CHAPTER 2
AYACUCHO, 1982: CIVIL SOCIETY THEORY AND NEOLIBERALISM

Para hacer la guerra hay que ser filósofos. El c. Gonzalo se plantea políticamente las batallas, no técnicamente.
--Sendero Luminoso, quoted in Gustavo Gorriti Ellenbogen, Sendero

It is a question of effecting groupings of powers, and these are what constitute affects.
--Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus

Civil society theory has flourished in the social sciences in recent decades, and enjoys great influence with non-governmental organizations, social democratic think-tanks, and the like. This second chapter is a critique of that theory and the practices it fosters, arguing that it assumes a liberal compact that is too easily overtaken by its neoliberal radicalization. I first discuss the various definitions of civil society, and the reasons for the concept’s popularity: it names a sphere of mediation between state and market, private and public, and also brings with it an aura of normativity. Who would not want a more “civil” society? I go on, however, to criticize the term’s deployment, through a
close reading of political theorists Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato. Their theorization of
civil society reveals the concept’s profound ambivalence: it is presented as a
moderating, mediating force, but depends upon what they call the “democratic
fundamentalism” that drives the social movements that constitute civil society itself.
For all that these movements are championed as the expression of democratic
rejuvenation, they are also to be policed and curtailed to protect both state and market
in the name of political and economic efficiency. I argue that the neoliberal state
outflanks civil society theory with its cult of transparency that bypasses mediating
institutions and breaks down the boundary between society and state. Neoliberalism
and its diffuse sovereignty herald a revolution in reverse, a fundamentalism purged of
affect. But that repressed affect always returns, and in counterpoint I offer an account of
the Peruvian Maoists Sendero Luminoso and their relations with the neoliberal regime
of Alberto Fujimori. Sendero’s baffling ferocity challenges any theory of civil society,
and provide a foretaste of the global war on terror that we are all living through now.

Defining Civil Society

Like cultural studies, civil society resists definition. Michael Edwards calls it “a concept
that seems so unsure of itself that definitions are akin to nailing jelly to a wall”; he cites
another account that calls it “a woolly expression for woolly-minded people.” Yet
Edwards comes not to bury the concept but to praise it. He is, after all, Director of the
Ford Foundation’s “Governance and Civil Society” program, and more than aware of
the term’s currency among non-governmental organizations such as, precisely, the Ford
Foundation. Edwards’s aim is to rejuvenate and refine the concept of civil society, to
ensure its continued viability. He is therefore “happy to be called a ‘civil society
revivalist.’’ Civil society is, he claims, for all its uncertainty or woolliness, the “‘big idea’ for the twenty-first century.”¹ We are already mired, however, in circularity. For there is something self-serving about the Ford Foundation advocating this “big idea,” when by almost any definition such a body is itself an integral part of civil society.

The concept of civil society gathers together all those organizations, associations, and movements that mediate, formally or informally, between private and public, state and market, particular and universal. Whatever its precise boundaries (and this is where the slipperiness enters in), whatever the spheres or institutions with which it is said to be in contact, and whatever its exact function, civil society is generally agreed, from Hegel or Tocqueville onwards, to be an intermediate sphere. Along with non-governmental organizations and foundations, other associations today commonly thought to constitute civil society include voluntary groups, charities, pressure groups, social organizations and clubs, as well as (more controversially) trades unions, political parties, religious organizations, some business organizations, and even the media. This is such a broad-ranging collection that it is sometimes hard to distinguish civil society from the public sphere or even society as a whole. Indeed, as we will see, often civil society theorists expend most effort and energy in limiting the concept, in ensuring that it does not break its bounds. After all, if it is to be an intermediate sphere, then civil society has to be located in between some other entities that can be distinguished from it.

The concept of civil society has a distinguished history, whose origins date as far back as Aristotle’s discussion of koinōnia politikè (κοινωνία πολιτική) at the outset of The Politics. Aristotle characterizes the polis as a political community, “the state as an association” as one modern translation has it.² But this phrase has also been rendered
variously as “societas civilis,” “civill societie,” “bürgerliche Gesellschaft,” and “société civile.” The French political scientist Dominique Colas traces the term and its translations from Aristotle to Lenin via Luther, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, and Marx. The American John Ehrenberg likewise emphasizes the idea’s classical heritage (from Cicero as well as Aristotle), and its Christian articulations (via Saint Augustine). US theorists tend to point to the influence of the early nineteenth-century French writer, Alexis de Tocqueville: according to Edwards, it is “Tocqueville’s ghost that wanders through the corridors of the World Bank.” The key moment in the term’s evolution, however, is Hegel’s emphasis on the “bürgerliche” or “bourgeois” to refer not to society as a civic whole, but to one element within a complex system of differences. Hegel was the first to distinguish civil society from the state; in Aristotle the two are conjoined. But Hegel was suspicious of any notion that civil society could be autonomous, and believed that it should be firmly subordinate to constituted power.

Today, commentators prefer instead to stress how the state bends to pressures from civil society. So, as the philosopher Lawrence Cahoone observes, “contemporaries who use ‘civil society’ are in the odd position of using Hegel’s term, but not his meaning.” When, after a long period of neglect, the term was resurrected in the 1970s and 1980s, civil society was to designate a site from which to transform or reign in the state. The concept was revived as a way to understand struggles in Eastern Europe and Latin America in which social groups first opposed authoritarian states and then, in the various democratic transitions from dictatorship, set to consolidating and “deepening” democracy. Analysts praised civil society as a source of normative democratic values. From these dictatorial and postdictatorial contexts, the term has spread to considerations of Western Europe and the United States as well as to Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. It has been enthusiastically adopted by non-governmental agencies
and aid workers; in political theorist John Keane’s words, “the language of civil society is now more widely used than ever before in the history of modern times.” The term’s ubiquity, the fact that it is often invoked if seldom questioned, characterizes what I call civil society discourse. Civil society theory, by contrast, is the attempt by theorists such as Cahoone, Colas, Edwards, Ehrenberg, and Keane to make sense of and systematize the disparate uses that cohabit in this discourse.

The concept of civil society is popular today thanks also to a slippage between descriptive and normative meanings: between civil society as the name for one part of a social whole (the Hegelian sense), and civil society as an ideal polity that would be characterized by civility rather than arbitrary violence or bureaucratic rationality. The normative meaning is closer to Tocqueville’s use of the term. Hence for neo-Tocquevillians, the tendency to form associations uncoerced by the state is itself an unalloyed good. “Civil society as the good society,” as Edwards puts it, is envisaged as “a reservoir of caring, cultural life and intellectual innovation . . . nurturing a collection of positive social norms.” In this conception, civil society takes on substantive content as well as a functional role: not only is it an intermediate sphere, defined therefore by what it is not: it is also a sphere whose particular character results from the qualities of the groups that constitute it, and which is defined therefore by what it is. Here civil society theory overlaps with the theory of “social capital” as outlined in works such as political scientist Robert Putnam’s influential *Bowling Alone*, which laments the decline of “voluntary associations and the social networks of civil society” in the contemporary USA. Putnam is concerned with all types of association, from Rotary Clubs to bowling leagues; but civil society discourse usually focuses on the so-called “new social movements,” which are likewise envisaged as contributing to overall social well-being.
New social movements (also, as we have seen, championed by Laclau and Mouffe) develop out of the social protests and identity politics of the 1960s. They are not strictly political, according to one of their most important theorists, the French sociologist Alain Touraine: traditional political parties “call for the seizure of state power. A social movement, by contrast, is civil and is an affirmation rather than a critique or a negation.” The new social movements are the lifeblood of civil society: it is their emergence, Touraine argues, that leads to “the growing importance of ‘civil society,’ or in other words of a new type of political action that is both less organized and less continuous than that of parties and unions.” The new social movements give civil society positive content, flesh out what would otherwise be an obscure and ill-defined term, and (civil society theorists tell us) make it worthy of our approbation and encouragement.

Latin America was, with Eastern Europe, one of the regions in which the contemporary renaissance of civil society discourse first took hold. The concept came to prominence in the 1980s, in analyses of the opposition to authoritarian rule in the Southern Cone (Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil). The concept was particularly popular in Chile and Brazil, where sustained pressure from opposition movements was claimed as a factor in the military’s withdrawal from power. For Brazil, political scientist Alfred Stepan quotes the sociologist and politician Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s observation that “the whole opposition . . . was being described as if it were the movement of Civil Society”; Stepan goes on to comment that “‘civil society’ became the political celebrity of the abertura” or opening. The transitions to democracy in these countries (with elections in Argentina in 1983, Uruguay in 1984, and Brazil and Chile in 1989) led to further interest in the concept, as civil society was considered crucial for consolidating or deepening the democracy formally secured at the ballot box. Political scientists Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, for example, argue that the return of democracy entails a “resurrection of civil society.” But while space opened for civil society as repression lifted, participation within its constituent organizations often declined. As many of those who had theorized
civil society in opposition later gained political power in post-transition governments (most notably Cardoso, Brazilian president from 1995 to 2003), they became concerned to improve relations between civil society and the state so as to ensure democratic legitimacy. By 1998, at the second Summit of the Americas in Santiago de Chile, the hemisphere’s heads of state pledged to “promote, with the participation of civil society, the . . . institutional frameworks to stimulate the formation of responsible and transparent, non-profit and other civil society organizations.” The then President of Chile, Eduardo Frei, wrote in the preface to the Summit’s subsequent publication that “civil society’s participation in the decision-making process is vital to the strengthening of democracy and the development of our peoples. . . . I am convinced that only insofar as civil society is directly and effectively involved in life will democracy fully become a reality.” At the same time, analysts began discussing civil society in regional and even global terms: scholars Sonia Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar noted, also in 1998, that “conservative and progressive analysts and activists alike tend overwhelmingly to sing the praises of civil society’s democratizing potential on a local, national, regional, and global scale.” By the turn of the century, the concept of civil society had comprehensively permeated political and social discourse in Latin America.

Over time, the role envisaged for civil society in Latin America has changed, particularly its relationship to the state. At first it was to be the springboard for opposition to the authoritarian state; later it was to be a partner for the democratic state; most recently, it has been seen as a site from which to protest the neoliberal state’s withdrawal from its social responsibilities. The Chilean philosopher Martín Hopenhayn, for instance, sees civil society and the new social movements as responding “to the crisis of modernization in Latin America without identifying with neoliberalism.” Throughout, however, the concept’s definition has remained more or less constant, a sign perhaps of its capaciousness. Civil society is consistently seen as an intermediate sphere, though the demands and pressures that it channels may vary; and, more emphatically than for discussions of civil society elsewhere in the world, in Latin America the new social movements are described as civil society’s most significant actors. New social movements are harbingers of civil society as the good society. Indeed, for Hopenhayn, it is because they inhabit civil society’s intermediate sphere that they gain emancipatory power: thanks to “their marginal or interstitial space within society and with regard to the State and the market,” he declares, these movements “can materialize ‘counter-hegemonic’ logics
where solidarity, resistance, cooperation, autonomy and/or collective participation predominate. . . . They constitute themselves as small ‘promises of emancipation’ in the eyes of critical theory.”

Cultural studies, too, is concerned with what Touraine terms “new type[s] of political action.” Indeed, there are plenty of continuities and similarities between cultural studies and civil society theory, though there are also significant differences. The two share above all the impulse to turn from the formal political sphere of parties, state, government, and administration. Both choose instead to focus on a sphere that they regard as relatively autonomous: culture in one case, civil society in the other. In so far as they take account of the state, at issue is either its impact upon this other sphere, or the ways in which it is influenced in turn. Equally, both cultural studies and civil society theory are concerned with community, or the various possible formations of communities imaginable within this non-state sphere. They set their face against the individual as much as they turn from the state. In so far as psychology is at issue, it is the psychology of groups rather than a more general psychology of “man.” Finally, both cultural studies and civil society theory present themselves as progressive theories, although the one is post-Marxist and the other more clearly social democratic.

Culture and civil society overlap, and so therefore do the ways in which they are theorized. Indeed, cultural studies and civil society theory meet in the same nexus where populism meets neoliberalism; both ultimately shore up the same fiction of a social pact. On the other hand, the differences between cultural studies and civil society theory include the fact that where cultural studies stresses antagonism (the conflict between people and power bloc), civil society theory emphasizes mediation (communication and checks and balances). Civil society theory tends towards
formalism, projecting ideal types of democratic regimes against which existing regimes are measured (often statistically); it flirts with both normativity and universalism. Cultural studies prefers narrative and thick description, and to shirk explicit discussion of norms. This difference between narrativity and formalism reflects a disciplinary distinction: cultural studies is strong in the humanities; civil society theory in the social sciences, particularly within Political Science. Cultural studies is also usually localist or nationalist, where civil society theory tends to the international and the global.

Cultural studies and civil society theory are distinct but complementary discourses, and should be examined in parallel. Cultural studies, a discourse of antagonism rooted in the humanities and providing generally narrative explanations within a national frame, is the other side of the coin to civil society theory, a discourse of mediation emerging from the social sciences that provides generally functionalist or statistical accounts within a global frame. In each case, however, a purported project of the left echoes rather than engages the dominant paradigms of governance: technocratic neoliberalism and media-savvy neopopulism, increasingly combined in diverse regimes of popular managerialism (of which Blairite New Labour is perhaps exemplary). I showed in my last chapter how cultural studies is unable to escape, and so critique, its own populist desires. In what follows, I argue that neoliberalism is a response to and radicalization of civil society discourse.

