'Zapata's White Horse and Che's Beret: Theses on the Future of Revolution'

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Given recent pronouncements of the demise of revolution, perhaps a more apt title would be 'Fourteen Theses in Search of an Audience.' Over 150 years after de Tocqueville announced that 'Great' revolutions would become more rare (1840/1990, p. 251), a declaration which has reappeared with some regularity, a number of people assure us again that such phenomena are a thing of the past.[i] If revolutions which closely resemble our most common reference points – France, Russia, China, Cuba or Iran – may be scarce, it seems premature to dispense with a very basic assumption: people will struggle for liberty, equality, democracy, opportunity, and freedom in a world where the material and ideological conditions of their daily lives reflect none of these and will do so using the array of tools at their disposal. Profoundly human creations rather than inevitable natural processes, revolutions do not come, they are made.[ii]

There is no small irony that the declaration of the end of revolution has coincided with a renewed interest in revolution. After a relative lull, the study of revolution is increasing in popularity[iii] and

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[i] Claims for the end of revolution as we have known it abound. Among these, the most deft is Goodwin (2001), the most blunt Snyder (1999), and the most casual Garton Ash (2000); the latter two accord somewhat with Wright (2000) Nodia (2000). These claims were presaged to some extent by Colburn's (1994) admonition that the 'vogue' of revolution among developing countries had come to an end. For a different perspective, see Radu (2000).

[ii] To turn around Skocpol's (1997, p. 17) invocation of Phillips' memorable phrase.

[iii] See also Kamrava (1999, p. 317).

there has been a veritable explosion of quality work on the topic;[iv] some have even detected the emergence of what may be the 'fourth generation of theorists of revolution.'[v] And there are cases to consider: Chiapas in Mexico, Algeria, Colombia, Indonesia, Palestine, and Nepal; there are even murmurs, however faint, about Russia.

Our propensity for subjecting puzzling moments of social disorder to the calming order of 'scientific' analysis has not provided the sensitive instruments necessary for exploring and

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[iv] See, for example, books by Goodwin (forthcoming), Parsa (2000), Wright (2000), Eisenstadt (1999), Halliday (1999), Katz (1999), Motyl (1999), Selbin (1999), McClintock (1998), McCaughan (1997), and Paige, (1997); chapters/articles such as Goldstone (2001), Goodwin (2001), Selbin (2001), Walzer (1998), Foran (1997), and McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (1997); and edited volumes by Katz (2001), Castro (1999), Foran (1997).

[v] Most recently and notably Goldstone (2001), author of one of the most influential analyses of studies of revolutions. Goldstone (1980) set the direction for many subsequent discussions of theories of revolution over twenty years ago. Goldstone himself was recently inscribed as 'the original "fourth generation" theorist' of revolution by Calvert (1999, p. 872). The emergence of some sort of 'fourth generation' was presciently noted by Foran (1993). Subsequently, a decisive move 'into a new "fourth" generation of scholarship on revolutions and collective action' was noted by Emirbayer and Goodwin (1996, p. 374); I suggested that 'the fourth generation scholars of revolution...[were moving] beyond the smothering structuralism of the third generation.' (Selbin 1997, p. 124), modifying this later to there being 'an arguably emergent fourth generation' (Selbin 1999, p. 5).

explicating the puzzling enterprise of revolution. Approaches overly reliant on the political, the psychological, or the economic are ill-equipped, for example, to capture the ways in which Zapata's white horse, Che's beret, Sandino's hat, Ho's pith helmet, bamboo walking stick and wispy beard, or Cabral's knit cap have become symbols redolent with meaning(s) and freighted with significance and import, consequential in their invocation and deployment, their story – and the part they are made to play in other stories – contested by people from all sides in the struggle to articulate the case(s) for or against revolution.

The contention here is that along with whatever material or structural conditions that are extent, the economic, political, or social constructions which commonly guide our investigations, it is imperative to recognize the role played by stories, narratives of popular resistance, rebellion, and revolution which have animated and emboldened generations of revolutionaries across time and cultures. To deepen our understandings of revolution, not least the future of such a concept in an increasingly globalized world, we need new approaches which serve to marry not only the "traditional" tools of modern scholars but include the traditional tools of scholars and revolutionaries, powerful and purposive stories. Perhaps something like Marx's *18th Brumaire* (1852/1978), a wonderful and rich example of the sociological imagination at work, may be a guide.[vi] This far more modest contribution is meant to stimulate your imaginations. Rather than persuade you by argument, I hope what follows will prompt questions, open a discussion, and get us to consider possibilities all too often shunted aside.

