direct-contact organizing", fare-strikes and other interventions. These actions provoke public visibility of the otherwise invisible bus riding subject and dialogue among the bus-riding constituency to organize for "transit justice" and "the right to get around". I show how the BRU's event-oriented public actions mesh with the urban fabric and in the process dissolve the conventional separations between social movements and urban subjects. They do this, I show, through elaborating an oppositional popular culture to the fear that acts as a disciplinary tool in neoliberalism.

Getting Communication Studies on the Bus

For all its emphasis on flows, masses, circuits of cultural and information exchange, popular culture, materiality and modernity, communication studies has been remarkably unconcerned with the city bus. There have been important contributions to communication studies which have included transportation networks and urban infrastructures within a broadly conceived communicational globalization (i.e. Mattelart, 1994, 2000; Graham and Marvin, 2001). The innovative work of Stephan Graham and Simon Marvin (2001) has specifically focussed on the often opaque role of infrastructure networks as communication and in accentuating patterns of urban segmentation in neoliberalism. But with few exceptions (i.e. Hurst Mann, 1996; Hutchinson, 2003) the bus is a neglected object of study outside of urban planning literature. This is not only in

terms of its pivotal sociological and communicational role in the city but also in considerations of the bus as a space where practices of communication and social movement articulate. Nor has the bus generally been considered as a site for oppositional culture and politics. This is despite the fact that the city bus is a uniquely intergenerational, gendered, proletarian and multicultural space in the neoliberal city. Further, the bus is an increasingly vital public service that has been the subject of neoliberal privatization and has a profound, if often invisible, impact on quality of life, social mobility and social justice. It is in this context that to look at the bus as contested socio-cultural space also helps us to make important connections between the politics of consumption as a matter not of "false consciousness" but of quality of life, social reproduction, race, class, gender, generation and access.

The work of communication scholars Armand Mattelart (1994; 1996) and Vincent Mosco (1996), who emphasize the spatial dimensions of communication and culture, opens up a direction in communication scholarship that could consider the city bus as an integral socio-cultural space. In his examination of the revolutionary role of the telegram, the post, and the telephone, Mattelart in particular uses an expansive conception of communication, grounded in culture, to show how information networks become spaces of communication for world capitalist expansion and nation-building. But his efforts focus on the grand figures of air, rail and sea transport as vectors for the transportation of information and culture and the resultant emergence of a conception of the world in communicational terms. While this is certainly vital to the elaboration of a communicational perspective on the processes of world integration, it's meta perspective

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obscures the myriad of ways the macro is present in the micro spheres of the urban

everyday of which the mundane city bus is an evocative example.

This emphasis on expansive transnational flows is also the case among scholars

from other disciplines who have been influential in communication studies, such as

David Harvey (1989) and Manuel Castells (1996) and Michael Hardt and Toni Negri

(2000). Those scholars have themselves been strongly influenced by what could be

called a "communicational turn" in critical social theory in the post-Cold War context of

globalization. When we travel to the subnational level we find that influential scholars of

urban change in globalization such as Graham and Marvin (2001) have drawn heavily on

Mattelart's communication studies. They analyze how the expansion of cybernetic,

transportation and other infrastructure networks are integral to the neoliberal processes of

socio-economic segmentation and concentration in cities of both the global north and the

global south. But here too, the city bus as an important site for analyzing the materiality

of communication is neglected

Furthermore, while these analyses all fall into the broad field of radical social

theory, their strong emphasis on the infrastructures of globalization and neoliberal urban

change respectively do not incorporate a substantial consideration of the role of social

movements within these formative circuits of communication. Here we could draw on

the historical analyses of anti-colonial movements in the work of Peter Linebaugh and

Marcus Rediker (2000) and Paul Gilroy (1993). These authors' accounts of the early

modern revolutionary Atlantic demonstrate how the merchant and slave ships that fuelled

that period of globalization were global capitalism's first factories. The ships were not

solely a space of transport but crucially a place of work, both waged and unwaged. In an

unprecedented way, the ships gathered together large numbers of men and women who had previously been geographically dispersed and unknown to one another. On the ships, new proletarian subjectivities emerged along with new survival strategies that accompanied the dispersal of communities and livelihoods to far flung cities and plantations. The ship was also a space for unprecedented radical cosmopolitanism and inter-racial cooperation among the world's emergent polyglot proletariat. Hence, like the terrestrial factory system that followed, the trans-Atlantic ship served as vectors of insurgent communication.

In highlighting the relationships forged on the trans-Atlantic ship as a medium for the formation of cosmopolitan popular culture, this literature identifies and opens up a contradiction at the heart of modern capitalism: that the enclosures of the commons and the opening of flows for capital mobility also produce excessive and unpredictable combinations of people, subjectivities and social movements that are difficult to contain. In its documentation of the brutal reactions of the authorities to the constant spectre of proletarian insurgency, this literature also explores the official use of violence and fear to dissuade and destroy popular movements on the ships, on the lands to which they were brought and in the emergent mercantile-industrial cities. In these narratives, we see how fear and terror were used to create boundaries among the popular classes through the elaborations of ever more intricate hierarchies of class, race and gender. These efforts included both harsh punishment for interracial cooperation and the social elaboration of incentives against it through the creation of differential rights to such things as land, wages and relative freedom. Indeed, it could be argued that the constant succession of

parliamentary acts against proletarian "combination" of the Industrial Revolution had their precedence in the early modern mercantile ship.

While it may seem to be a long jump forward from the 17th century to the neoliberal present, this fundamentally communicational perspective on popular culture and insurgent communication can help us to understand something about the significance of the bus as both a place where the disciplining affect of fear is mobilized and a site for the elaboration of grassroots culture amidst the new enclosures. This framework helps us to consider the articulation of practices of communication and social movement from the perspective of the protagonists of culture. Crucially, this perspective makes central a conceptualization of the relationship between social movements and communication that challenges the dominance of both media-centrism and totalizing conceptions of socio-cultural fear.

Situating the Bus Riders Union Movement

The emergence of BRUs at the turn of the 21st century points to a number of important developments on the micro and macro levels of urban and worldwide social change. The specific character of the Vancouver and L.A. BRU is grounded in the particular historical contexts of the cities in which they organize is reflected in the different discourses and organizational strategies that they deploy. But taken together, this trajectory reflects the changing composition of the urban political economies in these large North American cities as they increasingly shifted away from their historical basis in resource extraction, industrial manufacturing and high rates of unionization. At different paces, both cities moved towards a post-Fordist development model ever more organized around services, shift work and characterized by marked tendency towards

precarious conditions. As historic "frontiers' of North American subnational and transnational migration, the two cities became increasingly significant sites of global migration and cosmopolitan growth throughout the 1990s that continues today.

The movement also arose during a period of ascendancy of urban-focussed fear discourses and practices. As we saw in Chapter One, North American cities of the 1990s came into the media spotlight in the form of potent fear narratives. Representations of fear of and in the city started to dominate local newscasts and it took an ever-bigger space in print journalism, and commercial cinema. In television, the accumulation potential in the urban fear trade was exemplified in explosion of gritty "reality" television shows like *Cops* (Glassner, 1999; Rapping, 2003; Macek, 2006). In these narratives, the mobility of proletarian, racialized bodies became a defining trope of the pathological inner city.

Accompanying this period of neoliberal restructuring and its potent media environment was the growing influence of "Law and Order" campaigns and Zero Tolerance policing in cultural and political life. As policy, Zero Tolerance set its sights on the mobility of racialized, poor inner-city dwellers. Public transportation systems were its first targets because, as socially porous spaces, they were seen as the frontline of urban social control. This involved implementing video surveillance systems and dolling out harsher penalties for "fare evasion", graffiti and other activities that Zero Tolerance proponents argued promoted general criminality and urban decay. Following 9/11, the fear-security discourse of Zero Tolerance was augmented with the launching of the "War on Terror" which also specifically targeted urban transportation systems. It is in this fear-laden context that the Vancouver and L.A. BRUs emerged. But the two groups also appeared in a period of great social upheaval where movements began experimenting

with new forms of political confrontation that could respond to this complex set of changes. Both the LA and the Vancouver groups embraced the polyglot and multicultural fabric of their cities. They also drew on rich traditions of radical social movements from the US Civil Rights movement, grassroots labour movement traditions and postcolonial liberation movements.

The Bus, Anti-Fear and Dignity in the Civil Rights Movement

The formative inspiration and reference point for the L.A. BRU is the US Civil Rights movement, a movement historically tied to struggles over free mobility and public transportation. The role of urban public transit in the daily enactment of segregation in the southern US was a detonating factor in the Civil Rights movement's increasingly visible and confrontational materialization in the1950s. The bus was integral to its status as one of the most important domestic and international movements of the twentieth century. When we take a closer look at this period, we see that the Civil Rights movement is also among the most instructive settings for understanding the bus as a space of anti-fear and insurgent communication. Yet, despite its anti-fear discourse, the extraordinary upheaval of the movement is as neglected in the scholarship on fear as the bus is neglected in communication studies. The Montgomery Alabama Bus Boycott of 1955, generally seen to be a crucial opening moment of the Civil Rights movement, was not only critical in the undoing of segregation and the Jim Crow laws, it inspired liberation movements around the world.

Among the plethora of repressive laws and cultural regulations that were instituted following the collapse of the slave system, the elaborate system of segregation on city and interstate buses made fear and indignity hover over everyday life for African

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Americans in the Jim Crow south. Leading up to the Boycott, civil rights activists were meeting with officials in Montgomery, Alabama, to agitate for an end to segregation on public transit. A profound historic turn occurred on December 1st, 1955, when prominent civil rights activist Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat for a white man on a Montgomery city bus. She was promptly arrested and charged with violating the state's segregation laws. A boycott of the bus system was organized and for over a year people refused to participate in one of the principle spaces of segregation, choosing instead to walk and organize car pools.

Prior to Parks' arrest and the formal call for the Boycott, the unbearable pressure of the segregated bus system had already driven passengers to opt for walking instead of taking the bus. "They walked to and from work, to town, to movies, to see their girlfriends, because of fear of riding the buses" (Gibson Robinson, 1987: 37). When asked why she refused to move, Parks responded: "It was a matter of dignity; I could not have faced myself and my people if I had moved" (King, 1956: 4). The Boycott, according to historian Norman Walton (1989), was a catalyst to unprecedented black unity. Maids and the newly better off shared car rides, he recalls, talking and laughing together. After a year of agitating, arrests, striking, repression and waking, on December 21, 1956 the US Supreme Court ordered the buses de-segregated and the Boycott ended in a victory that would resonate around the US and the world for the rest of the century and into the next.

The backlash against the Boycott involved a predictably vicious campaign of fear meant to scare people back onto the buses and into segregation. Within a month of the Boycott's launch, Reverend Thomas Thrasher, Director of an Episcopal Church in

Montgomery, observed, "the only universal thing about our community is fear" (Walton, 1989: 10). Nonetheless, the African Americans of Montgomery, wrote Walton, were tough to this intimidation and not easily frightened. In a 1956 article entitled "Our Struggle" published in the movement's newspaper, *Liberation,* King describes how every reactive move on the part of the pro-segregationists strengthened the Boycott and drew more participants from diverse sectors of the population.

The movement's practice of collective civil disobedience was rooted in a principle of "Justice without Violence", the slogan of the Montgomery Improvement Association, the main organization supporting the Boycott. This approach was not a one-dimensional appeal to Christian pacifism as it is often portrayed. Rather, it was grounded in the movement's radical critique of power, which, King argued, was integral to the circulation and expansion of the movement and its ability to resist the provocations of the segregationists. The most significant aspect of the Boycott in this regard, argues Walton (1989), was the projection of the struggle for dignity into the national and international arenas. "Oppressed people throughout the world saw the boycott as a fight for the hope of the human race" (Walton, 1989: 30). This characterization was confirmed anew when, upon his release from a thirty-year imprisonment in 1990, Nelson Mandela cited Rosa Parks and the Boycott as a powerful inspiration in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.

An ethnographic study conducted by sociologist Preston Valien (1959) during the Boycott points to the political confidence and radicalization that it provoked. While initially the movement's demands were articulated within the framework of locally instituted segregation practices – as late as April 1956 King wrote: "We seek the right,

under segregation, to seat ourselves from the rear forward on a first-come, first-served basis" – the Boycott's extraordinary resonance and development as a social movement provoked a sense of the fragility of the system (Valien, 1959: 87). Besides formal de-segregation, the Boycott movement used this power of refusal to force the companies to hire black bus drivers, put more stops in black neighbourhoods, put procedures in place to halt the constant abuse by white bus drivers, and put a halt to the practice of blacks having to enter at the back of the bus and pay at the front. The Boycott launched a revolution in social and racial justice organizing that galvanized the movement around the country. The Freedom Riders of the early 1960s, for example, braved harassment and violence to exercise the right to interstate travel and to challenge the abuse and danger experienced by blacks travelling on interstate highways (Bullard and Johnson, 1997; Arsenault, 2006). The effectiveness of the movement was wrought in a series of legal reforms, among them the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act, 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968 (Thorton, 1989: xxii). It was this legislative framework that the Los Angeles BRU drew on to leverage its first major victory over the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) in 1994.

The Bus as a Space of Anti-Fear and Dignity in Post-Cold War Urban Culture

Both the Vancouver and L.A. BRUs are in many respects exemplary of the post-Cold War context of rapid privatization and enclosure of public space in North America in which they emerged. This meant that the state increasingly moved away from redistributive activities to supporting business development. In regards to public transportation, the effect of this exacerbated already existing social disparity between the transit dependent and private automobile users (Grengs, 2004). The neoliberal urbanism

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of the 1990s was coupled with a distinctly conservative turn in urban management, resulting in a marked shift towards prioritizing criminal justice over social justice. This turn is exemplified in the so-called Zero Tolerance doctrines and the influential Broken Windows theory of urban management. A series of environmental design and neighbourhood organizing programs directly inspired by these theories have been widely implemented in cities across North America and are considered to have a major role in promoting fear in and of the city (Smith, 2001; Merrifield, 2002b). Discursively, the "War on Terror" is the globalized corollary of Zero Tolerance as a practice of urban fear. In the wake of 9/11, the "war on terror's" rhetoric of "national security" comprehensively targeted public transportation systems.

The critical literature on the impact of the Zero Tolerance turn in urban management is effective in its analysis of the criminalization of the homeless, youth, sex workers, and the poor in general (i.e. Sanchez, 2002; Mitchell, 2003). But it does not address its impact on public transit and the bus in particular, which has been a major target of so-called "Law and Order" policies that marked North America's urban cultural politics of the post-Cold War period. One effect of the neoliberal emphasis on a criminal justice approach to social inequality that is exemplified in the fear-infused "Law and Order" discourse has meant that raising the fare is accompanied by criminalization of public transportation users. As with the discourse of the city street, the advocates of criminal justice solutions to social inequalities routinely frame urban public transit as perilously socially porous which, in order to control, requires a complex array of security and safety infrastructures. Following the launching of the "War on Terror" and the subsequent terrorist attacks on the metro systems in Madrid and London, the authorities'

Zero Tolerance-inspired treatment of public transit as dangerous was substantially magnified.

Through their experience, Vancouver BRU organizers discern clear links between neoliberalism, the "War on Terror" and the fear campaign directed at the public transit system and specifically those users who have no other transportation option. Prior to every major cut in public services, Vancouver BRU organizer Martha Roberts points out, the authorities have launched a campaign to demonize its users as criminals (Roberts, Interview, Vancouver, May 2005). As one example, Roberts explains that the police have a habit of circulating through the media unsupported claims that criminals are using the public transit system to conduct robberies, deal drugs and so on. Other pertinent examples in Vancouver include the transit authority's introduction of a video surveillance system and its ubiquitous public advertising campaigns encouraging passenger vigilance around reporting "odd" or "suspicious" behaviour.

An exemplary confluence of such fear-inspiring events occurred when, in 2005, the transit authority raised the price of the fare for the third time in four years and the fine for "fare evasion" from $43.00 to $175.00. (The fare evasion charge encompasses a range of infractions, including not having a ticket at all; having one that is over its time limit; for being out of the geographical zone that the ticket corresponds to). At the same time, it introduced Canada's first armed transit police force to bolster the existing patrols which enforce the fare and issue tickets to those they apprehend for the myriad forms of fare evasion. Enjoying unprecedented powers of detention and arrest, the city's 84 transit police operate across a jurisdictional swath wider then the Royal Canadian Mounted

Police (RCMP) or any other Canadian police force[30]. These drastic fare and fine increases combine with the stagnating wages at the low-wage end of the job market and deep cuts to social welfare over the last decade to make the price of a ticket prohibitive for a growing number of transit dependent people. As a result, the incidents of the much-publicized epidemic of "fare evasion" appear as self-fulfilling prophecy. To link this to historical processes enclosure, we can turn to Federici's (2004) and Linebaugh and Rediker's (2000) research that shows how each new phase of enclosure has always produced not only pauperization but also new forms of criminalization and repression. Perhaps even more chilling are the numerous reports that the BRU has been receiving about the abusive behaviour of the new transit police. Women and people of colour, especially young men of colour, have reported being harassed and physically and verbally abused by the police. Many have reported that they will not ride the patrolled routes for fear of being thrown into prison and even deported (Chan, Interview, Vancouver, April 2006). Through all of this, we can see how this strategy of criminalization is apparent in a number of ways, all of which have the effect of reproducing the public transit system as a receptacle of public fear.

Making the public transit system a repository for a myriad of social fears – of crime, of terrorism, and so on – is a way of silencing critics of stealth privatization and of disciplining public transit users through the fear of criminalization. Furthermore, Chan points out, the federal government's willingness to spend $110 million for video surveillance for the greater Vancouver public transportation system and $16.6 million for armed police to patrol it, demonstrates the necessity of a military presence to enforce

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[30] The current number police officers patrolling the transit system is expected to double to 168 by 2009.

privatization (Interview, Vancouver, April 2006). None of these public safety solutions address the fundamental security concerns of bus riders, BRU organizers contend. What they do, Roberts argues, is intensify the assault on everyone's right to common space. They especially infringe on the rights of poor and homeless people to be present in and move around freely in the city (Roberts, Interview, Vancouver, May 2005).

Conversely, the BRU re-appropriates this pervasive rhetoric of safety. As we shall see, this appropriation subverts the coercive, governmental notion of security by asserting the inextricability of public safety and dignity as an expression of "humanity in action" (Bonefeld and Psychopedis, 2005). This animation of the notion of dignity coupled with a renovation of the dominant notion of security is important for a social movement that has been organizing against the enclosure of the beleaguered and otherwise ignored or demonized bus. For this movement that seeks to put people at the centre of public transport planning, this politicized conception of dignity is at once a proposal for a conception of security that is rooted in a practice of dignity. "Through our discussions with people on the bus over the last five years, we find that people's needs are very basic", explains Chan. "This includes decent, affordable housing and meaningful jobs. It means not being socially isolated or alienated, and being part of a vibrant, multi-generational community where we can take our kids and elders out. It means quality health services that get at the root of why people are ill. For women, childcare is key" (Chan, Interview, April 2006, Vancouver). In other words, through its dialogic organizing practice, the BRU is endeavouring to convert the neoliberal conception of safety as synonymous with criminal justice to one that emphasizes security through the enactment of dignity and social justice.

This politics is a reflection of the diversity of the "transit dependent" constituency, which is overwhelmingly comprised of the waged and unwaged poor, low-wage workers, students, children, migrants, refugees, the elderly and the disabled. Women and people of colour make up the bulk of the city's transit dependent in Vancouver and LA (Burgos and Pulido, 1998; BRU, 2005). Hence the issue of security turns into larger questions of social justice and is reflected in the BRU's critiques of transit features related directly to the quotidian practical needs of this constituency, such as scheduling, sufficient lighting at bus stops, and the role of transit security personnel and drivers. The BRU's constituency and organizing style suggest a concrete project for the assertion of new claims organized around a justice politics of autonomy, diversity and everyday free mobility in the neoliberal city.

Over the past three decades, the historical spaces of social organizing, such as the trade union or the neighbourhood association, are being radically transformed by privatization and de-regulation. Coined by the co- founder of the LA BRU's Strategy Centre Eric Mann, the term "factory on wheels" is meant to signal an overlooked continuity between the industrial factory as a historic site of organized resistance to capitalism and the city bus. The bus is where an increasingly diverse and dispersed working class population encounters one another in an analogous social and organizational proximity. The term highlights the space of the often overlooked and unlikely figure of the lumbering urban bus as a site of possibility and social justice. The "factory on wheels" is a specifically neoliberal urban form appropriate to the conditions of the post-Fordist city. It is a mirror of its referent, the modern industrial factory that emerged out of the enclosure movement, whereby the expropriated are forced together in

capitalist social relations and turned into workers. The term convokes the bus as a social and political space where an extraordinary diversity of people are brought together in an unprecedented way, much as the factory did before it. As the industrial factory system disperses under post-Fordist labour market restructuring, the bus is an important public space that draws people together, if only temporarily, on the way to their workplaces. This re-casting of the bus as a factory has significant resonance with the Autonomist notion of the "Social Factory" discussed in Chapter Two.

Historian of the African American radical cultural and political tradition, Robin D.G Kelley points out that the BRU "highlight the critical importance of public transit to contemporary labour struggles. It is one of the few issues that touch the lives of many urban working people across race, ethnic and gender lines." (1996: 19). Indeed, much of the BRU's organizing efforts challenge the complicated cultural politics of race, class, and gender on the bus. This re-conceptualization of the bus as an integral social space helps to ground some of the debates on the effects of globalization on the neoliberal city, namely: cultural diversity, economic de-regulation and the post-Fordist restructuring of the labour market, and transformations in the dynamics of social movement politics.

The BRU's formation and practice is resonant with Saskia Sassen's (1998, 2000, 2001) contention that the contemporary global city evokes a double process of concentration of both the operations of the global economy and of radical cultural diversity. Out of this dynamic, Sassen (2000) demonstrates, capitalist globalization not only produces deepening polarization and intensifies racialized and gendered job market segmentation, but it also opens up new spaces for its transgression through what she calls "the politics of presence". In this way, the globalized city is a strategic arena for

transnational capital and politics, new inequalities and polarizations, new agglomerations and dispersals of people and capital but also new subjectivities. We could think about this proletarian cosmopolitanism that comes into view here, and that is certainly evident on the city bus, as a vector for the articulation of new claims grounded in the actually existing diversity of the city. Furthermore, for our purposes here, Sassen's insights offer a useful inversion of the influential, and woefully ungrounded and techno-centric, scholarship on the "information society" that situates the global city within a network of depopulated "flows" (Castells, 1996) or "scapes" (Appadurai, 1996). Indeed the very terrestrial social space of the bus can aid us in populating communication studies.

The BRU's politics of communication articulate multiple struggles within their globalized city contexts. The precarious circumstances but also the tremendous social resource of the transit-dependent population form the basis of their dialogical organizing model. Discernable in the movement's politico-communicational activities is an aim to harness, not contain, the diversity of the public transit constituency as a source of powerful accumulated knowledge. Hence the service workers, shift workers, the unwaged, students, single mothers, the disabled, the young and the elderly are among the diverse constituents that comprise the bus riding public and occupy the centre of the BRU's politics of presence.

In the following sections of this chapter, I will show how that BRU's communicational politics reveal a practice of anti-fear that is enacted through challenging the conventional binary separating political actors and urban subjects. By bringing people together in new ways and mobilizing for political action – a break from fear – this puts the ignored, or often obliquely demonized, bus-riding constituency at the centre of

political thought and action. This communicational insurgency is not only a significant departure from conventional claims for representation but it also transforms the very fabric of the city. We begin, therefore, by contextualizing the rise of the BRU in two North American car-oriented, and highly globalized cities: Los Angeles and Vancouver.

Los Angeles

The 1992 L.A. Revolt was a detonating factor in the formation of a union for bus riders in Los Angeles (Ramsay, 2000). The largest urban revolt in US history was sparked by the not-guilty verdict of four white police officers charged with a highly publicized, vicious beating of African American motorist Rodney King on an L.A. highway. The Revolt expressed popular rage against the systemic racism that the Court's ruling symbolized. The beating and the state's super-militarized response to the Rebellion exemplified the authorities' long-standing fear of unregulated proletarian bodies on the move. In his analysis of the social implications of the police attack on King and the post-ruling upheaval, Thomas Dumm (1993) traces the police and court justifications for the beating to its historical precedent in the first enclosures of the commons in Europe. It was through this period that the authorities instituted numerous poor laws to control, through criminalization, the mobility of "masterless men". Dumm points out how King's appearance on television after the Revolt began to make his oft quoted plea "Can we all get along?" was followed by another statement that was not widely circulated. "We all can get along. We've just got to, just got to. We're all stuck here for awhile" (Cited in Dumm, 1993: 192). For Dumm, "King recognized the finitude of the space of Los Angeles. He resisted the temptation to separate, to enclose, to substitute for the messy and open qualities of heterogeneous urban spaces the closed and

deadened spaces of the suburbs. In making his plea he implicitly endorsed an ill-defined

notion of toleration and plurality" (1993: 192). It was amidst this dynamic of reckoning

and profound social upheaval that articulated a myriad of historical fears and

contemporary changes that the BRU emerged.

In 1994 the L.A.'s Labour/Community Strategy Centre formed the Bus Riders

Union/Sindicato de Pasajeros (BRU/SDP) and launched a major organizing campaign to

"fight transit racism" (Mann, 1997). Recognizing and politicizing L.A. as a site of

intense labour mobility, the Strategy Centre's analysis of the production of capitalist

social relations rendered the 400,000-strong "factory on wheels" a vital arena for justice

organizing. The bus, the organizers felt, represented a space where the city's complex

intersections of race, class, generation and gender were uniquely co-present (Mann,

2000). As one place where the city's highly dispersed paid and unpaid workforce

congregated, the bus also suggested a fertile space of social possibility in the face of

L.A.'s accelerated de-industrialization and de-unionization of over the previous decade.

The idea of a new kind of social unionism, built on the self-organization of bus

riders was rooted in L.A.'s fierce labour struggles that peaked in the Reagan-inspired de-

regulation boom of the 1980s. From the organizers' testimony it appears that two key

factors drove the Centre towards unconventional spaces of organizing. First, its radical

critique of U.S capitalism, a critique that included the US's big house of labour, the

powerful AFL-CIO; second, its understanding of the changing political landscape

occurring both globally and locally under neoliberal restructuring. BRU/SDP organizers

sought to build a movement dedicated to transit justice as an allegory for the city's

political struggles around the intersections of mobility, poverty, racism, gendered

inequality and the raging social violence that was, at least until the spring of 1992 when the Revolt erupted, largely invisible in the mainstream representational landscape. Out of this context, the BRU/SDP anchored its vision and its organizing efforts within the radical cultural renaissance embodied in the Civil Rights movement. The movement adapted a civil rights organizing tradition, what the BRU/SDP calls "direct contact organizing," to the context of still hyper-segmented post-Fordist L.A.: "Going from bus to bus wearing yellow T-shirts that exhorted riders to 'fight transit racism,' the union organized disgruntled black and Latino riders into one of the most visible multiracial political coalitions in the city" (Hutchinson, 2000:111).