Through an interrogation of political theorists Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato’s theory of civil society, I show how advocacy of democratic expansion soon switches to an anxious patrolling of social movement “fundamentalism.” Civil society theory comes to support the state’s project to contain democratic radicalism; it turns against democratic movements, purportedly in the name of democracy as some kind of higher good. Despite its emancipatory and oppositional aura, the concept of civil society
becomes part of the toolbox of governmentality. It is perhaps no wonder that Michael Edwards is also now Director of the “Governance” program at the Ford Foundation: civil society and governance go hand in hand. Civil society theory plays into the hands of technocratic neoliberalism, providing faint hope with what is at best a naïve vision of democratization as self-limiting radicalism. For neoliberalism seeks to implement a transparent and perfectly functional civil society. Neoliberal technocrats are as scathing about the traditional political processes and institutions (parties, unions) as are advocates of new social movements. But new social movements add little in the way of transparency or efficiency, so neoliberalism institutes a quasi-direct democracy of opinion polling and media saturation that dissolves the boundaries between state and civil society and does away with social movements. Civil society theory is caught in the paradox that it relies on the enthusiasm of social actors for its appeal and credibility, but is forced to stigmatize that same enthusiasm as “democratic fundamentalism” in order to maintain the complex hierarchy of separate spheres upon which civil society depends. Neoliberalism resolves that paradox in a smooth, featureless space that dissolves all mediations: nothing should stand in the way of a perfect communication between citizens and the state. In the process, civil society disappears, subsumed within the state’s machinery to replace multiplicity and singularity with unity and consensus. The dreams of liberal rationality and communicative action are conflated and superseded.

In tandem with my general critique of civil society theory as a discourse of governmentality that ultimately colludes with neoliberal practice, I specifically criticize the way in which civil society and new social movements came to be presented as the progressive motor of Latin American democratization. I focus on how Peru’s Maoist guerrilla Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) figure as the
horizon of Latin American civil society discourse, destabilizing over-confident characterizations of new social movements. And I explore the continuities between civil society theory, Sendero, and neoliberalism, as well as the rise of technologies of immanence and immediacy, through an examination of the regime that effectively defeated Sendero, the government of Alberto Fujimori. Sendero, stigmatized as a repository of barbaric affect and feared as a highland counter-state, stands at the mute limits of both civil society and the neoliberal state. Sendero haunts civil society discourse in Latin America: analysts endlessly and anxiously refer to Sendero as the fundamentalism that threatens any conception of civil society as an intermediate sphere incarnating the good society of persuasion, consensus, and differentiation. But this specter of fundamentalism consistently returns, hinting at a fundamentalism at the heart of new social movements and neoliberalism alike. Civil society theory is therefore unable to account either for the terror at its margins, or for the social movements themselves, which are not so “unaffected” after all.

One instance of civil society boosterism is Utopia Unarmed, the influential 1993 book written by Mexican political scientist (later his country’s foreign minister) Jorge Castañeda. A bestseller outside as well as within the academy, Castañeda’s text helped frame a rethinking of the Latin American left; it re-evaluated national liberation movements, and advocated moderate state intervention in the economy and welfare projects. Castañeda offers an unabashed social democracy. As also in Compañero, his subsequent book on Che Guevara, he bids a fond farewell to all that the Latin American left held dear for most of the twentieth century. Yet his enthusiasm for civil society won plaudits from leftist critics such as Duncan Green, who suggests that Castañeda proposes “one of the most ambitious” attempts to formulate an alternative to neoliberalism. No longer, however, are such alternatives to involve gaining and exercising state power: “Here, then, is the first democratic order of battle for the left: to encourage every conceivable expression of civil society, every social movement, every form of self-management that Latin American reality generates.” This is the radicalism of civil society discourse. But it is very much what Cohen and Arato term a “self-limiting radicalism.” For there is a definite limit to the range of “conceivable” expressions of civil society: Castañeda locates the notoriously violent and ruthless Sendero Luminoso at the horizon of all leftist reformism; Sendero serves as a warning for any who choose not to rethink a democratic alternative. “The condition for the renewed viability of reformism in Latin America,” he argues, “lies inevitably in the threat of something worse. Since it cannot be
revolution as such—the way Cuba was for nearly twenty years—it must be different, yet terrifying nonetheless. This is the syndrome of Sendero Luminoso.” If not reform, then Sendero. For Castañeda, Sendero is both the outcome of neoliberal social disintegration (“the new bane of Latin America”) and the epitome of a left that refuses to reform. Sendero is the fundamentalism that haunts civil society’s radicalism. Sendero “can certainly instill fear in the hearts and minds of many”: a fear of the neglected masses, should they not be harnessed to a new program of reform, and of the recalcitrant left, should it continue with its fanatical excesses.23

For all that has been written about Sendero, the movement is still for the most part little understood. The best English-language introductions to the movement are the Peruvian journalist Gustavo Gorriti’s *The Shining Path* (a narrative account of the insurgency in the early 1980s) and historian Steve Stern’s collection, *Shining and Other Paths* (particularly on Sendero’s history and political context). Sendero exploded from the remote Andean province of Ayacucho in 1980, and grew in strength and size until 1992, when it rapidly declined after the capture of leader Abimael Guzmán. I have no desire to romanticize Sendero, or to advance its cause: the movement was undoubtedly vicious, and deservedly (almost) friendless. At the same time, I am not interested in demystifying it, either. Stern declares that “the agenda of [his] book is to move ‘beyond enigma,’”24 but enigma was part of Sendero’s strategy: its militants worked hard to maintain their invisibility, mysteriousness, and unrepresentability. Demythologizing them too fast prevents us from understanding their hold over their own recruits, and more importantly also over the imagination of middle class and urban Peru in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Gorriti’s book, written in the midst of that period, conveys quite viscerally just how “the insurgency’s very obscurity seemed to add to its power.”25 Moreover, in that “enigma, exoticism, surprise” condition the ways in which the group is (mis)perceived and (mis)understood,26 stripping them of that enigma prevents us from seeing how they figured not only within Peru, but also in the discourse of Latin American political and cultural theory more generally. Again, I am concerned precisely with the ways in which Sendero serves as a limit, an inassimilable presence haunting both neoliberalism and civil society theory.

Fundamentalism constitutes the limit or horizon for both civil society and neoliberalism. Civil society theory constantly invokes but then represses its other side: a
fundamentalism stigmatized for its affective, irrational, culture-bound qualities. The concept of civil society marks off fundamentalism as other in order to reinforce the rationality of an expansive state. It tries to reconstruct the social pact, no longer through affect but despite it. As a result, however, it expels affect and culture from its analyses. Neoliberalism, too, has to discard affect as an opaque, irrational, and unrepresentable obstacle to its reductive mechanisms of rational calculability. But that affect returns as terror, or as a counter-state to disrupt the principle of state unity. In my next chapter I return to terror and what is ignored or repressed by both neoliberalism and civil society theory: the irreducible affective relations that sustain and subvert social order. But to think affect, we will need new theoretical tools. Civil society theory can tell us little about the fundamentalisms that it so vigorously attempts to govern and excise.

A Progressive Project: New Social Movements

Civil society is projected as a means to rejuvenate politics, to dispel the threat of anti-political reaction. In a context defined by the decline of the traditional left and the end of both “actually existing” socialism and revolutionary utopias, by the rise of technocratic neoliberalism and fear of a disempowering globalization, by the increasing blandness and sameness of major political parties and widespread public apathy towards formal political processes, civil society has appeared to provide at least some cause for optimism. Commonwealth scholars Barry Knight, Hope Chigudu, and Rajesh Tandon, for instance, worry about a “yawning gulf between political institutions and their citizens. . . . With the social contract in jeopardy, we risk falling prey to the forces of barbarism.” Strengthening civil society, the intermediate sphere between citizens and institutions, is our only hope if we are to ward off barbarism and cement the social pact:
“Civil society functions,” they claim, “as a metaphor for ‘hope for a better world.’ . . .
Indeed, our view is that it is impossible to separate the idea of civil society from the idea of progress towards a better world.”

Activist author David Korten echoes these concerns and offers a similar solution. Noting the failure of “our dominant institutions,” he argues that “it is left to civil society to expose the causes of the institutional dysfunction and to define and pursue alternatives.” Korten is positively ebullient about “globalizing civil society,” identifying it with “the emergence of a new global awareness and sense of solidarity that is joining people from every part of the planet in the task of creating a new global civilization grounded in peace and cooperation.”

Civil society promises the utopia of a civilization based on peace, not war.

Other analysts, even self-proclaimed civil society revivalists, are more cautious. Edwards, for instance, recognizes that since the September 2001 attacks on New York and Washington, and subsequent US and British intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq, civil society has lost some of its cachet. The national security state and those who protest it are equally suspicious of the concept: the former for the possibility that civil society harbors subversion; the latter for the ways in which the post-Kosovo conflation of humanitarianism and bellicosity has, in radical journalist Naomi Klein’s view, “embedded what is called ‘civil society’ into part of the war machine.”

The state is both more distrustful and more untrustworthy than ever, while protest movements (from Seattle to La Paz) are more confrontational or cynical about the promises of NGOs and the like. Yet Edwards draws inspiration from the vitality of the World Social Forum and from the sight of millions demonstrating against the Iraq war, which he claims “provide a useful reminder that mass protest on the basis of human community may yet generate the foundation for alternative forms of politics and a new kind of society.”

For Edwards, then, despite these protestors’ suspicions of civil society, they
are acting out its presuppositions by coming together as a social movement, however transient. They are part of civil society whether they know (or like) it or not.

In Latin America, civil society is often simply equated with democratization: to strengthen civil society is automatically to expand and deepen democracy. Civil society is given an emancipatory aura, dressed in the rhetorical flourishes of the old left, as in Castañeda’s invocation of a “first democratic order of battle for the left: to encourage every conceivable expression of civil society.” This is rhetorical shorthand, a gesture toward the new rather than a serious attempt to think through possibilities for self-management. Yet Castañeda is not alone in his clarion call for the rejuvenation of Latin American civil society, and this sense of engagement is not merely a result of martial metaphors (“order[s] of battle”). Sociologist William Robinson’s laudatory account of the São Paulo Forum is in the same vein. The Forum is a broad coalition of leftist Latin American groups and parties; indeed it is practically a “Who’s Who” of the Latin American left from Brazil’s PT (Lula’s Worker’s Party, which originally convoked the Forum) to the Nicaraguan Sandinistas, the Salvadoran FMLN, and the Cuban Communist Party. Writing in 1992, Robinson describes the Forum’s belief that “the correlation of social forces in civil society is at least as important as who actually holds power, maybe more so.” Indeed, Robinson seems to suggest that civil society can simply be divorced from the state, which can be left to its own devices; the PT, now in power, would presumably no longer agree.

Though the São Paulo Forum embraces almost the entire spectrum of the Latin American left, Sendero Luminoso has always stayed away from this, or indeed almost any other, coalition. Pacts or contracts are anathema to Sendero. Sendero differs markedly from a group such as the FMLN: the FMLN was a broad “front” uniting numerous parties and tendencies; Sendero, by contrast, was the residue of a series of factional divisions. The Partido Comunista del Perú-Sendero Luminoso (or Peruvian Communist Party-Shining Path), to give it its full name, was an offshoot of the Partido Comunista del Perú-Bandera Roja (PCP-Red Flag), which itself had splintered from the Peruvian Communist Party proper. As the Peruvian Truth Commission puts it, Sendero emerges from “a long process of dogmatic purification.” Indeed, by Sendero’s foundation in 1970, only twelve militants remained in founder Guzmán’s Ayacucho faction, and the party had no more than 51 members in total in all Peru. It is as though it had to begin with something like a degree zero of extension, so as to ensure
it was untainted by association with any other group. Sendero took little or no part in the “great social mobilizations” of the late 1970s against the military regime of General Francisco Morales Bermúdez, refusing for instance to participate in the national strikes of 1977 and 1978. Sendero “stayed on the margins and even opposed mobilizations that it considered manipulated by ‘revisionism,’” the term it employed to describe the ‘Unity’ Communist Party (PCP-Unidad) and the rest of the parties on the left, which it viewed as obstacles to the development of the revolution.”

Far from seeking alliances, Guzmán deemed further purification necessary in 1980, on the eve of battle. Before initiating the “people’s war,” he called a Central Committee meeting that lasted from March 17 to the end of the month, and then a Military School from April 2 to April 19, for which criticism and “self-criticism” were paramount. As Gorriti reports of a typical day’s activities in the Military School, Guzmán urged his cadres to “clean out the ‘colossal mountain of garbage’ . . . left behind by the ideological struggles within the workers’ movement. The task of ideological policing lasted all day and concluded, inflexibly, with another round of self-criticism from those members of the wretched historical detritus.”

There is little in the way of discussion or negotiation here. In place of extension, intensity. And if civil society theorists exclude Sendero, in turn Sendero decisively turns its back on civil society.

Social movements are at the heart of claims for civil society as a progressive project. Civil society is, for political scientist Joe Foweraker, “the cradle of such collective identities”; reciprocally, these “active and diverse groups . . . act as ‘schools of democracy’” and give life and substance to what would otherwise be an empty structure. Civil society, for its enthusiasts, is more than simply a buffer against the immediate claims of either the market or the state, and more also than a mere vehicle for protest. As a diverse collection of organizations and associations, civil society offers, it is argued, new ways of thinking and experiencing sociability, conviviality, and connectedness. For Edwards and others, the concept presents new modes of doing politics, more flexible, creative, and democratic than those hitched either to the traditional institutions of the state or to the atomization of the market. Social
movements are to “constitute the laboratories in which new experiences are invented and popularized. Within these local laboratories, movements utilize a variety of means of communication . . . to question and transform the dominant codes of everyday life.”