To this end, the ideas and pieces presented here represent what might be best construed as pre-

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[vi] On the 'sociological imagination' see Wright Mills (1959). On the poetics (I would suggest mytho-poetics) of Marx's *18th Brumaire,* see Gourgouris (1998).

theory, offering 'raw materials [that] may serve as the basis for all kinds of theories' (Rosenau 1966/1980, p. 127, note 40). I have deliberately bitten off more than I can chew here and appropriate 'tests' of the utility of what follows are beyond the scope of this paper. It is my hope that eventually these will be a platform from which to address the intriguing issues of why revolutions are made here and not there, now and not then, among these people and not those, and whether people are likely to continue to do so.

Theses: An Evocative Concept for Provocative Purposes

'Theses' as a term is associated with pronouncements of some profundity and purpose. Consider the most common reference points: Luther's '95 Theses,' which fomented the Protestant Reformation; Marx's (1845/1888/1978a) succinct and pithy analyses of Feuerbach ; the playful and poetic peregrinations of Benjamin's (1940/1969) thoughts on the philosophy of history; or Debord, Kotányi, and Vaneigem's (1962/1981) subversive Situationist 'take' on the Paris Commune. My use of it here is not nearly so presumptuous. These 'theses' are meant to reflect the hypothetical nature of the concept, a set of related propositions that attempts to describe something or get at something still needing further definition or synthesis.[vii] These reflections upon revolution do not trace out the history of the concept nor explore it in all its thematic range and variety. They are simply one person's very self-conscious take at one point in time.[viii]

[vii] My appreciation to Laura Hobgood-Oster, Phil Hopkins, and Shannon Winnubst for sharing their understandings of the term with me as I wrestled with it.

[viii] Perhaps more dire warnings are in order: no less an authority than the perspicacious Wally Goldfrank (1999, p. 1596) has cautioned that 'envisioning and thereby encouraging armed revolutions is irresponsible nostalgia.'

The Incipient Revolution in Definitions of Revolution

Scholars of revolution remain largely in the thrall of Skcopol's (1979, p. 4) paradigmatic construction of revolutions as: 'rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures; ... accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below.' Despite numerous concerns raised from a variety of perspectives with this proposition, most of us simply modify her basic premise[ix] Goldstone's (2001) recent conceptualization moves us perhaps further along, describing revolution as 'an effort to transform political institutions and the justifications for authority in a society, accompanied by formal or informal mass mobilization and non-institutionalized actions that undermine existing authorities.'

Any useful definition of revolution will have to include a significant place for people and their actions and for culture. The classic cases are clearly about more than state power – denoted in large measure by people's efforts to fundamentally transform the material and ideological conditions of their everyday lives (and those of others) now and for all time. It is this covenant of fundamental transformation which was clearly the power, premise, and promise of cases such as France, Russia, Cuba, and Iran. Thus it is the conscious efforts – not to deny the obvious profusion of concomitant unintended consequences as well – by at least an active minority of the participants to profoundly transform themselves and their entire society which defines revolutions.

[ix] Which is why most of us might be more usefully thought of as a 'third and-one-half' generation rather than, to date, a fourth generation of revolutionary scholarship. See also note six above.

Theses on the Future of Revolution

1) Despite the propensity many of us share for discerning a single unbroken string of revolution and revolutionary-like behavior back to the French Revolution, there is no single tradition of revolutionary processes. A variety of people – revolutionaries, counter-revolutionaries, government bureaucrats, and academics – have for an array of reasons, created one. While this allows for useful and compelling comparisons to be drawn and reflects that there may be some 'deep rules' at play, most cases of revolution are more notable for their differences then their similarities. It is imperative that we explore and understand these differences even as we search for the common themes, the narrative, which connect, if at times tangentially, many of these processes. Thus at least part of the discussion over the future of revolution is profoundly intertwined with our conceptualization of revolution's past(s).