Architect and Strategy Centre activist Lian Hurst Mann (2003) characterizes L.A. as a global "hotspot" of contestation in globalization. By this she means that certain places are sites of highly visible and heightened contradiction at the level of daily life. Here, the incapacity of states to stabilize markets and the apparent ineffectiveness of governments exacerbate the destabilizing, oppressive and alienating experience of neoliberal globalization. We can see this in L.A.'s legendary transit inequality. In a city inspired by the dream of private mobility, integral to the impoverishment of the inner city that accompanied de-industrialization of the 1980s was the immobility of those populations who were unable to get out to the suburbs and exurbs to where the jobs were increasingly relocating (Hutchinson, 2000).

Hence, the BRU/SDP emerged in a context where the bulk of funding for public transit was being diverted from the city's notoriously inadequate bus system to the development of a commuter rail project designed to carry suburban dwellers in a straight line to the central city. What was desperately needed, the nascent group found, was more

and better buses for those many inner-city residents that had no other transit options and because they did not travel in a straight line, were spending a growing portion of their day navigating the woefully neglected bus system. As the city's suburban commuter-focussed development model has continued apace, many L.A. bus riders spend two to four hours travelling on the bus per day (Dutton and Hurst Mann, 2003). All of this makes bus riding a substantial part of everyday life. Because being on the bus has such a profound impact on people's quality of life, it is also, Hurst Mann argues, productive of an identity.

A turning point came in 1994, soon after the BRU/SDP was launched, when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense and Educational Fund represented L.A.'s 350,000 transit dependent people in a class action suit against the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). The suit was filed by the BRU/SDP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Korean Immigrant Workers' Advocates as co-plaintiffs, against the MTA's proposals to raise bus fares from $1.10 to $1.35, to eliminate the monthly bus pass, and to introduce a zone system on the commuter rail. The combined impact of these proposals would have translated in a fare increase of over 100 percent for half of its existing passengers (Mann, 1997). Following years of investing millions in rail while the bus system crumbled, the MTA's proposed fare hikes were to pay for the rail projects that hit a financial crisis (Grengs, 2004: 5). The lawsuit, filed under the Civil Rights Act, argued that the MTA was building a "separate and unequal" transit system[31]. The suit charged that the investment was creating a two-tiered transit system that discriminated against

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[31] Specifically, the suit charged the MTA with violating Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution.

predominantly low-income "minority" bus riders while the rail served white-collar commuters.

A victory brought in a court-ordered six month restraining order, which kept fares frozen until an out-of-court settlement was reached: the MTA agreed to continue with the monthly pass in exchange for the full fare increase. BRU/SDP organizer Eric Mann maintains that the suit is a civil rights-inspired challenge to "the creation of racist, separate and unequal public transportation systems in the way that *Brown v. Board of Education* did for challenging racist structures of public education" (cited in Kelley, 1996: 19). In 1996 the BRU/SDP secured an out-of-court legal victory in the form of a federal Consent Decree agreement ordering the MTA to cap fare increases and improve the bus service. The ruling, Hutchinson argues, was historic not only because of its implications for US urban transportation politics but also for post-civil rights era organizing "which has sought to address how institutional racism and sexism inscribe urban public space." (2000: 111). The BRU's most important victory here was to save the monthly bus pass and secure promises for clean fuel buses, service expansion and jobs. "In this context" Hurst Mann argues, "the Bus Riders Union campaign is winning demands that redistribute economic resources while simultaneously impacting the physical fabric of the city in ways we cannot yet imagine." (Dutton and Hurst Mann, 2003: 217)

Vancouver

The Vancouver BRU was started in 2001 following a screening of the Haskel

Wexler's film *Bus Rider's Union* at Vancouver's Mayworks Festival[32]. The film

projected the bus as a site of radical proletarian cosmopolitanism. It made visible the

face of the city generally denied a voice in official plans and narratives, and articulated

anti-racist feminist struggles around the "right to the city" and the "politics of presence"

in the US's most thoroughly globalized city. Through the screening, Vancouver bus

riders saw themselves as part of an extraordinary social constituency at once connected to

the specificity of place but not necessarily to industrial, Cold War- era spaces of social

struggle such as the factory or the nation-state. Discussions following the screening

unearthed a deeper understanding of the transit dependent subjects as a post-Fordist

proletariat and the bus as a cosmopolitan space.

In conjunction with the screening, L.A. BRU/SDP organizers travelled to

Vancouver to meet with local organizers to discuss tactics and structure. A meeting was

held over two days where organizers shared experiences of the two cities, both shaped by

histories of east-west domestic migration, diverse transnational migrations and militant

unionism, whose primary growth occurred in the automobile-era of post-World War Two

North America. Vancouver, like L.A., underwent considerable economic restructuring

from the mid-1980s throughout the increasingly neoliberal 1990s during which time the

city went from a predominantly resource extracting nexus to a real estate-service

economy (Blomely, 2004). The meeting happened amidst recurrent de-funding of bus

service and a bitter four-month long transit workers strike, making the BRU's political

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[32] Vancouver's Mayworks festival of working class culture and politics has been variously held in the city since 1988 in a number of incarnations. Its basic premise has been to project a vision of contemporary oppositional popular culture.

project especially resonant. The participants discovered a shared problem: the authorities' preference for enormously expensive, flashy commuter trains that travelled in straight lines from the suburbs to the downtown business district. Meanwhile, the city bus services, which get the majority of transit dependent users around, were being de-funded and the costs downloaded further to the user through higher fares and reduced service.

Like L.A., Vancouver had experienced a mushrooming of transit mega-projects – starting with the city's highly contested elevated light-rail system called Skytrain, which was built to host a second-tier 1986 World Exposition themed around the idea of "transportation" – even though 80 percent of the transit dependent continue to use exclusively the bus[33]. As a result, the organizers discovered access barriers of a similar character to those existing in L.A., whereby there was markedly inferior service in poorer areas than in wealthier ones (Roberts, Interview, Vancouver, May, 2005). Contrasting the priority that local authorities place on the Skytrain versus the bus system is one way that the BRU points to the class polarization that marks the city and is made evident in its differentiated access to mobility. The L.A. organizers also shared strategies on dealing with the transit authorities in a political culture where bus riders are not considered to be political subjects but recipients of a service.

Out of these meetings, the Vancouver BRU organized itself in a way that connected with the bus riding public and that also drew on some of the organizing strategies of the L.A. BRU. But the Vancouver BRU did not adopt outright the L.A.

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[33] "Expo 86" as it is popularly known marked a decisive symbolic and concrete shift towards Vancouver's insertion into the global realestate, service economy. The futuristic Skytrain line cut through the city marking the abandonment of its industrial-resource past for a stealth, high-tech future.

group's model. Rather, its activists see the formation of the movement as responding to the specific circumstances of the local context (Roberts, Interview, Vancouver, May, 2005). While Vancouver may have some resonance with Los Angeles, the significant divergences require, according to the organizers, place-specific organizing tactics. The Vancouver BRU does not share the precise referent of the Civil Rights movement's tradition of litigation or its historic lexicon that it can draw on as a mobilizing discourse. But the group began to elaborate a distinctly communicational politics that is rooted in the pluralist context of Vancouver and the specificity of the city's public transit experience. The driving approach and the basis of their communicational practice was to meet people where they are both physically and politically (ibid.).

The BRU's dialogical practice extends to a radical investigation strategy called "Testimonial Research" whereby organizers conduct interviews and bus riders narrate their own experience and analysis of the transit system and then make suggestions on how to improve upon it. Out of this dialogical, feminist research approach emerged the BRU's slogan that is also its demand for "the right to get around," which seeks to occupy the spaces of enclosure to confront and overturn neoliberal command. This grassroots research strategy also provided the foundation for the Vancouver BRU's elaboration of its "transitional demands" for transit justice. Through a deliberate and reflexive politics of listening, the BRU translated the expressed needs and desires of bus riders into four main political interventions: 1. Defend and expand public services; 2. End transit racism, 3. Advance public health and environmental justice; 4. Create a transit system that puts women at the centre of planning (Roberts, Interview, Vancouver, May, 2005). We can see in the framing of these demands how the BRU is conceptualising the bus as a social

commons. Hence, through discussions about the changes occurring with the public

transit system with the populations these changes impact the most a number of core

issues around privatisation (or enclosure) are articulated.

The Cultural Politics of Hope and Fear

The Bus as non-State Public Sphere

One of the BRU's primary contributions to the more general elaboration of an

oppositional culture amidst the new enclosures is their re-casting of the beleaguered and

demeaned city bus as vital socio-cultural space. In conceptualizing the bus as a site of

popular culture, the BRU's activities help us to think about contemporary culture within

and beyond the culture industries. Like other contemporary anti-enclosure movements

discussed in Chapter Two, they also create an aperture for the elaboration of alternative

publics beyond the state. Public space may be dramatically shrinking under

neoliberalism but the bus is one of the few expanding social spaces as the populations of

transit dependent people expands in these metropolitan centres. The bus connects people

who do not necessarily have ties to traditional spaces of organizing such as the factory or

neighbourhoods and the emergence and sustained presence of the BRU signals the

challenge of justice organizing across mobile and dispersed constituents. As Los Angeles

BRU/SDP organizer, Martin Hernandez, explains: "Since de-industrialization, buses are

among the last public spaces where blue-collar people of all races still mingle." (Davis,

1995: 272). Through the activities of the BRU, we can envision the bus as a kind of

alternative public, a site for the elaboration of new social relations and radical

imaginations. This autonomous conception of the public is articulated through the

BRU's innovative communicational politics. Indeed, communication occupies the centre

of the movement's labour intensive, highly interactive and inventive appropriations of the bus to transform them into spaces of meaningful encounter and public visibility of bus riders. All of this points us towards the building of a "non-state public sphere" against the new enclosures (Virno, 2004).

The BRU's grassroots communicational practices include agitprop theatre, civil disobedience, public poster and pamphleteering campaigns, street and on-the-bus actions, and traffic blocking theatrics. These extend into the deep structures of organizing, most significantly what the BRU calls "direct-contact organizing." This is a dialogic and self-reflective approach to organizing that aims to mobilize "one bus rider at a time". It is carried out by a trained group of multilingual organizers that comprise the group's On The Bus Crew (OTB). This strategy of talking to riders and drivers and engaging in multi-lingual pamphleteering on the bus fuses industrial union organizing tactics with those of grassroots urban movements. It draws together those traditions in innovative ways that respond to and try to make sense of the radical transformations in urban space taking place over the last couple of decades and the new claims that have emerged out of these processes. Hence, the BRU elaborates a social unionism in the context of neoliberalism that is based in the struggles around unprecedented transnational migrations, cuts to social services, privatization, strike breaking and anti-union legislation and growing economic polarization evident in large cities everywhere. Foremost in this communicational practice is a dissolving of the institutional left's distinctions between the organizer and the organized in a way that renders the unexpected space of the bus a place of immediate transformational politics.

The bus is a site of extraordinary social complexity, explains Chan, where for

example a homeless white man, a woman homecare worker here on a temporary work

visa from the Philippines, and a Latin American refugee are all present in the same space.

"We see a potential on the bus to reach a variety of communities which historically have

not been organized in Vancouver. And as a multi-racial, multi-lingual organization our

project is beyond any one specific cultural community" (Chan, Interview, Vancouver,

April 2006). Writing about the L.A. BRU/SDP, Robin Kelley argues that the group's

cultural politics demonstrate a sea-change of possibility in radical labour organizing that

mobilizes difference as a positive, movement enriching and expanding reality: "The

transit campaigns powerfully demonstrate that many of the issues facing the vast majority

of people of colour are for the most part working-class issues. We need a radical vision

of social justice – a vision that illuminates the deeper connections between welfare,

workfare, warfare and bus fare" (1996: 22).

The movement's emergence in moments of neoliberal ascendancy in both L.A.

and Vancouver creates an aperture for broad renovation in the North American

conception of union organizing. In calling itself a union, the BRU draws on the best of

the labour movement's traditions of agitation and organizing while avoiding mainstream

labour's verticalism and privileging of "productive", waged labour. Vancouver BRU

organizer Zailda Chan locates the bus as a site of struggle within the context of the

radical changes in the political landscape:

> The bus is a very accessible public space and it is in the bus where we
> have contact with a cross-section of many communities and generations.
> Why are we not doing what people did in the 1970s, going into the
> factories to organize? Because the place of the working class has changed
> and in the case of Vancouver, the working class is very clearly within the
> bus, and many sections of the working class are extremely poor. (Ibid.)

The BRU's ability to draw on the city's grassroots multiculturalism, and the anti-racism at the core of its organizing, draws us closer to the radical roots of trade unionism, while subverting the institutional union movement's historic productivist and industrial image and the more conciliatory aspects of its relationship with national capitalism.

Through this process of renovation we can discern a re-appropriation of the neoliberal conception of security, expressed in terms of individual safety and new forms of criminalization for suspect populations. The BRU's practices articulate a social conception that first galvanized the industrial union movement as a movement for security rooted in the expansion of social solidarity. But in the contemporary context, we can look at the bus is a social space that holds greater possibility for a democratic social conception of security because unlike the industrial workplace it is a non-exclusive space. In other words, membership in the public space of the bus is not dependent upon a person's job or wage. It is an act of self-definition. This transformative practice of anti-fear as a practice rooted in a conception of the bus as public space helps us to consider in practical terms what Paolo Virno's (2004) "non-state public sphere" could look like.

Insurgent Communication Against Fear: Public Art as Counterspace in L.A.

The L.A. BRU/SDP's "Make History Public Art Project" evokes this renaissance in oppositional culture and helps us to think about the relationship between social movements and communication practices of anti-fear in neoliberalism. Drawing inspiration from Henri Lefebvre's (1991) "counter project", "Make History Public" aims to construct "counterspace" to open spaces of social encounter (Hurst Mann, 2003). Lefebvre asserted the performativity in the production of everyday urban space, where the desire to create counter space is grounded in the understanding that social space is

infused with domination. From this perspective, the bus can be seen not only as a mode of proletarian movement but also as a social aperture in the city to be appropriated and overturned. Through this effort, Hurst Mann explains, the BRU/SDP "seeks to systematically appropriate openings in the city as our stage for the creation of counterspace through material cultural engagements of a tactical, temporal, and gestural kind." (2003: 221). As re-appropriation of the cultural field, this strategy is integral to situating public transit as site for insurgent communication and the elaboration of a new social unionism.

Much of the BRU's cultural politics focuses on challenging the complicated cultural politics of race, class and gender on the bus and in L.A. BRU/SDP theatre troupes perform "actos" en route[34]. "In this ethnically diverse but highly segregated region, the teatro [theatre] has developed on-the-bus pieces that use humour, multiple languages, and the communicative power of performance to make the shared public space of the buses into a more explicitly occupied counterspace" (Hurst Mann, and Dutton, 2003: 223). The *actos* harness the resistant cultural forms of popular urban culture in Latin America – especially of Mexico – and hence in many ways challenge the US cultural industry definition of popular culture. For instance, "Superpasajera" (Super-passenger) is one of the BRU/SDP's on-the-bus masked heroes. Evoking Mexican

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[34] The LA BRU's use of Spanish language ("Actos" means "acts" or "performances" and "teatro" is "theatre") in their everyday organizing and communication is one concrete demonstration of the movement's organic connection with the actually existing diversity in L.A. and in particular the strong participation of Latina/o bus riders in the movement and in its cultural politics (Hurst Mann, 2003).

popular characters like Superbarrio,[35] the *actos* simultaneously draw on and create a contemporary transnational popular culture.

This cultural action meshes with the multi-racial, multi-lingual and gendered composition of L.A.'s bus system. In the process, it overturns the figure of the migrant Other, making her the active figure of "place-making." Another of the BRU's performative characters, "Don Emiliano Embustero," again draws on Mexican popular culture by re-inventing Mexico's consummate revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata as an L.A. bus rider. The naming of the figure connects with L.A.'s rich diasporic culture on another much deeper level by convoking the linguistic playfulness that is so central to Mexican urban popular culture. One play, *As the Bus Rolls/ La Mentira del MTA[the lie of the MTA]*, was rendered in the spirit of the *telenovela* – the distinctly Latin American version of the soap-opera genre. The play has been performed at bus stops and on buses by different casts, all giving a different angle to the play by their improvisation and experience. The actors are scattered throughout the bus, requiring them to speak across its expanse. Other riders and the driver thus end up being part of the performance (Ibid.).

A pivotal moment in the BRU/SDP's elaboration of an insurgent communication practice occurred in 1998 when the MTA failed to meet the deadline of the Consent Decree regarding overcrowding. The BRU/SDP organized a fare strike under the slogan, "No Somos Sardinas [We're Not Sardines]: We Won't Stand for It". The serious issue of overcrowding poses an evocative critique of the security discourse of transit authorities,

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[35] Superbarrio (Super-neighbourhood) is a masked superhero figure and former real life wrestler whose political activity in fighting for the rights of the urban poor, especially the homeless displaced from the 1982 earthquake, has made him an iconic figure on the Mexican political scene. In the late 1990s he became active in formal politics and elected to the Mexican congress where he would debate with legislators in his shiny yellow, red and blue superhero outfit.

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whose narrow behaviouralist conceptions of personal security ignore the dangers and indignities that accompany overcrowding[36]. In this citywide civil disobedience campaign "the politics of culture became primary," observes Hurst Mann (2003: 221).

On the day of the strike, the city awoke to a carpet of brightly coloured, witty posters depicting a can of tightly packed sardines. The action entailed a "no seat no fare" position whereby riders were encouraged to pay only if there was a seat available for them. As the strike moved into effect, BRU/SDP organizers reportedly "claimed the space of the buses easily when they spoke: 'if you don't get a seat, you don't pay; don't pay for racism'" (Ibid.). The BRU printed mock bus passes stating "No Seat, No Fare/No Asiento, No Pago" for passengers to use when refusing to pay. The passes marked affiliation with the strike and oriented riders' actions within a movement, if only for a moment. This use of a mock pass, as we will see in the following discussion of the Vancouver fare strike, is a simple and highly effective way of animating collective action and creating solidarity that helps to turn the fear of transgression into a politicized act of civil disobedience.

Visibility and Encounter with the Vancouver BRU

The Vancouver BRU has also employed the fare strike tactic in a number of effective campaigns for "transit justice". Here I will discuss in greater depth how the Vancouver BRU's communicational politics of visibility and encounter represent concrete practices of anti-fear. The group's two fare strikes and a campaign to reinstate the late night bus service illustrate how the BRU's practices open spaces for the

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[36] Hurst Mann points out that as an architect she is constantly shocked by the overcrowding permitted on a moving space that would never be permitted in a stationary space, especially one with a different class inscription (Dutton and L. H. Mann, 2003).

articulation of popular agency and transgression and create an alternative, democratic conception of public security.

Crucially, these examples also show how these two kinds of anti-fear campaigns re-cast the bus as a social space of speaking and listening. On the one hand, the late night bus campaign challenges the state's logic of 'safety' that separates people from their social experience (i.e. shift work, low pay, precarity and racism, sexism, homophobia). Through this initiative we see how the BRU does not disregard people's feelings of insecurity, but rather challenges their appropriation by the state and the various security industries. On the other hand, the fare strike is a kind of social strike that asserts the political agency of bus riders. This collective action encourages people to break with the fear of transgression – a fear that is as much a part of the organization of the public transit system as it is of the workplace – through building social spaces that break from the atomizing, alienating experience of contemporary urban life.

End the Curfew!

In March 2004, the BRU won a major victory for Vancouver riders when its efforts galvanized public pressure to force the transit authority to restore the city's late night, "Night Owl" bus service. Following the transit authority's (Translink) $500 million in cuts to the night service, the BRU launched its "End the Curfew!" campaign. The group argued that the cuts to late night transit services constituted a *de facto* curfew on the transit dependent. Given that many transit-dependent people work at night, the cuts meant that those reliant on the late-night system would be either be trapped at their workplace or would be forced to leave their jobs. Furthermore, the cuts, the BRU argued, amounted to a sweeping social exclusion that denied those with no other mobility option

their "right to the city" (Lefebvre, 1991). All of this would greatly augment the transit dependent's sense of personal, physical and financial insecurity. The justification for the dramatic cuts was based on research conducted by a private firm contracted by Translink to determine the use of the nighttime bus service[37]. The study concluded, without any apparent input from bus riders, that a majority of late night transit users were young males with other transit options and hence the service could be drastically reduced. These findings contradicted those of the BRU, which found a highly complex mix of transit dependent late night bus riders, for many of whom the cuts proved catastrophic (BRU, 2003).

From May to August 2003 the BRU embarked on an exhaustive counter-research project to find out the impact of the Night Owl service cuts. A team of multi-lingual organizers rode the buses gathering testimonials. This research uncovered a story of shift workers forced to walk, sometimes for hours, or ride bicycles long distances before and after starting work. It chronicled stories of people forced to sleep at their workplace until the buses began running again, or having to turn down shifts and suffer economic hardship because of the loss of paid time. Some bus riders testified that they were spending half of each shift's wages in taking a taxi home. One woman reported that she was sleeping under a bridge after her shift ended at a downtown bar. Sleep deprivation, physical hardship, and excessive stress were other major emotional hardships attributed to the cuts by those riders interviewed. Social isolation was another effect the BRU discovered, especially for people living in the suburbs where services shut down by 6 pm on a number of routes. Women in particular reported a "loss of independence" and an

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[37] Statistics Canada does not keep statistics on transit use and so studies are contracted out to private companies by individual transit authorities.

increase in "fear and anxiety" overall. Women especially reported that the "daily burden" of surviving was exacerbated by the cuts (BRU, 2003).[38] In these findings, we can see how the BRU's research methodolgy subverts the corrosive fear discourse of the transit authority and the police department, which conflates danger with the existence of transit itself and hence provides further justification for service cuts.

The BRU used this research to mobilize riders and to agitate on the streets, at Translink meetings and through the media for the restoration of the late night bus service. They blocked busy intersections where members performed plays that were scripted from the research itself. Wearing the BRU's distinctive orange t-shirts, the diverse bus riding constituency packed Translink meetings and gave public testimonies. The city was periodically carpeted in posters that called the authorities for task for imposing a curfew on the public. All of this proved highly effective and by 2004 the late night service was fully restored. Amidst the ongoing neoliberal program of privatization, the BRU continues to agitate for the further expansion of this service as this is regarded as a key issue for many bus riders. This significant victory concretely highlights the centrality of studying the connections between communication and practices of anti-fear from the perspective of the protagonists of culture.

Fare Strike as Social Strike against Fear

Vancouver's first Fare Strike was launched by the BRU on January 14, 2005 to protest Translink's New Year's resolution to raise the cost of bus fares for the third time

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[38] According to the BRU's findings, anxiety amongst transit dependent women spiked in the fall of 2003 when the Vancouver Police Department issued a warning that women should stay off the streets at night because there was a serial rapist operating in Vancouver.

in four years as a way to raise the millions needed for the region's new rail projects.[39] The civil disobedience strategy was adopted after the BRU's efforts to push open top-down spaces of political representation – through a postcard campaign, protests, street theatre, testimonials at Translink meetings, on the bus organizing – were ignored. This action to demonstrate the power of bus riders was, the organizers argued, necessary to raise visibility and open a space for the kinds of popular cooperation and new social combinations required for any change to take place. For the BRU, civil disobedience is part of a long-term strategy to build a culture of resistance in the local arena, a culture that is inspired by a combination of Third World liberation struggles and the rich traditions of grassroots labour, anti-racist feminist organizing and the civil rights movement (Chan, Interview, Vancouver, April 2006). The drama of the fare strike represents an opportunity to educate people on the bus to look at public transit as a legitimate political issue and to encourage bus riders to see themselves as political constituents. As a communicational event, the fare strike aims to engage bus riders through questions and dialogue that situate the subjects of public transit as its cultural protagonists.

According to the BRU, over 5,000 people participated in this strike. As with the L.A. fare strike, participation entails simply refusing to pay the fare and using instead the BRU issued mock "bus pass." The immediate aims of the strike were multiple, including: to make visible the presence of public transit dependent people as political subjects; to move transit users into collective action and, in so doing, breaking from the

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[39] Greater Vancouver public transit fares have increased by 40 percent in the last five years. The increase that sparked the first fare strike will generate $41 million over four years according to Translink's projections. Fifty percent of the bus system is funded through fares and the rest through parking fees, a levy on hydro, gas taxes and advertising. The $700-per-month car allowance that TransLink directors began to receive as of November 2005 has been widely criticized by bus riders.

fear of challenging the rules; and to pressure Translink to return fares to the pre-increase rates.[40] The fare strike strategy mobilized aspects of the Civil Rights Movement's community organizing approach exemplified in the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the L.A. rider's strike. This involved forging an often-unrecognized space of solidarity among riders and, along the way, demonstrating the economic strength of transit users by economically impacting the corporate bodies that rely on those fares. It is, in this sense, analogous to the industrial trade union strike: organizing and mobilizing a mass refusal and forcefully demonstrating the economic power of the users as the makers of the public transit system. The fare strike is, therefore, about making a space where people can move into action through encouraging bus riders to see themselves as social actors that can take part in transforming the world immediately around them (Ibid). In practice, the strike encourages a structural critique of neoliberal capitalism by identifying the fare increase as symptomatic of the upward transfer of wealth that is the structural character of neoliberalism, domestically and globally.

It is precisely at this point that the conventional vanguardist distinction between those 'inside' and those 'outside' the movement dissolves. As a participant in the strike, rarely have I experienced such an event that overturned dominant conceptions of political constituency and agency. Here we can draw an historical comparison and see that the BRU's community-based unionism is reminiscent of the International Workers of the

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[40] BRU organizers say that the driver's union – the Canadian Autoworkers (CAW) – generally supported the strike. While it would have been deemed an illegal job action if the CAW supported the fare strike officially, union leaders sent a memo urging members to heed an important negotiated victory with TransLink: that they are only required to quote the fare, not enforce it. Due to an increasingly restrictive legislative environment designed to curtail job action of unionized public sector workers, the drivers were not able to actively show much more support than that, although when I was at one of the information picket sites, a union organizer was there with us and spoke to the drivers about what was happening and why the union was supporting it politically.