Civil society is the intermediate sphere for the articulation of demands to the state, but it is also a communicative medium within which social movements construct, live out, and express new collective identities. It is in this sense that Cahoone suggests that civil society “is, if you will, a form of life.”

Social movements, and particularly the “new” social movements, are the agents that are to shape and transform civil society. For William Robinson, they have already effected a “revolution” in civil society. For Cohen and Arato, “social movements constitute the dynamic element in processes that might realize the positive potentials of modern civil societies.” Similar sentiments surround descriptions of a “movement of movements” that gives life to the so-called anti-globalization protests and the World Social Forum, as detailed in social theorist Tom Mertes’s A Movement of Movements. The Brazilian Emir Sader’s contribution to Mertes’s collection is critical of the concept of civil society (because he sees it as ignoring the role of the state), but he goes against the grain of the anti-globalization movement’s own conception of its political role: no less a body than the World Social Forum describes itself as “an open meeting place for reflective thinking . . . by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism.”

Social movements and civil society go hand in glove: analysts point to the plethora of new social movements as evidence of contemporary civil society’s dynamism, and to distinguish between its conservative elements (more traditional associations and “old” social movements) and what they see as its radical potential.

New social movements encompass the post-sixties counter-cultural opposition (such as anti-war and anti-nuclear activism), pressure groups (environmental, animal
rights, or AIDS activism), groups premised on identity politics (feminism, the lesbian and gay movements), as well as now the “anti-globalization” movement. For Touraine, the rise of many diverse new movements in the past forty years responds to the advent of post-industrial or “programmed” society. Whereas the principal site of domination and resistance in industrial society was the factory, and so the central struggles concerned class and labor, in post-industrial society “political action is all-pervading: it enters into the health service, into sexuality, into education, and into energy production.” Social movements are products of modernity, perhaps even of postmodernity, rather than resistant elements of a previous order. They arise from “a weakening of traditional cleavages in which people are freed from traditional ties of class, religion, and the family.” They disrupt the notion that modernization necessarily implies an undifferentiated “mass society” and increased homogeneity. Social movements embody the paradox that postindustrial society allows new forms of creativity and experiments in identity-formation at the same time as it brings new modes of control, more extensive regimes of bureaucratic rationalization. Their emergence is part of what in chapter four I describe as “biopolitics.”

At stake in new social movements’ struggles, Touraine argues, is first and foremost “self-management.” The movements take advantage of the communicative possibilities offered by technological change (telephone, fax, and now email and the web) while fending off the threats of surveillance and control brought by these same developments. “Struggles over quality of life issues,” write globalization theorists John Guidry, Michael Kennedy, and Mayer Zald, imply “movement goals toward the rearticulation of identities and the elaboration of identities denied by systemic constraints.” Movements are social or even cultural before they are political: the new social movements renovate civil society as one renovates a house; they inhabit civil
society rather than being merely represented within it. This is “civil society as an ordinary lebenstraum.”\textsuperscript{46} Social movements, it is argued, are autopoietic or self-making, seeking space within an ever more expansive civil society to vindicate and consolidate the ways of life they incarnate, and to demand the state’s support and succor. Hence Touraine’s conclusion that “a social movement . . . is an affirmation rather than a critique or negation.”\textsuperscript{47}

Rather than elaborating universal demands, or aiming to smash or capture the state, new social movements prefer to seek the state’s protection or legitimation for the spaces they have carved out within civil society. Whereas traditional political parties claimed to speak for a plurality of subjects in a single voice, representing them across a broad range of issues, new social movements are more limited in their composition and in the issues they address. As so many of the new social movements are the expression of who people are (identity politics) or where they happen to be (neighborhood organizing), they promise a quasi-natural participation in the political, a promise accentuated by the apparent everydayness of their typically small size and anti-bureaucratic workings. Social movements engender new habits, a “second nature” to be preserved from incursions by the state. In Cohen and Arato’s terms, these movements “operate on both sides of the system/lifeworld divide,” intervening in the strategic projects of political and economic society, but rooted in a Habermasian “lifeworld” devoid of bureaucratic rationality.\textsuperscript{48} They come to seem organic, embedded in the soil of life itself; they are, after all, the “grassroots.”

In Latin America the label of “new social movement” is often applied to indigenous organizations, ecclesiastical base communities, squatters’ movements, peasant cooperatives, and so on. The concept is particularly associated with those groups that took over the role of opposition to authoritarian regimes
after the repression of political parties or trades unions: relatives of the disappeared, neighborhood
soup kitchens, and human rights organizations, for instance. Some movements, particularly Latin
American feminists and gay and lesbian campaigners, draw on the example and resources provided by
similar organizations in Europe and North America. Others arise from the distinct problematics not
only of dictatorship and resistance, but also of the extremely rapid modernization and urbanization
that have affected much of the region in the past forty years. “In the new situation,” theorists Arturo
Escobar and Sonia Alvarez declare, “a multiplicity of social actors establish their presence and spheres
of autonomy in a fragmented social and political space. Society itself is largely shaped by the plurality
of these struggles and the vision of those involved in the new social movements.”

As anthropologist Orin Starn observes, new social movements are generally assumed to be outlets
for social protest. But this is a dubious generalization. Starn comments that in Escobar and Alvarez’s
collection on Latin American social movements, “not a single essay considers drug gangs, conservative
civic movements, soccer hooligans, neo-Nazi skinheads, faith healers or evangelical churches.” The
same, one might add, is true of books such as geographer David Slater’s New Social Movements and
the State in Latin America or sociologist Susan Eckstein’s Power and Popular Protest. Eckstein frames
her collection in terms of the “coordinated and overt nonviolent forms of defiance” on the part of “the
politically and economically weak.” But this ignores the conservatism inherent in some social
movements, particularly as they grow in strength: if they so zealously guard their new-won identities
from the intrusions of the state, why should they not also react against threats real or perceived from
other, perhaps more progressive, movements within civil society itself? As Starn goes on to argue, the
general silence around civil society’s conservative or reactionary elements only “operates to preserve
both the pleasing ring of insurgency to the labels ‘popular initiatives’ and ‘social mobilization’ and the
simplified picture of the dispossessed as always in feisty opposition to the state, the ruling classes, and
the powers that be.” But acknowledging this would threaten the notion of an organic society of the
oppressed. Starn argues for a more nuanced approach that notes both that conservative movements
have progressive aspects, and that even the most cherished vehicles of popular protest can and do
reproduce relations of domination. Yet Starn is not so nuanced when it comes to Sendero, taking at face
value their own claims of “absolute . . . certainty” to characterize the guerrillas only in terms of
“myopic inflexibility.” He seems to accord Sendero a homogeneity that he is quick to unravel in other
movements. Again, Sendero serves as the limit of analysis, even in the context of a subtle account of
groups such as the rondas campesinas, the often state-organized civil defense patrols that competed
with Sendero for support in highland Peru.

Is Sendero a new social movement? Slater comments that “on most counts Sendero Luminoso is not
a ‘new social movement,’ certainly not in relation to the way this category has been discussed.”
Sendero is usually contrasted with movements such as the rondas, because of the latters’ political
stances (pragmatic), formal organization (unhierarchical), and undogmatic willingness to enter into
coalitions with the state as well as with other popular groups. Sendero has confounded those who
have tried to understand it in ideological terms, as social movement new or old whose goal would be to
advance some doctrine or program. It refused to define itself. For most of the insurgency, Sendero
issued no manifesto, made no demands, gave no interviews, and shunned any conventional conception
of the public. It foreclosed the possibility of any negotiated political resolution. Sendero has bemused or
shocked those who see it as an irrational deviation from the political, as a mystical death cult or
barbarous terrorism. Or rather, Sendero bemused at first, opening its campaign in Lima by stringing up
dead dogs in shrouds daubed with the eccentric slogan “Teng Hsiao-ping, son of a bitch.” Shock took
over as the war advanced and as the violence became more frequent if no more explicable. But however
much Sendero came to condition Peruvian political discourse, there was no space within that discourse
to talk about Sendero. Sendero was pure terror. Peruvian historian Nelson Manrique notes the implicit
convention that one “categorizes [Sendero] as terrorist. When the discussion reaches this point,
apparently it is impossible to say anything more without running the risk of being considered at best an
appeaser of Sendero, if not a covert Senderista.”

Some do approach Sendero within the framework of the new social movements. Slater’s collection
has an essay on Sendero, as does Eckstein’s. In the former, Dutch researchers Vera Gianotten, Tom de
Wit, and Hans de Wit attribute the movement’s growth to the lack of competing movements in the city
of Ayacucho, a town “without an organized peasant and labour movement.” In the latter, analyst
Cynthia McClintock separates out Sendero’s early mobilization from what she claims was a later
hardening when, “after the onset of the Peruvian military’s counterinsurgency offensive in 1983,
Sendero’s dedication seemed to become fanaticism and brutality.” Political scientist Cyrus Zirakzadeh
likewise attempts to distinguish a social-movement Sendero from a fanatical Sendero: “It never
developed a consistent position . . . but vacillated during the late 1980s between peaceful infiltration within popular associations and violent destruction of rival organizations.” \(^{59}\)

Meanwhile, Calderón, Piscitelli, and Reyna present Sendero as a new social movement, albeit “striking, absolute, cruel, and disconcerting.” But they suggest that Sendero is more symptom than actor, though its actions are what make it so “striking”: “The movement reflects the complex processes of exclusion and disintegration occurring in Peruvian society.” “Sendero Luminoso is strong,” they claim, “because the Peruvian working class is weak.” \(^{60}\) Again, Sendero is a warning of the consequences of a vacuum in civil society. It is the limit, the “disconcerting” image of a false movement, to be warded off at all costs.

Sendero encouraged the view that it was a limit movement: it has always shown intense hostility towards other Peruvian social movements, as was epitomized in its infamous 1992 assassination of María Elena Moyano, a community organizer in a Lima shantytown. This hostility upsets the assumption that social movements can quasi-naturally enter into coalition, an assumption that rests on the fundamental premise that Latin American societies really are organic wholes. Sendero challenges such organicism. It claims that the social movements, especially those supported by NGOs, are foreign incursions into the Peruvian political scene: “From Sendero’s sectarian point of view, organizations that support grassroots groups represent an attempt on the part of the imperial powers . . . to strengthen the chains of capitalism in rural Peru.” \(^{61}\) On the other hand, Sendero never claims to be natural, to be part of the grassroots. From its initial gesture of inscribing Maoist slogans on the corpses of Lima’s animal population, Sendero has always presented itself as somehow uncannily out of place.

There is something ambivalent about new social movements. On the one hand, they are to be the vehicle and catalyst for democratic participation. What Knight, Chigudu, and Tandon term “citizens’ organizations” are, they argue, “the bedrock of civil society.” The task of “reviving democracy” is to “appeal to their self-interest and to show them ways in which they may increase their power.” Only then will formal “representative democracy” be fleshed out and given substance, and so be transformed into a “participatory democracy” that could integrate civil society as the “arena where the common good is negotiated, intense deliberation and dialogue take place and
diversity is celebrated.” Politics is here conceived as a process of continual negotiation (according to the lifeworld’s logic of communicative reason) to build consensus among diverse social actors. Civil society would be the space within which the terms, strategies, and actions of power are debated, contested, or approved by social movements that represent and are inhabited by the various elements and identities of an increasingly modern and differentiated society. The new social movements vitalize civil society and ensure, we are told, that “democratic states will regain much of the legitimacy that they have lost.” Yet on the other hand, social movements also threaten civil society. Encouraging their participation and mobilization, to “show them ways in which they may increase their power,” risks promoting movements that may not stop at respectful consensus. What if participants take too seriously the agency ascribed to them? They may not wish to stop short at the boundaries of civil society. Why should the force and vitality of a mobilized social movement be appropriated by the state for its own legitimation? The social flesh that gives substance to campaigns for a more direct democracy may turn monstrous (multitudinous), and refuse containment. Here the “hand” of social movements rips the constricting “glove” of civil society. Social movements, in short, give life to civil society but also press against its limits, endangering its role as intermediary to power.

**A Theory of Civil Society: Cohen and Arato**

For “an age when totalizing revolutionary utopias have been discredited,” Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato offer the “self-reflective and self-limiting utopia of civil society.” Drawing on the vitality of new social movements, impelled by the fact that the concept of civil society is “in fact the major category of many of the relevant actors and their
advocates from Russia to Chile, and from France to Poland,” they present civil society as a progressive project, and emphasize its utopian dimensions (3). Further examination, however, reveals an anxious attempt to patrol civil society’s boundaries. The limits of this supposedly “self-limiting” utopia are in fact imposed upon social movements by the theory that claims these same movements as inspiration. A close reading of Cohen and Arato’s insistence on the autonomy of state and market, allegedly in the name of civil society’s own autonomy, demonstrates the paradoxes of civil society theory: a theory of democracy becomes a discourse of governmentality and control that sets the constituted power of state and market institutions against the democratizing force of social movements. Civil society theory comes to blows with civil society discourse, extirpating from the latter all traces of what it stigmatizes as “fundamentalism.” In place of fundamentalism, Cohen and Arato privilege efficiency: forced to choose, civil society theory sides with the instrumental logic that it purportedly opposes.