2) Any discussion of the past(s) is wildly freighted and should be approached with great caution. Beyond the problems of history in its many manifestations as well as the variety of memories extant – collective, collected, folkloric, mythic, etc. – there is the trap of nostalgia. Nostalgia is a particular form of memory, often encountered either in the context of the powerful who use it to legitimate their privileges(s) or those who would read it as proof that the present is what is/was meant to be. But nostalgia also influences and impinges upon revolutionary wannabes and intellectuals, each group prone to relishing a perhaps heroic-mythic time which legitimates their struggles. Our efforts must be to uncover and explore and illuminate our past(s) from a multiplicity of voices, from an array of sources. This plurality of realities which conspire to shape who and what we are, what we think is possible and why, how those things might be achieved, and what it will mean, or we hope it will mean, if and when we do. Thus the past(s) are remembered in the present[x] and our present desires envision our future. Despite our best

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[x] 'All times,' in the estimation of Fuentes (1996, p. 16), 'are living, all pasts are present.' To Mexico's modern day Zapatista leader Subcommandate Marcos, Fuentes (Ibid., p.

efforts and the images of calenders, clocks, and the like, none of these – past, present, future – are neatly demarcated from each other. As the nineteenth-century French historian Michelet said of France in 1789: 'On that day everything was possible ... the future was present ... that is to say time was no more, all a lightening flash of eternity' (Kimmel 1990, p. 186).[xi] Even those who proclaim the demise of revolutions recognize that, 'revolutions are like migrations to the future .... [where] the promised lands exist ... in the minds of those who believe in them' (Nodia 2000, p. 164). In either formulation, people forge what seems like the incredible opportunity to reshape their world and themselves.

3) Recognizing that revolution is inherently local and is fundamentally about the material and ideological conditions of people's everyday lives does not mean that global teleologies are irrelevant – they remain useful heuristics and certainly help explain international reactions to and behaviors toward revolutionary processes, even if they undervalue the profound role of human agency in bringing about such processes and sustaining their possibility. Connections between and among revolutionaries and revolutionary processes are deep and strong, whether the link is to France (*liberté, égalité, fraternité*) or Russia ('Bread, Peace and Land') or Mexico ('liberty and land'). But in each case where such "universal" claims have been adopted, they have been adapted to exigencies of the local, wedded to stories specific to the case at hand. It is misleading

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124) argued, 'can there be a living future with a dead past?.'

[xi] The 'possible' which Michelet invokes is the font of Darnton's (1989, p. 10) compelling contention that the incredible staying power of the French Revolution resides in its enshrinement of 'possibilism.' A fascinating twist on this is the contention that Mexico's modern Zapatista's manifest the impossibility of their reality and that it is in this very impossibility that hope resides; see Rabas (1997).

to focus on *a* teleological dimension which has hypothetically linked two hundred years of revolutions. There is something a bit peculiar about the notion that any one revolution – or, perhaps, the writings of Karl Marx – somehow provided *a* teleological dimension to revolution or revolutionary processes.[xii] Thus, if there was *a* teleological dimension to revolution, can we discern who created it, for whom, and why? We might even ask who exactly knew it was there?

4) There is a global or transnational role played by the ideas, myths, and conceptions which people share with each other. Hence an argument for the local is not to ignore that some sort of international revolutionary *bricolage* has emerged — a variety of words/concepts from a variety of sources forged by people into some sort of practical ideology with which they confront the inequities and exigencies of their time and place, crafting new stories, new visions, out of old, while retaining important contextual links to the past.[xiii] Thus memories of oppression, sagas of occupation and struggle, tales of opposition, myths of once and future glory, words of mystery and symbolism are appropriated from the pantheon of history of resistence and rebellion common to almost every culture and borrowed from others and fashioned into some sort of usable past which confronts the present and bodes for the future. Stories establish obligations between past, present, and future generations in which each generation is called to defend the

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[xii] While it may be that treating such processes as teleologically connected makes sense, it is also unfortunately redolent of the sort of male, linear, rationalistic assumptions which have (pre)dominated since the Enlightenment – a teleological construct in its own right.