World (IWW or Wobblies) social unionism, which also emerged at a moment of

profound crisis for proletarian movements[41]. Like the IWW before it, the BRU

temporarily appropriates public spaces and uses popular, multi-lingual modes of

communication such as graphics and street theatre to mobilize multi-cited workers

outside of their specific workplaces. This is in stark contrast to the cold-war era labour

centrals that are today experiencing a profound crisis of representation. From a feminist

perspective, this is also where the historical division between productive and reproductive

labour (which characterized labour organizing in the Fordist period of national

capitalism, party politics, social pacts and family wages) also begins to disintegrate. The

BRU's social strike, therefore, points to an important shift in the post-Cold War role that

social movements play in the circulation of social hope amidst growing social fears when

the established institutions of the welfare state find themselves increasingly incapable of

doing so.

Nine months after the first strike, in the lead up to the 2005 municipal elections,

the BRU launched a second fare strike. To experiment with form and to build

momentum through a concentrated period of on-the-bus organizing, media presence, and

ongoing community dialogue, the strike took place over five days in November. From

early morning rush hour until past the evening rush, organizers boarded the buses and

leafleted at major nexus bus stops. The strike targeted those inner-city routes that move

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[41] The Industrial Workers of the World is an internationalist autonomous labour movement that was born amidst North America's profound labour upheavals at the turn of the 20th century. The IWW pioneered a radical labour movement dedicated to organizing the unorganized across industrial sectors, national, racialized and gendered divides. The Wobblies were especially groundbreaking in their organizational approach, which was uniquely horizontal and democratic, and their communicational style which emphasized street theatrics to communicate across linguistic barriers. The IWW was a highly mobile movement that was sharply criticized by the institutional left for its lack of stable, centralized structures. The wobblies' example has many affinities with the heterodox Marxist tradition that inspires autonomism among them are the organizational orientation, its grassroots cosmopolitanism and its vision of One Big Union that connected workers across national borders.

the largest concentration of transit-dependent riders, those who have experienced the greatest burden (overcrowded buses, increased cost of riding them) from lagging services and increased costs. The strategy was to target Translink at the fare box to leverage restitution of the 2004 transit fare, a demand based on the expressed desire of riders, which the BRU had learned about through direct contact organizing and testimonial research on the bus. I participated in the strike as an on-the-bus organizer.

Prior to the strike, the BRU held a series of open community dialogues. Here, the connections between privatization and the experience of social insecurity were examined through Frierian-inspired popular education techniques that endeavour to draw out people's experiential knowledge. Here, the BRU argued that the fare increase constituted a service cut, since according to their research the fare increase was directly pushing people off the bus. Drawing the connections between public transit, public space and democracy, organizers discussed the problems that arise when the decision-makers treat "the city as a commodity". They explained the connections, dredged through investigative research, between the ruling provincial government, car dealers, the oil and gas industry and private transit developers. They described how these forces and actors play out in the determination of public infrastructure policies and resource allocation. The organizers situated the recent privatization of bus shelters in Vancouver as indicative of the incremental enclosure of public space which was also feeding the authorities' re-casting of the public transportation system as a space of fear and insecurity. One of the most animated and excited parts of the workshop involved envisioning a free transit system. This activity opened a sense of untapped possibility and the participants agreed

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that this would actually be the most effective way to dramatically reduce conflict and fear on the bus system.

The fare strike of 2005 was my first experience with on-the-bus organizing. At the crowded and tumultuous intersection of Main Street and Terminal Avenue, I joined several BRU activists for the last shift of the strike. The area, an industrial scale transport hub with a constant flow of car traffic, is also the main nexus for a number of long inner city bus routes. It is a particularly bleak area of the city, especially as bus after bus rolls by filled to capacity, routinely leaving passengers behind. The bus we boarded was predictably over-crowded, packed with work-weary passengers trying to get home. The organizer designated to be the liaison with drivers boarded first to explain the strike and express the BRU's solidarity with the bus drivers' own struggles to halt the trend towards privatization and to address the system's terrible overcrowding, and the BRU's support of their general demands for better working conditions. On this dark and rainy winter evening on a relentlessly crowded route, the bus driver was in a foul mood. But after an outburst of angry frustration, he permitted the four of us to board provided we "didn't harass any passengers."

As the bus inched into rush hour traffic towards the bursting bus stops ahead, the BRU liaison sparked a dialogue with the driver about the difference between political organizing and what he understood as 'harassment of passengers'. Once people started streaming onto the bus, the organizer held her hand over the fare box and informed them that we were on a fare strike to protest the high fares and deteriorating service. Passengers responded with a mix of bewilderment, delight, and occasional apprehension, particularly after the bus driver began screaming that we could not do this. The organizer

deftly discussed the politics of the strike with both the oncoming passengers and the understandably testy driver. Another organizer started a rap at the front of the bus. "The transit authority is a racist, sexist, and inept institution run by people who never have to take the bus and who are responsible for deteriorating air quality and increased hardship for bus riders!", she called out excitedly. Meanwhile, the rest of us were staggering around the bus distributing leaflets in Punjabi, Spanish, Chinese, and English, and discussing the state of public transit with the passengers.

People on the bus were intrigued, not the least because of the bus driver's drastic mood swings, rapidly shifting from conciliatory to infuriated, and this curious group of women wearing bright orange shirts respectfully testing what is often a fraught relationship between uniformed drivers and passengers. Soon the driver began protesting vociferously at the organizer's charge that the transit system is a racist institution – which she had continued to make by pointing to the routine cutting of services such as the late night service and in the relentless fare hikes, both of which disproportionately impact riders of colour concentrated in low-wage shift work. Hearing the driver's angry reaction to the organizer's statements, other riders immediately surged into the debate. "Yes it is racist!" a grocery-laden woman passenger yelled back, "it is racist, sexist, anti-working people, anti-student and young people, they just do what they want!" Suddenly, an elderly man—who moments before had been complaining about the strike action holding up passengers who "have dinner waiting at home" finished the woman's sentence by proclaiming "and anti-senior citizen!" This moment suggests how suddenly the bus-riding subject became visible in a whole new way, asserting a political presence that came directly from the riders themselves. At this point something shifted on the bus and

it filled with effervescent, fiery discussion. The "factory on wheels" had transformed into a moving debate and a space of encounter was opened. The driver finally ordered us off the bus several stops later, but passengers clapped and cheered in support as we flew off the bus to be met by a transit security officer.

Throughout that strike I saw many instances where the politically ignored and often demonized urban subject became active oppositional constituent. Visible on the faces of many riders as they entered the bus was the pleasure in collective defiance of a system whose routine and invisible humiliations are rarely recognized. The collective solidarity of refusal also provided a break in the mundane frustrations of commuting on a harassed public transportation system. More than in many other spaces of social organizing, it was on that bus that I experienced the meshing of political activist and the urban subject. Indeed, the whole basis of the BRU's organizing is rooted in its identification as part of the transit dependent public. This is, of course, integral to their strength and credibility as a movement; it is also what distinguishes social unionism from the hierarchical logic of representational politics, which separates leadership and subjects on the one hand and the "organized" and the "unorganized" on the other. This is the logic of the enclosed industrial factory or the representational politics of the party as a separate inside to the outside of elsewhere, whereas the BRU operates on the logic of the city as a constituent everywhere.

Hence, the struggles around public transit represented in transnational movements like the BRU point to some ways in which we can re-assess the long-held strategy of the general strike and look at it in terms of generalizing the strike in the neoliberal factory without walls or wages. This tactical shift suggests a perception of a more general shift

towards the sphere of social reproduction, of the service economy and the migrant workforce that is often characterized by the generality of its ties rather than the specificity of work sites.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

In post-Cold War North America, the emergence of the Bus Riders' Union rendered public transit as a site of innovative autonomous cultural politics and grassroots social justice organizing amidst the new enclosures. In the North American urban context, the bus is one of a dwindling number of highly diverse public spaces. The cultural significance of the bus in the neoliberal city is also highlighted by the fact that it is a principle target of the post-Cold War fear discourses of both Zero Tolerance doctrines and the "War on Terror". But despite all of this, the bus has largely been ignored in communication scholarship. In this chapter, I have argued that it is in the socio-cultural space of the city bus where we can see fear and the new enclosures intersect in crucial ways. I drew on the examples of the Vancouver and L.A. BRUs to explore some of the ways in which the humble bus is among the most relevant and contested of public spaces in the neoliberal city. Through this approach I have sought to populate communication studies by conceptualizing the relationship between social movements and communication in a way that challenges the dominance of both media-centrism and totalizing conceptions of socio-cultural fear.

I argued that the BRU's communicational activities of visibility and encounter animate our understanding of the bus as a social space. I grounded my discussion of the bus as a site of anti-fear within the context of the US Civil Rights movement. Here, we see how the bus emerged as a potent social space and how practices of anti-fear are also

practices of social agency. From here I sought to demonstrate the diverse ways that the BRU carries on and extends these practices of anti-fear within the context of the new enclosures. The BRU is conceptualized as a contemporary anti-enclosure movement to the extent that the movement opens the space of the bus for social movement and organizes to halt the privatization and militarization of public transit. Here, I argued, we can see how the public transit system convokes many of the profound changes brought about by neoliberalism post-Fordist restructuring.

Prior to the "War on Terror", the bus was an object of fear narratives in political and police discourses and in commercial media culture. But in the post-9/11 context, public transit has taken on an especially fearful status. In New York City, the Metropolitan Transit Authority's "See Something, Say Something" poster campaigns urge passengers to be vigilant and report any strange or unusual behaviour. In cities across North America ever more surveillance cameras are being installed around public transportation networks under the auspices of protecting the public from an amalgam of terrorist attacks, crime and unruly behaviour. It is in this context that we turn to the next case study, which examines the practices of anti-fear of the Surveillance Camera Players, a political performance group that emerged in the late 1990s to challenge the rise of surveillance culture in public places.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE STREET AS A STAGE FOR LAUGHING AT FEAR: RE-APPROPRIATING THE SPECTACULAR CITY WITH THE SURVEILLANCE CAMERA PLAYERS

"Ultimately it is in the streets that power must be dissolved – for the streets, where daily life is endured, suffered and eroded, and where power is confronted and fought, must be turned into the domain where daily life is enjoyed, created, and nourished."

– London Reclaim the Streets, 1997

At the exits to the New York City subway at the World Trade Centre station, passengers are greeted by large stylized eyes painted onto the wall tiles. It is difficult to discern the meaning of these eyes. Meeting them provokes a number of questions. Are they an artist's critique of the ubiquitous and seemingly uncontested spread of surveillance cameras post-9/11, a kind of counter-commemoration of the culture of fear amidst the "War on Terror"? Or are they a sinister display of state art, urging civilians to "play police" and be on the lookout for internal enemies? Or, do the eyes mean that there are cameras everywhere, so as to warn the would-be suspect – the bomber, thief, political dissenter, or fare evader – that they are being watched? Does that warning make its audience feel safe or fearful?

What makes the eyes so ambivalent and disturbing is the extent to which they brazenly mimic the ubiquitous presence of surveillance cameras in public spaces, a phenomenon that accelerated throughout the 1990s and expanded enormously after the attacks of 9/11 and the subsequent launching of the "War on Terror". In one way, the eyes on the wall allegorize the cameras, acting as vectors of surveillance culture. In another, they provide a vivid representation of the authoritarian appropriation of public fears about security (Lechner, 1992). This simultaneous cultural production and appropriation is multiplied over and over in the myriad of so-called public safety campaigns that are designed to make suspects visible to power and make power visible to suspect populations.

Video surveillance is arguably the quintessential post-Cold War information technology of urban fear. The increasingly ubiquitous cameras communicate fear and they are themselves feared. Its stunning rise in the public spaces of "globalized" cities, especially in places where capital is concentrated (e.g. New York and London), suggests a direction of urban enclosure that deserves close attention in communication studies. The enormous expansion of all manner of state and private surveillance over the last two decades has spawned a growing scholarship and public debate (i.e. Lyon, 2001, 2003; Norris, 2003; Levin, 2002; McGrath, 2004). Nevertheless, surveillance is routinely discussed in mainstream media representations and by its proponents in the security industries, the police and even by some of its critics, within a techno-centric and totalizing binary of either monolithic control or poorly substantiated claims of public consensus. The myriad of ways in which surveillance is actively refused is often invisibilized in the dominant discourse about it. This is particularly the case with public

video surveillance, which has been given substantial critical attention as a problem of technology and control, but is infrequently considered as a problem of communication.

This chapter examines communicational practices of anti-fear that specifically contest the expansion of video surveillance as a technology of urban enclosure and social fear. It specifically focuses on the anti-fear practices of the New York City based political performance troupe, the Surveillance Camera Players (SCP). The SCP is a loose group organized around practices of affinity, participatory radical cultural politics and opposition to video surveillance in public space. For the SCP, and other critics of surveillance culture, the mushrooming of surveillance cameras around New York City in the 1990s is seen as emblematic of an increasingly authoritarian political culture that accelerated during the post-Cold War period and intensified dramatically in the wake of 9/11.

Immediately following 9/11 there was much discussion about the apparent vulnerability of cities in the context of a growing mobility of people, goods, and ideas across national borders and within all urban spaces. While the US government prepared to attack Afghanistan and developed the USA Patriot Act – the legislative framework for the domestication of the "War on Terror" – it also embarked on a deepening fortification of domestic urban spaces, especially in New York City (Graham, 2002; Marcuse, 2004). The SCP's practices animate a critical debate about the ways in which the dominant rhetoric of surveillance produces a false binary between security and freedom. In examining the SCP's interventions from a communicational perspective, we can uproot totalizing conceptions of surveillance as a technology of security and consider the ways in which it is vector of both power and contestation amidst the new enclosures.

Here, I discuss the SCP's communicational insurgency – its efforts to open spaces for social movement through creating counterspaces of visibility and meaningful encounter – as a practice of anti-fear where the street is the stage. I locate the SCP within this study's framework of contemporary anti-enclosure movements and their practices of communication, which emphasize the event, autonomy, dignity, and urban re-appropriation. In contrast to much of the communication scholarship that disproportionately focuses on computer mediated data surveillance and tends to adopt a Benthamian conception of total power and consent, I argue that the SCP's anti-fear practices demonstrate the fragility of the total power that the panopticon is designed to communicate. The novelty and importance of the SCP's communicational insurgency, I argue, is its critique of video surveillance from the perspective of the protagonists of culture and not of the technologies of power, which deliberately goes against the grain of much of the literature on surveillance[42]. I ground the discussion in the SCP's walking tours and street performances to show how the SCP's communicational insurgency is a practice of anti-fear aimed at detonating conventional distinctions between art and politics and activist and spectator.

New York City's Everyday State of Emergency: Public Surveillance and Zero Tolerance

The justification for the expansion of public surveillance in post-Cold War cities is premised on a discourse of public space as dangerous. In the context of neoliberalism, where the redistributive state's promise to provide both physical and economic security is

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[42] The protagonists of culture in this case include those actors who authorize and design the use of video surveillance, the bureaucracies that implement it, and the security and police agents that operate and enforce it, but also the people who are captured by its gaze and those who act against it. In this chapter, I focus on this latter set of actors, while recognizing that the subjectivity and actions of the former are still considerably under-theorized.

falling away, the presence of video surveillance appears as a mediating technology, regulating and monitoring everyday interaction among increasingly proximate and differentiated populations. Throughout the 1990s, video surveillance became an increasingly important technology of urban management, particularly in the large metropolitan centres of the global north. The expansive trend of deploying it to watch over an ever-expanding swath of public spaces generally radiated outwards from the most powerful centres of capital concentration like New York and London. In London, the first round of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) surveillance was installed in the early 1990s under the auspices of combating IRA terrorist attacks and crime[43]. In New York it took hold after the 1993 election of Mayor Rudolf Giuliani, whose "law and order" platform promised to alleviate New Yorkers' fear of crime (Davis, 2001). Indeed, Giuliani's New York City became a laboratory for a conservative regime of urban management that came to be known as Zero Tolerance Policing (Smith, 2001).

The practice at the core of Zero Tolerance policing is to treat the slightest expressions of public "misconduct", such as graffiti, public drinking, pan handling, loitering, jay walking and so on, as offences and subject to police regulation (Belina and Helms, 2003). Under its auspices, a drastic reorganization of public space took hold in New York and in a growing number of other cities around the country. Parks were reconstructed, adding enclosed areas for children and installing locking gates in many of

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[43] CCTV is the common term for video surveillance in the UK but it is not as typical in North America where the terms video surveillance or security cameras are normally used. While the two terms are often used interchangeably, here I use variations on the literal terminology of video surveillance for two reasons. First, because it describes what the cameras are doing and hence the political intent is not concealed in a technological language as it is in the case of CCTV. Second, the CCTV describes an earlier model of closed circuit cameras. This means that only those with physical access to the system can see what is being broadcast. This is still a dominant form but with the expansion of wireless applications in all manner of communication technology, including surveillance, the closed aspect is opened (SCP, 2006).

them to prevent access at night. The policing of public spaces – from small plazas and urban parks – was stepped up and privatized under the financing and direction of usually subsidized Business Improvement Districts. Police street patrols began to focus on keeping panhandlers and the homeless continuously on the move as part of a general bid to crack down on loitering (Mitchell, 2003). Many of the targeted activities are not offences and even fewer are crimes. But the behaviouralist strategy underwriting it aims to change the social landscape of the city through identifying and monitoring whole new categories of suspects deemed to threaten the "good community" (Belina and Helms, 2003). The expansion of public surveillance, the authorities argued, was integral to this management of public spaces.

The embrace of video surveillance as a technology of Zero Tolerance in New York is rooted in the post-Cold War introduction of a distinctly militarized model to urban policing, and in the growing influence of the neoliberal conservative movement. Geographer Neil Smith (1996, 1998) develops a particularly useful conceptualization of these changes as signifying a counter-revolution of the "revanchist city". His recuperation of the term revanchism recalls the wave of reactionary, right wing violence that swept Paris following the defeat of the Commune in 1871. The dragnet of revenge perpetrated against the city's revolutionary crowd was historic in its scope and intensity[44]. In its contemporary context, the term refers to the counter-revolution against the liberation movements of the previous three decades. The ideology of revanchism, Smith explains, "blends revenge with reaction" (1998: 1). The re-casting of Giuliani's

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[44] The effects of the repression were deep and long lasting. Felix Guattari (1995) argues that the violent repression of the Commune was one of the seminal moments in the history of fascism and its links with Stalinism, Nazism and bourgeois democracy.

New York as a cultural vanguard of the revanchist city of the 1990s, Neil Smith (1996) argues, was principally organized around a re-discovery of "the enemies within".

Zero Tolerance was given its first intellectual articulation as the "Broken Windows" theory of policing in an influential 1982 article by prominent neo-conservative criminologists James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Entitled "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighbourhood Safety", the article's main argument centres around the idea that visible signs of disorder on urban streets, such as broken windows, graffiti, broken down vehicles and so on, communicate to the would-be disorder-maker that nobody cares about the neighbourhood and that "no-one is in charge". For Wilson and Kelling, it is the small, seemingly benign signs of social disorder such as graffiti, the drifting presence of the homeless, and transit fare evasion that provide the bedrock for intensifying criminal chaos and social breakdown. If it is let be, that disorder, the authors contend, will then quickly spread to surrounding streets, transforming a seemingly minor blight into a violent and menacing urban environment. This situation is exacerbated further, they argue, by the inevitable retreat of law-abiding citizens from civic life, because they feel threatened and scared of this unruly public space.

If city streets are "cleaned up" and all signs of disorder are promptly removed as soon as they surface, Wilson and Kelling conclude, then residents will see that someone is watching the neighbourhood and nobody will try to deface it. Thus, the police's role, they urge, should be should be to engage in active order maintenance. This idea resonated strongly with politicians and police forces around North America and the UK in particular (Smith, 2001). As New York journalist Bruce Shapiro points out, the theory

supplied a way of avoiding any structural critique of either public fears or crime: "With its vivid central image and its implied rejection of economic or social explanations of crime, the broken windows hypothesis proved instantly appealing in politics" (1997: 20).

The proponents of Zero Tolerance have been hailed for their success in dramatically curbing crime, making New York City "the safest big city in America" (New York City Policy Department, 2005). This claim prompted numerous cities in the US and internationally to adopt Zero Tolerance policies (Shapiro, 1997; Smith, 2001). Conversely, Bruce Shapiro (1997) argues that the decline in crime in New York City in the 1990s is not attributable to what some refer to as the "Giuliani Doctrine" but to a complex combination of social shifts. Among these changes not mentioned by the proponents of Zero Tolerance were some of the redistributive social policies enacted by Giuliani's predecessor Mayor David Dinkins, who Giuliani campaigned against as a soft-on-crime liberal. Zero Tolerance, Shapiro argues, is really a street-level version of the trend towards mass incarceration in the US. After the policy went into effect, he reports, civilian complaints of police brutality in New York rose by 41 percent. Three quarters of the complaints filed were by Black or Latino residents against the City's overwhelmingly white police force (Shapiro, 1997). In cities around the US where Zero Tolerance Policing was implemented, the ramped up climate of impunity precipitated anti-homeless police actions, including evictions from city centres, mass arrests, and most startlingly reminiscent of the old enclosures, a case in California of the police detaining and marking homeless people with identification numbers for ongoing monitoring (Mitchell, 2003). It is in this context that surveillance camera systems expanded dramatically by cities

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endeavouring to render ever more elaborate categories of suspects visible to power and power visible to everyone.

Advocates of Zero Tolerance fail to mention the problem of police abuses, but they do roundly criticize the efforts of civil libertarians to restrict police power. These "cultural radicals", they complain, are seen as having spurred not only an amplification of public deviance, but also a corrosive acceptability of it (Kelling and Coles, 1996). In a book devoted to elaborating the theory of Broken Windows, Kelling and conservative criminologist Catherine Coles write: "Disorder proliferated with the growth of an ethos of individualism and increasing legislative and judicial support for protecting the fundamental rights of individuals at the expense of community interest" (1996: 7). Repeatedly, the authors lay the blame for community breakdown on the libertarianism of the 1960s and 1970s: "the expression of virtually all forms of non-violent deviance came to be considered synonymous with the expression of individual, particularly First Amendment or speech-related, rights" (1996: 40). The model of criminal justice that emerged out of the 1960s civil rights movements and its "libertarian ideology" has failed, they argue, because "it does not recognize the links between disorder, fear, serious crime and urban decay" (1996: 6).

Public Transparency and the "War on Terror"

Against this backdrop we can see that well before 9/11, New York's public spaces were already undergoing a significant fortifying transformation in the name of security. The 9/11 attacks, however, supplied an argument for the urgent necessity of total transparency and pre-emption in a moment of profound social panic. The attacks

exacerbated fears of public spaces and provided an aperture to further expand the growing presence in the city of surveillance cameras, which throughout the 1990s had accompanied the corresponding contraction of public space. According to the New York Civil Liberties Union, there were 2, 397 cameras in public spaces in all of Manhattan 1998; by 2006, there were at least that many in the neighbourhood of Greenwich Village/SoHo alone (NYCLU, 2006). The SCP has pointed out that among the flaws in the NYCLU's enumeration method is that the organization's exclusive focus on cameras operated by the police and other state agencies and do not count the much more numerous private cameras that also monitor public spaces (SCP, 2006b). In 2001, the SCP had already estimated that if the plentiful private, obscured, very small and elevated cameras were included, the count would be closer to 10,000 in Manhattan alone (SCP, 2001).

Whichever way they are counted, the numbers continue to climb as law enforcement agencies pursue the expansion of video camera presence as an integral part of the "War on Terror" (ibid.). Simultaneously, surveillance cameras are most enthusiastically being deployed by universities, shops, and other private businesses whose operations mesh with public space. Meanwhile, according to the SCP's findings (2006), the public is generally not aware of this continual proliferation of cameras, nor is the extent of their field of vision understood. This blurring the distinctions between private and public space is effectively privatizing public space by opening it for monitoring and policing by private actors. This development that, among its many problems, renders increasingly impossible the democratic right to anonymity.

In this context, the spread of public surveillance cameras and the personnel behind them makes people increasingly visible to power, and the activities of the powerful are becoming progressively more concealed in the name of national security[45]. This development helps us to think more concretely about how the proliferation of visual surveillance reflects the extent to which the macropolitics of security operate through the micropolitics of everyday fear. In an essay entitled "Resolving to Resist", Elaine Scarry draws a vital connection between visibility and power amidst the "War on Terror" that is highly resonant for our discussion here:

> The objective of the Patriot Act becomes even clearer if it is understood concretely as making the population *visible* and the Justice Department *invisible*. The Act inverts the constitutional requirement that people's lives be private and the work of government officials be public; it instead crafts a set of conditions that make our inner lives transparent and the working of the government opaque. (2004: 16)

It is the refusal of transparency in exchange for spurious promises of security – or "freedom from fear" in the lexicon of the "War on Terror" – that is provoking new oppositional communication practices.

"See Something, Say Something": Contesting Surveillance in the City of Fear

One of the most salient surveillance rhetorics, in both popular and academic debates, is that the cameras enjoy widespread public support. The public, the argument goes, will gladly relinquish privacy in exchange for security if the degree of danger is

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[45] The personnel behind the cameras includes either the agents monitoring the cameras' gaze but also the personnel that authorizes their deployment, design their location, and install the cameras. In many cases, the cameras do not work at all, they are intended to act as deterrents through a mere decoy function. It is important to remember that in this chapter I use the word 'camera' and 'camera system' not in a technologically reifed sense, but rather as a synecdoche for this ensemble of human beings and apparatus involved in the work of surveillance

deemed sufficient (McGrath, 2004; Norris, 2003). The security rhetoric surrounding surveillance camera technology revolves around claims about its efficacy as a crime fighting, behaviour modifying, and terrorist-stopping tool and the assertion that only "bad" people can have reasons to oppose it. In New York City, where the SCP was founded, the use of surveillance cameras is overwhelmingly concentrated in areas distinguished by the presence of state agencies, high property values, and high-income residents (SCP, 2006). But wherever they are found, the deployment of cameras has been widely contested, and cameras have even become targets of sabotage in all kinds of contexts (ibid.). Since 2002, the SCP has been collecting documentation on anti-surveillance activity around the world. The list, culled from international news sources, is impressive (SCP, 2006b). High school students, office, factory and construction workers, bus drivers, neighbourhood residents, metro passengers, automobile drivers, and pedestrians are the most prominent among the long list of ordinary people contesting the imposition of this unaccountable scrutiny in their lives.