I focus on Cohen and Arato’s formulation of civil society theory because I accept their claim that “despite the proliferation of this discourse, and of the concept itself . . . no one [had] developed a systematic theory of civil society” before them (3). They argue, for instance, that for all its importance “Touraine’s work points us in the right direction, but he does not offer a theory of civil society” (523). Cohen and Arato set out to provide contemporary civil society discourse with a theoretical basis, and theirs undoubtedly is a significant theorization of civil society. Though the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas is their primary influence, they also engage with or draw on Hannah Arendt, Carl Schmitt, Michel Foucault, and Niklas Luhmann, among many others. Published in 1994, their book has perhaps had less influence than it deserves in part because it is so rigorous and academic (in short, difficult). It is out of tune with the
pragmatic and untheoretical (and sometimes self-serving) tendencies more common in
the civil society discourse of foundations and aid agencies. Activists often disdain
theorizing as impractical and over-intellectual, as though political action were simply a
matter of common sense; but given that contemporary neoliberalism also relies on
presenting itself as second nature, as beyond question, such a refusal of theoretical
reflection can only be self-defeating. It should not be theory as a whole that is at issue,
but this theory in particular. It is, however, a theory that should be examined,
understood, and respected. I focus on Cohen and Arato’s work, therefore, also because
it is the most consistent, thorough, and coherent theory of civil society to date. If there
are problems in their work, these are problems afflicting the very best theory of civil
society.

As with Laclau and Mouffe’s theory of hegemony, a submerged Latin Americanism runs through
Cohen and Arato’s book. Citing particularly the work of Guillermo O’Donnell, Alfred Stepan, and
Fernando Henrique Cardoso, they note that Latin American debates about civil society are “the richest,
most open-ended and most synthetic” (48) of the discussions that have returned the notion of civil
society to the contemporary socio-theoretical map. Yet Latin America soon drops off this map: later
only Eastern Europe is mentioned as providing “the world-historical impetus to revive the category” of
civil society (487). No doubt Cohen and Arato’s occlusion of Latin American contributions to civil
society discourse arises largely from their unfamiliarity with the original Spanish texts, though their
overall project of relegitimating civil society as a concept for the West also requires a certain silencing of
non-Western discourses. More importantly, here is perhaps another instance of Cohen and Arato’s
ambivalence about the social actors they discuss. They claim both inspiration and distance: inspiration
in that by invoking actually existing social movements, such as those that brought down authoritarian
regimes in the Southern Cone, they can assert that they are “not speaking in a void” (346); distance in
that they reject what they call the “democratic fundamentalism typical of collective actors based in civil
society” (561). The price they pay, they admit, is that they lay themselves open to criticism for their “soulless reformism” (423, 451).

Cohen and Arato define civil society as an intermediate sphere “of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of association (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication” (ix). They emphasize civil society’s modernity and self-limitation. Civil society is modern because it is a product of modernization’s differentiating tendencies, which give rise also to the distinct subsystems of economy and state. It is self-limiting because it respects the differences between these subsystems, and maintains its (relative) autonomy from them. Following the differentiation of economy and state, civil society emerges as a reciprocally differentiated space, site of interaction, mediation, and communicative action.

Economy, state, and civil society: this is the fundamental Hegelian division. It is also the basic schema invoked by social movements: Cohen and Arato claim that they are in tune with the “contemporary collective actors” that themselves establish this tripartite model, as “by ‘civil society,’” they “have in mind a normative model of a societal realm different from the state and the economy” (346).

But the three-part division of economy, state, and civil society, while “fundamental” (423), is insufficient to describe the complexity of modern social formations. Civil society is the nexus for multiple mediations and interactions that are part of what Cohen and Arato term “a fabric of societal intermediations” (425). So, for instance, in addition to the state there is also a “political society” that mediates between civil society and the state; and as well as the economy there is an “economic society” that mediates “between civil society and the market system” (x). State, political society,
civil society, economic society, and market: Cohen and Arato’s model now has five components. But the complexities do not stop here, in that civil society is also itself internally differentiated. Its functions are split between intervention in other subsystems on the one hand, and defensive integration and self-conservation on the other. Further, Cohen and Arato invoke the Habermasian distinction between lifeworld and system: civil society connects the communicative, quasi-organic, interactions of the lifeworld with the systemic attributes of the state and the economy, whose subsystems are guided by the rationalized media of power (within political society) and money (for economic society) (426). Mediation goes every which way. At the porous border between lifeworld and system, civil society can be where institutions encroach upon the lifeworld: these are the “negative dimensions of civil society” which its defenders should guard against (442). It can also, of course, be the site from which social movements “exert pressure for inclusion” (532) and “influence . . . within political (and economic) society” through “receptors” within these subsystems that “can, within limits, be added to and democratized” (531). “Receptors” are elements unusually open to the communicative logic of the lifeworld, and the points at which the system includes social movements. So the subsystems are split, too, between their more coldly rationalized elements, and their receptive nodes, open to the influence of a civil society conveying another logic, derived from the lifeworld.

Cohen and Arato’s full social architecture therefore comprises: a quasi-organic (but partially or potentially rationalized) lifeworld; a rational-bureaucratic system made up of the state, the market, and attendant subsystems of political and economic society (with their receptive and non-receptive elements); and civil society as space apart, interstice, communicating vessel, and multivalent conduit. Civil society connects these diverse spheres. But it also keeps them separate. For Cohen and Arato, it is as important
to preserve social boundaries as to bridge them. Invoking Habermas again, they argue that “the utopian horizon of civil society’ . . . is based on preserving the boundaries between the different subsystems and the lifeworld” (456). Civil society has to defend the lifeworld from the incursion of instrumental reason. But instrumental reason has also to be protected from the over-eager interventions of civil society. The encroachment of system upon society should be limited; but civil society, too, should be self-limiting. Any scope for mediation is surprisingly restricted. Indeed, for Cohen and Arato, the “logic of democratic association” turns out to be but an “emergency break” (sic) on the “logics of money and power” (454), waiting for an emergency whose lonely hour, it seems, never arrives.

However much store Cohen and Arato set by civil society, they allot it remarkably little scope for influencing either politics or the economy. Despite “the obvious permeability of political and economic institutions to societal norms” in theory (549), in practice the boundaries of civil society are remarkably watertight. Cohen and Arato are at pains to protect the state from over-enthusiastic social demands, by maintaining a rigid distinction between civil and political society. They repeatedly reject any radical democratic proposal that would fuse civil society and the state: “It would involve such an overburdening of the democratic process that it would discredit democracy by associating it with political disintegration or by opening it to subversion through covert, unregulated strategic action” (451; emphasis added). It would be all too much. Moreover, civil society is no more prepared to take the strain of over-zealous intervention into the political sphere: any dedifferentiation, threatening the autonomy of the two spheres and making the state immediately accountable to civil society, “would deprive civil society of time resources for democratic deliberation and decision making” (454). Indeed, Cohen and Arato’s view on the prospect of civil society taking
upon an expanded role in ensuring the political system’s democratic accountability is downright dystopian: extending “the (communicative) logic of democratic association” to the state would be, they claim, “conducive to short- and long-term dysfunctional side effects and pathologies.” (454). The chances are slimmer still that civil society, in Cohen and Arato’s conception, could affect the economy. Though they continue to claim that “the political public is an open structure because of its permeability to general social communication,” they are forced to “admit that it is difficult to apply the same conception to economic society, where conditions of publicity and therefore the possibilities of democratization are even more restricted” (713 n. 134). Any possible social movement intervention into the workings of the economy is endlessly deferred and subject to doubt: social movements engage in a “politics of influence targeting political (and perhaps economic) insiders”; they “target political society (and will one day perhaps target economic society as well)” (532; emphasis added). A more democratic economic society remains a theoretical possibility, but right now it is bracketed off: literally, Cohen and Arato place it in parentheses. Economic processes are separated out, inscrutable and inviolate. In sum, against the pathological specter of direct democracy, they hold that “modernization depends on the differentiation of modern economy and state” (454); excessive dedifferentiation is “incompatible with . . . the presuppositions of modern democracy” (469). In Cohen and Arato’s conception, civil society’s “self-limiting utopia” is rather more self-limiting and rather less utopian that one might initially have imagined.

Cohen and Arato’s strictures are presented as a defense of democracy. But this defense is paradoxical: democracy is to be defended against democratization, against social movements taking the promise of their empowerment too literally, too seriously. The state and the market are never to be fully democratized. At best there are “forms of
democracy adequate” to these subsystems (415). Social movements are to be content with an “adequate” democracy. They should not take up the burden of undue influence: separating out economic and political society from civil society ensures that “communicative interaction is unburdened from the task of coordinating all areas of life” (539). Civil society should remain an intermediate sphere separate from, but also attendant on and subservient to, state and market. Civil society should, in brief, know its place. By implication that place is also bounded by the nation: a civil society that consents to back off from intervention in political society is tied to political society and its institutional support, the nation-state. Implicit in Cohen and Arato’s discussion of citizenship, legality, and identity, and part and parcel of their conception of modernity, is that civil society should be a national civil society. (Reciprocally, calls for a global civil society are also calls for a global state, as in proposals such as journalist George Monbiot’s The Age of Consent.) They hem civil society in on all sides; yet Cohen and Arato present themselves as its supporters!

Cohen and Arato attempt to dampen the enthusiasm of civil society’s democratizing impulses in the name of modernity and from fear of fundamentalism. There is something deeply conservative about their attempt to safeguard modernity. Political modernization can only be guaranteed, they suggest, by upholding the relative autonomy of the state and political society. Economic development can only be safeguarded by insulating the economy and economic society from social demands. Civil society mediates between these spheres, but its task is above all to defend the integrity of the lifeworld. Systemic reason is to be spared full democratization; communicative reason is to be relieved of the burden of implementing full democracy. Everywhere, in Naomi Klein’s phrase, there are more fences than windows; this is modernity’s rather anxious defensive compact. Any threat to this order threatens
modernity as a whole: Cohen and Arato stigmatize such threats as fundamentalism, by which they mean both traditionalist “fundamentalism of false communities” (24) and innovative demands for radical democracy, the “revolutionary fundamentalism” of the “total politicization of society” (565). Both fundamentalisms, the traditionalist and the revolutionary, are anti-modern: premodern or “primitivist” (453) on the one hand; postmodern on the other. It is, however, the revolutionary demand for immediacy and immanence, against differentiation and the protection of state and market from civil society’s demands, that most threatens “the universalist tradition of cultural and political modernity” (24-25). Civil society is only modern if it is a “lifeworld capable of rationalization” (422). “Democratic fundamentalism” (453 and passim), which resists and overcomes rationalization, and which refuses to differentiate between civil and political society, would overwhelm the state and lead, Cohen and Arato imply, to anarchy.

The identity of the fundamentalists themselves is never precisely specified. It is as though fundamentalism were strangely omnipresent: haunting civil society, never settling in any one location. A desire to breach the boundaries separating civil, political, and economic society could arise at any point, from any part of civil society. If anything, fundamentalism is to be expected. However much it may be hoped that modern social movements “are no longer motivated by fundamentalist projects of suppressing bureaucracy, economic rationality, or social division” (16), in practice such views are “typical of collective actors based in civil society” (561; emphasis added). Everyone is a potential fundamentalist. “Democratic fundamentalism” is the everyday but false consciousness of social movements. This is no barbarism at the shores of civil society; it is the enemy within, the pathogen carried in the cells of the social movements themselves. The concept of civil society has, then, to be “reconstructed” to protect it
from its own most fervent supporters, to ensure that it remains “usable” (422). A usable concept of civil society would ensure that instrumental reason still held sway over communicative logic. But social movement fundamentalism arises from the very popularity of the concept of civil society, and the promises of empowerment that it offers. Hence the double-edged sword of participation: without participation in and from civil society, the state loses legitimacy; so civil society has to be encouraged. The more people who take part, the better, but it is all too “easy for such actors to slip into fundamentalist postures” (421). Fundamentalism is civil society run amok, unreflectively celebrated by “the theoretical defenders of civil society who see democratic publics, intact solidarities, and forms of autonomy everywhere” (422). Fundamentalism is central for Cohen and Arato because it is dangerous and ubiquitous, but also because it is entrenched in civil society discourse itself. The “imagery” of civil society articulated by social actors is “not really adequate . . . to the most important constraints on collective action” (421). Civil society theory, in Cohen and Arato’s hands, is now directly opposed to civil society discourse as championed by the new social movements themselves.

The truth of civil society theory is that it imposes a series of boundaries, drawing on the force of social movements to legitimate political order, but restraining that force at the point at which it might challenge the state. Tendencies that might overspill or dissolve those boundaries are ostracized as fundamentalist. Dominique Colas’s genealogy of the term demonstrates that whenever the concept of civil society is invoked, it always depends upon the demarcation of a fanaticism that is its other. The concept of civil society founds and maintains a “regulated system of differences.” Systemic differentiation has to be regulated, its borders anxiously patrolled against the threat of fanatical dedifferentiation. Colas details the changing distinctions secured by
the idea of civil society over the long history of the term’s use: civil society has variously been counterpoised to the people, the City of God, the state of nature, and (in its most recent incarnation) the state. In all its guises, however, civil society invokes “the flexible management of multiplicity, heterogeneity.” The concept manages multiplicity by imposing representation, by “translat[ing] force into signs,” and so establishing politics as “a noisy theatricality like an essential ‘demonstration’ of the belief in the effectiveness of representation.” By contrast, “for the fanatic” (and Colas has little sympathy for fanaticism), “representation is always a parasitic excrescence” and “mediation is a loss of strength or meaning that necessarily entails a degradation.” Civil society is threatened not by the other elements within the system of differences that it establishes (such as the state), but by a constituent power that would abolish all distinctions and all mediations. From Martin Luther and the early modern battles against religious radicalism to the very literal fences constructed to protect world leaders in Davos and Genoa in the present, civil society is haunted by the fear of what Colas calls “the multitude triumphantly imposing its unmediated will.”