[xiii] I have in mind here 'bricolage' at least in part as articulated by Levi-Strauss (1966, pp. 16-33) as a creative design process.

struggles of previous ancestors and to fulfill a historic duty to the future.[xiv]

5) Long before the current fascination with globalization, revolutionaries constructed a global community, a web of myths, symbols, and connections which served to support and nurture the irruption of revolutionary processes in a surprising number of places under a surprising array of circumstances. While this may be handily traced back to the 'subterranean revolutionary eschatology' of millennial Christianity or the story of Exodus,[xv] I am inclined to think it is far more complicated, reflecting both roots that are far deeper and older as well as rhizomes spread very broad and shallow. The 'globalizing' efforts of the French revolutionaries, the Comintern, Che Guevara, Iran's mullahs, or Marcos suggest that whatever inhibitions the globalizing sweep of liberal democracy/late capitalism might present will unlikely forestall the continued invocation and evocation of revolutionary calls and claims. Che Guevara, for example, now weaves in and out of history with incredible sinuosity, meandering and looping around not unlike old rivers, cutting through landscapes, leaving behind 'lost rivers,' bends which become lakes, or even areas which become high and dry.[xvi] Will they wear Che t-shirts in Algiers as they did in

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[xiv] See, for example, Martin (1992, p. 178); she cites Benjamin (1940/1969, p. 254).

[xv] See, respectively, Cohn (1990) and Walzer (1985); the latter presents Exodus as a template for revolutionary narratives.

[xvi] The mythos that has become 'Che' is a phenomenon worthy of (even) greater study. Che has not only been ascribed to the future – showing up in an array of locations at a variety of times and places and inscribed on material and ideological goods – one could also argue that Che has been transcribed/re-inscribed almost Zelig/Gump-like into critical areas of Latin American and revolutionary myth: the voice-over in the fictionalized account of the life of Argentine heroine Evita; the determined leader of a

Teheran in 1979? 'See' Zapata's horse in Havana as some did in Nicaragua? Sing the 'Internationale' or perhaps even the 'Marseillaise' in Jakarta; the former happened in El Salvador, the latter in Namibia? Or draw on other less 'globalized' figures, symbols and myths imbued with meanings we have yet to decipher, discern, or define? How and why these will be written and constructed, by whom and for whom, and how they will be deployed, merits far more of our attention than they have received to date.

6) 'Globalization' – eerily reminiscent of what used to be called imperialism[xvii] – has clearly had

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band of foreign radicals standing against the U.S. overthrow of the democratic government of Guatemala in 1954; an interloper with some nascent Mexican guerrillas in the 1950s – who may never have even existed – and who passed him on to Fidel; and various sightings throughout Africa and Asia long after he was, at least in theory, dead – the most recent are that the guerrilla now well into his seventies is leading a unit in Nepal. The stories go on and on and on, making prescient Martin Guevara's remark even while his brother was still very much alive that he was 'like the white horse of Zapata. He is everywhere' (made in a slightly different context, Guevara's remark is quoted in Ryan (1998, p. 36; he cites FBIS, DR #211, 1 November 1965, 'Father Denies Che Guevara Death'). Such stories/sightings seem likely to continue. The veracity of these matters less than how and why these claims are true for those whom believe them to be and why they are passed on as talismans and torches to enable and ennoble people's resistance and struggles.

[xvii] 'The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions (sic) everywhere.' Marx and Engels (1848/1978b, p. 476).

enormous consequences. With apologies for some gross generalization on a heated debate, the primary causes of revolution in most every conceptualization of the term remain profoundly extant: it is a time of great global change, people are hungry and resent the widening gap between the rich and the poor, people are confronted by the failed promises of neo-liberalism and/or liberal democracy, and, people have a model – themselves, overflowing with historical narratives of rebellion and revolution and the possibilities inherent in creating a new world – and opportunity, as everyone struggles to define and decipher the (not-so)New World (dis)Order. Hence revolution is arguably as likely, perhaps even more likely than ever before; rather than a shrinking space for revolutionary and related processes, we may well witness more space for such activities not really the worse for having lost some vague imprimatur – usually conferred on them by others – of moribund revolutions elsewhere.

7) Thus while we can reasonably construe ours as an age of globalization, there is much about that claim which remains unclear – the issues, the dynamics, the limits, the possibilities – in short, what globalization means, what the implications and ramifications are. Nowhere, it seems to me, is this truer than with regard to the relationship between this thing we call globalization and the material and ideological conditions of people's everyday lives. Despite the talk of globalization and its attendant glories, the immense majority of humanity remains profoundly immiserated by any reasonable measure. Whether revolution will be an option they choose remains to be seen.