The fact that the use of surveillance cameras is primarily geared towards detection of property crime raises doubts about what its proponents claim is the camera's fear-averting capacity as a technology of preemptive security. Indeed, the value of the cameras has been widely called into question by a number of critics who argue that while there is some evidence of its effectiveness for detection of suspects in property crime *after the fact*, surveillance cameras are decidedly ineffective at deterring crime and or violence (*BBC online*, August, 2002; SCP, 2006).[46] Furthermore, studies in the UK have shown that the cameras simply displace crime to other areas whereas street lighting is

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[46] These doubts about the benefits of CCTV are reflected in the fact that several cities, such as Melbourne, have dropped their video surveillance networks citing their high-costs and relative ineffectiveness.

proven to be more effective for public safety (Privacy International, 2004). The irrelevance of the cameras in the face of the terrorist attacks in New York City in 2001 and in London in 2005 brutally reinforced these findings. The fact that these two cities are carpeted in surveillance cameras was immaterial in the face of these attacks. On 9/11, the scores of cameras that surrounded the World Trade Centre in New York City were incinerated along with everything else. The long-time use of approximately 500,000 cameras in London, the most heavily surveilled city in the world, saved no-one from the suicide bombers that targeted its public transit in 2005. Nonetheless, their presence deployment continues to be ramped up in the name of anti-terrorism and crime fighting.

A brief look at the promotion of surveillance cameras as a technology of public safety effectively illustrates its critics' arguments that it represents an authoritarian turn towards capillary surveillance culture extending beyond their seemingly inanimate presence. Through publicity campaigns that urge civilian surveillance, the fear-logic of the camera extends into and meshes with the urban social fabric. The office of the Mayor of London sponsored one CCTV promotion campaign that took place in the months leading up to the public transit bombings of July 2005. Posters spread around the city endeavoured to represent the notion that security cameras are analogous to security. "Secure Beneath the Watchful Eyes", declares the campaign poster, whose aesthetics mimic 1950s cinema advertisements. It features an image of a Double Decker bus travelling across a London bridge amidst a number of floating Horous eyes, whose pupils are replaced by the London transit authority's logo. The remainder of the poster's text soothes, "CCTV and Metropolitan police on Buses are just two ways we're making your journey more secure." In the spring of 2006, London's Metropolitan Police launched

another poster campaign urging civilians to be on the lookout: "Terrorists won't succeed if someone reports suspicious activity – and you are that someone".

A similar effort has been taking place in New York City. Here, a number of public security campaigns also suggest an expansion of the technological presence of video surveillance into the broader socio-cultural field. For example, in 2002 New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) launched its still ongoing public education campaign, appropriating a slogan of the Department of Homeland Security: "If You See Something, Say Something". As in London, the campaign focuses on public transit and urges civilian vigilance in watching out for and reporting "suspicious packages and activity". This campaign has a more capillary effect than its London counterpart however, as it includes not only posters but also radio advertisements and widely distributed pamphlets. Since it was launched, at least 30 organizations and transit authorities have adopted the slogan itself.[47]

At the same time, a number of innovative counter-initiatives have arisen to subvert the normalization of surveillance culture suggested by the ubiquitous presence of the posters, the slogans and the cameras, with their unseen monitoring personnel. An exhibition, workshop series and publishing project entitled "See Something Say Something" that took place in Sydney, Australia in the Winter of 2007 appropriated the slogan as part of the collaborative critique of global security culture and of this "government sponsored vision of the world". The project drew on Jacques Ranciere's

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[47] They include the Alexandria Transit Company in Virginia; the Australian states of New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia; Bay Area Rapid Transit; the Chicago Transit Authority; the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority; Chicago and TriMet in Portland, Oregon. The *Village Voice* ranked this slogan as "Best ridiculous use of MTA marketing dollars" in its "Best of New York 2004" issue.

concept of "dissensus" – those extraordinary moments of political opening where new social actors force themselves onto the political landscape and in the process create moments of genuine democracy – to explore the interplay between dissident art and politics. This is reflected in the exhibit's polyvocal strategies and multi-platform approach. The exhibit's appropriation of the title of a state campaign to encourage the public to engage in mutual surveillance directly confronts the intimacy between capillary surveillance and official practices of political fear. The exhibit's literature challenges the discourse of "public safety" behind the official campaign by invoking the vital role of dissent against the conformist logic of public surveillance and the "War on Terror" more generally: "In the state of exception produced by the war on terror we are asked to accept a consensual vision of fear, scapegoating and state sponsored violence. Yet many are moved to dissent from this" (de Souza and Begg, 2007). This invocation of oppositional voices and cultural practices is not simply rhetorical posture. It is indicative of new forms of political confrontation that problematize the pretense of broad public consensus surrounding the security rhetoric of public surveillance.

In New York City there have been at least two counter campaigns against the "See Something, Say Something" initiative that explicitly grapple with the socio-cultural landscape of fear. Both more or less replicate the public communication strategy of the MTA's posters and flyers and similarly target their distribution around the public transit system. One flyer and poster series entitled "If you Fear Something, You'll See Something" appropriates the MTA aesthetic and its logo, signing the posters MTA/Mobilize Toward Awareness. This hijacking of the slogan is accompanied by a longer explanatory text about the dangerous self-reproducing effect of fear. The text goes

on to argue that the posters contribute to a stealth cultural environment drenched in insecurity: "The news and the MTA are drilling fear into your head nonstop and this could activate prejudices you didn't even know you had. So be vigilant – of yourself." This call to turn the surveillance logic of the official campaign into a reflection upon the socially corrosive effect of one's own fear is an intriguing proposition. In another way, it shows that the problem with the authoritarian appropriation of fear is that it separates us not only from those around us but also from ourselves.

In a separate initiative, some activists affiliated with Artists Against the War in New York started distributing mock posters that also played with the text of the original MTA material, to be used as a kind of mobile placard. The words "If you see Something" sit at the top of the poster. This is followed by five separate observations: "A President of the United States Authorizes Illegal Wiretaps/A Secretary of State Lies about Torture and Illegal Detentions/A Vice President Schemes to Wage War and then Secretly Profits/A Secretary of Defense Orders the Use of Chemical Weapons on the People of Iraq/An Attorney General Abandons the Rule of Law to Defend Torture/Spying and the Abuse of power by a President of the United States." Across its bottom the poster urges, "Say Something". This simple hijacking strategy effectively inverts the target of the surveillance. It urges a fearful public to turn away from the amorphous and confusing yet racially coded "suspect" to look hard at and denounce a number of clearly identified perpetrators. Its creators distributed these posters around the New York transit system.

Soon after the MTA's official campaign was launched, New York artists Saul Melman and Ani Weinstein produced another intervention called "If you See Something, Say Something" that they placed inside the Union Square metro station in 2002. The

installation consists of a cardboard box spray-painted black. A white stencil text on the front declares "Fear Art". Turned on its side, the box's opening makes it look like an animal trap. In 2005 the box was part of a group show that grappled with impact of the post-9/11 cultural climate of fear, eerily entitled "A Knock at the Door". The SCP was among the groups participating in the show[48].

Populating the Lens of Power

These examples of surveillance culture and counterculture are important here because they point to a central tension around the presence and subsequent extension of the cultural logic of visual surveillance beyond the seemingly inanimate camera and into the wider social space of the city. But despite the enormous growth of surveillance camera use and the many documented instances of its refusal in public places, civil liberties and privacy advocates do not generally prioritize video surveillance in public places. While the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) does register opposition to the expansion and abuse of video monitoring, it still treats public surveillance as among the less worrisome trends within the general growth in all kinds of surveillance (SCP, 2003). On a number of occasions ACLU spokespeople have reiterated the claim of New York City police commissioner Howard Safir that "the public" does not expect privacy when they are out in public (ibid). Similarly, the high profile international privacy rights organization, Privacy International, ranks communication surveillance via the Internet and the telephone and workplace surveillance as highest priority and video surveillance of public spaces as substantially less significant than computer databases containing personal information, workplace surveillance and on-line commerce (Ibid.).

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[48] Dressed as security guards, Melman and Weinstein performed "art security" at the show.

A similar hierarchy is found in critical scholarship. Academics and civil libertarians writing on surveillance often worry more about computer monitoring, surveillance networks and other forms of "dataveillence" than they do about the rise of video surveillance in public spaces (Lyon, 2001; Romero, 2003; Whitaker, 2003). The most prominent critiques from both academic and privacy groups are principally preoccupied with *regulating* video surveillance of the public by state and private actors. This stance arguably reproduces the dominant inevitablist appraisal of technological developments; especially those which make claims to enhance public safety, which has muted critical analyses of public video surveillance in particular.

There are no doubt many reasons why civil liberties and privacy advocates adopt this hierarchy of importance and accommodating position of public surveillance. From one angle we can argue that it appears to be rooted, at least in part, in the dominant approach to surveillance studies that starts from the perspective of technology. This techno-centric tendency often creates an impression of inevitability and universality around surveillance technologies. At the same time, the surveillance-as-technology analytic approach tends to favour an informational versus a communication understanding of its socio-political significance. Whether the critique focuses on their ability to produce control or on their failures to do so, they often represent the technologies as though they are acting autonomously. Framed in this way, ironically, the study of surveillance is de-populated while the increasingly ubiquitous lens of the camera is filled with people subjected to the gaze of its anonymous monitors.

This bias towards technological explanations is often reflected even in fierce critiques surveillance itself. For example, Nick Dyer-Witheford's remarks about the role

of surveillance in the neoliberal shift from the welfare state to the warfare state privileges

the technology over who is filling the lens, who observes its gaze, and who manages and

authorizes its deployment when he states "…informatics equips paramilitary forces with

a full arsenal of surveillance devices, electronic intrusion measures, cross-referenced

databanks, and field communications for a series of domestic 'wars' on terrorism, on

crime, on drugs – that beat down on civil liberties" (1998: 178). This focus on the

production of surveillance culture as a technological problem makes it difficult to detect

the multifaceted processes of reception and insubordination.

Indeed, an inadvertent effect of this approach to surveillance *as technology* is a

casual disregard for contestation. This problem is augmented by a methodological

standpoint that adopts the fear narrative, employed by surveillance advocates, that there is

widespread, if grudging, consent among the people who are the object of surveillance.

For example, David Lyon's (2001) substantial body of scholarship critiquing the

"surveillance society" does not ignore the existence of social movements in contesting

surveillance culture, but it does not develop an analysis of such contestation. Instead, his

argument dismisses social contestation of surveillance as inherently limited because the

benefits of this technology are so skilfully promoted and are so attractive to people. In

regards to the security-in-exchange-for-privacy pact, Lyon argues: "People strolling on

city streets at night will be reassured to know that cameras and alarms are in place"

(2001: 137).

Like other surveillance scholars, such as Clive Norris (2003) and John McGrath

(2004), who have studied public perceptions of video surveillance, Lyon's analysis of

people's relationship with surveillance draws on a Foucauldian interpretation of

discipline. As such he contends that much of the complexity of surveillance culture lies

in our desiring of it and active participation in it: "Safety, security and convenience are

sought through surveillance systems, which is why – when we are aware of them – we

collude with them so readily" (2001: 66). While certainly there is evidence of collusion,

this "we" is too readily assumed and the complex dynamics of power, subject production,

complicity and contestation are not taken into account. Hence, these authors unwittingly

reproduce a version of the security industry's claim that people desire surveillance in

exchange for security. This contention is in fact belied by the numerous and diverse

instances of contestation by those very ordinary people that are categorized as the

complicit "we" of the general public.

Another related effect of the surveillance-*as-technology* stance is to reproduce the

discourse of total power that lies at the heart of panoptical surveillance as an artifice of

total control. Two theorists of North American anxious urbanism, Mike Davis and

Michael Sorkin, utilize this conception of surveillance technologies as total power. In his

trenchant analysis of California's quintessential culture of fear, Mike Davis argues that

the massive expansion of video surveillance in Los Angeles in the 1990s re-constituted

the city as a "scan-scape". While this is a compelling evocation of video surveillance as

a space of global power shifts, it suggests total power is not only possible but actually

realized through perfect, technologically rendered transparency, without accounting for

its differential distribution and effects within the highly segmented, diverse and contested

urban context of L.A. For example, the SCP's research (2006) demonstrates that in the

case of New York City, the deployment of cameras is overwhelmingly concentrated in

wealthy areas with high property values. Writing about New York post-9/11, Michael

Sorkin also too hastily draws a technological connection between top-down global power, total control and surveillance. "Revisualized as a compendium of applied images, the city is remeasured in pixels or benday dots, evacuated of the particulars of place, rushing towards the condition of a pure field of top-down communication and surveillance" (Sorkin, 2004: 257). Again, Sorkin's pixilated re-mapping of New York suggests that the dense integration of surveillance into the urban fabric is a kind of perfect storm.

Because contemporary surveillance is largely mediated by technologies of perception and information sorting, this technological fixation is understandable and possibly essential to being able to communicate the meaning of surveillance for people and specifically its impact on suspect populations. However, what if we refused to consider surveillance systems on their own terms and instead thought about them less as technologies of perception and more as acts of communication?

To reconsider the totalizing, technologically determinist conception of the ever-expanding presence of video surveillance as a sign of full spectrum domination, and to challenge the influential notion that there is widespread consent for its application in exchange for security, we can look at video surveillance as a communicational relation. In this way, we can begin to think about the explosive presence of visual surveillance from the perspective of the protagonists of culture, whose practices of anti-fear enable us to challenge the discourse of fear and consent surrounding much of the debate about video surveillance. For this we will look more closely at the communicational insurgency of the SCP.

"Standing in a Circle in a City of Squares": The Psychogeography of the SCP

In December 1996, six members of the SCP performed their first play as a Situationist-inspired prank to draw attention to the burgeoning presence of video surveillance in New York City. Their seven-act silent version of Alfred Jarry's play *Ubu Roi* opened in front of the Union Station camera on the 100th anniversary of the dissident play. Jarry's work is credited with anticipating the distinctly politicized, transgressive genre that came to be known as "theatre of the absurd" and became an influential form of experimental theatre in Eastern and Western Europe and North America following the Second World War. *Ubu Roi* was an appropriate choice for the occasion, according to SCP co-founder Bill Brown, because of Jarry's interest in the creation of "theatrical space", a communication tactic he favoured over dialogue, story lines and character development (Brown, Interview, June, 2005, New York City). The police arrived at act five and shut the performance down. From a Situationist perspective, recounts Brown, the police's decidedly theatrical intervention designated the performance a great success as far as theatre and politics go. Thinking that this was a one-off action, the players packed up with no plans for more surveillance camera theatre.

Meanwhile, the revanchist assault on the city under the auspices of Zero Tolerance policies proceeded apace. In 1998, cameras went up in Washington Square Park, a symbolic centre of New York's dissident and libertine culture (Kayton, 1999). The SCP responded directly with another performance. In this way, the group that started as a "prank to amuse jaded intellectuals, suddenly had a context" (Brown, cited in Schienke, 2003). The group started doing more performances directed at surveillance cameras (and the personnel behind them) around the city. Soon after, the players started

mapping the most heavily surveilled neighbourhoods such as Greenwich Village, the UN

and Wall Street, and began conducting a subversive version of the New York City

walking tour.

From the start, the SCP has had a theoretical and practical affinity with the

cultural politics of the Situationist International (SI). The SCP's Situationist disposition

is projected in the passions of the group's spokesperson and co-founder, Bill Brown.

Academically trained with a PhD in comparative literature, Brown is one of the main

theoreticians of the Situationists working outside of the university context (Albright,

2003).[49] The influence of the SI on the SCP is more than theoretically significant if we

consider how both groups articulate their historical moment of radical cultural and

political transformation. As in the SI's 1960s, when the politics of the street and the

event became increasingly significant, the 1990s witnessed the resurgence of the street as

political space in the context of neoliberal enclosure and Zero Tolerance revanchism. As

we will see below, both groups reflect a moment of cultural crisis marked by a decline in

conventional organizational politics.

The SI provided the most trenchant analysis of contemporary commercial culture.

Their attack sought to detonate the spectacular society – where commercial relations were

infused into every aspect of everyday life – by turning quotidian spaces into sites of

political struggle. The SI elaborated a critique of the traditional Euro-Marxist

understanding of culture as superstructure, arguing, like Foucault, that power radiates

through culture. "From the outset, they introduced a new political understanding of the

moments in daily life considered 'dead' and marginal to political life" (Martin Barbero,

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[49] In addition to his SCP work, Brown is the publisher of a Situationist magazine, *Not Bored*. He also initiated the New York Psychogeographical Association.

1993: 56). Today, the SCP's anti-surveillance practices elaborate on the SI's critique of the separation between politics and culture. For this reason, the SCP defines itself as a political group that uses creative practices, and not as a group of politicized artists (Brown, Interview, New York City, June, 2005).

The SCP adapts the SI's two principal expressions of insubordinate urbanism, *detournement* (hijacking) and *derivé* (drift), to the subversion of so-called security cameras and, by extension, the city of fear. For the SI, *derive* was a method, a street ethnography deployed to re-appropriate and transform the city by moving transgressively through its streets (Marcus, 2004). Using primitive walkie-talkies to communicate while they wandered the back streets and hidden corners of nocturnal Paris, the Situationists were the first urban revolutionary movement to explicitly connect collective wandering with the re-appropriation of the city and hence with freedom (Merrifield, 2002a). The SCP's adaptation of *derivé* is a more socially open and politically pointed practice, elaborated through their walking tours of Manhattan neighbourhoods that are heavily dotted with surveillance cameras, and conducting ambulant versions of their performances. The group's intricate, self-generated maps of camera locations (and occasionally their remote monitoring posts) are distributed to participants and help to guide the walking tours. Subversive mapping was one of the SI's principle material expressions of *derivé*. As David Pinder points out, the SI's maps were themselves imaginative critiques of representation, "The [SI] maps are not meant to remain at the level of the descriptive or explanatory-diagnostic in terms of present-day organizations of space. In challenging dominant representations, they look towards other imaginings and

experiences" (Pinder, 2005: 159). With the SCP, the conventions of the urban walking tour genre are themselves "detourned" as the spectator is transformed into a participant.

The SI's practice of *detournement*, or hijacking, posed another form of urban re-appropriation, not only of spaces of the city but of the capitalist social relations that, as the Situationists recognized, was as much the object of spectacularization as the city's material life. For the SI, *detournement* could be applied to everything in the urban environment: architecture, urbanism, poetry, cinema, eating, drinking, the aural environment, squatting, building and street occupations, graffiti, as well as what the Situationists called "free associative" expressionist art (Merrifield, 2003). It is first and foremost about turning the normalized world upside down through a practice of lampooning and parody that aims to radically transform the sedate ambience of the city street. In this way, urban hijacking is as much about sparking a revolt inside the head of the self as it is about fomenting social revolt on the street.

Four decades later, the SCP's *detournment* of surveillance camera deployment must negotiate the spectacular social complexity of the camera systems, as they exist in a social landscape, in that additional exposure may add to their effectiveness as a strategy of fear. The SCP's delicate task, therefore, is to elaborate a practice of exposure for the purposes of re-appropriating the city of fear while undermining the camera's normalized visibility. This is why, Brown explains, the SCP "detourns" the cameras rather than destroying them as a militant anarchist might propose. "Detourning" the camera system is also preferred by the SCP over the more conventional tactics of the institutional left such as writing letters to political representatives or holding demonstrations against their presence (SCP, 2006).

This "detourning" of the camera system operates also as a hijacking of public space. The SCP's appropriation of the monitor's field of vision, achieved by occupying it through a combination of insightful social critique and irreverent, funny interventions, asserts the political importance of the street as a site of political action, while pointing to the often forgotten fact that an anonymous human being is potentially observing private lives unfolding through the lens. The SCP's own theatre of absurdity, which uses a deliberately unprofessional aesthetic that eschews a concept of theatre as separate from everyday life, is also a "detourning" of the separation of culture and politics. Nor do the SCP's tactics constitute "culture jamming" in the conventional sense, because the group resolutely refuses the corporate aesthetic. "This can't so easily be consumed as counter-culture," explains Brown, "because it really isn't culture" (cited in Schienke, 2003: 366). Hence, the SCP's assertion that they are a political group that uses aesthetic tactics is critical of artists that evaluate the problem of surveillance from the interior space of the gallery, and whose aesthetic goals are limited to tackling the issue as an "interesting" and or scandalous socio-political development (ibid). For the SCP, this kind of art stands outside of people's lived experience of video surveillance systems and hence constitutes another separation.

Performing Disobedient Bodies and Subverting the "Theatre of Conformity"

In their plays, the SCP uses hand made placards with simple, bold images and text that is characterized by a deft use of humour and acerbic political critique. Absent from the troupe are professional actors (and professional political activists). This composition represents a political ethos of direct democracy and a deliberate communicational strategy to convey that everyone, not just a few specialists, privacy advocates, civil

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libertarians and artists, should be worried about how surveillance culture violates people's right to anonymity, privacy and free assembly (SCP, 2006). The SCP, Brown maintains, does not bring the theatre to the cameras because it is already there: in their normal operational mode, he contends, the surveillance camera systems provide the stage for "a theatre of conformity" (Schienke, 2003: 360). For Brown, people are performing for the cameras and their monitors, either by ignoring them or by acting in accordance with the normative behavioural codes that their presence silently projects. The public, in this sense, was already turning the streets into stages before the SCP came along.

What the SCP performances bring to these everyday stages is protest. "So, what we do is attempt to meddle with the theatre they have already established – a theatre of non-conformity and resentment. A sense of protest" (ibid). In this way the performers animate the dominant image of the passive fearful urban subject captured by the surveillance camera, turning her into a transgressive social participant. Through the use of humour and transgression, this act transforms the space of fear into a practice of anti-fear: "Precisely because the amateur 'actors' of the SCP perform their plays directly in front of surveillance cameras, and thus directly in front of security guards, police officers and anyone else who is watching, both fear and subversive humour are inevitably and essentially part of the theatrical experience" (SCP, 2006: 185).

The SCP's theatricality takes much inspiration from the French surrealist playwright Antonin Artaud. In recognition of this influence, the SCP's playwright, Bill Brown, goes by the alias Art Toad. The name is meant to convey more than a funny homage, however. The ugliness of the toad is an invocation of Artaud's antipathy towards conventional bourgeois ideas of aesthetics and beauty (SCP, 2006). Artaud

rejected theatre based on artistic spectacle and opted instead for one devoted to collapsing the separation between spectators and actors. His "theatre of cruelty" was a critique of linguistic conventions. It experimented with silence and movement and refused the theatre space: "It is not on the stage that one must look for truth today, but in the street, and if one offers the crowd in the streets an opportunity to show its human dignity, it will always do so," Artaud wrote (cited in SCP, 2006: 185). At the same time that the SCP draws on Artaud's transgressive theatre practice, it extends his critique of formal spaces of cultural participation to the theatre itself: "But the SCP only performs in the street, and have never performed in a theatre or any other "performance space," precisely because it is in the streets that one finds both surveillance cameras and the people that will form the movement against their installation in public places" (SCP, 2006: 185).

Like Art Toad, Artaud was himself inspired by Alfred Jarry. In an essay on Jarry's work, Brown describes the combined influence of Jarry's transgressive theatre and the Situationists' hijacking techniques on their first performance of Jarry's infamous play *Ubu Roi*:

> Because it is a political group that uses culture to get its message across, rather than a cultural group that has a political consciousness, the SCP has been primarily concerned with calling attention to the way surveillance cameras "theatrify" or spectacularize the public places in which they are installed, and only secondarily concerned with the things – dialogue, story-lines and character development – that most people still associate with "theatre". (These things are only used to call attention to the existence of the cameras, and not for their entertainment value.) Similarly, if the SCP uses such *silent* devices as placards, speech bubbles and other printed materials to identify the scene and to convey the meaning of the action, it does so because surveillance cameras are barred by law from picking up sound, and thus are rarely equipped with microphones. (SCP, 2006)

But after adapting and performing *Ubu Roi* and later a number of other *avant-garde*, plays such Samuel Becket's *Waiting for Godot* and Edgar Allen Poe's *The Raven*, the SCP discovered that in the context of the street, these absurdist critiques of authoritarianism were too obscure to effectively communicate an "affirmative no" against surveillance camera systems. As a result, the SCP stopped adapting plays that did not specifically refer to the cameras. The players were also committed to distancing themselves from *avant-garde* art practices that must, by their self-definition, be explained rather than experienced and that consequently thrive on, rather than transform, the traditional separation between spectators and performers. Given that criteria, Brown recalls that after adapting George Orwell's *1984* for a silent performance, the SCP turned to scripting its own original plays. In this way, the group opened space where it could more freely and directly draw connections between surveillance and spectacular capitalism and confront specific developments and debates surrounding public surveillance (SCP, 2006).

Headline News was the SCP's first play written and performed specifically for surveillance camera systems after the group had abandoned the adaptation of other works. The play emerged out of the SCP's desire to produce plays that are at once explicitly political, enjoyable and easily comprehended by its socially complex, ambulant audience (SCP, 2006). A 'Reclaim The Streets' (RTS) protest on June 18, 1999, organized to coincide with a meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Cologne, Germany, provided an ideal opportunity to present a new SCP work. Written specifically for the RTS action, *Headline News* is comprised of four large boards and takes about one minute to perform. The first board is "World News" which depicts a

picture of a NATO bomb dropping. Then comes "Local News", featuring a psychotic-looking Rudolph Giuliani donning a swastika tie and devil horns. Next is "Sports," which features a simple dollar sign splayed across the board. The SCP's "Weather" desk report depicts the menacing symbol for poison, a skull-and-crossed-bones. The sequence, the SCP explain, is important because it both mimics the format of the commercial television news broadcast and produces an escalating "dramatic effect".

> The NEWS begins on a serious, tragic and distinctly unfunny note (bombing and implied destruction and death), and then shifts to a very funny caricature of a serious, tragic and very unfunny man (Giuliani). And so these Surveillance Camera Players are not without a sense of humour! The audience is kept in a "light" mood by the next board, which is the one that everybody – radical, liberal, conservative, and reactionary – can agree expresses a social truth (athletes are paid far too much money). And then – boom! – comes the "punchline", the one about the weather, which poisons us all (rich or poor, player or spectator, bomber or target of the bombs). (SCP, 2006: 40)

The play's "Special Reports" makes it adaptable to comment on particular events that are added on to the larger structural critique of the "newscast". The SCP also performed *Headline News* at New York's Thomas Paine Park and Times Square in solidarity with the April 20, 2001 protests in Quebec City against the Free Trade Area of the Americas. The play was chosen for the occasion in part because by then it also included an image of a huge raptor splayed over the globe with CAPITALISM festooned across its chest. For this event, the SCP added a new placard to the "National News", "a picture of the self-avowed President of the United States, one George W. Bush" sporting the phrase "death penalty" (SCP, 2006: 73). To express solidarity with protests in Cincinnati over police racism and brutality, a placard was added that featured a policeman in full riot gear.