What distinguishes civil society theory today is that with the emergence of “democratic fundamentalism,” fanaticism is now a component part of civil society. Fanaticism is no longer simply the other, external to modernity. In the early sixteenth century Luther could denounce the iconoclasts and Anabaptists as heretical sects who had misinterpreted his teaching, and assert that “crushing the fanatics was vital for the very existence of civil society.” This history of the Anabaptist rebellions and their violent suppression is marvelously told in Q, a novel written by Italian anarchists under the pseudonym “Luther Blissett.” They certainly are alert to the continuities between, say, Münster in 1535 and Genoa in 2001. But crushing the fanatics is no longer an option. Fanaticism and civil society are now practically indistinguishable. To mobilize
the forces of civil society, in the name of the state’s legitimation, is at the same time to
summon forth the fanaticism that threatens to abolish both civil society and the state.
The more that civil society expands, the more it incorporates fanaticism and the
“revolutionary fundamentalism” that so perturbs Cohen and Arato. The more that
social movements and groups are integrated into civil society, the more differentiated
and complex civil society becomes, and so the more that civil society incarnates a pure,
immediate multiplicity that would destroy the entire system of differences. Civil
society’s triumph is also its downfall: it gives expression to emergent subjectivities that,
now empowered, threaten to annihilate civil society from within. Civil society loses its
capacity to regulate difference and multiplicity. Civil society discourse therefore has to
stir up fear of fundamentalisms that are not or cannot be incorporated within civil
society itself. The image of a fanaticism beyond its borders wards off the more pressing
danger of fundamentalism within. The name given this new fanaticism, is terror.

The influential Mexico-based anthropologist Néstor García Canclini invokes Cohen and Arato to
advocate a market-based version of civil society, and to demonize fundamentalism. As cultural theorist
George Yúdice observes, García Canclini identifies “a bipolar divide between negotiation and
fundamentalism” in Latin American popular culture. Choosing between these options, García
Canclini plumps unequivocally for negotiation. He argues that subaltern resistance is doomed, because
the market is “stronger than the difference of the subalterns or marginalized groups.” Such groups
need to accept the market and ally themselves with the state which, though weakened, can still shelter
some forms of cultural specificity. Civil society is the midpoint between the two, and so the site of
accommodation to the market on the one hand and negotiation with the state on the other. García
Canclini gives civil society a culturalist and consumerist twist, premised upon the market enabling
what Yúdice elsewhere glosses as “consumption as a ‘means of thinking’” and upon the state
virtuously regulating the trade in cultural goods. Again, however, the state is the prime beneficiary:
“Communities of consumers” will provide the “cultural adhesive” legitimating a renovated social
This is García Canclini’s version of “regional federalism,” a project in some ways now being put into effect with the current Latin American left turns. But again, civil society has to be protected even from its advocates: too often, García Canclini argues, the term “is used nowadays to legitimize the most heterogeneous agendas of groups, non-governmental organizations, private corporations, and even individuals.” Seeking to refine and restrict the concept, he turns to Cohen and Arato for its “best reformulation.” He draws a line in the sand: social groups open to negotiation are to be set apart from those that tend towards fundamentalism; the fundamentalists no longer belong.

Sendero provides García Canclini with the exemplary image of fundamentalism, beyond the pale of possible political positions. Even banished from sight, however, Sendero continues to haunt his political project. Sendero is a symptom of the neoliberal breakdown that leads to (para)ethnic fundamentalism: as “peasant and urban economic conditions have deteriorated,” García Canclini argues, “the segregationist fundamentalism of ethnic or paraethnic movements such as Sendero Luminoso only makes it more difficult to implement integration projects.” Blocking integration, Sendero prevents the realization of a multicultural civil society. Or rather, it reveals the limits of integration and multiculturalism; it is inassimilable. But García Canclini warns that fundamentalism wears many masks, appearing even “in the guise of Latin Americanism.” He launches a critique of magical realism, whose Macondismo “freezes the ‘Latin American’ in a premodern sanctuary and sublimates this continent as the place where social violence casts its spell through the affects.” It is against this enchanted, affected version of the region that García Canclini proposes the concept of civil society, which would presumably be characterized by disenchantment and realism. There is, however, something fantastic about the picture he paints: for instance, Sendero is hardly an ethnic movement, and very far from Macondismo. But everything lumped together as fundamentalism and affect has to be banished to the margins and excluded from view, so it is no surprise that it should also be subject to such mischaracterizations. Sendero becomes inconceivable and unknowable for a civil society discourse that so anxiously wishes to distinguish its own incipient fundamentalism from that incarnated by Sendero. Fundamentalism has to drop out of discourse altogether, to become part of the non-negotiable real, sacrificed for the sake of an increasingly fantastic realism. For if fundamentalism were but one discourse among others, then it could enter civil society, its differences relative and negotiable. Rather, it is expelled to the perimeter where all differences are annulled and all mediations abolished, and
where the distinction between referent and sign is iconoclastically erased. And this in the name of a discourse that refuses to portray Latin America in terms of subaltern abjection! For García Canclini, Sendero incarnates Latin American fundamentalism, the affect and terror at civil society’s margins against which his rationalism, otherwise always ready to negotiate, turns its back. But Sendero’s unrepresentability haunts Latin American conceptions of civil society, frustrating attempts to extirpate it. García Canclini’s *Hybrid Cultures* ends with the question of “how to be radical without being fundamentalist.” He might equally ask how to be radical without being Sendero; for if Sendero is nothing else, it is radical.

In Peru, above all, Sendero’s presence was spectral but no less frighteningly real. Unseen, the insurgents could be anywhere. Just as Abimael Guzmán was frustratingly elusive for the Peruvian security services, so also with Sendero’s militants: their eyes and ears were everywhere, but even the bodies of fallen combatants were removed from the scene of battle before the security forces arrived. All they left was an affective trace. Peruvian film-maker Francisco Lombardi’s *La boca del lobo* (1988) portrays the state’s paranoia and paradoxically puts Sendero’s invisibility on display. The movie shows a detachment of the Peruvian army sent to a remote Andean village. They wake up after their first night there only to discover that at some point, someone, without disturbing the guards, has replaced the Peruvian flag that was flying high above their billets with Sendero’s red flag, its hammer and sickle. The soldiers search for who could be responsible, but Sendero are never seen: the guerrilla constitute the absolute horizon and limit of visibility in the clear Andean air, the real whose insistent but invisible ubiquitous presence threatens order and internal coherence. Among the forces supposedly ensuring national security, the ensuring paranoia leads to disintegration: the commanding officer breaks down under the strain, orders a massacre of the villagers, and then loses control even of his own men.
At the war’s outset, Sendero quickly turned their spectrality into strategic advantage. They soon demonstrated that they could operate virtually with impunity in the city of Ayacucho, as well as in the countryside. As early as March 1982, they attacked the city’s jail, taking the security forces completely by surprise and freeing almost 250 prisoners. In the face of withering fire, the Civil and Republican Guard blockaded themselves into their barracks. “On Ayacucho’s streets,” Gorriti reports, “mobile Shining Path teams dedicated themselves to hunting down the isolated policemen serving as sentries… In less than thirty minutes, the Shining Path had established complete control over Ayacucho.” An hour or so later, the Sendero fighters had already disappeared back to the countryside (“they vanished on the road to Huancavelica”), but the damage had been done and the “siege of Ayacucho” had begun. In December of that year, the bridge linking Ayacucho with the neighboring provinces of Andahuaylas and Cusco was dynamited. Two days later, the city’s mayor was shot and seriously wounded; when the doctor who had been treating him went to leave the hospital, on his car’s driving seat “he found a written note: ‘The people have a thousand eyes, a thousand ears.”’ Sendero’s mobility, the fact that they could turn up anywhere, at any time, contrasted with the immobility of a petrified police force,
who had been “undermined morally, not defeated in battle.” The policemen’s only movement was the jitters: “Fear of an attack like the one that had taken place in March was intense. . . . Few officers dared walk on foot at night—even downtown—for fear of the trembling trigger fingers of their own men.” And the jitterbug: “In a not entirely incomprehensible paradox, the discotheques were filled to capacity.” That same year, Sendero’s siege of Lima also began: “On December 3, the Shining Path celebrated the exalted Guzmán’s birthday. . . . A simultaneous blackout darkened Lima and Ayacucho. On San Cristóbal Hill, which overlooked colonial Lima, and on Ayacucho’s La Picota Hill, hundreds of cans with burning material inside drew a fiery hammer and sickle in the blackness.”

National and provincial capital alike were confronted by a burning presence, uncomfortably close and (not quite) visible at their margins.

The paradox of civil society theory is that the fundamentalism it disdains has given soul, promise, and hope to social movements and so to the civil society that it sets out to praise. Social movements mobilize people by offering them empowerment, expansiveness, and collective influence; they promise participants that (in the slogan of the World Social Forum) “another world is possible!” People join up so as to do away with the noisy theatricality of representational politics. Cohen and Arato admit that by contrast their own project, with its emphasis on limitation and systemic management, may appear “deficient in its motivational ability” (455). They are sensitive to the charge of “soulless reformism” (423, 451). Civil society theory is dry and affectless compared to the inspirational force of social movements and their democratic fundamentalism. This absent affect shadows Cohen and Arato’s text: they have eliminated desire from civil society, but recognize that civil society is nothing without it. In its place, all Cohen and Arato can offer is efficiency. In the end, they prefer efficiency to affect, governability to democracy. So, for example, “the need for steering mechanisms for the state and the economy must be respected if we expect them to function efficiently” (415). Opposing
civil disobedience that would target economic society, they assert that “economic efficiency should not be sacrificed *in toto* to democratic pressure” (741 n. 80). Modernity’s compact of limitations subjects democracy to efficiency rather than vice versa. You might not like it, Cohen and Arato imply of their conception of civil society, but at least it works.

**Neoliberalism and the State**

As efficiency becomes its principal rationale, civil society becomes a subsystem of what Cohen and Arato term the “*steering performance* . . . [of] system rationality” (479). Efficiency trumps democracy, albeit tempered by legitimacy. Civil society resolves the dilemma faced by “bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes,” that they “never manage to solve their problems of legitimacy” (50). The result is managerialism: civil society becomes an auxiliary component of the state’s self-guidance mechanism. An expanded civil society, in short, is subsumed by a still more expansive neoliberal state. A new state form emerges, whose technocratic legitimacy rests on an image of transparency and accountability that bypasses parties, politics, and even social movements in favor of immanent investment in civil society. The forms of the state’s expansion are novel: they include opinion polling, mediatization, surveillance, as well as the proxy state institutions of NGOs and charitable organizations. Civil society and the state merge, and civil society’s mediating function becomes rationalization, a far-reaching mechanism for the production of consensus. Cultural particularities are filtered, sorted, negotiated, and finally eliminated. Heterogeneity becomes unity; multiplicity and singularity are reduced to identity. Civil society and the state, a single assemblage whose operations lie well beneath ideology, strip culture of its irrationalities and fold
back its force as the power of management. Neoliberal regimes silently and efficiently transform constituent into constituted power, consolidating their claims to a monopoly on violence.

Neoliberalism is more than simply a set of economic policies, though that is how it is usually defined, as a conjunction of neoclassical economics and monetarism. The neoliberal economic agenda, codified as the so-called “Washington Consensus,” is premised on stabilization, structural adjustment, and export-led growth, and its implementation calls for privatization, deregulation, reducing subsidies, cutting tariffs, and generally encouraging market solutions over state intervention. But an exclusive focus on economics occludes the fact that above all neoliberalism ushers in a new state form. British prime minister Margaret Thatcher famously summarized her own version of neoliberal doctrine as “rolling back the frontiers of the state,” but neoliberalism is better understood as a radical reconstruction of the state’s contours. Neoliberal states relinquish direct control of the economy, but are highly interventionist in other arenas. Indeed, “freeing” the economy involves direct and often controversial action to break the powers of those institutions vying for power with the state. In Thatcherism’s case, the paradigmatic confrontation involved the political mobilization of the police against the National Union of Mineworkers’ 1984 strike. The fact that neoliberalism was first tried and tested under a military dictatorship, in Augusto Pinochet’s Chile, demonstrates that it is hardly incompatible with a strong state; indeed, its “shock doctrine” requires it. But Pinochet’s dictatorship or Thatcher’s authoritarianism are only the early stages of neoliberal ascendancy, in which initial resistance is overcome. Neoliberalism comes into its own in transitional, post-authoritarian societies, under the banner of consensus and with the promise of a renovated social pact.
The state brooks no competition; it has to be singular and all-encompassing. “In the end,” sociologist Max Weber tells us, “the modern state controls the total means of political organization, which actually come together under a single head.” Never has this been truer than of the neoliberal state, despite its apparent reticence. Following German legal scholar Carl Schmitt, political theorist Giorgio Agamben describes “the dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics” as a “state of exception” in which the law is suspended, and so the boundaries between state and society (“between law and the living being”) radically breached. This is the state’s own brand of fundamentalism, its own excessiveness. Yet, again following Weber, if the state is defined by its monopoly (its monopoly on “the means of organization” but also on “the legitimate use of force”), it is not simply “in the end” that it acquires such monopoly. The state always has this monopoly, at least ideally: its very definition depends on its uniqueness; there can be no half measures within the territory that it controls.

Philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari argue that “the State was not formed in progressive stages; it appears fully armed, a master stroke executed all at once. . . . It is the basic formation, on the horizon throughout history.” With the neoliberal “state of exception,” the state’s fully-armed ideality is apparently realized; history’s horizon rushes up to meet us. The state is everything, or so it would have us believe.