8) To assess that, the need is for an approach that collates and convenes political, social, economic, psychological, and cultural perspectives, with apologies for the obvious overlap in some of these categories. That overlap may be the strength of such an approach. What they all share, in part, is a recognition that people have long bonded together in groups for a variety of reasons and that those assemblages, however loose or (un)structured, however far flung, are fundamentally bound together by the stories they tell and the tales that they weave. While there

is a propensity, especially in the West and among academics, to render these tales with a familiar 'beginning-middle-end structure that describes some sort of change or development, as well as a cast of dramatis personae ...' (Steinmetz 1992, p. 490), there are plenty of stories which are not Nineteenth Century narrative novels replete with logical plot progressions and amazing closures. More often one encounters odd tales that pop up almost out of nowhere and disappear, leaving behind only traces.[xviii] Along with the dream worlds/times within which many of the myths play out and the inevitable 'trickster' tales (the 'Gueguense,' for example, in Nicaragua), Che was here, there, and everywhere, able to cover enormous distances in moments, Cabral visited people in Mozambique in their dreams, and Ho discussed the U.S. Declaration of Independence with U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt in Paris. Explicating and exploring stories of both types may well be our best bet for answering why revolutions are made here and not there, now and not then, by these folks and not those.

9) People do not fight, do not risk their lives and those of their families, do not put their hopes and dreams on the line lightly; certainly they do not do so for dry, distant, theoretical concepts. Revolutions are about passionate commitment and, as such, 'more cultural than social or economic in their origins and unfolding, even if social and economic forms were both critical cause and effect of cultural belief' (Higonnet 1998, p. 13).[xix] Thus, along with various social science measures, we must search for something, perhaps a mythopoetic element, which moves people's hearts as much as their heads.[xx] This thing we call globalization has brought us to a

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[xviii] My thanks to Shannon Winnubst for this point.

[xix] Higonnet cites Furet (1995); this is available in English as Furet (1999).

[xx] Elsewhere I (Selbin 1999, p. 145) have argued for the notion of 'magical revolutions,' meant, however inelegantly, to invoke 'magical realism,' the literary style denoted by blending fact and fiction. A much more sophisticated and nuanced take on this is

time and place redolent of a magical realist novella replete with forking paths, mystical markets, and things, not least liberal democracy, not what they seem. The fantastic, the mythic, and the magical seems commonplace.[xxi] While we may have seen the last revolutionary conflict of the Cold War era and arguably marked the end of a cycle of at least nominally Marxist-Leninist (and later, Maoist) revolutions that began in October 1917, does anyone really believe that the assorted events and processes identified by at least three generations of scholars of revolution and innumerable generations of revolutionaries will disappear? Túpac Amaru in various guises will reappear from the dead, from the mists of the jungle and time, a different person or persons occupying the same space, echoing Marcos's contention that behind the ski masks are different Marcoses (Marcoses creating neuroses for the Mexican government?) and animating people to struggle.

10) A part of that reality is a timeless story told and retold, a story of brave, valiant, committed people, often youth, who realizing the gross inequities of their situation or those of their parents/people rise up to demand freedom, to demand equality, to demand justice. It is a tale as old as we are, seeming to stretch as far back and almost certainly as far forward as we can imagine and beyond. It is tale told by neither idiots nor by savants, though both may tell it. What seems key is that people want to hear a story that they already know, with familiar characters, and action they anticipate with fear or delight.[xxii] And there seems little question that there is a

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available in this volume; see Foran (forthcoming).

[xxi] And the commonplace merits our attention. As Markoff (1997, p. 1139) suggests, 'if we are to seize the moments of social creativity, we need to study the messy details of historical processes and not just the grand trends.'

[xxii] A similar point is made by Bates (1996, p. 72).

desire for heroes, quasi-mythic but also human. Hence it is a story inscribed and reinscribed from generation to generation, across myriad cultures in an astounding array of places strewn across staggering reaches of times and an even more compelling panoply of peoples. Written within and outside of time, within and against history determined by no one, structured only insofar as we impute such structures (and the concomitant strictures) to it. As one scholar of myths notes, 'myths survive for centuries, in a succession of incarnations, both because they are available and because they are intrinsically charismatic' (Doniger 2000, p. 26). These myths come to form a 'reality' defended, extended, and maintained by people in song, in plays, in stories; their compelling articulation may be what moves people into, if more rarely through, a revolutionary process. In Chiapas, for example, it is possible to discern key pieces of the narrative: an endless struggle against occupation and oppression, for justice and dignity (and bread); stories/tales/sagas/myths of the 'stranger from the' north/south/east/west as well as a tale of the return of the prodigal son, who will lead the people to the promised land. It is, in most of the ways that matter, the same story found in so many cultures across so many times.