Another adaptation includes a placard with "National News" which depicts an automatic weapon. Art Toad eventually added commercial breaks with another placard announcing, "We'll be right back." For the "commercials," the performers hold up a series of placards: one with a Nike logo that says "Proud Sponsor of Chinese Sweatshops"; a second shows the Chase Manhattan Bank logo and declares "We Own You"; a third features a Pepsi corporation logo that says "Get and Stay Addicted to Junk" and the fourth combines a CBS-TV logo with the words, "We Watch You Watch". The play is repeated over and over in front of cameras.

Yet another performance of an SCP original play, *It's Ok Officer*, occurred on October 9 2001 in the immediate wake of the US invasion of Afghanistan. Amidst the intensifying military build up around New York City and the attendant climate of social fear and political repression, the SCP audaciously performed an ambulatory version of the play for the city's supposedly bristling surveillance cameras. *It's Ok Officer*, which features six people each holding up a placard featuring the same illustration of a smiling figure saluting to the camera, imagines that coming into the view of the surveillance camera system is equivalent to being stopped by a police officer who demands identification. Holding up the placards to the camera, the performers answer the officer's demand to know what they are doing with a response that encompasses the acceptable patterns of public conduct according to the behaviouralist demands of Zero Tolerance and the rampant suspicion that accompanies the "War on Terror." The sequence proceeds as a general account of deliberate, socially sanctioned public activities:

It's Ok Officer
Just going to work

Just getting something to eat

Just going shopping

Just sightseeing

Going home now

The intent of the performance is to subvert the normative standards of behaviour

that turn subjects into suspects, a trend in policing that is profoundly expanded through

the ubiquitous, silent presence of surveillance camera systems. An earlier SCP essay on

the performance of *It's Ok Officer* explains its intention to disrupt the normative

standards of public behaviour through both mocking them and making visible the

coercive intent behind the allegedly passive presence of the monitors: "In our society,

these are the only reasons for being out in public; everything else is "strange" or

"suspicious" (SCP, 2006: 64). Immediately after, the group marked the one-month

anniversary of 9/11 with a second performance of *It's Ok Officer* on October 11, 2001.

The play's weird outsider humour ridicules the fear that the institution of the

police and the camera systems rely upon, and in the process it works to overturn

hierarchy. As Brown explains, the play answers the police/camera question "what are

you doing out in public?" with a mock answer: "what we are supposed to be doing: don't

worry, everything is ok". The SCP reported that the play was met, despite or perhaps

because of the dour milieu of its performance, with an enthusiastic reception from those

who happened to see it. This response from ordinary pedestrians, the very constituents

that the monitoring system is purportedly there to protect, perfectly underscored the

SCP's contention that the proclaimed general consensus around the continuous expansion

of surveillance and militarism as a reasonable exchange for personal security is an artifice

of the fear industry. In a post-performance assessment, SCP performers wrote: "The NY SCP found that their fellow New Yorkers *do not* see their options as a simple choice between keeping their constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties and being "safe" from terrorism. One can be *both* free and safe!" (SCP, 2006: 76-77)

Solidarity and Silence

The SCP's performance style represents a form of embodied refusal. The presence of the performances is augmented by their silence, which draws attention because it is so unusual. The performers dress in black to symbolize both everyday theatricality and solidarity. According to Brown, the SCP's political sensibility at once breaks with the moralizing advocates of Zero Tolerance and also challenges conventional conceptions politics and culture as separate from one another and from ordinary people's experience. As Brown explains,

> Black clothing symbolizes anarchism and I wear it because I want to stand out. It is inspired by a Situationist sense of performance, of living life as theatre. To me it resonates with workers. Servants, for instance, wear all black. If you're just interested in plain old politics, it doesn't really appeal. In North America there's a split in most political movements, which had healed somewhat around the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization in 1999. This has broken open again: there's politics and there's art. That artists can't be political and political people can't be artists. Here, in North America art and politics have both tanked. (Brown, Interview, New York City, June, 2005)

It is interesting here to think about how silence operates within the SCP's communicational insurgency against the contemporary enclosures. The reason for the silence of their performances is indivisibly practical and political. It is illegal for the cameras to be equipped with sound. The SCP enters into an important trajectory of oppositional practice through silent performance. Silence, often associated with fear

itself, in this case provides an aperture for the creation of spaces of genuine encounter

and a counter-visibility of anonymous dissenters that challenge the claims of social

consensus surrounding video surveillance. Brown points out that this approach is linked

to the strong participation of women in the group:

> Over its nine-year history, the majority of SCP performers are women. My speculation is that women have a very interesting way of inverting the rule that women are to be seen and not heard, because surveillance camera theatre is silent. I think women are drawn to silent performances because they enjoy turning the "seen but not heard" paradigm inside out. Also, ultra-left and anarchist demonstrations are dominated by men with loud voices. Instead we're using silence, something that connects us with groups like [the Palestine/Israel international peace movement] Women in Black. Women enjoy turning the invisible inside out. It is women who generally stop and look, because it's women performing and also because it's silent, you never see silent demonstrators. (Brown, Interview, New York City, June, 2005)

Taking a Tour with the Vagabonds: audacious stillness in the city of frenetic flows

It is a sticky-hot New York City noon hour at Washington Square Park, in the

heart of Greenwich Village. At the corner of the park designated as the *rendezvous* point

for people taking part in the SCP's walking tour, Bill Brown stands amidst the

neighbourhood's watchful and plentiful electronic eyes. The bulk of the cameras are

operated by the New York Police Department, which even has a surveillance van

stationed at the park and New York University whose camera-festooned exterior walls

surround the park. Since November 2000, the SCP has been giving "SCOWTs" –

Surveillance Camera Out-door Walking Tours – on Sunday afternoons. Except for the

big colourful Horus eye splayed across his t-shirt, Brown's all-black attire is notable in

the heat, making its deliberateness that much more performative. He is dressed for an

afternoon on the stage of one of Manhattan's most filmed neighbourhoods. The area we

are about to tour boasts one of the highest concentrations of surveillance camera systems

in the city. Here, there are cameras of all shapes, sizes and generations, and the vast

majority of these were erected with increasing velocity throughout the 1990s. In fact, the

neighbourhood is so packed with surveillance camera systems that the two hour tour

takes place over what amounts to a mere few square blocks. Brown is also dressed to be

identifiable to the tour participants who have in one way or another, most likely through

the SCP's website, contacted the SCP to arrange for their participation on this walking

tour. Around Brown's neck hangs an enormous pair of army-issue binoculars.

Waiting for the others to arrive lends a rare moment of suspended time to absorb

the surrounding landscape. Greenwich Village is so steeped in the symbolic and material

history of Manhattan that it encapsulates in many ways the peculiar urban dialectic of

New York. At the north corner of the park lies the Washington Square Arch, which has

been the site of many symbolic appropriations, one of the more famous being the Liberal

Club's 1917 scaling of the monument to proclaim "The Independent Republic of

Greenwich Village" (Kayton, 2003: 25). Washington Square Arch was the site of

another appropriation in 1968, this time by the Students Against War and Racism who

flew a banner on it declaring "The Streets Belong to the People." According to New York

popular historian Bruce Kayton (2003), one of the park's most significant and wonderful

oppositional actions was when Yippies fought restrictions on political leafleting in or

within 150 feet of the park. They won in court a suspension of the restriction and dashed

back to the park carrying copies of the judgment and passed them out as leaflets.

Unaware of the ruling, the police arrested the pamphleteers for handing out leaflets that

explained that they could not be arrested for it. The park itself has been many things,

among them a potters field and a military parade ground. But since the 1850s, it has most significantly been New York City's irreverent space of encounter, "blending peace and anarchy" (ibid). Here, ideas of progressive individualism and radical freedom percolated and bloomed, making it famous for nurturing many of the twentieth century's oppositional cultural movements.

In the 1990s, the park was also the site of numerous protests, including those against the Gulf war, and anti-curfew demonstrations over the Tompkins Square Park battles – which solidified, in many ways, New York's revanchist turn under Mayor Giuliani (Smith, 1996). Following the attacks of 9/11, the Park was an important counterspace for numerous self-reflective vigils and anti-war protests, a number of which were viciously attacked by the police. Given this history, against which the revanchist movements of the 1990s precisely emerged, and the fact that Greenwich Village has been undergoing intense gentrification over the last decade, it is not very surprising that this epicentre of New York's radical history, is among the city's most heavily monitored.

In many ways, the overbearing presence of New York University (NYU) represents the other side of Greenwich Village's oppositional history. The university is the most significant private purveyor of public surveillance in the neighbourhood. As the largest private university in the US, NYU is a wealthy, powerful urban actor. According to Brown, the campus has been a key force in the gentrification of Greenwich Village, gradually incorporating more and more of the area surrounding Washington Square Park. Many argue that the campus is responsible for rapidly rising rents and for driving out older residents who can no longer afford to live there (Brown, Interview, New York City, June, 2005). Not surprisingly, one of the most prominent aspects of NYU's controversial

enclosure movement is the omnipresent surveillance cameras on the exterior walls of its leased buildings surrounding Washington Square park.

There are six of us on the tour, including four men and another woman. The rag-tag group slowly assembles and Brown launches into a background explanation on just how contentious and contested gentrification's spatial offensive is in this symbolic centre of cultural and social radicalism. Here, NYU and the metropolitan police seem to compete for street space. There is constant movement in and around the park, as well as many people relaxing on park benches, playing card games and engaging in a brisk, low-key marijuana trade at the edges of the Park. An alarmingly crumpled New York Police Department Surveillance Van sits alongside the park. It appears as though it has not moved for several decades and is decorated with an impressive assortment of thick multi-coloured electrical cables pouring out of its window to connect it to the city grid outside.

We stand in a circle for what feels like a very long time in the intense summer heat, while the urban crowds stream past us. We are clearly neither a strange nor alarming sight as Brown gives the background of the surveillance landscape that surrounds us. Standing still in a circle for an extended period of time is, like his high-summer black attire, subtly deliberate. By standing still in the city of extraordinary, frantic movement, Brown is performing a silent dialogic encounter with the personnel behind the surveillance cameras, making their lenses turn on their pivots to register the unusual static congregation. After an extended rap on the relationship between surveillance, civil rights, electronic interdiction, and the enclosure of public space, Brown explains that we are elaborating a performance for the unseen personnel behind the surveillance cameras mounted on the buildings that surround us. Through the apparently

passive act of standing in a circle listening to a man with a big eye on his t-shirt as he tells us about surveillance culture in New York City, we are performing surveillance camera theatre! Having staged our first act of the SCP's tour genre, we set off on our next performance.

At the outset of the tour Brown passes out hand-drawn, photocopied, black-and-white maps of Greenwich Village. Buildings and streets showing the location of the cameras are marked, indicating how many of them there are at each location. The map includes a helpful legend that identifies privately owned, police, Federal government, State government and New York City housing authority cameras. Other maps have different legends. The Chelsea legend, for example, includes privately owned, residential, New York Police Department Traffic, City (police or fire department), and Federal government cameras, but also a police microwave antenna. The SCP started mapping surveillance cameras in May 2000 and the group's now numerous maps are an ongoing project of street ethnography that the entails labour-intensive work of checking and counting the cameras on a continuous basis, documenting the city's shifting security terrain (SCP, 2006). Our tour material also includes a hand-drawn "Guide to Surveillance Cameras" that depicts and describes the features of various technological generations of cameras. Squeezed on the page is also a "Guide to Mapping Surveillance Cameras" that conveys the Do-It-Yourself spirit that is central to the SCP's autonomous urban praxis.

Our map outlines a geographic area consisting of only a few blocks. It lists and locates all known surveillance cameras and we learn that there are 510 of them around NYU and its extension into Washington Square Park. At last count, the SCP noted 371

around Greenwich Village, extending out of the park. As we stand amidst these monitored streets, NYU's presence in this area starts to feel openly aggressive. The cameras mounted on walls point from private buildings onto ostensibly public streets. The university funds the rumpled but apparently functioning police department's surveillance van that sits on the edge of the park with two permanent officers inside the vehicle. The contentious presence of the van is evident from the decorations on its exterior: on the front window is a mock "parking ticket" issued by New York's Critical Mass bike riders, who are among the many oppositional political groups that have become a growing target of police surveillance in the city over the last few years (Eileen Clancey, Interview, New York City, 2005). There are numerous anti-police and surveillance stickers and graffiti plastered around the van. A painted logo on the side panel indicates that the van is part of the NYPD's Video Interactive Patrol Enhancement Response (VIPER) unit, a term Brown aptly describes as "bureaucratic poetry."

On the tour, Brown recounted an incident in the financial district where he was stopped by security while making a map. A plainclothes officer approached him and asked, "can I help you?" When Brown explained, the security agent reported that he was already aware of the SCP. Brown describes Wall Street and the area surrounding the New York Stock Exchange as "armed camps." We could never, he explained, stand in front of a police surveillance van on Wall Street, as we were doing while he recounted the story, taking pictures and making fun of the van and its curiously sloppy array of equipment. This differentiation in security is highly suggestive of the ways in which particularized local politics and financial regimes within one city produce bordered city spaces. This is particularly evident in dense and economically concentrated and highly

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diverse cities like New York where neighbourhoods are parcelized, micro-managed and contested differently. The neighbourhood militarization that Brown describes around Wall Street would be impossible in Greenwich Village, he explains, because it would provoke an uprising against it by the community and so the authorities do not dare try (Brown, Interview, June, 2005).

As we ambled among the different cameras, Brown explained in detail the various models that are used. At one point, he passed around his enormous binoculars as a didactic device to show us the reach and range possible of one of the standard surveillance cameras that we were looking at outside the doors of one of NYU's buildings. We all took turns looking through the binoculars, momentarily becoming the watchful eyes on the street. It is indeed a long and detailed gaze. This tactic had a double effect. In a very visceral way we experienced the disturbing visual scope of the cameras, and, despite ourselves, we momentarily became monitors of the street. The fact that people could see us brazenly looking in their direction through powerful binoculars without any permission, which would doubtlessly be rejected if we had asked them, underscored the SCP's point about video surveillance being a fundamental problem of, among other things, unaccountable power. Only this time, unlike the anonymous human monitors behind their screens, we were starkly visible to the public. This made our act of looking, and by extension all those anonymous eyes that watch us go about our activities, seem all the more offensive, repressive and absurd. Now, the military-issue binoculars are transformed into an effective theatrical and didactic prop.

Standing outside NYU and alongside Washington Square with Brown and his theatrically large binoculars dramatized the extent of the surveillance camera system's

violation of public space. Throughout the tour there was much techno-talk and fascination with the computational intricacies of surveillance, which Brown provided along with a critical social analysis of surveillance and everyday life. In exchange for the technological explanations of the intricacies of surveillance society that kept the young men rapt, Brown constantly emphasized the primacy of the social relations of surveillance in terms of race, class, and gender politics, the right to anonymity and the abuse of public space that the cameras signify. Deftly, he situated the proliferation of surveillance camera systems within a critique of how differential mobility is enacted and regulated, how visual culture's fetishisation of the image operates, and how the power of looking without being seen is organized around the social relations of racial profiling and predatory gazing at women. In other words, the cameras, which are justified as a necessary and effective technology of safety, are experienced by some people at least, as fearful. On the one hand, the tour exposed a process at work whereby rampant surveillance culture in the name of security ravages democratic possibility. On the other hand, the act of the tour and its narrative critique also exposed the fear industry's notable failure to manage and fade out the presence of urban others that continue to assert their right to the city by being present in it.

Refusing Fear and the "War on Terror"

Amidst the frantic climate of terror in the wake of 9/11, on September 13, 2001 the SCP issued a statement declaring that they would continue their anti-surveillance activities, that nothing had changed, that anti-surveillance work was more important than ever:

> Unlike other groups – such as the Ruckus Society, the Sierra Club and others, especially in the American environmental and anti-globalization movements – the New York SCP will *not* be scaling back its actions against surveillance cameras and face recognition software, its vocal opposition to the policies of George W. Bush, or its very visible public and Internet presence, in response to the "attack on America" that took place on 11 September 2001 and to the subsequent calls for unity and "war" against terrorism. (SCP, 2001)

This statement was followed by an essay published on November 23, 2001 on the SCP's website, entitled *"Nothing* has Changed, *Therefore* Everything Must Change" (SCP, 2006). Here, the SCP affirms its position, explaining that prior to the attacks, surveillance cameras in the area around the World Trade Centre – some privately owned and many operated by law enforcement agencies – were too numerous to count. With the attacks, their failure as a technology of pre-emption was violently substantiated. 9/11 and its aftermath, Brown explains, was a pivotal moment for the anti-surveillance movement in that it highlighted the issues like never before. He argues that while the attacks and the "War on Terror" have provoked widespread fear among the public, it has also forced a questioning of some of the fundamental, and deeply flawed, arguments for public surveillance. Now more than ever, people are actively challenging surveillance culture and the politics of fear that sustains it. For Brown, video surveillance, as a domestic expression of the "War on Terror", represents a vital space of oppositional struggle:

> As a Situationist I've always been more interested in the local. I've chosen to fight against the war on terror by focusing on surveillance in New York City. Power doesn't exist abstractly, it touches down in little spaces and that is what is always local. So we have vast international power formations with a local beat as it were. The anti-war movement has in some ways been led astray. Its path is very difficult because it doesn't realize that power is localized. After 9/11 many didn't know what to do. In that momentary paralysis the Bush administration suddenly decided to attack Iraq and Afghanistan while people simply just got over the shock. I'm most proud of our statement after September 11 saying that nothing has changed. There's a breach here, a number of people have taken down

their websites or let them go because they don't know – is it appropriate to demand a new trial for Mumia when we've been attacked? 9/11 made our issue relevant in a way that it never was. And since 9/11 we've been in hyper drive. It has put our issue on the map. (Brown, Interview, New York City, June 2005)

* * *

The proliferation of camera systems, especially in large cities where capital is concentrated, begins to narrate the relationship between visual surveillance, socio-cultural fear and the new enclosures. While the expansion of state and private surveillance and of surveillance talk is a major feature of North American urban life post-9/11, the scholarship on surveillance shows us that an emergent "surveillance society" was already well underway throughout the 1990s (Lyon, 2001). Despite these developments, much of the scholarly literature and popular debates around surveillance has failed to focus adequate attention on the significance of video surveillance as not merely a technology of control but as a communicational practice that projects and animates social fear. As a result, surveillance, and video surveillance systems in particular, is often treated in the totalizing terms of technological determinism. In this context, the numerous and diverse forms of contestation are rendered invisible. This chapter analyzed the significance of these modes of oppositional practice through the anti-surveillance interventions of the SCP. The group is an instructive example because it arose out of the Zero Tolerance milieu of post-Cold War New York City to contest the fear-driven practices and narratives of the new enclosures upon which the expansion of video surveillance in public places has been built. Here, I have examined how the SCP's anti-fear practices work to dismantle surveillance culture and its infrastructure against the authoritarian appropriation of public fears (Lechner, 1992).

The SCP is principally concerned with the relationship between the video taped enclosure of public space and the circulation of the authoritarian imagination, which is hostile to the modern city as a space of anonymity, self-expression and new combinations of sociability. Through a variety of Situationist-inspired tactics, the group seeks to participate in the building of a movement that will galvanize the demise of surveillance camera systems in public places. The SCP's anti-surveillance communicational practices take place on the streets of New York through the mapping, performances and walking tours, to create spaces of meaningful encounter, social participation and visibility of anti-surveillance protest. The group's "audience" could be composed of security guards watching their screens, the police, people walking past a performance taking place in front of a surveillance camera, visiting it's website, or taking part in one of SCP's tours. At the same time, the SCP's "target audience" is not the authorities but ordinary people that are drawn to question and challenge the state and the private sector's monitoring of public places and personal lives.

I have argued here that the SCP's communicational insurgency opens up new forms of political confrontation for the elaboration of a non-state public sphere. The group's tactics are designed to bring the issue of public video surveillance to the centre of political debates around freedom, justice and democratic struggle in the increasingly militarised city, what Henri Lefebvre called "the right to the city" (Merrifield, 2006). In this way, the SCP is a significant example of a contemporary anti-enclosure movement that contributes to a renovation in our identification of the protagonists of culture by detonating the conventional separations between social activist and urban subject. Moreover, the SCP's strategies of disruption project practices of anti-fear that articulate

oppositional communication and social agency from the perspective of the protagonists of culture and not simply the increasingly prolific technologies of detection.

In the next chapter I turn to an interrogation of visibility through the significantly different set of problems and struggles situated in Ciudad Juarez, a city on the Mexico-US border that has been the site of a devastating serial sex murder case. Juarez is a city of intense fear. In addition to the overt violence, this state of social fear is propelled by a strategy of confusion, impunity and obfuscation promoted by the state and sectors of the commercial media and maquila industry. The movement that has sprung up to combat the violence is confronted with enormous danger and it has used many creative tactics of political confrontation to make its struggle visible and to pry open spaces of encounter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DOCUMENTARY PRACTICES OF ANTI-FEAR: SOCIAL AGENCY AND THE MOVEMENT AGAINST FEMICIDE IN *SEÑORITA EXTRAVIADA*

Hundreds of women and girls have been murdered and disappeared in the Mexico-US border town of Ciudad Juarez. Raped, mutilated, strangled, stabbed, burned and tortured, the ravaged bodies of the mostly young, poor women have formed a pattern of gender terror that, the victim's families and women's rights advocates argue, amounts to genocide. The pattern is widely identified to have begun in 1993 when the discarded body of the first victim was discovered in a quiet middle class neighbourhood in Juarez. Since the, almost all of the victims have shared a demographic and physical profile. Like many of Juarez's inhabitants they are migrants, mostly from Mexico's poorer south. They have been drawn to the city's promise of work in one of its many *maquiladoras* (labour intensive, free trade export assembly plants), where they will spend six days a week making three to five dollars a day. They are generally young, the majority between the ages of 12 and 23. Most are slim, dark-haired and dark-skinned and small in stature (Gaspar de Alba, 2003). In short, the profile of the victims narrates another hidden story of displacement and enclosure in Mexico's interior, a force propelling them northward in search of a viable livelihood (Schmidt Camacho, 2005).

Today, after over a decade of activism, official promises, investigations and high profile arrests, almost all of the murders remain unsolved. Officials have yet to produce any credible explanation for the crimes, and women's rights activists and the families of

the victims have denounced the police's sporadic and spectacular arrests as mere political theatre. Indeed, the police have been widely criticized by local and international human rights groups for routinely covering up information, for misplacing and falsifying of evidence, manipulation of the crime scenes, intimidation of witnesses and torture of suspects (Amnesty International, 2003). Such is the place that has come to be variously titled in the international media as the "capital of murdered women", and "the city of fear". Women's groups in Juarez say that the murders constitute a "war on women" (SOS Initiative, 2001).

Who is killing the women of Juarez? Is it a serial killer, or several? Is it the police or the paramilitaries? Porn or snuff filmmakers? Organ traffickers? A satanic cult? The "Juniors" (sons of the elite)? The narcotraficantes? Unemployed men enraged by women's employment in the city's maquiladora economy? Men lashing out against poverty? Men threatened by the shifting gender relations? Are the culprits abusive boyfriends or husbands? Rumours, theories and speculations on the profile and motives of perpetrators of the murders abound but there are no definitive answers. Michael Taussig argues that this "problem of interpretation" is "decisive for terror, not only making effective counter-discourse so difficult but also making the terribleness of death squads, disappearances, and torture all the more effective in crippling of people's capacity to resist" (1987: 128). As I will argue, a shroud of mystery allows generalized social fear to operate as an instrument of enclosure in Juarez.

To begin to bring some lucidity to the terrifying confusion that surrounds the murders, we need to listen to the expert testimony of the victims, their families and their advocates. This is what Lourdes Portillo sets out to do in her documentary on Juarez's

femicide, *Señorita Extraviada* (Missing Young Woman) (2001). Among the ever-swelling representations of Juarez's gendered terror, *Señorita* is exemplary in its portrayal of the murders from the standpoint of the protagonists of the story: the victims, their families, women in the *colonias* (shantytowns), and the women's rights advocates that have been tirelessly working to contextualize the numbers and memorialize the dead and disappeared. Portillo's camera is explicitly pointed at investigating the murders politically, and searching for the story's underlying plot. The film grapples with the ways the gendered terror stalking in Juarez functions politically in a climate of institutional impunity, pervading from the transnational corporation to the local police station. Hence, the entire film is structured around privileging the direct voice of historical knowledge of those experiencing, and struggling against, the full force of the violence. With the exception of these voices, Portillo recounts, "I find myself distrusting everything I'm told and everything I read" (2001). In turn, *Señorita* grapples with the immense social, economic and political insecurity in Juarez, and its perpetuation of a climate of fear and suspicion where few are willing to talk openly about the violence.

This chapter examines documentary practices of anti-fear through a close reading of *Señorita* as a significant example of cinema as communication and oppositional cultural practice. The film is exemplary, I argue, not only because it endeavours to politicize the murders through its representation of a city drenched in social fear, but also because it works against the dominant commercial media's sensational and lurid representations of the violence and the government's moralistic discourse of victim blaming. Moreover, I explore how Portillo's documentary presents a challenge to the top down, victim-blaming, and often critical, representations that insist on totalizing

interpretations of the femicide as resulting directly from globalization and the inherent

dangerousness of women's presence in public space.

My approach to the film draws heavily on Rosa Linda Fregoso's groundbreaking

scholarship on Portillo's work and the violence in Juarez and endeavours to extend it

through an examination of how documentary practice is a communicational insurgency

against fear. In order to frame this theoretical elaboration around the fear/anti-fear

dialectic in the context of the new enclosures, I anchor this analysis in Taussig's (1987)

conception of the "problem of interpretation" that was discussed in Chapter One. As will

become clear in this chapter, the murders and disappearances cannot be exclusively

attributed to enclosure processes; such interpretation would simply replicate the totalizing

representations that attribute this violence to globalization. Instead, I hope to show that

the social fear resulting from the mystery that surrounds these unresolved cases of

violence intensify the conditions that allow enclosure to literally take place.