Peru’s experience of authoritarianism differs from that of Southern Cone countries such as Brazil and Chile, and its post-dictatorship history has been anomalous and disorderly. Sendero took advantage of this chaos, and also made it much worse. The military regimes of, first, General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975) and, then, General Francisco Morales Bermúdez (1975-1980) were corporatist, left-leaning, and progressive: Velasco, for instance, initiated one of Latin America’s most ambitious land reform programs. The military did not destroy public institutions; indeed, in some cases it strengthened them. But not for long; as political scientist Philip Mauceri argues, “the transition to
democracy largely provided a framework for the military to extricate itself rather than providing a strong institutional framework for a new democratic order.” This would not, however, become evident for some years. Mauceri comments that “the marvel perhaps was not that that structure would be easily swept away twelve years later, but that it lasted as long as it did.”

The first head of state after the 1980 transition was Fernando Belaúnde, who had also been the president ousted by the 1968 coup. By contrast with the protectionist positions he took in the 1960s, in his 1980-1985 administration Belaúnde reversed some of Velasco’s reforms, further accelerating the trade liberalization that Morales Bermúdez had already initiated. But the economy soon entered into crisis, the national debt spiraled upwards, and the Sendero rebellion took hold and rapidly grew out of control. Alan García’s presidency of 1985 to 1990 was the last hurrah of Latin America’s historic populist parties: with García, APRA (the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) finally took power, over sixty years after its 1924 foundation as perhaps the region’s first mass populist movement. García’s presidency was, however, by almost any standards a disaster: despite initiating an increasingly dirty campaign of counter-insurgency in the highlands, he failed to contain Sendero; hyper-inflation only worsened Peru’s economic crisis; and García himself left office in disgrace, soon to face charges of massive corruption. (He has since, however, returned to power as though redeemed by his subsequent years in the political wilderness.)

With APRA thrown out of office, a vacuum ensued. The party system had by now effectively disintegrated, paving the way for the 1990 presidential contest that culminated in a face-off between the renowned novelist Mario Vargas Llosa and a then-unknown university professor by the name of Alberto Fujimori. Against all expectations, Fujimori won.

The best accounts of Fujimori’s regime include anthropologist Carlos Iván Degregori’s La década de la antipolítica, sociologists Julio Cotler and Romeo Grompone’s El fujimorismo, and, for its economic policies, economist Efraín Gonzales de Olarte’s El neoliberalismo a la peruana. Fujimori was an outsider to the Peruvian political scene, and had campaigned on a more or less populist platform. Once elected, however, he revealed himself an ardent neoliberal. Gonzales de Olarte points out that the reforms that Fujimori initiated almost as soon as he took office were “an extreme model of efficiency-driven adjustment” in line with “a radical model of the ‘Washington Consensus.’” He also argues that the new regime engineered a “divorce of economics from politics,” as “active intermediaries such as political parties . . . employers’ or workers’ organizations” either disappeared or lost all influence. But
in fact bypassing such groups is the politics of neoliberalism: stripping politics of its mediating bodies fully fits with radical changes in the economic sphere. Degregori rightly sees Fujimori’s regime as “the end of the Creole Republic.” But to term it also “the apotheosis of antipolitics” is to define politics solely in terms of the mechanisms bequeathed both by traditional republicanism and, more generally, by modernity’s model of separation of powers, formal representation, active interest groups, and clear limits between civil and political society. What Degregori describes is in fact better understood as a new form of (anti-political) politics. “Opposed to any form of organization,” Degregori explains, “the anti-politician preferred to preside over an amorphous country, based on an alliance of de facto powers: the intelligence services, the armed forces, the media, and technocrats linked to international financial organizations.” This permeation of society by state characterizes what in chapter four I describe as biopolitics. But a shift to biopolitics brings its own dangers for constituted power. Degregori goes on to note that these same “de facto” powers later had pause for thought, as they “began to see this formerly obscure ex-agronomist acquiring ever more life of his own, redolent of multitudes.”

Fujimorismo often strangely mirrored Sendero, supposedly its sworn adversary. Indeed, Degregori suggests that Peruvian society in the 1990s was built on a common philosophy articulated most clearly by Abimael Guzmán, in the one interview he conceded the press (the so-called “interview of the century”) in 1988. Guzmán declared that “Senderistas were ‘prepared to do anything and everything. Anything, without exception.’” This was a declaration of fundamentalism, no doubt, but one shared and amplified by Fujimori. “What effect,” asks Degregori, “does this philosophy have on a country that lacks institutional brakes? Anything goes. Anything can be bought, anything sold. . . . Anything and everything in the name of the cult to utilitarianism and efficiency.” This willingness to do anything relates to another fundamentalist trait shared by both Sendero and fujimorismo: their refusal to enter into alliances. As Grompone puts it, “the regime managed without seeking support for its reforms from social coalitions, which would necessitate political negotiations, and to appeal instead to a passive consensus, directed from the seat of power. In fact what was proposed was to bypass any pacts.” Instead of political representatives, Fujimori’s government relied on political “operatives,” conduits immediately and directly in touch with civil society. They mirrored, Grompone tells us, Sendero’s cadres: “Both sides understood that what was at stake were problems ‘of life and death.’” Of “bare life,” as Agamben would have it.
If anything, Sendero and **fujimorismo** were adversaries precisely because of their similarities. Both aimed to construct a new state, disputing the monopoly of legitimate violence and in the process destroying any possibility of a functional civil society along classical lines. As anthropologists Deborah Poole and Gerardo Rénique indicate, by the late 1980s Sendero had established a counter-state in the areas under its control, building “a new moral order in the countryside. Theft, adultery, wife-beating, corruption, failure to cooperate in communal work projects and other moral infractions were severely punished by flogging and occasional executions.” Poole and Rénique observe that “during [the] early years many peasants viewed the PCP-SL positively as a source of the moral order and security which the Peruvian state had for centuries failed to provide.”90 Sendero was less anti-state than a parallel state, aggressively seeking to legitimate its violence, and exploiting historic weaknesses in the Peruvian state’s claims to legitimacy or monopoly. Civil society breaks down when split between two states, two competing poles of potential negotiation and legitimation. In response, some demanded greater representativity on the part of the “official” state, better adequation between state and civil society. Writing in 1991, lawyer and journalist María del Pilar Tello claimed that “the whole of civil society appears more and more lucid in its demand that the State represent the national community and its interests on top of the party interests of the State government.”91 Calling for a representativity beyond party and sectoral differences, Tello points to a crisis of state legitimacy that was both effect and cause of the Sendero rebellion. The entire system of representation had broken down, fragmented into two (or more) parts. The state can do without parties, but cannot stand threats to its unity and monopoly. Within months, Fujimori reacted, but not perhaps in the way that commentators such as Tello might have imagined: his response to this legitimation crisis would be to declare a coup against his own regime, and to absorb civil society fully within the state.

Neoliberalism demands that civil society provide ever more legitimation ever more immediately and directly. The state and civil society should be completely transparent to each other. Transparency is neoliberalism’s key value, going hand in hand with governance. So Michel Camdessus, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund from 1987 to 2000 (the IMF’s longest-serving chief official), declared to
“Transparency International” his belief in “the central importance of transparency and good governance in achieving economic success.” Transparency International itself is, it declares, “the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption, bring[ing] people together in a powerful worldwide coalition.” It defines corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” and produces an annual “Corruption Perception Index,” statistically documenting on a ten-point scale which societies it believes are the most transparent (in 2007, Denmark, Finland, and New Zealand, which each scored 9.4) and which the least (Myanmar and Somalia with 1.4 points apiece). The workings of government and business are to be transparent to civil society. Equally, however, neoliberal practice insists that society be transparent to business and government. Business must have immediate access to information about consumer behavior, while government needs to be able to sound out its citizenry as efficiently as possible. Transparency is aimed at literally disarming social movements: Camdessus’s example of the “positive effects” of the IMF’s initiatives, which he himself terms a “revolution,” involves unions “giv[ing] up the idea of a general strike.”

With social transparency elevated to the acme of public virtue, opinion polls in all their many current incarnations come to the fore as the prime mechanism of governance and control in public and private sectors alike. Constant surveys eliminate the residual autonomy and texture of civil society, and public opinion becomes directly assimilated to both state managerialism and private profit. Many of the companies specializing in the variety of polling devices now in use also provide their services to business as “market research,” and vice versa. Politics becomes market research as market research becomes a particularly valuable tool for politicians. Both thrive on surveys, focus groups, brand analysis, even corporate ethnography and social semiotics: business and politics are increasingly built on the same basis. The thickness and texture
of civil society disappear, as the state moves to an apparently direct relation with the public. Transparency is promoted through the technocratic conversion of disparate affects (the way things make us feel) into statistical opinions (what we think about them) that can justify a single set of policies, a single outcome for the governmental client. Pierre Bourdieu points out that the social scientific survey, on which technocracy’s production of public opinion is based, proceeds “as if it had already resolved the essential problem of politics, namely, the question of the transmutation of experience into discourse, of the unformulated ethos into a constituted, constituting logos.”

Yet polls are too often taken at face value by researchers, and their rationale is seldom questioned. Much social science, after all, is premised upon unconditional belief in such surveys. When the tools of social science are taken up by power, there is little that the statistic-minded scholar can do but applaud this incorporation of social scientific calculation into governance.

There is nothing passive about the recording technologies that underpin an age of transparency. They effect real transformations, changes in state for the state’s unchanging benefit. They bridge what Bourdieu describes as the “radical discontinuity” that separates “ethos and logos, practical mastery and verbal mastery.” Opinion polls and other such instruments of technocratic observation are apparatuses of capture converting qualitative difference into quantity: they produce a statistical striation of social space that reduces experience to opinion and people to pop-sociological epithets (“soccer mums,” “Essex man”) so as to calibrate endlessly comparable differences. Multiplicity is replaced by simple multiplication. Once different sectors of society are compared, they can also be represented and so appropriated. The state becomes what Deleuze and Guattari term a “form of expression” for the disparate elements that it has captured in its all-observing gaze.
Polling goes hand in hand with the mediatization of politics under neoliberalism. These media take new forms: the classic critique of the spectacle, for positioning its viewers as passive subjects, is now outdated. Cinematic spectators may have been blinded or distracted at the apogee of historical populism. But in the televisual age of neoliberalism, participation is all. We are endlessly encouraged to vote: for Pop Idol or American Idol, and a myriad other reality programs. George Orwell would never have imagined Big Brother converted into an interactive fantasy in which it is the television audience that determines events on the omnipresent small screen (to evict or save a housemate), rather than the other way around. But the incitement to join in does not merely affect so-called reality television: British TV constantly exhorts its audience to “press the red button on your remote control” or “send us an SMS message,” urging viewers to provide feedback and comments immediately and directly. Participating viewers produce a stream of real-time opinion that can then be run along the bottom of the screen, like a stock market ticker, while a politician is interviewed or breaking news is broadcast. Meanwhile politicians themselves, on the sofas and comfy chairs of the breakfast and teatime discussion shows, enter the nation’s living rooms to chat, mug of coffee or tea in hand, about ever more everyday topics: their favorite football teams, recipes, and health tips. And all this is to say nothing of the Internet or the blogosphere, and the ways in which they too foster the sensations of transparency, immediacy, accountability, and the blurring of boundaries between economy, state, and civil society.

Opinion polls played a central role in Fujimori’s political survival. Especially after he dissolved Congress in an “autogolpe” or self-coup, public opinion was the mainstay of his administration’s legitimation: a public opinion constituted solely through the polls. Fujimori’s neoliberal reforms faced
resistance from both chambers of Congress, which were controlled by opposition parties. On April 5, 1992, therefore, he suspended the constitution, dissolved both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, and had prominent opposition figures and journalists arrested, “the culminating response of an attempt to restructure the state and its relations with society.”

As Poole and Rénique report, in subsequent weeks “Peruvians were subjected to an avalanche of opinion polls, most purporting to demonstrate massive public backing for Fujimori’s coup. Most were simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ polls, suggesting widespread support.” Fujimori then paraded these polls before the Organization of American States (meeting soon thereafter in the Bahamas) to secure international as well as national legitimation for what he had done. As political scientist Catherine Conaghan puts it, “It is not unusual for coups to be made in the name of ‘the people.’ What was novel about Perú’s Fuji-golpe was that the assertion could be tied to a body of ‘scientific’ data.” Poole and Rénique go on to comment that the polls revealed “the potency of Fujimori’s ‘anti-political’ and ‘anti-establishment’ stance.” But again, the regime was only “anti-political” in as much as it had almost fully converted the complex relations between culture and the state into a managerial discourse interior to the state itself; all mediating institutions could be pushed aside because Fujimori could claim, though polling, direct access to the public mind.

The one book on Peruvian opinion polls, sociologist (and subsequently head of the Peruvian electoral commission) Fernando Tuesta Soldevilla’s No sabe / no opina, is mainly concerned with their representativity and their treatment in the press. In interview, however, Tuesta partly confirmed what was commonly rumored, that Fujimori worked closely with an Argentine polling company headed by one Saul Mankewich. Subsequently it emerged that Mankewich was being paid $2,000 per month for his work on Fujimori’s 2000 re-election campaign. In biographer Luis Jochamowitz’s words, Fujimori’s “fondness for political marketing is no secret; the polls have become, with him, a theme of frequent discussion.” As these are unpublished polls, they are not discussed in Tuesta’s book. But it is invisible polling that truly permeates neoliberal social order.