11) If there is a mythopoetic vision surprisingly basic and enduring, featuring stock characters and familiar situations, in structure enshrining many, perhaps most or even all our most basic dreams and desires, there is mystery aplenty about where and when and how the tale comes into play, when it ceases to be stories whispered around campfires, tales told from grandmother to mother to daughter, skits or songs performed among friends and family or only those most trusted confidants. At what point – when and where and why and how – does it become the story of the struggle of the day? Faced with an array of political, economic, or social inequities and injustices, what makes today the day that someone awakes and decides to pick up a gun, if they have one, and head for the hills (or desert or swamps) to join the revolutionaries? Whose voice and what tale turn the disenfranchised and dispossessed into the makers of their world?

Ultimately, such an event, such processes, such confluences, if they are such, of structures and agency, can only be adequately explored by recourse to narrative, to story – specifically to the stories that those selfsame people themselves tell, told and retold over generations and across cultures, tales that may be best understood for their rhizomic quality, appearing and reappearing like crabgrass that can not be defeated, bamboo that can not be tamed, the dry riverbed that distant rains can suddenly renew into a roaring river. Stories keep the past alive and assert one's own place–and version–of critical historical processes. Told and retold, polished to a high sheen and in the service of an array of masters, these tales offer us a wealth of information.

12) The role these stories or myths might play raises another prospect, that of exercising, rather than exorcizing, one's ghosts. The bold act of necromancy, the conjuring[xxiii] of the spirits of the dead for the purposes of influencing the course of events and revealing the future, carries with it considerable risk, as revolutionaries seek to move between the past and the present, the real and the fictional, 'fact' and 'fantasy.' Idolatry becomes necromancy, as revolutionaries seem to attempt to communicate with the dead – Che or Cabral or others – through their writings or even talking to them, often in public speeches in public places. Who controls these spectral figures? Who they speak through and who is allowed to speak for them are difficult issues, fraught with complexities. Those who are able to invoke and evoke the dead – 'the true guardians of the

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[xxiii] The concept of conjuring is a fascinating and not surprisingly complicated one. I am guided here by Tucker (1994). Specifically, Tucker notes that 'When faced with the task of defining conjure, scholars often create divisions which, while useful, tend to oversimplify the subject and almost always reflect an ethnocentric bias. To associate conjure with sorcery, witchcraft, or necromancy is to further align it with occult practices which in Western traditions have been perceived to be opposed to Christianity and are, therefore, the work of the devil' (p. 177).

words of our dead' in the estimation of Mexico's EZLN (Marcos, et. al. 1995, p. 150) – speak with a special resonance to the living and help forge links in a timeless struggle.

Thus there seems little question that the ability to invoke revolutionary heroes and martyrs is a powerful and persuasive tool, much sought after by those who would make revolution *as well as* those who would oppose it. For those who oppose not only seek to coopt, but more commonly seek to exorcize; thus the Bolivians, the U.S., and others sought to exorcize Che while Cubans and millions elsewhere sought to bring him into play, that is exercise him. The Mexican government in its idiosyncratic fashion sought to if not exactly to exorcize Zapata, to mediate him; many others have exercised Zapata's ghost (perhaps, if some are to be believed, even with him).[xxiv] Here, we are back in the realm of myth and story, a realm in which the telling, the narrative, is key.

13) The perspective implied above, reflecting culture as a 'multifaceted and a contested concept-- intersecting with mentalities, strategic framing, and political ideologies' is open to charges that

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[xxiv] 'Because of these confections with the past, Buena Vistans view themselves as the custodians of the memory of Zapata and the Zapatista fighters. They are particularly concerned with the authenticity of images of Zapata and the revolutionary fighters that the government tries to use to gain legitimacy. The issue of authenticity became important in the state of Morelos almost immediately after the assassination of Emiliano Zapata. In 1926, six years after Zapata's death, Robert Redfield recorded a corrido in Morelos that raised the question of whether the government troops killed the "real Zapata." The corrido ends, "It is certain and cannot be doubted, but they were deceived about Zapata, they cannot put Zapata down.'" (Martin 1992, pp. 181-2). Como Che, Zapata vive.

