

manifestations now emerging in other parts of the country, Tijuana no longer holds an exclusive advantage. Now, the playing field is even.

Even as the infrastructure of the international music industry collapses in Mexico due to rampant piracy and the "ills" brought on by the Internet, surprisingly, independent music distribution enjoys robust health at the national level, increasing its scope and field of action. The same Internet has also brought Tijuana closer to the rest of Mexico and succeeded in raising its best producers to the level of their counterparts in Montreal, Cologne, and New York.

Musical Tijuana is about to get started again, post-Nortec; it offers a new generation of musicians with a broad array of tools for self-promotion and a scope that was unthinkable three years ago. There is no doubt that the ease technology affords everything means that we face a new era—the revival of what Tijuana music will be in the second half of the first decade of the new century.

The foundations are already laid, with a new generation, though more traditional in its definition of what music ought to be, distancing itself from the Nortec boom and rethinking what it wants to be. I am still waiting for some Mexican Velvet Underground to appear, a band that would change and transform musical precepts around the world.

Although there is no internationally recognized rock tradition from Mexico, I have no doubt that, sometime, such a possibility might emerge. Perhaps it won't arise in the near future from Tijuana, as so many of us anticipated; but, for forty years, the city has set the bar very high for the rest of Mexico. All that came before has been, in truth, very easy. For Tijuana, the difficult part starts now: achieving permanence and continuity, within the context of what happens outside. This is what will finally define to the world the city's legacy in the musical history of Mexico.

Tarek Elhaik

## Borderline Ghosts

*From Touch of Evil to Maquilapolis: City of Factories*

I assemble filters. I assemble electrical components. I assemble oxygen masks. I place rings in the machine. I tape electronic pieces. I assemble urinary bags. I assemble furniture. I package telephones. I inspect lenses. I package pantyhose. I assemble power cords, television parts, toys, oxygen sensors, intravenous tubes, batteries . . . —LOURDES (maquila worker in Maquilapolis: City of Factories)

The new emerges in the eventful moment of its return. —MICHEL FOUCAULT

## From Border Representations of Tijuana to Borderline Screens

Much cultural and film studies ink has been spilt over the broad category of "border" cinema and moving-image media from the late 1980s on.<sup>1</sup> This literature includes writings on films, videos, and multimedia works dealing with issues of intercultural translation across diasporic and transnational communities, to autoethnographic strategies in personal documentaries, to tactical deployment of media by "minority" activists in multicultural political landscapes, to questions of self-representation associated with the emergence of the politicized category of indigenous media, to pioneering postcolonial critiques of classic auteur cinema's exotic fascination with the dangers and frissons of border crossing. Attributed to a multiplicity of liminal subjectivities discrepant with one another in the affective and political economies of late capitalism, "hybrid micro-cultures"<sup>2</sup> and their attendant intercultural forms of spectatorship and oppositional ethos (often overlapping but never fully coinciding with the larger category of Third Cinema) have been particularly prominent in anthropologically informed scholarship engaged with such intensely marked ethno-racialized modernities as Brazil or Mexico, or militarized geopolitical border zones and states of exception such as the ones between Morocco and Spain; Palestine, Lebanon, and Israel; and, for the purpose of this essay, between the United States and Mexico.

Tijuana can boast a rich and heterogeneous cross-genre repertoire that includes such films as Orson Welles's *Touch of Evil* (1958), Steven Soderbergh's *Traffic* (2000), Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Babel* (2006), Jesse Lerner and Ruben Ortiz's experimental documentary *Frontierlandia* (1994), Chantal Ackerman's documentary and installation *From the Other Side* (2003), and the project commissioned by the binational public art event INSITE, *El Miedo* (Antonio Muntadas, 2005), that explores and interrogates, as the title suggests, the alleged affective economy of fear characteristic of border life. More recently, two untimely interventions, discussed below, can be added to the list: Sergio de la Torre and Vicky Funari's *Maquilapolis: City of Factories* (2006) and Sergio de la Torre's installation *Nuevo Dragon City* (2008). An important body of work, mainly in Spanish and seldom read,<sup>3</sup> has flourished over the past two decades that chronicles in exquisite detail representations of Tijuana on celluloid, both in silent films and talkies, from the 1920s on when the city served mainly as the backdrop and film set of Hollywood's culture industry, to the present that extends in new forms, but that nonetheless bears the trace of the foundational paradigm, of the immoral, lustful, and violent Tijuana of the Black Legend, or, in the words of tijuanaense historian Humberto Berumen, of "Tijuana the horrible."<sup>4</sup> Speaking of the aesthetics of garbage that characterizes a certain tendency of certain national and/or Third Cinemas, Robert Stam enthusiastically observes: "Here I would like to focus on three related aspects of these aesthetics, namely: 1) their constitutive hybridity; 2) their chronotopic multiplicity; and 3) their common motif of the redemption of detritus."<sup>5</sup>

Stam's deployment of garbage heaps "as both metaphor and synecdoche" has also been a commonplace representational strategy that continues to inform perceptions of Tijuana.<sup>6</sup> TJ is the "horrific" and "horrible," mediated through the tropes of detritus and decomposition that would eventually come to dominate both critical and mainstream representations of Tijuana in Mexican and U.S. cinematic and political imaginaries. Thus Tijuana falls within the intercultural framework that assigns to it, by ways of reversal gestures, a cultural politics and film aesthetics that laments and celebrates at once—that is, politicizes—the "horrible" and abject against the backdrop of an alleged purity and authenticity characteristic not only of its northern neighbor but also of its constitutive rival, Mexico City. Still and moving images of the borderline separating Tijuana from San Diego invariably juxtapose, ad nauseam and via a strategy that has long lost the subversive shock appeal of surrealist/situationist antiaesthetics, the clash (rather than Laura Marks's more subtle "meeting"<sup>7</sup>) of two sensoria. The disorders of the South are set against the backdrop of immaculate and repressive grids of the North,

ultimately endowing the disorderly<sup>8</sup> with political-oppositional and decolonizing capital.<sup>9</sup>