There is no poll more invisible than that conducted by the intelligence services. The MRTA hostage crisis and its resolution in the Spring of 1997 provide an object lesson and metaphor for the combination of political polling, intelligence gathering, and mediatization that characterized Fujimori’s regime. The Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement) were the other, much smaller, guerilla movement active in Peru during the 1980s and 1990s. They were,
however, quite different from Sendero: in the tradition of classic Latin American guerrilla groups, similar to and affiliated with the FMLN and other darlings of the 1980s left, they aimed to create some public space for negotiation, even if it had to be taken by force. In December 1996, disguised as waiters, a group of fourteen MRTA militants infiltrated and then over-ran a reception at the Japanese Ambassador’s residence in Lima, taking hundreds hostage, many of whom were prominent figures from Peru’s social, business, and political elite. The MRTA held 72 of these hostages for four months, in a drama played out daily on Peru’s television screens (and also in the eyes of world opinion). The guerrillas were happy to create a spectacle and bask in its limelight; the crisis was their soapbox. TV crews were even invited in to the residence for interviews with the armed group’s leaders. Fujimori, on the other hand, insisted that negotiation was impossible; talking was not an option. When the polls indicated that the time was right, he instead implemented a technocratic solution to eliminate this blockage to the state’s expansion and transparency. The MRTA was all too visible, and Fujimori’s security forces undermined them literally as well as metaphorically, through subterranean tunnels that permeated the ground beneath the hostage-takers. Using sophisticated listening devices, unbeknownst to the camera-friendly militants, the state was quietly listening in to their over-confident volubility from under their very feet. Finally, in a special operation that was broadcast live to the nation, the forces of order emerged from their tunnels and stormed the compound, killing all the guerrillas. The victorious state then allowed itself the luxury of teaching potential militants a visual lesson: images of the MRTA members’ corpses, and of Fujimori inspecting the scene, were repeatedly replayed on the nightly news. The exercise depended, however, on an invisible penetration of the social bedrock, on a surreptitious sounding out of everyday routines in the residence above.

Media politics under Fujimori took both overt and covert forms. For the importance above all of TV talk shows and the culture of so-called “vedettes” (or showgirls) during the 1990s, see not only Degregori’s La década de la política but also media scholar José Luis Vargas Gutiérrez’s Adiós a la vergüenza, journalist Carlos Chávez Toro’s Susy Díaz, and Romeo Grompone’s Fujimori, neopopulismo y comunicación política. “In his marketing strategy,” Grompone tells us, “Fujimori starts from the idea that people’s reference point is television and the opportunities they have for direct contact with the president.” Chávez Toro focuses on the election of a vedette, Susy Díaz, to Congress in 1995. Díaz won a significant share of the vote, and more in absolute terms than almost sixty other
elected members of Congress. Asked the reasons for her success, she answered that “the people have voted for me because I am a transparent person.”

To the same question, sociologist José María Salcedo’s response is that “it is because in Peru the category of professional politician has disappeared. The distance between those who know and those who don’t know about politics has vanished.”

Anyone could be in politics, so long as they were transparent enough. Degregori, meanwhile, is quick to point up the similarities between talk show culture and Sendero: “One of Sendero’s most terrifying slogans was the Foucauldian ‘the party has a thousand eyes, a thousand ears.’ A TV channel has a thousand eyes and ears, too: electronic ones. Placing hidden cameras in the most unexpected places . . . is a perverse erasure of the separation between private and public.”

But the most telling evidence of the imbrication of politics, media, and intelligence came with the scandal of the so-called “Vladivideos.” In late 2000 it emerged that Vladimiro Montesinos, Fujimori’s right-hand man and head of the Peruvian National Intelligence Service, had secretly videotaped thousands of his meetings with military, commercial, and political contacts. These videos recorded a series of illegal financial transactions, including outright bribes accepted by opposition members of Congress and by the proprietors of several Peruvian television stations. The scandal brought down Fujimori’s government, but not before making crystal clear the complete infiltration of state, market, and civil society. In the end, none of this was too surprising. As Degregori comments, “corruption had become the only institution. All the other institutions had become mere façades.”

Corruption kept the state going; but it was also eating it away from within.

State and society, and their mutual relations, have been transformed over the past twenty or thirty years. Opinion polls take popular representativity to an extreme, holding out the dream of a direct expression of popular will: a utopia of direct democracy that would replace the mediated representations and the mediating institutions (political parties and social movements alike) of formal democracy. Any such institution has its own weight and relative autonomy and thus, from the perspective of neoliberalism, distorts the political process, either through bureaucracy or through corruption. In the interests of transparency, such institutions are subject to
constant scrutiny and demonization. The discourse of scandal becomes ubiquitous: even minor peccadilloes are magnified by a press and a political establishment determined to eliminate any remnant of opacity, any obstacle to the smooth and transparent operations of a technocratic direct democracy. Corruption fights corruption: an unbounded flow of knowledge, wealth, and desire (insider trading, bribery, and sexual affairs, but also television, marketing, and the popular press) is simultaneously obstacle to and vehicle of neoliberalism’s self-realization.

The state too is caught up in such flows: it does not so much shrink, as neoliberal ideology would have it, as slip its bounds and invest society as a whole. It totalizes, legitimating itself through a direct and total coincidence with the social, thus erasing any distinction between state and civil society. The most radical elements in the new social movements have long tried to break down these barriers between state and civil society: neoliberalism takes up their fundamentalism, but on the state’s own terms. Sovereignty becomes dispersed and decentered, but at the same time all the more entrenched in everyday life. Italian philosopher Paolo Virno terms this a “counterrevolution” or “revolution in reverse” whereby social demands are appeased but inverted. The state’s response to a constituent power that it brands fundamentalism is a new form of sovereignty: Empire. All limits are abolished, but in the process multiplicity is reduced to unity, singularity to identity. No matter how many inputs civil society has, how many different voices enter the general hubbub, everything becomes one. It is ironically by taking up civil society’s most radical demands that the state maintains its monopoly. Civil society transforms multiple inputs into a single output (policy), and the state then intervenes into civil society to stratify and so contain the force of its social movements. The state differentiates and classifies: by recognizing some individuals as citizens and others not, for instance; or by marking
off the insane, the educated, the criminal, and so on. But these differences are subject to a single principle of sovereign unity, identity, and legitimacy. The state lies behind modernity’s multiple differentiations. It is a machine to produce difference, but it depends upon civil society’s hyper-representational assemblage to produce its own over-arching identity. In other words, the multiple negotiations within civil society become the legitimating components of an eminent unity that then overcodes differences according to a single legitimate and legitimating principle. But something always escapes.

**Beyond Civil Society: Affect**

Neoliberalism takes civil society discourse to its limit. Many left and social democratic intellectuals champion civil society to counter the ascendancy of neoliberalism. But at the same time they often betray their ambivalence and their distrust of the concept and even of democracy as a whole. Political scientists Catherine Conaghan and James Malloy, for instance, argue that “democrats must make and remake civil society to prevent the realization of Tocqueville’s worst fears,” that is, “the potential of democracy to devolve into new insidious forms of domination.” It is as though there were a battle over the soul of civil society. In its neoliberal incarnation, civil society no longer looks much like civil society as it has been imagined or theorized, because there is no role for parties or other mediating institutions, and because the complex architecture of liberal limitation has been erased. Functional efficiency has replaced any Tocquevillian normativity. This is a more perfect, or at least a more perfectly functional, civil society: fundamentalism has won out as the last barriers to communication fall and as the division between state and society is more permeable and diffuse than ever. But this is a
dispassionate fundamentalism. A new breed of intellectual comes into play: the technocratic manager, political operative, special advisor, or marketing guru, with his or her ear permanently to the ground. These spin doctors try not to stick out above what is by now a torrential flow of information. As all distinctions disappear, striated space becomes smooth, and everything is a matter of blending in. September 11, 2001, for instance, becomes simply a “good day to bury bad news” in the notorious phrase of the British political advisor Jo Moore. Politics is now the art of desensitization. This is a cold world, from which all sentiment and affect is, ideally, excluded. But that repressed affect is bound to return.

Neoliberalism’s affectlessness contrasts with populism’s passion. In other ways, neoliberalism and populism are very similar. Both, above all, are born out of a frustration with political representation. Both construct a direct relation or pact: between state and society, or between the leader and his people. Both reconstitute a social contract threatened by unruly elements (a multitude) that threaten to exceed and overcome the state or the nation. They both engender new habits that harness dissident energies to constituted power. No wonder that neoliberalism often takes neopopulist form. In neoliberalism, however, immanent infiltration trumps all alliances; populism, by contrast, may operate through intermediary institutions such as trades unions.

Populism’s pact is sealed via an affective affinity that obscures the state and holds it at arm’s length; neoliberalism excludes all affective relations to impose the state’s hitherto unimagined universality. Populism substitutes culture for the state, while the neoliberal state excludes culture in the name of a hyper-rational civil society. Hence the disparate moods of the two regime forms: neoliberalism’s coldness and cruelty on the one hand, and populism’s ecstatic love on the other. Hence also their very different dramaturgies: replacing the theatricality of traditional liberalism, populism is cinematic; neoliberalism
is televisual. Populism is incarnated bodily, its crowds gathered in the central plaza facing the projected image of the charismatic leader. Under neoliberalism, space is privatized, individuals are cloistered in living rooms, and the social is calculated in line with statistical ratings on a piece of paper or spreadsheet reviewed by a leader without qualities.

It would be hard to imagine a regime less embodied in its leader than Fujimori’s. From the outset, in the 1990 election campaign, this shy agronomist and mathematician defeated the flamboyant Mario Vargas Llosa without ever trying to imitate the novelist’s style. Fujimori’s public image was consistently muted, his reticence popularly attributed to his Japanese heritage and the myth of Asian inscrutability. But his stubborn undemonstrativeness could equally be interpreted as the result of social awkwardness, the fact that he never quite fit in. Populist leaders, too, are often outsiders, but they prefer to put their anti-establishment credentials on dramatic display: for instance, Evita Perón’s every effort was to produce the effect (and affect) of natural and spontaneous emotion, however much in fact her ailing body was propped up by makeshift technology. In contrast to the volubility of a populist leader, who is endlessly perorating from the balcony, Fujimori kept his counsel. In Degregori’s words, “he governs in silence. A silence that provides a sense of relief after the verbal excesses of previous years; moreover it proves its utility for the tactic of the ambush, one of his preferred forms of doing politics.” As if to compensate for his outsider status, rather than standing out or standing up, Fujimori aimed always to blend in. On his numerous visits to provincial communities around the country, he would take on local dress (a poncho and woolen hat, for instance, in the highlands) rather than bringing with him the pomp of presidential office. Fujimori turned his “lack of character,” “unease in speaking,” and “lack of charisma” to his advantage. With Fujimori’s election, “the era of voting for the ‘master,’ for the ‘exemplary father’ was at an end”; in a form of “electoral narcissism,” people were now voting for themselves. No wonder Jochamowitz should entitle his biography of the president Ciudadano Fujimori, “Citizen Fujimori.” Whereas a populist leader incarnates popular aspirations, the neoliberal leader tries to disappear into the crowd.
Again, we see a strange affinity between fujimorismo and Sendero. Abimael Guzmán, who also started off as an obscure academic, likewise turned reticence and silence into a virtue. Before his capture in 1992, Guzmán had the reputation of always being just out of reach, consistently evading capture by the narrowest margin. He was everywhere but nowhere: rumor often had it that he was in fact dead; Sendero’s maximum leader left only semi-legible signs of his spectral presence, such as a bag of personal effects found discarded after an attack in Ayacucho. British novelist Nicholas Shakespeare’s The Dancer Upstairs centers on the paradox of the guerrilla leader (a fictionalized version of Guzmán) who is nowhere, everywhere, and in front of his pursuer’s eyes all at the same time. Inscrutable and uncommunicative, his principle is that “if you wanted to be effective, you’d leave no trace.” The revolution’s mastermind “had dismembered and scattered his body, and now thrived like a monstrous Host in the heart of anyone invoking his name.” And yet, like Poe’s purloined letter, he is in plain view, living above the studio where the novel’s detective protagonist takes his daughter for ballet lessons and falls for her teacher. When in 1991 the Peruvian state captured a videotape of Guzmán dancing to “Zorba the Greek,” it was proudly displayed as a publicity coup. The images of the clumsy and apparently drunk former professor lumbering around to the music gave him a sense of physical presence. Ironically, at the time Guzmán was in fact less present than ever: owing to health problems aggravated by altitude, he was seldom able to travel to the Andean regions where Sendero had most power and support. Guzmán was no Che Guevara. He could never project himself at his people’s side in the populist manner, and rather is represented in Sendero iconography as the teacher, the bookish pedagogue, finally as the incarnation of a form of thought (“pensamiento Gonzalo”) that allied him, as the “fourth sword of Marxism,” with a parade of dead foreigners (Marx, Lenin, Mao).

Civil society theory and neoliberalism alike set out to exclude affect, passion, and the body from politics. In their place, they propose statistical articulation and hyper-articulacy. Affects are replaced by reasons (by Reason) as answers are solicited to the questions of management and state direction. Opinions hold pride of place in society’s constant self-interrogation, which contrasts so baldly with populism’s barely articulable ontology of habit. If populism is apolitical, its anti-politics is very different from
neoliberalism’s. Populism is an under-articulate disposition of the body, an incorporated common sense, as opposed to neoliberalism’s over-articulate frame of mind, its deracinated opinion. Neoliberalism excludes any affective sense of bodily location. It is not that populism, with its material, bodily grounding, is somehow more natural than neoliberalism. Neoliberalism’s stress on transparency enjoys a very similar aura of incontrovertibility, as though it harnessed a spontaneous effusion of popular opinion, varnished with the sense of rightness that rationalization and reason bring. Moreover, as neoliberalism’s techniques of surveillance and observation are so in harmony with a whole range of social scientific methods and ideologies, it gains additional purchase in that its constitutive distortions mirror those of its social scientific observers. The state processes and ultimately dispenses with experience and affect to construct the realm of managerial reason. Normally this process passes more or less unnoticed, but when the constituent force of this excluded affect reappears, it does so with a vengeance.