'without a solid rational base and a relationship to structural constraints, culturalism risks broadening conflict until, in Hegelian fashion, all politics becomes enmeshed in meaning' (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 1997, p. 144).[xxv] Moreover, as noted above, an analysis of stories and narrative alone is unlikely to adequately explain the origins and process and outcomes of revolutions; food shortages, recessions, the vagaries of the international system and the resultant domestic implications, to take a few examples, are not in and of themselves cultural constructions. Yet the ability of revolutionaries, specifically revolutionary leaders, to conjure up cultural artifacts and connections and, once summoned, to manipulate and rewrite them, is critical. Such stories must be compelling, speaking to people's hearts as well their heads, to their emotions – with none of the normal academic derisiveness usually reserved for that term implied – as well as to whatever 'calculations,' rational or otherwise, people may make. Thus these leaders of revolutionary processes consciously set out to (re)construct narratives predicated upon timeless aspects of the story(ies). But the population is not passive, waiting to be acted upon. While the revolutionaries may provide an impetus and may present the population with a vocabulary or intellectual framework that helps organize and channel their visions, revolutionary leaders can go no farther than the population is prepared for them to go. People have their context, their culture, independent of the revolutionaries and respond to these stories or not; they have their own narrative (Peru, Mexico, and Indonesia might all be examples here). Perhaps more often, people have their stories, their narrative, built on timeless conceptions, and revolutionaries either find a way to accord with these or not; when they do, it is more likely that a revolutionary situation will emerge.[xxvi]

[xxv] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001) are sensitive to the importance of culture in their formulation and address it in their volume on contentious politics.

[xxvi] One of the most fruitful places for exploring such matters may well be Chiapas. What are we to make of this putative post-modern uprising featuring Mexico's modern

15) In 1845, Marx penned what may be the single most succinct revolutionary credo, concluding his provocative and compelling 'Theses on Feuerbach' by pronouncing that 'the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it' (1845/1888/1978a, p. 145). Recently, the Zapatistas updated this maxim for the Twenty-first Century: 'It is not necessary to conquer the world. It is sufficient with making it new. Us. Today.' (EZLN 1996).

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day Zapatistas, the EZLN. This grants the EZLN a revolutionary status which is not uncontested by both academics (revolution? rebellion? armed social movement? social movement with a propensity for street/ jungle theater which just happens to include the display of weapons? 'coup de théâtre') and even other revolutionaries. See, for example, the disdainful assessment of their fellow Mexican revolutionaries the EPR (an excellent introduction to the People's Revolutionary Army (EPR) is Bruhn (1999); Gatsiopoulos (1997) offers a brief overview). Chary of 'the outdated vocabulary of Che Guevara,' Fuentes (1996, p. 93) suggests that 'the Chiapas revolution, among its other virtues, speaks a language that is fresh, direct, post-Communist. I would say that Subcommander Marcos, the Zapatista leader, has read more Carlos Monsiváis than he has Carlos Marx.' (Carlos Monsiváis is an important Mexican writer and public intellectual, a contemporary of Fuentes'). Elsewhere, I (Selbin 1999, p. 147) have argued similarly that 'Marcos...owes as much to Groucho as Karl, to John as Vladimir'; see also Gómez-Peña's (1995, pp. 90-1) compelling portraiture of Marcos as the 'consummate *performancero,*' his 'persona was a carefully crafted collage of twentieth-century revolutionary symbols, costumes, and props borrowed from Zapata, Sandino, Che, and Arafat as well as from celluloid heroes such as Zorro, and Mexico's movie wrestler, *El Santo*.' And their actions (and look) are at best decidedly modern(ista?) and perhaps even pre-(but not PRI)-modern.

If it is no longer some putative ideology or teleological concept which we seek, what links these groups and their visions? Rather than a common ideology, it is the daily needs and practical necessities within the advanced/late capitalist world economy and the increasing demand for social justice and equality by peoples whose daily lives reflect neither. While the heuristic provided by the French revolution may no longer serve us well--and may never have served us as well as we thought!--who among us is really prepared to claim that people will no longer seek to transform themselves and their world? In seeking to resist, rework, and reform their lives, there is every reason to think that revolutions will persist, perhaps in forms we have yet to consider, as people struggle at various levels and in a variety of ways–traditional, new, and not yet imagined--to protect, defend, and improve their lives in accordance with their visions and aspirations. Until those dreams and desires are met, regardless of how we define them, resistance, rebellion, and revolution will persist.