I will explore a number of ways that *Señorita* also introduces a subversion of the

conventions of documentary realism. Here, complexity and ambiguity play an important

role alongside the multiple actors that she introduces, so that her subjects include not only

concrete and specifically named individuals and institutions but also the generalized

impunity enjoyed by the various levels of government, the police, the powerful narcotics

mafia and the maquila industry alike. Similarly, the documentary's aesthetic of affective,

poetic realism poses a deft challenge to the documentary conventions of "government

realism" (Druick, 2007) and New Left realist aesthetics alike. In this way, Portillo's

documentary suggests a new form of political confrontation in radical documentary

practice, geared in this case against the disciplining terror of Juarez' violence. Contrary

to the dominant representations of the femicide which mobilize the "victim documentary" form (Winston, 1995) *Señorita* situates the social agency of the victims, their families, and women's rights activists at the centre of the story of the femicide. In confronting the dominant representations with her bilingual (English and Spanish) documentary, Portillo makes the femicide visible in Mexico and on a transnational scale, and as we will see, she effectively uses it to open spaces of encounter. As I will argue, it is from this-perspective that we can see Portillo's representation of the femicide as a practice of anti-fear taking place in the intensely contested representational space of Ciudad Juarez.

Cinema as a Communicational Insurgency of Social Agency and Anti-Fear

Because *Señorita* investigates the murders politically, it has been an impetus for action in Mexico and internationally, making it one of the most significant and widely circulated counter-representations of Juarez's femicide. Unabashedly pushing the bounds of the cinema of agitation, Portillo characterizes her film as a "weapon", a "sharp knife" (Dollarhide, 2002). The filmmaker, whose opus is a dedicated challenge to conventional documentary, calls her beautiful, haunting and scary film a "documentary noir" and characterizes it as a requiem for the disappeared women of Juarez (Fregoso, 2003). Stylistically renegade, *Señorita* is conceived in the heterodox tradition of the cinema of liberation dedicated both to interrogating what Stuart Hall (1996) calls the "relations of representation" and, in the process, to transforming the spectator into witness. It is also a film that listens. It is in the manner of this listening to the voices of the ignored, maligned, and demonized that Portillo's communicational insurgency confronts the fear.

A short detour into Portillo's background as a filmmaker helps situate her unique rendering of Juarez's traumatic violence from a perspective that privileges the social agency of both the subject and the audience. Portillo came of age as a filmmaker in the 1970s, a time of radical experimentation in cinema and social movements. Working in the radical cultural milieu of 1970s California, she made her first films in the early seventies with California's Marxist film collective Cine Manifest. The new Latin American cinema movement that emerged out of the liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s had a profound and animating influence on Portillo's cinematic vision. According to cinema scholar Rosa Linda Fregoso (2001) who is Portillo's most dedicated critic to date, as a bilingual and bicultural filmmaker, Portillo was uniquely equipped with capacities of cultural and linguistic translation to tap into these movements. But, Fregoso argues, her work did not engage with the new Latin American film movement on a mimetic level, rather she developed her own style that drew on a number of movements, including "cine feminism" and the Chicana/o cinema of the 1970s.

Although Portillo does not explicitly define herself as a feminist filmmaker, Fregoso (2001) asserts that feminist influences are nonetheless central to all of her work. For Fregoso, virtually all of Portillo's films – especially her most widely known ones such as *Las Madres: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*[50] (1986), *La Ofrenda: The Days of the Dead* (1988), *Vida* (1989), *Columbus on Trial* (1992), *Corpus: A Home Movie for Selena* (1999) – make central the lives of women, their voices, their histories and perspectives. "Similar to filmmakers in the feminist film movement," Fregoso maintains,

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[50] Among its many awards and accolades, this documentary on the movement of mothers of the disappeared in Argentina received a nomination for an Academy Award for Best Documentary in 1986.

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"Portillo inordinately attends to the details of interior spaces, the domestic sphere, family dynamics, and gender relations." (2001: 11)

While Portillo's subject matter has focussed on the lives and struggles of women, she was never directly connected with the feminist film movement of the 1970s. This was due, according to Fregoso, to a combination of the feminist film movement's predominantly white and middle class composition, which Portillo did not identify with, and her own specific diasporic Mexican cultural identification which did not mesh with feminist critiques of the time (ibid.). Rather, Fregoso argues, Portillo's feminism is more connected to what Sonia Saldivar-Hull (2000) calls "feminismo popular" (popular feminism). That is, a distinctly Mexican and popular mode of "living feminism" that does not generally call itself feminist and is rooted in everyday struggles of women in the *colonias populares* (poor neighbourhoods), in the factories, fields and markets as well as in domestic life. For Fregoso, this feminism is distinctly experiential and practical: "Theirs is not a feminism learned from books, but culled from the micro details and practices of everyday life." (2001: 11).

But possibly the most essential feature of Portillo's work is its characteristic ambiguity (ibid). A startling sense of lucid ambiguity is undoubtedly the dominant communicative strategy in *Señorita*. Indeed, it could be argued that the profound ambiguity of the violence is one of the documentary's central characters but also its key problematic. It is not, however, an uncertainty that refuses to assign blame. Rather, as I will discuss in detail below, the film systematically works through a number of overlapping investigative threads in an effort to clarify the very confusion that the dominant media and government narratives of the violence create. It is a strategy of

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tackling the problem of interpretation through a direct confrontation with the unspeakable and the myriad of material and metaphysical forces that give the violence its particularly jagged shape. It is an approach that rejects definitive explanations. In the context of Juarez, it is a communicative strategy that stands in stark contrast to the authorities' periodic theatrical arrests of suspects, where perpetrators are produced, paraded in front of the cameras and promptly imprisoned, while the murders and disappearances continue and the confusion and fear multiply.

As discussed earlier, Portillo's blatant, renegade stance of ambiguity, of refusing to provide definitive answers, contradicts much in the conventions of both political cinema and the documentary tradition. Combined with the influence of the radical cinema practices of various liberation movements, her novel style of engaged ambiguity evokes a critical adaptation of these movements' central concern with the problems of spectatorship and social agency. This blend of grounded, politicized feminism and lucid ambiguity seems to point to a source of what Fregoso characterizes as Portillo's "vulnerable" cinema practice. "Portillo makes herself "vulnerable" as a filmmaker, and she does so not simply by inserting the "I" of the filmmaker into the text, but by making films that call for an intellectual and emotional engagement from the viewer" (ibid: 6). Finding innovative strategies to communicate a deliberate uncertainty and developing ways to effectively engage with audiences were central concerns of the new Latin American cinema movement.

In thinking about the context of Portillo's film and the one which gave rise to the new Latin American cinema movement, I would like to propose that this movement of the 1960s and 1970s was the first cinema practice of anti-fear. Heterodox in character,

and emerging in times and places of dictatorships and generalized insecurity, but also radical political change in Latin America, its best known practitioners developed their practice amidst authoritarian violence, imperial aggression, growing deprivation and social upheaval. Filmmakers such as Fernando Solanas, Octavio Getino and Fernando Birri in Argentina and Glauber Rocha in Brazil made films about ordinary people's struggles and wrote manifestos on the role and importance of politicized cinema under the terrifying shadow of their countries' military dictatorships. In Cuba, filmmaker-theorists like Julio Garcia Espinosa and Tomas Gutierrez Alea sought to transform and connect cinema practice to the cultural radicalism of the Revolution while an enraged group of exiles and US government and business interests waged a vicious media and military war against it. This is the environment in which a specifically anti-colonial cinema practice emerged, one that film scholar Teshome Gabriel (1982) has theorized as a new and revolutionary "aesthetics of liberation".

These filmmakers were also insightful communication theorists and the most immediate theoreticians of their new genre. In various ways, all of them saw cinema as cultural practice for harnessing the social optimism that swirled amidst the surrounding violence, hunger and what they saw as the cultural degradation wrought by the enormous power of the European and US culture industries. The movement celebrated cinema as a powerful medium to reach audiences that were often illiterate, and as a way to make visible the social agency of ordinary people that were absent in the narratives of the two

cinema currents against which it defined itself: the cultural avant-garde and Hollywood[51].

The movement's main theoreticians and filmmakers conceived of cinema and especially

the documentary as a mode of social critique, analysis, political action and social change.

As anti-imperialists of their time, they saw in radical cinema the possibility of bringing

people together in new ways, as a crucial tool in the broad efforts to de-colonize the

imagination as well as the economy and politics. Their various aesthetic practices were

unified by a desire to make visible the history of peoples denied a place and to use

cinema to participate in creating a place of "bread and dignity" (Birri, 1997: 95). As a

movement dedicated to re-appropriating "the popular" in popular culture from what they

perceived as the pernicious influence of bourgeois aesthetics and production and

exhibition practices, its conceptualization of culture was analogous to Brecht's "fighting

notion of popularity" (Willemen, 1997: 249).

Designating cinema as the most transformational and democratic medium, the

movement sought to articulate a popular, radical aesthetic and, as I said, to pose a critical

challenge to both imperial Hollywood and the individualist cinematic avant-garde

(Wayne, 2001). Accordingly, its conception of cinema as a "poetics of the

transformation of reality" (Birri, 1997: 96) challenged the way conventional cinema was

made and consumed. As a result, the movement defined itself in part by its emphasis on

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[51] The new Latin American Cinema movement was an innovator in the larger transnational cinema movement that came to be known as Third Cinema. The term was proposed by Solanas and Getino in their 1965 essay "Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World." Here, Solanas and Getino elaborated the concept of Third Cinema as a category defined against the cultural avant-garde (Second Cinema) and imperial Hollywood (First Cinema). While the term engages with the Three Worlds geopolitics of its time, and its practitioners and theorists were deeply engaged with post-colonial struggles, Third Cinema was not geographic designation. Rather, it was defined by its dedication to socialist politics, historicism, internationalism and an experimental yet popular aesthetic stance (Wayne, 2001). In this chapter, I focus particularly on the new Latin American cinema because it was this specific movement, in particular the post-Revolution Cuban cinema movement which has influenced Portillo's work.

developing innovative practices that privileged process over the results (Espinosa, 1997).

Its approach diverged sharply from the didactic realism of the European and North

American New Left, as these filmmakers sought new aesthetic strategies that advanced

the cause of pleasure as well as social possibility (Espinoza, 1997). This was central to

the movement's profound innovation at the time. As Fregoso points out: "Radical

filmmakers in Latin America were proving that one could use highly innovative

techniques and still deliver a progressive political message" (2001: 9). In this way, the

movement proposed the reverse of a textual strategy of monologic, top down pedagogy,

an approach that was a hallmark of the Griersonian documentary movement. While the

new Latin American Cinema movement did draw on aspects of the British documentary

movement as well as Italian neo-realism, its antecedents also lay in non-cinematic Third

World cultural practices such as India's Santinketan movement of the 1920s and 1930s,

Brazil's theatrical and literary avant-gardes of the 1920s and the Mexican Muralist

movement of the 1930s (Willemen, 1997).

This conception of cinema as a political practice propelled the movement's

critique of cinema as passive spectatorship, asserting instead its open communicational

possibilities. It sought to convoke a visual language of people in action in their lives, a

language of love, death, revenge, dignity, aspirations and hunger. In other words, it is a

practice of communication that is the opposite of "information". Hence, the movement

always treated cinema as part of a social totality and as a form that would contribute to a

broader cultural practice centred on social-historical knowledge. Its practitioners

elaborated a new aesthetic practice that cinema scholar Robert Stam describes as, "the

search for production methods and a style appropriate to the economic conditions and

political circumstances of the Third World" (cited in Martin, 1997: 17). Here, there is no settling "answer" but only an immense field of questions driven by an ethos of participation and a meshing of audience and subject matter, guided by the voices of those denied a voice. In this "imperfect cinema" (Espinosa, 1997), the emphasis is on the audience and dissolving the separation between spectator and text. It seeks to be both experimental and social, engaging emotion, intuition, and cognition.

But while Portillo's "vulnerable" stance, characteristic ambiguity and political emphasis on the social agency and dignity of her subjects certainly evokes the concerns and practices of the new Latin American cinema movement, *Señorita* articulates a number of significant renovations to the "aesthetics of liberation". First, her story is told from the perspectives of its most significant and grounded subjects: the victims, their families and women's rights advocates. In contrast to the historical revolutionary stance of the new Latin American cinema movement, Portillo's subject is not some abstract, homogenized concept of "the people". Second, her feminist cinema practice, while it may stand outside of the feminist film movement, is an important renovation in the masculinist stance of the movement and of its Hollywood and avant-garde adversaries. Specifically, *Señorita*'s portrayal of social agency and resistance to fear in the "private" sphere challenges the new Latin American cinema movement's singular emphasis on public action. It also confronts the Griersonian documentary tradition, which is self-defined around ideas of the public good and governmental strategies of public education (Druick, 2007). Third, *Señorita*'s transnationalism, bilingualism and biculturalism put into practice the theoretical internationalism of the radical cinema movement in a whole new way. *Señorita*'s remarkable circulation is undoubtedly due in part to its linguistic

accessibility outside the Spanish-speaking world and to the profoundly expanded

circulation of independent media over the last decade. But more significantly, its wide

circulation is an accomplishment grounded in Portillo's ability to connect on a profound

level with victims, the family members and other members of the movement confronting

the femicide, an integral accomplishment to the practice of communication that is

rendered through her film.

The connections between Portillo's cinema practice, *Señorita*'s relevance as a

documentary practice of anti-fear, and the new Latin American cinema movement extend

deep into the contemporary social context of Juarez itself. Critics of the state's role in the

violence in Juarez roundly link today's climate of insecurity to a rampant state of

impunity. Fighting this impunity is a primary activity of the justice movement that has

arisen around the femicide. This battle is a continuation of the movements against Latin

America's dictatorships, which reached a repressive apogee during the 1970s and 1980s.

Arguing that we must look at the violence through this historical political lens, Fregoso

(2003) argues that the femicide in Juarez represents a chilling updating of Latin

America's state-led "dirty wars", with its own specific and overt gender dimension.

While the wars of the Generals were once waged against leftists, so-called "internal

enemies", the present violence, she asserts, is one now waged against "disposable female

bodies" by multiple actors.

Like the movement against the femicide, Portillo's film adopts strategies of

representation that are analogous to the practices of anti-fear developed by social

movements during the dirty wars. One of the most common strategies of women's

movements of the disappeared in Argentina, Chile and El Salvador, for example, was

their audacious moral re-occupation of the enclosed public spaces appropriated by the military state. Groups such as the Mothers of the Disappeared in Argentina or *Comadre* in El Salvador would gather regularly in the regime's symbolic spaces of power, such as the plazas in front of government buildings. One of the most common strategies of visibility used by these groups involved carrying still photographs of the missing and dead, taken while they were alive, into those state/public spaces.

In Juarez today, the families of the murdered women and women's rights activists bring out photos of the murdered women along with other non-literal symbols that mark the unrepresentable violence, as a way of opening up spaces for communication and encounter amidst the public space of death that is Juarez for poor migrant women. But this strategy of visibility and encounter differs from the strategies of symbolic re-appropriation of social movements during the dirty wars because, unlike the periods of the military dictatorships, there is no centralized symbol of power and culpability. Today, the space of responsibility extends across the city and points to the dispersal of power and its multiple agents.

Returning to Taussig's contention that fear is socialized and circulated through the "problem of interpretation", we can now begin to grapple with the problem of representing the femicide from the perspective of the protagonists of the struggle for justice. As Fregoso explains, "[g]iven the absolute abjection of women through death, as well as the desecration of their bodies in public discourse, Lourdes [Portillo] confronted an enormous problem of representation." (2003: 25)

Fear by Numbers: The Problem of Representing Femicide

In many important ways *Señorita Extraviada* interrogates the violent image

politics that surround the response of the various levels of government and the industrial-

commercial and media establishments to the murders and disappearances of Juarez's

women. The documentary joins with the broader anti-femicide's movement's focus on

the problem of the state and media representations of the violence, characterizing it as a

"problem of interpretation". The problem comes into sharp focus in the context of the

highly competitive and precarious world of globalized manufacturing and tourism

investment, where cities are highly politicized image factories competing for business.

This is particularly the case for Juarez, a city whose accumulation strategy is particularly

outward focussed. Having undergone enormous international investment-driven growth

over the last three decades, Juarez is, with its highly image conscious tourist trade and

export manufacturing industries, a place especially reliant on the careful crafting of its

image as a border city that is open for business.

The growing publicity about the murders in recent years, especially in the

international media and among high profile human rights organizations like Amnesty

International, has opened up an intense battle over the representation of the city. As a

result of their public agitation for genuine justice, human rights activists and women's

groups have been demonized and threatened by those seeking to project a business-

friendly image of the city. The authorities have responded to their critics with a victim-

blaming narrative that suggests it is women's increasing public presence that is the cause

of the violence being waged against them. Ironically, the many media representations of

Juarez's gender violence routinely depict the public spaces of the city as dangerous "no-go" zones.

In general, de-contextualized, disembodied numbers have been the main currency of the commercial media's grisly crime reports, which circulate lurid images of ravaged, indistinguishable bodies and sensational descriptions of the victims, especially in the tabloid press and the television news media (Fregoso, 2000; Portillo, 2003). In serving to make its facts surreal, this symbolic violence is not only functional for those that wish to downplay it, but it is actually central to the circulation of fear in the border city's imagination. The media's repetitive violation of the victims and their families complements the government's dismissive victim-blaming strategy of representation. As part of the struggle to challenge the state and commercial media's strategy of representation which, critics argue, fuels fear, confusion and the climate of impunity, the movement has appropriated the representation of the violence by re-presenting the abstract numbers in the politicized language of femicide.

Unfortunately, representations of the femicide, even sympathetic ones, have generally been dominated by totalizing frames that make invisible both the complexity of the violence and the many forms of contestation. In the various interpretations of the femicide we can discern three dominant documentary strategies of representation: the tabloid media's sensational and salacious framework; the state's victim-blaming narrative; and the influential left counter-narrative of "globalism". In different and sometimes overlapping ways, all of these strategies of representation mobilize top down, totalizing fear discourses that, I will show, augment the "problem of interpretation". While approaching the violence from often radically different perspectives –

conservative, patriarchal, 'progressive' – these totalizing frameworks all convoke a "victimological" gaze.

I should emphasize that the following critique of the victimological gaze does not seek to imply that the murdered women were not victims of violence. Rather, it is meant to challenge a strategy of representation where the social agency of victims is either absent altogether or rendered in such a fragmentary and incoherent manner that makes it appear aberrant. In the rest of this chapter, I will discuss how *Señorita* deploys an alternate strategy of representation that is grounded in a bottom up emphasis on social agency; it is for this reason that Portillo's documentary, like the stance and strategies of the movement against the femicide, constitutes what I have been calling a practice of anti-fear.

City of Numbers

Juarez is a city of impressive – yet contested – numbers. Sitting across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas, this desert-bound agglomeration is the world's largest border town and North America's busiest border crossing. It is home to the border region's largest concentration of *maquiladora* workers, most of whom assemble clothing and electronics for export[52]. Since the Border Industrialization program was introduced

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[52] The establishment of free trade manufacturing districts known as Export Processing Zones (EPZ) was a plan initiated by the Mexican government in 1965 under the name of the Border Industrialization Program. Juarez was the first city to establish *maquiladora* plants in EPZs that then spread first along Mexican side of the US-Mexico border and are now increasingly present further south in the country, where wages are lower. The maquiladora model was one of the first experiments in globalized production and flexible accumulation. The term "maquiladora" or "maquila" comes from the Spanish word "maquilar", which historically referred to the milling of wheat into flour, for which the farmer would compensate the miller with a portion of the wheat, the miller's compensation being referred to as "maquila". The contemporary use of the term is to describe any partial activity in a manufacturing process, including assembly, packaging and sorting performed by a worker separately from the original manufacturer. Generally, the maquilas are located in industrial parks and in regions referred to as Export Processing Zones, which receive tax and tariff exemptions on value added.

in 1965, and especially during the years following the passage of NAFTA, Juarez has heaved under the weight of super-fast growth. The *maquiladora* industry has drawn millions of people to Mexico's northern border region, which during its period of greatest expansion in the 1990s, grew from approximately 100,000 residents to at least 12 million (Bowden, 1998). Today, Juarez is Mexico's fourth largest city, with population estimates ranging from 1.3 to 2.5 million inhabitants. It is estimated that hundreds of women and men pour into Juarez daily from Mexico's increasingly impoverished interior towns and southern rural villages, where three decades of escalating neoliberal restructuring has made rural life impossibly precarious. Indeterminate numbers of Juarez's new migrants have already crossed Mexico's southern border to get there, coming from similar conditions in Central American countries like Guatemala and El Salvador. For some, it is a stop before attempting the perilous trip over an increasingly militarized US border.

Many migrants, young women in particular, hope to find work in the city's 24-hour *maquila* industry, sewing clothing, assembling electronics or sorting mountains of coupons. Most of the new arrivals head to Juarez's sprawling periphery and construct a house in the sand in one of the manifold *colonias* (shantytowns). These new settlements are generally located far from the *maquiladoras* and other sources of employment, and so residents will spend long hours commuting to and from work. Because the settlements are so new, numerous and unregulated, most residents will have no address or secure land tenure. They will operate with little, if any, urban infrastructure because the political economy of the border requires that the bulk of the city's infrastructure resources be dedicated to the voracious and increasingly competitive demands of the *maquila* industry. In addition to being notorious for low wages, terrible working conditions and for

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widespread industrial pollution, a key aspect of the *maquila* industry's competitive edge

is the low or non-existent property and commercial taxes that the factories pay to the

cities that house them. As a result, few resources are available for any kind of urban

infrastructure. For example, until 1995 Juarez's *maquiladoras* paid no taxes to the city.

In January 1996, Juarez was the first Mexican municipality to institute a tax on the

industry, at a rate of 0.5 to 1 percent of the total monthly payroll (Bowden, 1998).

In an essay on the citizenship of fear in neoliberal Latin America, the late cultural

theorist Susana Rotker (2002) points to the dizzying presence of numbers that so

routinely organize the commercial media and official urban fear narratives. Through

their de-contextualized repetition, she argues, the numbers "do nothing but accumulate".

And, while for the news media and other realist genres such as documentary, numbers

may narrate an entry-point into a news story, the social meaning of the numbers quickly

erodes through constant repetition. In the context of the gender violence wracking

Juarez, the problem of representation is startlingly reflected in the struggle over numbers.

Advocates and families of the missing and murdered women say that somewhere between

300 and well over 400 women have been killed since 1993. Conversely, in 2006 the

Mexican government claimed that 90 victims fit the pattern of these crimes.

According to the Juarez-based advocacy group Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa

(Our Daughters Return Home), over 460 women have been murdered and more than 600

women have disappeared. *El Paso Times* journalist Diana Washington Valdez (2005)

says her research shows 320 victims between 1993 and June 2002. In the spring of 2001,

six months prior to the November 2001 discovery of eight women's bodies in a lot across

from the Maquiladora Association office in Juarez, a number of groups that included the

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Grupo 8 de Marzo, Comite Independiente de Chihuahua and the Taller de Genero de la Universidad Autonoma de Juarez, delivered a report entitled "Cases of Murdered Women in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua" to the UN special rapporteur for Human Rights, Dato Paran Cumarawany. That report listed 189 women murdered between January 1993 and April 2001. By early 2002, the number had soared to 289 murdered and 450 disappeared (Fregoso, 2003). Amnesty International's figures, presented in its major report "Intolerable Killings" (2003), document 370 women murdered between 1993 and 2003.

The Mexican authorities have vociferously claimed much lower numbers. Amnesty's report notes the discrepancy between the government's figure on missing women, which is 70, and the social organizations', which is over 400. In one of countless examples of this battle over numbers, a May, 2006 *New York Times* article by Pat H. Broeske on the proliferation of cultural productions that grapple with the Juarez murders was amended by a correction dated June 19 that stated:

> An article and headline on May 21 about films, plays and other works about the killings of women in Juarez, Mexico since 1993, misstated the number of victims who have been raped and strangled, with signs of ritual murder. According to Mexican law enforcement officials, it is about 90, not 400. (Estimates vary, but 400 is the approximate number of women killed in all kinds of cases in Juarez in that time).

Examples of the ways these figures are disputed by the authorities include the official definition of rape, which is limited to penile penetration, thereby excluding from the numbers those women's bodies found to have been raped with objects. In the case of the disappeared, the authorities have routinely refused to count a woman as missing and instead categorize her disappearance as the result of her running away from home to be with a boyfriend.

We need to pay close attention to the wildly different accounting provided by the victim's families and advocates and the official estimates. Whatever figure is believed to be the most legitimate, these numbers tell a story of a terrifying spike in violence against women. They also narrate the connection of the violence to battles over representation. For the political and commercial classes determined to protect the image of the city, the numbers are a matter of strategic deliberation over definitions.

To turn the disembodied numbers into a politicized representation of the excessive violence that makes Juarez a "space of death" (Taussig, 1987), feminists, human rights advocates and families of the murdered and missing women seek to evoke the violence behind the numbers, by calling what is happening a femicide. For the movement, the charge of femicide is an important discursive strategy to transform the heretofore unspeakable and private anguish into a public and social matter. The charge of femicide, a juridical term for gendered genocide is a way of politicizing the murders, making the violence at once public and global through the mobilization of the language of international law and the highlighting of the intersection between private violence and official terror (Camacho Schmidt, 2005). Movement activists use this terminology to represent the violence as constitutive of a deliberate and systemic effort to deny a whole category of women – poor, racialized and migrant – their basic rights of personal security and free mobility (Monarrez Fragoso, 2000). "One way to politicize violence against a class of women", Fregoso suggests, "is to redefine it not as isolated or personal in nature, but as a weapon of war, a tool of political repression sanctioned by an undemocratic and repressive regime, in its war against poor and indigenous communities" (2000: 143-44). This politicized conception of the violence is important in the absence of a declared

armed conflict or official policy of state repression in Juarez (Schmidt Camacho, 2005).

For the movement, the term femicide opens up the space of silence created by the

authorities, the perpetrators and those commercial agents of representation that exploit

this pervasive fear to de-politicize it.

The Victimological Gaze

In many ways, the femicide is a test-case scenario for the fear-as-capital logic

driving mainstream media representations of urban violence. The absence of images of

destroyed women's bodies in *Señorita* is a clear and deliberate oppositional strategy to

the tabloid and news media's lurid representations (Portillo, 2003). Chicana media

theorist Rita Gonzalez (2003) likens the regional and international commercial media

depictions of the violence to the sensational reporting found in the Mexican crime

magazine ALARMA, a publication that uniquely specializes in blood-spattered carnage.