Sendero combines affect and reason with peculiar intensity. From the outside it always appeared bloodthirsty, mysterious, and irrational. Sendero militants seemed to be motivated perhaps by archaic prejudice, perhaps by sheer hatred and resentment. Everything about the movement was excessive and disturbing. But political scientist David Apter comments that “just as there are reasons of state, so there are reasons of the anti-state,” however much the latter appear to be anti-reasons. Indeed, as Degregori explains, Sendero is better understood as what, taking the phrase from nineteenth-century poet Manuel González Prada, he calls a “divine cult to reason.” Its ecstatic rationality slides easily into rational ecstasy and back again. Hence Degregori argues that to understand Sendero, we should “invert Pascal’s phrase, ‘the heart has reasons of which reason is unaware,’” and say of Sendero’s leading group that “reason has passions of which the heart is unaware.” Sendero is a “hyper-rationalist movement” that “develops and draws out” extraordinary passions. It amplified the passions of its adherents, but it also drew out unsuspected passions from society at large. At the peak of the
insurgency, nobody could be sure of the line between reason and affect, rationality and madness. Sendero encouraged a paranoid search for order among its followers, but at the same time it revealed the paranoid structure of civil society as a whole.

The modern, developmentalist state inadvertently spawned and nurtured the passions that drove those who would become that its most tireless enemies. Sendero’s cradle was Ayacucho’s University of Huamanga, re-opened in the late 1950s. In particular, the movement was always strongest in the university’s Faculty of Education. The state held out education as the vehicle of progress, and raised enormous expectations about the transformations that lay ahead. The university would bring modernity to the rural backwater in the Andes. Education offered a form of salvation, a means to escape; if there was any millenarianism or messianism in Sendero, this was its source. As Degregori puts it, “Andean peasants . . . flung themselves into the conquest of ‘progress.’” They searched for the knowledge and truth that would set them free; and “those who made it to university would have to go further and search out, by dint of great effort, something beyond truth: coherence.” For Degregori, Sendero militants, especially its leadership in the early stages, were driven by this state-sanctioned love of truth and coherence: “And when they think they have found them, they are capable of the greatest violence in order to defend and impose them.”\footnote{118} Their violence provoked consternation and horror in Peruvian civil society; but it merely reflected the structural (and often enough also actual) violence that had long patrolled the boundary between center and periphery, civilization and presumed barbarism. Again, Sendero held up a mirror to civil society, revealing its translations between affect and reason, and unveiling the terror that secures its simulacrum of a social pact. Sendero “affected” civil society, reintroducing affect into its rationalizations. It provides the limit of civil society theory, the unaccountable distortion at its horizon. And precisely because its hyper-rationality is illegible to the state, Sendero is also a brick wall, a screen, an empty signifier upon which others project fearful and shadowy images (not least, of Peru’s indigenous majority) in an inverted reflection of Sendero’s rational purity, its all-consuming joy.

Sendero tipped reason over into madness. Like the paranoid whose obsession with interpretation and connection soon constructs a hyper-real edifice that no longer bears much relation to the real, Sendero passed through rationality to delirium but also demonstrated the delirium that underlies rationality. With Sendero, ideological reason was cultivated and transformed such that it no longer
performed a communicative function. In its abstract rigor and autonomy, an ideology that lays claim to the scientific tradition came close to a surreal poetry that is both horrifying and sublime: “[The people’s] blood will rise like pulsing wings, and that bruised flesh will turn into the powerful whips of vengeance, and muscles and action will turn into a steel battering ram to destroy the oppressors, who will be irretrievably smashed.”¹¹⁹ Language becomes pure affect. Sendero’s language is the expression and the sign of purity, foretelling the joy of those who share in that purity and instilling fear into those it defines as radically other. It never attempted to convince or persuade. The passions of reason mimic the reasons of the heart in a reciprocal reinforcement that requires no justification. This is barbarous indeed, but Sendero equally shows up the barbarity of the constituted, official state and its mechanisms of subalternization. Sendero seeks no negotiation because it poses only one question: are you loyal to this vision of revolution? Or as its militants put it to María Elena Moyano: step aside or be eliminated. While the neoliberal state has a panoply of different polls and calls for managerial support, Sendero, which managed only the revolution, reduced this discourse to the single question: yes or no? Increasingly, however, the same is true also of the contemporary state, affected by a war against terror that is now global. It, too, asks little more than we be either for it or against it.

Though Sendero’s discourse becomes sublime and sublimely horrifying, we should avoid describing Latin American reality as abject difference. This is neither the “noche obscura” of novelist Joan Didion’s Salvador, nor the revolution from the Incan South of journalist Simon Strong’s Shining Path.¹²⁰ Sendero incarnates the apotheosis of reason, plucked straight from the finest Western philosophical tradition of Kant (subject of Guzmán’s thesis) and Marx. More generally, all civil societies are “affected.” Neither the Peruvian nor more generally the Latin American experiences are aberrant. As I will suggest in chapter three, all social formations are structured through affect, by the reasons of the heart and the passions of reason. Sendero shows how affect is a constituent element of any social formation, that necessarily disrupts the working of any civil society. Any attempt to set limits to this constituent power is doomed to failure, not least in an era of biopolitics in which neoliberal Empire has already pulverized the carefully-constructed barriers of liberal modernity. Sovereignty is more precarious than ever, and rightly so. Which is not to say we should support all its adversaries: Sendero’s line of flight soon became suicidal as well as homicidal; it became entranced by death, rather than life. As historian Alberto Flores Galindo tersely comments, in reaction to a 1988 Sendero killing:
“Socialism is a wager on the side of life, not that of death. Its objective is not simply the destruction of a state and the liquidation of class domination but also and above all the construction of new social relations that should and can be developing in the present.”¹²¹ The problem posed by Sendero, and other similar movements, is why such constituent power turns back on itself, and how hope and expectation become death and conflagration.

With the crisis of the state, and the dissolution of any boundary between state and civil society, affect comes to the fore. Paranoia flourishes in the face of constant surveillance, but equally the tides of policy ebb and flow with changes in popular sentiment. The extent to which social relations are structured in terms of affect rather than (or on another level from) discourse becomes clearer. Other social logics begin to emerge in eddies and whorls, and fundamentalisms thrive as the mechanism of representation passes its sell-by date. Civil society theory aims to restore order, and at the same time holds out the hope of reform by returning a sense of rationality and agency to subaltern subjects. If traditional left politics had assumed a vanguard role for intellectuals, who are to awaken and educate the masses, a focus on new social movements emphasizes rather the myriad negotiations and initiatives performed by subaltern subjects. No doubt this has been a progressive move, to counter the view that peasants, the indigenous, and others are formed by premodern communities bound by atavistic tradition and superstition. An emphasis on subjectivity is a welcome corrective. Yet it is as though subalterns were presented as perfect rational choice actors, conforming to the most ideal of Western liberal paradigms of reason. Presenting them as rational actors of this type deculturates and depoliticizes such agents by presenting them “as if they were outside culture and ideology.”¹²² The price subalterns pay is that their activities are recognized only so long as they accord to a notion of reason imposed upon them; only, that is, so long as efficiency and modernization
continue to be the ground of civil society. Such actors are to be ascribed agency, but on the terms of the social theorist. Anything outside that framework becomes invisible, and the democratic task becomes to substitute a rational civil society for affective and cultural relations seen as distorting its managerial transparency. But an insistence on transparency heralds a massive expansion of the state, a politics futilely focused on the wholesale elimination of culture and corruption. Neoliberalism takes over where civil society theory leaves off, only to founder on the terror that lurks at its margins and haunts society as a whole.

Civil society is enlivened by the fundamentalism that civil society theory subsequently seeks to curtail. But in the context of a global war on terror, fundamentalism has the upper hand: whether that be the fanaticism that is pledged to bring down the state, or the state’s own brand of now decentered sovereignty. A multitude confronts Empire and yet, as I argue in my concluding chapter, there is less than ever to choose between them. But surely there is some alternative to the fundamentalisms of a Sendero Luminoso or an al-Qaida on the one hand, or of neoliberalism’s diffuse forms of command and control on the other. There is no point returning to the deadening restrictions and careful regulations of the liberal contract. And populist hegemony is also but an illusion, a misleading sleight of hand. Could there then be a fundamentalism driven by vitality, affirmation, and life, rather than the death drive of mutual immolation? Refusing the constrictions and anti-democratic democracy of civil society theory, we might reconsider the immediacy of social movements in their excessive and passionate demands. Encore un effort. Néstor García Canclini asks how to be radical, without being fundamentalist. We might better look for a good fundamentalism, a good multitude. With that in mind, I now turn from critique to constitution.
Notes

1 Edwards, Civil Society, 4, 112, vi.


3 Colas, Civil Society and Fanaticism; Ehrenberg, Civil Society.

4 Edwards, Civil Society, 10.

5 Ca hoone, Civil Society, 219.

6 Keane, Civil Society, 32.

7 Edwards, Civil Society, 14.

8 Putnam, Bowling Alone, 338.

9 Touraine, What is Democracy? 58.

10 Touraine, Beyond Neoliberalism, 99.

11 Stepan, Rethinking Military Politics, 5.

12 O’Donnell and Schmitter, Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies, 48.


14 Frei, “Preface,” vii, viii.


16 Hopenhayn, No Apocalypse, No Integration, 86-87.

17 Ibid., 68.

18 Touraine, Beyond Neoliberalism, 99.

19 See Franco, “A Ghost Dance on the Fields of the Cold War” and The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City, 108-111.

20 Green, Silent Revolution, 191.

21 Castañeda, Utopia Unarmed, 372.
22 Cohen and Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, 493 and passim.


24 Stern, *Shining and Other Paths*, 8


27 Knight et al., *Reviving Democracy*, 1, 59.


29 Klein, “Killing Democracy in Iraq.”


33 See McClintock, *Revolutionary Movements in Latin America*, 64-65.

34 Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación, *Informe final*, 2:14, 17, 22.


37 Keane, *Civil Society*, 171-72.

38 Cahoone, *Civil Society*, 205.


40 Cohen and Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, 492.


42 Touraine, *The Voice and the Eye*, 6, 7.

43 Kriesi et al., *New Social Movements in Western Europe*, xviii.
44 Touraine, *The Voice and the Eye*, 22.

45 Guidry et al., “Globalizations and Social Movements,” 15.


47 Touraine, *What is Democracy?* 38.

48 Cohen and Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, 531.


50 Starn, “To Revolt Against the Revolution,” 558.


52 Starn, “To Revolt Against the Revolution,” 558, 561.

53 Slater, “Social Movements,” 25 n. 43.

54 See Degregori et al., *Las rondas campesinas*.

55 Gorriti, *The Shining Path*, 76.

56 Manrique, “La década de la violencia,” 137.


58 McClintock, “Peru’s Sendero Luminoso Rebellion,” 96.


62 Knight et al., *Reviving Democracy*, 166, 164, 165.

63 Cohen and Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, 451. Hereafter, references to this work will be included parenthetically within the text.

64 See Klein, *Fences and Windows*.

66 Ibid., 355, 351, 353, 103.
67 Ibid., 122.
69 García Canclini, Hybrid Cultures, 39.
70 Yúdice, “Civil Society,” 18, 19.
71 García Canclini, Consumers and Citizens, 27, 28.
72 Ibid., 126, 79.
73 García Canclini, Hybrid Cultures, 281.
74 I thank Alberto Moreiras for drawing my attention to this aspect of the film.
75 Gorriti, The Shining Path, 167, 169, 259.
76 Ibid., 258, 253.
77 Green, Silent Revolution, 4-5.
78 See Klein, The Shock Doctrine.
80 Agamben, State of Exception, 2.
82 Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, 217.
84 Gonzales de Olarte, El neoliberalismo a la peruana, 41, 97, 106.
85 Degregori, La década de la antipolítica, 53, 60, 62, 63.
86 Quoted in Degregori, La década de la antipolítica, 252.
87 Degregori, La década de la antipolítica, 252.
88 Cotler and Grompone, El fujimorismo, 116, 140.
89 Agamben, State of Exception, 4.

90 Poole and Rénine, Peru, 62.

91 Tello, Perú, 116.


94 Bourdieu, Distinction, 460.

95 Ibid., 461.

96 Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 445.

97 Mauceri, “State Reform, Coalitions, and the Neoliberal Autogolpe in Peru,” 32.

98 Poole and Rénine, Peru, 161.

99 Conaghan, “Polls, Political Discourse, and the Public Sphere,” 242.

100 Poole and Rénine, Peru, 161.

101 Interview with Fernando Tuesta Soldevilla, Lima, August 14, 1997.


103 Jochamowitz, Ciudadano Fujimori, 277.

104 Grompone, Fujimori, neopopulismo y comunicación política, 26.

105 Quoted in Chávez Toro, Susy Díaz, 103.

106 Quoted in Chávez Toro, Susy Díaz, 104.
107 Degregori, *La década de la antipolítica*, 206.

108 Ibid., 377.


110 Conaghan and Malloy, *Unsettling Statecraft*, 224.

111 Degregori, *La década de la antipolítica*, 110.


115 Apter, “Political Violence in Analytical Perspective,” 5.


117 Degregori, *Que difícil es ser Dios*, 20.


119 Guzmán, “We Are the Initiators” 313.

120 Didion, *Salvador*, 36; Strong, *Shining Path*.

121 Flores Galindo, “Muerte en Haquira,” 196.

122 Starn, “Maoism in the Andes,” 405.