Indeed, these representations have been broadly critiqued for their effect of not only

contributing to a climate of fear in the city but also for repeatedly violating the women

after their death. It is the victims' status as poor, dark women, critics charge, that renders

them not only "disposable" to the perpetrators in life but again and again in their

representation in death. Portillo found that the routine circulation of gory images

following the discovery of discarded women's bodies had a traumatic effect on the

women of Juarez (Torres, 2004). "Given the sensationalist tendencies of journalistic

accounts of the border," Gonzalez argues, "and the unique and complex identity of Juarez

as both city of the future and region of uneven development, the task of depicting its

recent history of violence demands an uncompromising, intelligent, culturally aware and

fearless approach" (2003: 235). The importance of *Señorita*'s accomplishment, she

asserts, lays in how Portillo managed to both depict the problem of the invisibility of the victims and subvert the hyper-visibility of the salacious representation of brutal death.

In the book *Juarez: Laboratory of our Future* by US journalist Charles Bowden (1998), we find reproductions of a number of the images of the murdered women that have been circulated in the press. Bowden's stated intent is to highlight the work of the city's "street shooters", photographers who roam the streets snapping Weegee-style images, depicting the "real" of Juarez's iconic underbelly. Virtually absent from the sensational images of the ravaged women's bodies, here and elsewhere in the tabloid media, is any context of the victim's lives. Any background content that is supplied consists of moralizing, scandalized speculations about their activities, a perhaps profitable habit, but one that movement activists and the families have widely criticized. In this way, the victims continued to be violated physically in the mediated reproduction of their bodies without their consent, but also figuratively in their public consumption as objects of moral scrutiny.

It is not only the media that have speculated on the women's activities. State officials have also responded to demands for action with the familiar accusations that the women themselves are responsible for their terrible fate. The state displaces the blame to the women and their families to silence its critics, who have themselves been labelled by government officials and business and civic organization as "enemies of modernity" and for undermining Juarez's global image[53] (Schmidt Camacho, 2005). This official strategy of deflection pivots on the familiar demonizing trope of the "vagrant" woman,

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[53] As thousands of border manufacturing jobs are transferred to China, the activists themselves are blamed for the downturn in the border economy. According to Melissa Wright (2005), between 2000 and 2003 more than 100,000 jobs have been lost in the state of Chihuahua alone. This trend has led some researchers of the region to announce the "end of the maquila era" (Fregoso, 2003).

moving freely, publicly and therefore dangerously through the city in flagrant disregard

for its devouring reproach (ibid.). In the state's utopian patriarchal narrative, the safe

woman is the virtuous woman who remains under the cover of the home, a place which is

constructed, spuriously, as the only secure place for a woman in a rapidly growing city.

Through its discourse of vagrancy (*vagancia*) against virtue, the state has

attempted to link deviant sexuality to women's transgressive presence in public spaces

(Schmidt Camacho, 2005; Tabuenca Cordoba, 2003). Conversely, feminist activists

argue that the violence against women in Juarez represents a "deliberate and systemic"

effort to control women's mobility and to deny their security in public spaces (Schmidt

Camacho, 2005). As feminist border scholar Maria Socorro Tabuenca Cordoba (2003)

argues, the discourse of virtue that organizes the state's representation of the femicide is a

strategy to control women's movement in the highly mobile space of the border region at

the same time that neoliberal restructuring reorganizes women's relationship to public

and private spheres of production. One significant expression of this strategy of

immobilization and control is in the state's personal safety campaigns that are directed at

Juarez women via radio broadcasts. The announcements target behaviour in public,

urging women to avoid wearing high heels and make up and going out in the street,

especially at night. The fear-inducing effect of these campaigns is reflected in women's

expression of everyday fear in Juarez: fear of men, of going out at night by themselves

and fear of waiting for the bus that takes them to the *maquilas* (Landau and Angulo,

2000).

Early on in *Señorita*, Portillo effectively interrogates this strategy with an image

dialectic that juxtaposes her original footage with culled television news footage

depicting the tone of the official investigation. In one rendering, the governor of the state of Chihuahua Francisco Barrio (1992-1998) is explaining that the authorities have found a pattern in the murders: the victims, he states, have been frequenting night clubs and keeping company with gang members. In another scene, the state's Attorney General, Jorge Lopez, appears in a television interview enthusiastically tabling his office's idea of imposing a citywide curfew to address the violence. He backs up his plan by reiterating that this will not pose any problems for the "good girls" who should be at home with their families. The "bad girls", he proposes, can then be left to their own devices along with the rest of the city's unsavoury characters. When his interviewer points out the fact that the fuel of Juarez's industrial economy – the 24-hour *maquila* industry that pulls many women into and out of the industrial parks at all hours – requires a highly mobile labour force that happens to be largely female, Lopez concedes, "well, you can't impose this on workers." *Señorita* then cuts to an interview with a Juarez human rights activist who points out that immediately following public pronouncements from officials blaming the victims for being out at night and for dressing provocatively, the number of murders of women always rises. By taking these officials' confident victim-blaming discourses out of their deeply conservative frame and placing them within an oppositional narrative, Portillo highlights the problem of interpretation by pointing to the culpability, and ludicrousness, of the political class.

As noted earlier, the critical discourse of globalism – a conception of capitalist globalization as total, inexorable and without fissures – has been an influential framework for interpreting the violence both in many critical left interpretations and in the international media. This discourse also invokes the discourse of dread of women in

public. Fregoso roundly critiques this habit of framing the femicide around the top down, totalizing discourse of globalism because it discounts the widespread acts of active resistance to the violence and reproduces a hegemonic, even if sympathetic, understanding of it. As a result, "the subject of the discourse of globalism is an abject one: a subject in need of regulation; a subject as passive victim; or a subject as fetish of the masculine gaze" (2003: 9). Moreover, this interpretive framework of globalism, as a discourse of inevitable, self-propelling power, with its problematic stress on the disintegration of the state, inadvertently exculpates the state's complicity in perpetuating the violence (ibid.).

Ironically, in other instances, the discourse of globalism replicates the state's own narratives of the femicide, which assert that the violence is caused by women's transgressive presence in public space. In this way, the globalism=femicide perspective disregards the active production of terror by the Mexican state itself. It also either makes, or provides space for, specious culturalist arguments that connect neoliberal globalization with cultural degradation brought on by women's growing public presence and participation in the productive economy. Given its focus on the effect of transnational capital's deleterious impact on spaces of work and leisure on the border, Fregoso emphasizes that the problem of interpreting the femicide through the framework of globalism is that its emphasis on non-domestic spaces elides other oppressions (ibid).

This temptation to make a causal connection between globalization and radical social disintegration structures the central narrative of the femcide in another border documentary, *Maquila: A Tale of Two Mexicos* (Landau and Angulo, 2000). Fregoso lauds *Maquila* for its treatment of the movement to organize unions in the Export

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Processing Zones along the border. This, she asserts, provides an important challenge to the inevitablist discourses of the more famous left globalists like David Harvey and Zygmunt Bauman. These critics' assertions about the impossibility of organizing in the hyper-controlled context of the free trade zones is belied by the actually existing organizing efforts there. But in regards to its treatment of the femicide, Fregoso argues, the documentary falls into the totalizing, victimological trap of the globalists and on the way adopts the patriarchal stance of the state and the tabloid media. *Maquila* does this by arguing that the violence is connected to the increased presence of women in the public domain, which is itself a result of economic globalization. This "destroying the social fabric" narrative, Fregoso argues, reiterates the state's line about public space as space of danger. This stance is backed up further by the documentary's soundtrack. The lyrics of its *corridos*, the border's musical genre, are heavily inflected with warnings about the danger of public spaces, and especially the *maquiladoras*.

The reasons for pivoting the narrative of the femicide upon globalization are of course linked directly to Juarez's status as the vanguard of the globalized production regime. Because the city is so strongly associated with the *maquila* industry and the industry itself has been so controversial, *maquiladoras* figure prominently in human rights discourses, in the international media and among critical scholars and artists interrogating the femicide. This is especially the case for Mexican and international critics of NAFTA, and by extension neoliberalism generally, for whom the factories have been a major focus of anguish and agitation. For example, in an essay on the dystopic meshing of the U.S-Mexico border post-NAFTA, Mike Davis (2004) describes the murders in Juarez as being directed specifically against *maquila* workers. In an essay on

the femicide, novelist and cultural critic Alicia Gaspar de Alba (2003) describes it directly as the "*maquiladora* murders".

Citing numbers that counter this conception, Fregoso (2003) lodges an important critique of the reductive emphasis on the public expressions of global transformation such as the *maquila* industry and the chaotic and dangerous city street, as not only incomplete but problematic in that the singular, monolithic emphasis on globalization misses the complexity of the femicide and does not adequately explain it. While a number of the victims have been *maquiladora* workers, and the factories themselves are the major reason why Juarez is such an important magnet for women migrants, the victims have also been students, housewives, drug traffickers, sales clerks, sex workers and domestic workers. Besides adding important nuance to the complex dynamics of gender, work and experiences of violence on the border, this fact emphasizes the importance of de-mystifying the domestic and private as safe spaces for women. In other words, while fear is certainly a dominant aspect of everyday experience in the *maquilas*, a contention backed by decades of research and testimony from workers, it is the equation of the public domain with danger and the failure to address the domestic and private as a space of fear for women that Fregoso takes issue with. This omission, she argues, treats the *maquila* system as inert, not only removing responsibility for the fact of the danger it represents from its engineers, but also suggesting that the problem resides in women's threatening presence in the historic male realm of productive, public life.

Drawing on Benjamin's notion of the fetish in the social relations of representation, feminist geographer Melissa Wright's (1999) analysis also complicates the problem of totalizing discourses by examining how the *maquila* industry itself takes

advantage of what I referred to earlier as the victimological gaze. As an accumulation

regime organized around the production of disposable workers, she argues, the industry

benefits from the culturalist frameworks for interpreting the violence:

> The image of the murder victims – many of them former maquila
> employees abducted on their commutes between home and work – also
> represents value for the industry as cultural victims. Through descriptions
> of Mexican cultural violence, jealous machismo, and female sexuality,
> maquila exculpation finds its backing. No degree of investment in public
> infrastructure to improve transportation routes, finance lighting on streets,
> boost public security or hold seminars in the workplace will make any
> difference (Wright, 1999: 471).

Finally, Fregoso suggests an interpretive framework for understanding the

relationship between the *maquila* industry and the violence that both accounts for the

important role of *maquiladoras* in the political economy of the border region while

demolishing the problematic claims of cultural degradation and female abjection:

> Rather than targeting "actual" maquila workers, it is much more accurate
> to say that the misogynist and racist killers are targeting members of the
> urban reserve of wage labour of the maquiladora industry, namely a pool
> of female workers migrating from southern Mexico and Central America
> and living in the poor surrounding *colonias* of Juarez. (Fregoso, 2003: 8)

Social Agency

In sharp contrast to the victimological frame, *Señorita* re-casts the public woman

and cultural victim as a social agent. Here, against the circulation of fear, confusion and

depictions of ravaged bodies, the femicide's obscured story of people in action emerges,

struggling for justice against an intransigent state and enacting solidarity against the

overwhelming subjectivity of fear. Portillo refuses representations of destroyed bodies.

Alternately, the film's confrontation with death takes place through the use of

testimonials and the allegorical use of personal effects, including clothing, shoes and

photos of the women taken when they were alive. These are things that make visible the victims' personhood, their individual reality, their bodies as places once inhabited with a life, a soul that is cherished by others. This representational strategy reflects the strategy of visibility deployed by Juarez's women's groups, for whom "voicing the unspeakable in public has been a vital means to interrupt the devalorization of the dead as disposable bodies" (Schmidt Camacho, 2005: 273). Here, Portillo retains her "vulnerable" approach to filmmaking, which as I have argued earlier, simultaneously advances Brecht's fighting notion of popular culture.

This grounding in social agency is not only a subversion of the dominant representations of the commercial media: it is also a counter to the top down conventions of documentary. Indeed the testimony that Portillo includes directly in her documentary on the process of creating *Señorita* recalls the cinema of liberation movement's calls for a renovation in the practice of filmmaking that challenged not only the way cinema looked and felt, but also the process of making it. Reflecting on the challenges of locating the subjects of her documentary in the context of such media-fuelled confusion and generalized social fear, Portillo recounts how her point of entry came through an invitation by a small human rights organization to join their weekly *rastreo*, a search party that combs the desert for bodies and evidence. There she met some of the victim's family members who became *Señorita*'s protagonists. "In that afternoon I saw a harrowing panorama of what might be taking place," Portillo recounts, "carefully painted by the testimonies of those same people who suffered through the ordeals. My world was shaken to its core, and the fear experience by the people of Juarez became part of my own daily life for the next three years" (2003: 229-230).

This profound connection with the social agents of the story and their positioning as the documentary's principle source of knowledge renders the filmmaker a producer of communication versus a transmitter of information. What I am arguing is that as a result of this approach to communication, *Señorita* is grounded in the complex social relationships produced by people in action, and which precisely make any communication possible amidst the generalized fear that surrounds them. Even though Portillo's film retains her poetic commitment to ambiguity, this articulation of practices of communication and social movement from the perspective of the protagonists of culture enables her to make a documentary in the radical mode of what Glauber Rocha (1997) characterized as the an essential oppositional cinema of "lucidity". This is in stark contrast to the sea of confusion and inexplicableness that structure the dominant victimological interpretive frame.

My claiming of a difference between Portillo's ambiguity and the bewilderment of the victimological narrative may sound contradictory, but it is not. My point is that unlike the helpless opacity of the latter, the indeterminacy of Portillo's approach is deliberate and carefully constructed so as to shed light on the multiple factors and actors that come into play in Juarez, including the often neglected social agency of the victims, their relatives and the activists who mobilize against the femicide.

In a number of interesting ways, *Señorita's* grounding in the social agency of its protagonists unhinges the state's largely dismissive narrative. In one stunning scene, *Señorita* effectively chisels at the artifice of official power when Eva Arce, the mother of one of the victims brings her research to the embattled government-appointed "special prosecutor" for the missing women, Suly Ponce. Arce is a central character in the film

and Portillo tracks her tenacious, lonely investigations into her daughter's disappearance while the authorities appear determined to undermine it. Interview clips with the intermittently sympathetic and combative Ponce appear throughout the film, gradually revealing her role as a person who seems to be entirely dedicated to shielding the authorities from inquires about what they are doing or not, rather than conducting an investigation. As a woman and a representative of the state, Ponce is the film's most ambiguous character. When the prosecutor balks at the supply of information from the resolute Arce, the exasperated mother asks: "What are you afraid of?" Leaning in towards Arce, a visibly anxious Ponce responds: "you aren't afraid?"

The Politics and Poetics of Evidence

In the opening sequence of *Señorita*, Portillo recounts that when she arrived in Juarez to investigate the murders, "the most significant thing was the silence." How, she wonders, does a filmmaker represent silence? "I came to Juarez to track down ghosts", Portillo continues in a voiceover as her camera pans across the parched, sprawling border landscape. Her utterances introduce us to images of the place where hundreds of "young, poor, brown, unprotected women" have been murdered over the past decade. Juarez emerges out of the desert sand as a city of frenetic movement, and through a rapid succession of seemingly disjointed images she begins weaving the official and unofficial investigations of the case, comparing the evidence, both material and discursive, and linking the murders with the material context.

Through the use of culled television footage and archival material, interviews and reconstructions, a counter-narrative of the murders and disappearances emerges and a devastating yet inconclusive chain of culpability is considered, linking powerful criminal

networks, the police, the maquilas, the drug mafia, and the state's murky incompetence. In one brief sequence, even the border itself emerges as a suspect, a zone of trespass for a theoretical US serial killer. By entering into and opening up the space of fear-fuelled silence and interrogating the general climate of insecurity that shrouds the story of the murdered and the missing, *Señorita* recognizes that the 'murderer' is more general than the specific and sensational serial killer narratives claim.

But as I will argue in this section, the problem of conventional criminological epistemologies that have been a staple of the documentary tradition occupies the centre of the film's treatment of the politics of fear in Juarez. In reflecting on the challenges of making *Señorita* in this especially confusing and dangerous context, Portillo testifies to having to develop an alternative strategy for establishing a narrative of investigation out of the tumult of the visible evidence:

> When I decided to make a documentary about the girls, I went to Juarez and found a deafening wall of silence: most people were too terrorized to speak out. The authorities, when questioned, gave only cavalier and confused responses. There was no way to make a documentary in which any approximation to journalistic objectivity could be claimed. (Portillo, 2003: 229)

But even armed with the narrative openness made possible by Portillo's abandonment of conventional evidentiary claims to objectivity, the enormous obfuscation that surrounds the femicide still requires unravelling the dense knot of untruths that envelop the social context of the violence. This is an instance where Portillo's commitment to ambiguity, her version of Espinosa's "imperfect cinema", is most daring and effective. Through her inconclusive approach, Portillo abandons the conventional strategies of the realist documentary, and in particular the dubious realism of the crime

investigation genre, while maintaining a stance of stark realism. To achieve this, she privileges the perspective of the victims, their families and the women's rights activists whose experience, agitation and advocacy makes them producers of the most reliable knowledge.

Yet *Señorita* does not entirely dispense with the crime documentary's investigative mode. Rather, I would argue that its typical strategies of deduction are employed to weave together essential aspects of the background context in order to highlight the problem of interpretation. Through her depiction and assessment of the state's well timed, high-profile arrests of suspects, Portillo shows that we cannot see the truth simply by having it shown to us. Here, as I discuss in detail below, we witness the extent to which reality, steeped as it is in complex socio-political dynamics, is contingent. Indeed, the parade of false arrests of possible murder suspects depicted throughout the film is unsettling in the extreme. The authorities' eagerness to pin the crime on an appropriately unsavoury suspect or group of suspects so as to not disrupt the organization of power is one of the only lucid truths to emerge from the state's highly politicized investigation. This challenges the viewer to re-consider the conventional documentary treatment of causality, criminality and punishment as matters of identifying and corralling individual pathologies. It urges the audience to question the state as the appropriate guarantor of justice. To do this, *Señorita* embarks on an investigation into the highly public arrests and imprisonment of suspects in 1995, 1996, 1999 and 2001. The film sensitively uses interviews with the suspects' lawyers, human rights advocates and archival footage of the suspect's testimonies to problematize the intersection of raw

individual culpability and the opaque function of evidence in a context of institutional impunity.

Introducing the Suspects

Early on in the film, *Señorita* launches into an interrogation of the sensational arrest of the femicide's first suspect, a wealthy Egyptian chemist who was working for a US-owned *maquiladora* when he was arrested in 1995. Abel Latif Sharif Sharif, already in possession of a criminal record for rape and assault in the US, was the first of a number of dubious characters to be charged with the murders. Given his record, his wealth, his belligerent personal style and his Otherness in the eyes of the Orientalist media and authorities, Sharif provided an ideal suspect. Through interviews with his lawyer and careful examination of television footage, a complex image of "Juarez's favourite scapegoat" (Gaspar de Alba, 2003: 7) begins to emerge. Portillo shows the tremendous effort that the authorities expended in order to attribute all of the murders to Sharif despite the evidence to the contrary. She unpacks how, with the help of the commercial media, the authorities' bizarre theories can be convincing to a terrified population. We learn that by the time Sharif moved to Juarez in 1994, twelve bodies had already been discovered. Six months after his detention, when women's bodies continued to turn up, police claimed he was orchestrating the murders from prison.

Following this lead, *Señorita* takes us through the arrest of a group of teenaged drug runners from the *Los Rebeldes* gang, who the police claimed Sharif was paying 1,200 dollars for each victim[54]. The charges were dropped when the press revealed that

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[54] This amount immediately raised suspicions about the authenticity of the claim considering that the going rate for a narco-mafia ordered assassination was 500 dollars (Gaspar de Alba, 2003).

the teenagers were beaten into confessing, and all but the only adult member of the group, who was directly implicated in one of the murders, were released. Portillo then traces another lead that emerged in 1999 with the arrest of a gang of drug-addicted bus drivers called *Los Choferes*, who transported women to and from the shantytowns and the *maquiladoras*. They were arrested after a 13-year-old girl who had survived a gang rape pressed charges against a bus driver. The drivers also claimed they were tortured into confessing. Here, *Señorita* splices in a chilling scene from a television interview with one of the suspects, where he is urging parents to protect their daughters because the killers are still out there. Eventually all but one of the drivers, identified by the girl as her attacker, were released after pictures of them showing signs of torture appeared in the press. These investigations expose an important counter-narrative to the state's theatrical attempts to resolve the crimes by attributing them to characters whose generalized criminality conveniently frames their social culpability. Meanwhile, the social dimensions of the violence go unexamined to the extent that women's groups have joined the families of suspects demanding a genuine investigation into the finding of the real killers.

The Cross and the Photo: Symbolism as Social Investigation and Activist Interrogation

In problematizing the fraught investigations and evidentiary claims of the state, *Señorita* elaborates a difficult counter-narrative using non-literal forms of representation. Images of the desert where hundreds of bodies have been discovered are layered with images of a woman's profile, a single abandoned shoe, young girls looking in shop windows, girls working in the stores, girls walking through a nameless shantytown; buses

driving through the desert, dropping women off at the *maquiladora*; search parties

scouring a barren desert swath, and women painting black crosses on pink backgrounds

on street poles. Here, the audience is witness to the importance that non-literal forms of

representation play in Juarez's anti-femicide movement as a strategy to counter the

violence of the dominant representations of mutilated bodies, a practice that itself works

to quell oppositional voices through the mediation of fear.

The cross, one of the most recognized symbols of the movement, is a central trope

used in the film, marking both *Señorita*'s active connection with the movement and its

persistent interrogation of the problem of representation. The crosses started appearing in

Juarez in May 1999 as part of a campaign of visibility launched by a group of women

calling itself "Voces Sin Eco/Voices without Echo". For several years, its members

gathered on weekends to paint crosses around the city to protest against the state. The

placing of crosses to mark the spot where a loved one died is a familiar symbol and

important ritual in Mexican popular culture. Here, the crosses are oppositional and

affective symbols of public anguish butting up against the wall of official denial and

publicly marking Juarez as a space of death for women.

In considering the symbolic weight of crosses in light of the bitter colonial history

that they evoke, Fregoso argues that, far from fortifying traditional power, in the hands of

the movement the crosses represent a symbolic appropriation: "The ghostly barren black

crosses on pink backgrounds, painstakingly emblazoned around Ciudad Juarez as

abrasions in public discourse, as embodiments less of Christ, the man made flesh, but of

female flesh made human sacrifice" (2000: 151). In evoking mass death, their insistent

repetition signals the constant violation that occurs with the routine publishing of photos

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of dead and mutilated victims in the mainstream media. "Faced with such literalness and explicitness, religiosity is a mode for re-imagining the murdered, violated body otherwise: as a subject undeserving of annihilation" (Fregoso, 2003: 22). At the very least, they make visible the lesions on the social body of the wounded city, testifying against the crushing effects of silence and atomizing fear.

From my perspective, as an appropriated symbol that holds great popular resonance, the crosses themselves provide a vector for the movement's communicational insurgency. As a stark visual testimony, they bring people together symbolically as well as physically, providing a way of overcoming the atomizing effects of mass mediated culture's lonely spectatorship. The use of the cross is also a counter-discourse of representation that brings Juarez's secret out into the public, through a visual discourse of loss that seeks to represent the unspeakable. This public voicing of the unspeakable has been crucial, argues Alicia Schmidt-Camacho (2005), to disrupt the systematic devalorization of the dead and missing as part of the inevitable waste of neoliberal development. In this way, the cross appears as a medium for the symbolic appropriation of public space to mourn the dead but also to articulate a new public identity for women (Fregoso, 2003).

The movement's use of the popular symbol of the cross diverges from other campaigns against impunity and political violence in Latin America, which , as I explained earlier, have more typically used the photograph to evoke the ghostly presence of loved ones and render visible the crimes of the state. But the photo also plays an important role in *Señorita*. Portillo uses the photo – an important device in much of her work (McBane, 2001) – to invoke the centrality of memory in the families' struggle for

justice. Photos of the victims taken when they were very much alive are interspersed throughout *Señorita*, appearing in sharp contrast to the violence of the commercial media's portrayal of the women as anonymous, lifeless mutilated corpses. Taken for identification cards, *quinceañera* celebrations and treasured family portraits, the spectral images act as punctuation marks, signalling narrative transitions and humanizing the subject. They pull the documentary's witness into a space of identification through their unsettling everydayness and their emotional intimacy set against the backdrop of the knowledge of their subject's death.

I read in this image dialectic a communicational affinity with John Berger's conception of the two distinct uses of photography: the public and the private. The private photo, he proposes, despite its stillness, continues to be surrounded in its intimate context, thus making it a memento of a life lived. Conversely, the public photo is "a seized set of appearances, which has nothing to do with us, its readers or with the original meaning of the event. It offers information, but information severed from all lived experience" (1991: 56). By cleaving the social embedded in the image in this way, Berger offers not only an insightful feminist critique through which to consider *Señorita*'s use of quotidian family photos. For my purposes, his conception of the public and the private could also be considered as corresponding to a vital distinction between information and communication. While information is associated with objectivity and evidence, communication relates to the affective and to social relationships.

Spaces of Impunity: the Maquila and the Police

In this section, I will show how the communicative significance of the interspersed photos comes into sharp relief during *Señorita*'s interrogation of the maquila

industry. Through a collection of photos of a young *maquiladora* worker named Sagrario Gonzalez, who disappeared one day after leaving work, the film considers an alarming theory of the industry's direct role, itself tied to the use of photos of women. Sagrario's grief-stricken mother explains to Portillo's camera that someone at the *maquiladora* had changed her schedule on that day. Her daughter left the factory without the protection of her family and vanished. Several of the reproduced images of Sagrario were taken while she was at work at the *maquiladora*. Having women workers pose for photos, especially on the Friday paydays, is a common industry practice, human rights activist Judith Galarza reports in the film. The photos are evidence of possible industry involvement in the killings, a theory that she urges needs to be investigated. "I believe they choose them from the photos", Galarza charges, adding that the authorities are uninterested in seriously investigating this thread because of the strategic economic role of the multi-billion dollar industry. "The *maquilas* are untouchable, nothing is investigated", Galarza insists. Once again, we see Portillo's indeterminacy in fact shedding light on otherwise hidden actors and potential culprits as well.

Through the casting of the photos as material evidence of a possible crime, together with the testimonies of Sagrario's family and other movement activists, Portillo interrogates the contradictory situation of poor women's inclusion as economic actors, as magnets for multi-national capital, and their social exclusion from any formal system of justice or representation in the transnational space of the border. This differential inclusion in the globalized system of production and representation is highly dependent upon the industry's control of the image. As Wright argues, the *maquila* industry's harnessing of representation and articulation of the femicide connects directly to the way

the devaluation of women on the border as inputs in the global assembly line also creates value: "Any activity that contests the normalization of the crimes and challenges the devaluation of the victims threatens the value that is supported by such processes" (Wright, 2005: 379). As was discussed above, the vigorous efforts by the industry and government officials to retain this control over the representation of the murders include the harassment of the families and women's groups, whose national and international movement-building have made them targets of a vicious campaign of demonization by the authorities and the *maquila* industry. Portillo's film directly entered the debate in 2003, a peak moment of international attention on Juarez's femicide, when two plant managers tried to stop a public screening *Señorita* organized by local activists (Wright 2004).

Photos are also prominent in *Señorita*'s investigation of the connections between police impunity and direct involvement in the killings. This is examined through the testimony of a survivor named Maria Talamatez, whose extraordinary courage appears against the terrifying violence she experienced at the hands of the police. The photos that figure prominently in this narrative are not made visible. Rather, their significance is explained as part of Maria's description of her brutal rape at a police station. During her captivity, she explains, the police officers attacking her used photos depicting women being murdered as a strategy to terrorize her into silence.

The story not only points to evidence of the possible culpability of the police, I argue, but it also elucidates the function of impunity more generally in the circulation of fear. Maria's testimony ought to be located within the context of widespread fear and distrust of the police and the justice system in Mexico. This fear is backed by the fact

that 97 percent of reported crimes go unpunished, a figure that suggests far more than the culturalist denunciations of "Third World" institutional incompetence and corruption. As Schmidt Camacho (2005) explains, we ought to think about impunity as a function of state terror, itself the historical agent of capitalist enclosure. Contrary to the influential ideas that police criminality or criminal complicity are either aberrant, or an unfortunate symptom in the growing pains of neoliberal development, or the regrettable result of illicit cultures of border cities like Juarez, Schmidt Camacho (2005) argues that the state and transnational industry not only tolerate but also exploit public fears of the police as a generalized strategy of social discipline. "While international observers commonly represent the gender violence in Juarez as a regressive cultural manifestation of masculine aggression," she suggests "it is perhaps better understood as a rational expression of the contradictions arising from the gendered codes of neoliberal governance and development." (2005: 297)

In this way, Maria's testimony is the basis for *Señorita*'s interrogation of the role of the state in producing a permanent "state of emergency" in the context of its neoliberal accumulation and control strategy. It also grounds Fregoso's contention that, "Mexico's neoliberal policies – its divestment in the public sphere, instituted by the shift from a welfare state to a state that facilitated globalization – has produced the very culture of violence that it purports to police" (Fregoso, 2003: 19). Most significantly perhaps, *Señorita*'s critical stance returns to the side of the victims. That Maria narrates her own account of the police violence against her is an affirmation of her agency and, thereby, a practice of anti-fear in its a subversion of the intended effect of the terror to which she was subjected. Instead, Portillo's film opens the space not only for the investigation of

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possible explanations of the femicide but also for Maria's courage, compounded with the courage of others in the film, to circulate among its witnesses.

Counter Communicational Networks: Circulating the Movement

> In an effort to further inform people about the on-going violence against women in the border town of Ciudad Juarez, we encourage people to watch this show tomorrow night. Of course, watching a TV show is not social change, but this film is a vehicle that opens dialogue and will focus a unified voice of political pressure. The wall of government silence, corruption and inaction on these cases is solid, but not uncrackable. Together, we will bring it down.
> *– email circulated by the Mexico Solidarity Network announcing the television debut of the film* Señorita Extraviada

As I have argued, insurgent communication against social fear is organized around opening up material as well as mediated spaces for visibility and encounter in a way that moves against passive conceptions of spectatorship. Here, the problem of distribution and exhibition remains central to any consideration of the capacity for a documentary like *Señorita* to grapple with the problem of interpretation. Given the overwhelming power monopoly of North American and European commercial media distribution and exhibition networks throughout the world, new Latin American cinema founder Fernando Birri argued in 1962: "the most important thing is exhibition and distribution" (1997: 90). Likewise, since the 1970s, feminist cinema has also emphasized the importance of developing autonomous distribution capacities. In the present contradictory context of global media concentration, dispersal and privatization, this challenge of opening spaces for the circulation of alternative documentary continues to central to be a central point of cultural struggle.

Since its release in 2001, the international circulation of *Señorita* has been remarkable. The significance of the documentary, as a film and as a political intervention, lies not only in its imaginative capacity to represent the unspeakable and present a counter-narrative of the violence that privileges social agency. Its impact is also inextricably anchored to Portillo's effective connection with the movement in a way that turns that representation of death into a sensitive polemic against fear. As a *practice* of anti-fear, the documentary encourages us to consider cinema as communication, rather than simply representation or information. This conception of radical cinema as communication practice is the galvanizing force behind its unique mode of engaged circulation. Since its release in 2001, *Señorita* has been invaluable in the struggle to make the femicide visible and to open spaces of encounter among groups and individuals seeking justice. In other words, the importance of its circulation lays not simply in its capacity to represent the problem but in its dedication to changing it.

The movement against the femicide is the most significant social movement to emerge in northern Mexico in decades (Schmidt Camacho, 2005). Because of the hard, effective work of activist groups in publicizing the story, from the time of *Señorita*'s release in 2001 to the present, the femicide has become a flashpoint issue in Mexico and it has been the focus of a great deal of high profile international attention and action. In turn, of the many cultural expressions and interventions on the femicide, Portillo's is considered to have had the greatest impact (Murillo, 2004). The wide circulation of *Señorita* – from outdoor pirate screenings in Mexico City to international film festivals and screenings in Canada, Spain, Italy, Greece, Norway, Thailand and the US among others, to a feature on PBS's independent documentary program POV, to screenings with

families of the murdered women, artists, activists and even government officials and *maquiladora* operators in Juarez – has undoubtedly been instrumental in animating the movement against femicide which now has significant national and international profile.

The timing of the film's release in 2001 coincided with a profound moment of convergence of events and organizations. In November 2001, despite the latest round of spectacular arrests of murder suspects, the dead bodies of eight women were discovered across from the headquarters of the Maquiladora Association. The police assassination of a Juarez defense lawyer who was the working on the femicide cases suggested, in combination with the other events, a turning point. It was at this moment that the official strategy of victim-blaming and moral panic really started to collapse (Fregoso, 2003). At that point, hundreds of organizations, feminist, civil and human rights, from Juarez and El Paso joined existing networks.

In December 2001, 30,000 protesters from both sides of the border gathered in Juarez to protest the violence. In March 2002, hundreds of women dressed in black and marched the 370 kilometres from Chihuahua City to the Juarez-El Paso border. Students, elders, factory workers, professionals, housewives, and others were among the participants in the "Exodus for Life" campaign that sought to connect the global justice movement against neoliberalism and the rise of state terror on the border (Fregoso, 2003). The transnational character of these events speaks to how vital international ties are for Juarez's women's claims to justice and autonomy from the state (Schmidt Camacho, 2005). The crucial importance of the transnational aspect of the movement is reiterated by the case of Esther Chavez Cano, one of the most visible feminist figures in Juarez, who has herself been the object of numerous death threats for her advocacy work. If it

were not for the international pressure, Chavez Cano maintains, no investigations or any official movement whatsoever would be happening (ibid.). Furthermore, the opening created by the film in concert with other international activities is vital due to the fact that it is too dangerous to act in Juarez alone.

Still, or perhaps because of the upsurge in the movement's profile, the murders continued apace and activist groups were being threatened and infiltrated to intimidate them into stopping their advocacy (Portillo, 2003). For Portillo, the urgency of the situation demanded a more direct approach to distributing *Señorita*. Armed with her film, Portillo re-financed her house and spent a year touring the world screening *Señorita* at film festivals, activist and community spaces, in schools, conferences and universities. It began winning numerous awards, including Human Rights Watch's Nestor Almendros award, which helped to raise awareness about the femicide internationally. Given the growing international profile of the femicide, Portillo determined it was crucial that the film travel in Mexico too, and she collaborated with Mexican filmmaker Maria Navaro who organized numerous screenings in Mexico City. Pirated copies were produced and circulated. The film's first public screening in the capital's leafy Coyoacan plaza brought over 2,000 people out. Afterwards, two of Mexico's most prominent public intellectuals, Elena Poniatowska and Carlos Monsivais led a discussion with the audience (Portillo, 2003). By December 2002, 10,000 people demonstrated in Mexico City's Zocalo, in front of the National Palace, demanding that President Fox launch a federal investigation into the murders. Around this time, the mainstream media coverage also started to shift and to focus more on state corruption and indifference. The influential Mexico City

leftist daily *La Jornada* began framing its discussions of the violence in terms of racism, classism and misogyny (Fregoso, 2003).

Señorita's contribution to circulating resistance to the femicide beyond the border region and its animating role within the movement in Mexico and internationally speaks to its important connection with planetary social movements against the global enclosures. For Fregoso (2003: 25), *Señorita* is an activist film not only because it "refuses to withdraw from political action [...] expressing moral outrage and seizing terror through confrontations." It is also an activist film, she argues, because of its connection to the movement of "planetary civil society" against neoliberalism. This dialectic pivots on the film's emphasis on animating social agency versus victimization. Further, *Señorita*'s intersectional approach to analyzing the femicide enables it to deftly tackle the neoliberal economy, the state, and localized forms of patriarchy. All of this together has been vital to its contribution to both providing a counter-narrative to the immobilizing effect of the dominant victimological interpretive framework and in animating the movement's vital national and transnational connections.

* * *

In an essay about her experience of making *Señorita Extraviada*, Portillo explains that the film received such widespread international attention because it was the first time that Juarez's femicide victims were portrayed as persons whose lives were stolen in the most terrible and terrifying way. "Up until that moment", she maintains, "they had been just statistics of 'poor brown women,' not human beings who deserved action and justice on their behalf" (Portillo, 2003: 231). At the outset of her film, Portillo establishes that she found the families and activists to be the most credible voices in a story mired in

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misinformation, cover-ups, and threats and intimidation directed at critics of the handling of the case. *Señorita* is a direct challenge to the official story, which has attributed the disappearances and murders to some combination of the women's fault, the unfortunate yet inevitable cost of rapid and uneven modernization, a result of the dangerous flux of a border zone, and the illicit temptations of the city's underworld, all of which is fuelled, in the state narrative, by women's reckless presence in public. In the confusing and obfuscated context in which the femicide is conventionally represented, the documentary's counter-narrative is one of lucidity as well as ambiguity.

Portillo's documentary also confronts the top down critical representations that insist on totalizing interpretations which treat the violence is a direct result of globalization and the inherent dangerousness of women's presence in public space. Centred on the testimonies and historical knowledge of the victims, the families and the women's rights activists, *Señorita* is also a critique of the influential representations of the femicide that have tended to erase the actually existing social agency of the protagonists. As a powerful indictment of the exploitative politics of representation, *Señorita*'s image dialectic forces open the space of representation in a way that redeems the possibility of the politicized image as a practice of anti-fear.

In this chapter I have endeavoured to expand upon cinema scholar Rosa Linda Fregoso's analysis to show how Portillo's documentary intervention is an exemplary practice of anti-fear. Drawing on the work of Taussig, I argued that this is due to the film's skilful confrontation with the "problem of interpretation". I emphasized how it re-appropriates the space of representation from the state and the commercial media's sensational reproduction of the violence as a contest of numbers and victim blaming, to

open up space for social movement amidst the new enclosures. Through a close reading of *Señorita* as a strategy of representation and circulation that adheres to Brecht's "fighting" notion of popular culture, I have argued that Portillo's film provides an important example of the communicational significance of documentary cinema that is capable of both galvanizing a movement but also of challenging the dominant totalizing approaches to socio-cultural fear.

Finally, by relating Portillo's film to the concerns of the new Latin American cinema movement, I have tried to show how *Señorita* connects with, and extends into the present, an important historical practice of filmmaking *as communication*. Here, that movement's efforts to reinvent the way cinema was made and consumed, its commitment to documentary as an aesthetic of lucidity, emotional intensity and imperfection versus a purely didactic form, and its radical "poetics of the transformation of reality" undergo a positive renovation. This renovation, I have argued, offers an essential contribution to the elaboration of oppositional cultural practices of anti-fear. These practices are vital if we are to overcome the sociality of fear, a transformation that depends upon our capacity to reinvent a language and practice of the common against enclosure.

CONCLUSION: FEAR, REFUSAL AND THE FRAGILITY OF OPPRESSION

> Shouldn't we ask ourselves how we can build new powers from below? How can we create a new common language to define injustice and to imagine the new world? How can we recover trust in our words? How can we call for participation in a new political project that is not on its way to replace the palaces of power, but that can change lives, so that common and ordinary people start making decisions? Is it possible to exchange answers and certainties for a few shared questions?
>
> – Adraina Lopez Monjardin, 2001

> Any tyranny's manipulation of the media is an index of its fears. The present one lives in fear of the world's desperation. A fear so deep that the adjective desperate, except when it means dangerous, is never used.
>
> – John Berger, 2003

In her study on the Witch-hunts, Silvia Federici (2004) recounts a remarkable story of popular refusal that relates directly to what I have been problematizing throughout this dissertation. In the middle of the 1601 annual cod season, Basque fishers cut their expedition short by two months upon hearing rumours that French Inquisitor Pierre Lancre was conducting mass trials of women in the region who were accused of being witches. As a result of this persecution alone, an estimated six hundred women were burned alive. The fishers hurried home from the sea with clubs in hand and managed to liberate a procession of condemned women being transported to the site of their execution pyre. As a result, the Inquisitors stayed away and the trials, in that region

at least, were halted. What makes this event so extraordinary is that such examples of opposition to those who orchestrated this carnage were so rare during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – the period that this sexual genocide reached its protracted murderous apogee. If with one relatively modest push, the ecclesiastical authority briskly retreated, why were these challenges so rare? "Undoubtedly, men's failure to act against the atrocities to which women were subjected was often motivated by the fear of being implicated in the charges [...] But there is no doubt that years of propaganda and terror sowed among the men the seeds of a deep psychological alienation from women, that broke class solidarity and undermined their own collective power" (ibid.: 189). The pervasive social fear, to put it differently, had a splintering effect that seriously undermined the capacity of communities to resist. This story is relevant to a discussion of the implications of this dissertation because it suggests the power of refusal, it problematizes the notion of courage as an individual act of bravery, and it shatters the artifice of power-over (as opposed to power-to-do) by revealing the fragility of oppression.

In this dissertation I have tried to open up a set of questions related to the dialectics of socio-cultural fear and social movement practices of communication amidst the new enclosures. Through an exploration of emergent urban social movements, I developed the concept of "communicational insurgency" to theorize the new modes of political confrontation elaborated by oppositional social movements in the post-Cold War context of urban North America. This has been a period of enormous social upheaval that has coincided with a communicational turn in discourses of socio-cultural and political economic change as the materiality of communication became increasingly

central to processes of globalization. This was also a period where market triumphalism became hegemonic, inaugurated by the resolute declaration of "the end of history" by the ideologues of neoliberalism. Paradoxically, it was during the 1990s that the politics of fear became an increasingly potent discourse in public life and an emergent area of scholarship. As a social discourse, fear came to occupy an important place in representations of large cities as places of reckless criminality and danger.

Once the "War on Terror" was declared following the 9/11 attacks, public fears took on a heightened intensity that continues to escalate. But the emergent field of fear scholarship, whose post-Cold War exemplars in North America are Mike Davis (1998) and Barry Glassner (1999), has focused primarily on the top-down circulation of fear in the authoritarian imagination. In my research, however, I found that just as the pervasive presence of social fear exacts its atomizing effects on everyday life and relationships in urban North America, it is also being resolutely refused through a myriad of oppositional cultural practices for which communication plays a central and decisive role. Through analysis of the literature and three particular cases, I came to the conclusion that the problem of communication is also a condition for overcoming the atomizing and repressive effects of socio-cultural fear.

I wanted to think about theories of communication from a bottom-up perspective and for this reason I drew on the diverse and overlapping literatures of Autonomism, Cultural Studies, social history and the Latin American communication studies tradition. This project also reflected my desire, both intellectual and political, to challenge dominant technological explanations of communication. It also seemed particularly prescient to the study of socio-cultural fear because, as I have shown throughout this

dissertation, this scholarship has suffered from an emphasis on instrumental approaches to the media. My intention is for this project to contribute to a broader renovation in an area of scholarship that has tended to conceptualize socio-cultural fear within a top-down totalizing framework that occludes social agency.

I believe that communication studies, with its transdisciplinary and intersectional orientation, has much to offer to the scholarship on fear. I found that critical theories of communication can challenge the dominant totalizing conceptions of socio-cultural fear. In turn, I have sought to add to the discipline's contributions to theorizing the significance of people in action in their lives, in contrast to the more conventional emphasis on informationalism, discrete media and technological change. In this way, I hope that this dissertation contributes to a general effort to populate the field of communication scholarship and challenge the tendency to conflate communication and information.

In a global context where unprecedented social fear collides with ever-rising inequality, poverty and violence, it seems to me imperative that we search for an approach to the study of fear that does not enforce or reiterate it. Given that much of the fear literature, especially in the Anglo-North American positivist tradition, is explained as a top-down process and organized around a rational-irrational binary, it is important to recognize, as the social movements discussed in this dissertation do, the manner in which everyday fears are not comprehendible along a rational-irrational continuum. Rather, as I argue here, these movements show us that it is the authoritarian appropriation of fear – that which Norbert Lecher (1992) identified as integral to the enforcement of anti-democratic power – that poses the most urgent problem for the realization of democratic

desire. Hence, as we have seen, the struggle against fear is not contingent upon vanquishing irrationality and learning to fear only "the right things". Rather, it is about undoing the unequal organization of power. A focus on oppositional movements helps us shift away from the emphasis on ever-more elaborate diagnosis and towards theorizing existing and emerging social practices in a context of pervasive fear and insecurity. This seems particularly relevant because the materiality of fear is itself a pretext for the exertion of political fear from above.

This study has also taught me how communication studies is uniquely suited to analyzing the extraordinary complexity and heterogeneity of the global urbanizing world. The implications of this capacity to grasp the intersection of micro and macro scale processes are, I feel, considerable. For a number of reasons, this dissertation focused on the context of urban North America following the end of the Cold War, a period that marked the city as a site of intense fears. Several overlapping processes that would have significant implications for the circulation of fear in the social imagination marked this specific place and time period. These developments included the waxing of the so-called "dot com" and "Information" revolutions and a communicational turn in both popular discourses of society and in social theory. At the same time, the neoliberalization of the economy and society created a permanent condition of mass layoffs, privatizations and the dismantling of the social commons, which fuelled a generalized intensification of insecurity for millions of people at the most quotidian level of experience. This heightened sense of insecurity was most vociferously politicized in the rise of Zero Tolerance theories of urban management, which had a corresponding aesthetic and

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representational presence in everything from strategies of policing, infrastructure design and allocation, and the commercial media.

Finally, the launching of the global "War on Terror" marked a distinct apogee in the social construction of the city as a site of fear. While the "War on Terror" had an obvious connection to New York City, it also profoundly influenced the official and commercial media's security discourses in cities such as Vancouver and Juarez, drawing these disparate sites into similar logics of control. It is in this way that we can discern the connection between the declaration of permanent war and neoliberal enclosure, which soon became a justification by the state and the ideologues of neoliberalism for an increasingly repressive public life.

This has created a climate where governmental impunity meets economic and social insecurity. In the US, for example, public debates about the merits of torture have become possible and even normalized. In many places, this atmosphere has also led to the demonization of dissenters of all kinds, while providing justification for preemptive war and detention without charge, the expansion of government and private surveillance, discretionary powers of the police and secret services, and the suspension of various aspects of civil liberties and protections. Through this conservative counter-revolution we can see how pervasive fear acts as a disciplinary strategy of enclosure, much as it has for the last five centuries of primitive accumulation.

One of the many serious implications of this process of neoliberal enclosure is a discernable crisis in the ability to articulate a common language of the social, specifically as it relates to questions of equity, freedom and justice. In other words, there has arisen a problem of communication. This crisis of the social is certainly not limited to North

America, but it is here that it is conspicuously under-theorized. This is another reason why I felt it was important to consider the problem of political fear from the perspective of social movements and oppositional cultural practices. Movements for social justice and equality have historically been the most important and effective agents of change and resisting political fear. It is not surprising, then, that popular movements have been the powerful's greatest source of fear.

It is perhaps because of the intensity of the revanchist repression found in cities like Vancouver and Ciudad Juarez that much of the post-Cold War literature on social fear has narrowly conceived of it as a top-down process. Much of this scholarship is immensely rich and important, but it also tends to replicate what John Holloway (2002) critiques as radical theory's problematic emphasis on oppression/resistance to oppression. This binary conceals a third crucial element, namely the fragility of that oppression. In this way, such theorizations inadvertently reinforce rather than detonate the unequal distribution of power in society. This dissertation has endeavoured to draw out some of the manifestations of this fragility.

To this goal I drew on the Autonomist literature, whose "margins at the centre" approach provides a fruitful terrain through which to consider the relationship between communication, social movements and socio-cultural fear in relation to a political project of emancipation. As I have shown in this dissertation, Autonomism is a wide-ranging movement and by no means homogeneous. I anchored my approach to the explicitly bottom-up theorizations of the new enclosures developed by the Midnight Notes Collective, Silvia Federici, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker and John Holloway, over the "high-end" orientation of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (Dyer-Witheford,

2001). These scholars' philosophical refusals and "affirmative no" helped me to think concretely about the relationship between the politics of fear and the fragility of oppression. This negativity is, of course, a dialectical stance and hence is "positive" in its practical aspirations. We can discern this 'positivity in refusal' through Holloway's (2002) contention that negation is pivotal to contesting the new enclosures and, therefore, to making a new world. This spirit of negativity is encapsulated in one of the more resonant slogans of the post-Cold War global justice movement: "One No, Many Yeses". It is also present in the numerous other expressions of groups and currents within this broad "movement of movements", such as the name of the group No One is Illegal.

Because refusal is a central trope of this dissertation, I deliberately use the negative terminology of *anti*-fear practices and *anti*-enclosure movements rather than positive expressions such as hope, courage and commons. Anti-fear is not an abstract call for courage or a theological invocation of hope. As a term that is meant to signal democratic desire, it is conceptually intended to maintain a position of critical openness. Hence, anti-fear is not only an act of refusal of fear but one that is a necessarily enacted in cooperation with others and in innumerable ways. It is in this spirit as well that I have emphasized the terminology of anti-enclosure instead of its conceptual counterpart, the commons. In the examples of the movements and practices explored in this dissertation, I have argued that we can discern a vital, collective approach to the creation of new forms of sociality. In this way, the terminology of anti-enclosure and anti-fear are appropriate to this dissertation's interrogation of the ways in which the activities of the contemporary anti-enclosure movements problematize power as already constituted.

This conceptual negativity is also the foundation of my elaboration of communicational insurgency. The concept is meant to signal a refusal of a Leninist-inspired militaristic conception of revolution that goes along with vanguardism and struggles for state power. Visibility and encounter, the two practices that I identify as integral to the communicational practices of contemporary anti-enclosure movements are also here conceptualized in this framework of refusal. As I discussed throughout this dissertation, visibility is a refusal of historical erasure and an invocation of a politics of presence. As a practice, it reverses invisibility through connection, communication and cooperation with others. Examples of movements that have used tactics of visibility abound; among the most notable are the feminist, anti-racist, disability and gay-rights movements. Recall Rosa Parks' refusal to relinquish her seat to a white man on a segregated Alabama bus in 1955: that "affirmative No" to segregation and racism not only made visible a percolating resistance to the scandal of the Jim Crow laws, but it also sparked a movement that changed the world. That is to say, the initial negativity in the defiant refusal of racism is also necessarily transformed into the positivity of the struggle for justice.

Likewise, the communicational and conflictive concept of encounter that I have elaborated throughout this dissertation is a refusal that merges the physical and social space. It is concrete in the sense of being an act of physical presence and opening in place. I showed this in the diverse organizing activities of the BRU and the SCP and in the circulation of Portillo's film. It is a social appropriation because encounter signals a deliberate practice of dissolving the distinctions between subject and object, the fundamental separation at the heart of the capitalist enclosure movement. Moreover, as a

dialogic concept, encounter is a refusal of the monologic of constituted power and its disciplinary discourse of fear. This makes it appropriate for considering the relationship between democratic desire, communication and social transformation.

That this space making and taking is considered throughout this dissertation in the context of large, heterogeneous cities connects with another important goal of this project: to think about the globalizing city as a communicational relation in order to conceptualize the transnational connections and discursive circulations of movements of anti-fear. It is my hope that raising this set of questions will contribute to the field of transnational cultural and communication studies. Cities, particularly very large ones, tend to be the focal point of political fear discourses. Given the enormous influence of large cities in the field of globalized representation, this is of considerable importance for thinking about the dialectics of communication and fear. The implications for the future of urban life are enormous, especially if cities are to become, as Saskia Sassen (2001) predicts, an alternate space of identification and a strategic frontier for the assertion of new claims that eclipses the nation.

As compelling as Sassen's prediction may be, it does not resolve the fundamental problem of the continuous process of enclosure and the disciplining use of political fear in capitalist society. Neither spatial reorganization nor technological developments in communication, no matter how optimistic, produce a new common language of justice, which is vital if we are to overcome the corrosive effects of political fear.

As I have argued throughout this dissertation, the capitalist ideology of security that is materialized in the circulation of the authoritarian imagination is harnessed to break solidarities and enforce fearfulness, isolation and political passivity. In the new

enclosures it is not just the baton, the prison or the bomb that people fear, but the power of the pink slip, the social services agent and the debt collector. However, while the history of the enclosures sits on the scaffold of fear, history shows that enclosure has always provoked its refusal. While neoliberalism propels fear and insecurity, contemporary anti-enclosure movements repudiate the logic of deferral while attempting to forge collectivities of hope in the present. Their "affirmative No" overturns Hobbes' absolute state of fear, his violent, subjugated peace, by elevating his other two "necessary passions", desire and hope, to the level of a political project against enclosure. These movements seek to dissolve the binary between political spectator and urban subject by bringing people together in new ways and mobilizing for political action. Refusing fear helps us to breathe. It affirms new collectivities of democratic possibility and human dignity.

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