In light of this, one can safely say that Tijuana has the potential to undo, in the same gesture, both grand narratives of modernity and cross-cultural searches for alternative modernities, enabling us to move toward more complex engagement with contemporary intermedial forms of life, the disorderliness of which ought to be framed less and less in both ossified poststructuralist gestures of reversal and in self-recursive actualizations of the differential force of modernity. Said differently, there is another mode of sensing the border that continuously emerges long before two geopolitically and culturally distinct sensoria can be delineated. Emblematic of the cross/inter/transcultural and border crossing, "Tijuana the horrible" is also its impasse.

The literature I am questioning here zooms in on Tijuana as a convulsive (cinematic) city caught in an interstitial imaginary: on the one hand, at the margins of Mexico's postrevolutionary nationalist culture and on the other, as a hyperrepresented waiting zone resulting from exclusionary migration policies and a racially ghettoized political culture in the United States. This interstitial framework has generated a proliferation of academic and nonacademic approaches that tend to reduce the practice of film historiography to a history of representations of the city on celluloid.<sup>10</sup> Tijuana, the modernist cinematic city and urban experiment that emerged on the screen in the 1920s, is nonetheless often caught in such binaries as popular cinema and art film, fiction and documentary, cross-cultural and nationalist-nativist ways of seeing. Consequently, histories of border representation accentuate these dichotomies by reducing the city to a binational geopolitical dynamic, to a mere margin of the Mexican nationalist imaginary, and since the 1990s increasingly as a cosmopolitan haven for site-specific artists and curators. The beginning and the end of the nation, the before and after the border, Tijuana is seldom engaged as a screen assemblage, at once simultaneous and discrepant with the history of representations that guarantees its name and status as a border city.<sup>11</sup>

I would like to take here another approach, one that doesn't reduce the constitutive excess of moving images to confining strategies of representations, or that doesn't conflate the multipolar libidinal economy of Tijuana-based moving images to the category "cross-border." My approach eschews a mode of attention that frames Tijuana as an incommensurable, radical urban and cultural alterity, as a form of desire for radical and ghostly otherness, projected onto a blank screen, only to be neutralized and consumed as a commodity or neat binational representation (i.e., internationalism or cosmopolitanism as a mere



All stills in this chapter are from *Maquilapolis: City of Factories* (de la Torre and Funari, 2006).

cross-cultural encounter between nationals or diasporic subjects). Images of Tijuana become either indelible entries in a site-specific cross-cultural archive (at best), a boudoir of both Hollywood productions and the films of the Golden Age of Mexican cinema, or merely an inexhaustible source of anecdotal information (e.g., the city that gave birth to Rita Hayworth).

Tijuana offers instead the possibility to rise above the nitty-gritty of at once academic disciplinary and geopolitical patrolling and to inaugurate new forms of collaborative dialogues between academics, cultural producers, screen practices, media makers, journalists, and independent researchers moving alongside, within, and beyond the border of this decidedly intriguing city in the throes of political economic (maquila factories, outsourcing to Asian markets), affective (fear, violence), juridico-political (state of emergency and narco-war), and institutional (CECUT, the cultural center of TJ, has recently been under increasing pressure from official cultural policy at both national and state levels) convulsions. Tijuana is one of those complex cities that has suffered from being hailed as the postmodernist border city par excellence. And unlike how many writers, social scientists, artists, and curators would have it,<sup>12</sup> Tijuana's urban state of fragmentation and seeming cultural pastiche—its postpolyphonic state of affairs so to speak—does not make it an exceptional city and paragon of hybridism. It is at once more and less than that: a place haunted by



the phantasms of modernity and modernization, a place that gives a chance to ghosts and ur-phenomena to show up, even if fleetingly during the generous temporality of a screening session, in an eventful return. This makes Tijuana new, not exceptional, because it allows the eventful return of things that do not lend themselves easily to incorporation into either the fabric of its everyday life or into the academic category of border studies and its subterranean link to the Mexican postrevolutionary nationalist frameworks of *mestizaje*, or into the regimes of visibility characteristic of attempts at representing/crossing Tijuana as a binational border-crossing zone.<sup>13</sup> Tijuana is in this sense a profoundly modernist city in dire need of alternative models of transgression. For these to be actualized would require an alternate conceptual framework alongside both intercultural modes of spectatorship and so-called Post-Theory's critique of the Gaze. While the latter, as Žižek has noted, "relies on the commonsense notion of the spectator (the subject who perceives cinematic reality on the screen, equipped with emotional and cognitive predispositions)," the former, unquestionably open to a radical politics of the unconscious, nevertheless is still unable to conceive of contemporary postcolonial encounters beyond the framework of national culture, its traces, its *de/re*-territorializations, its diasporic embodiments. The intercultural is in the end always hinged on a sense of in-between that succumbs, in the final instance, to the interpellative force of the national as it seeks to escape it. One can experience, however, this postcogni-

tive and postnationalist site of reflection—that is, a site within and alongside normative perceptions and understandings of an irrevocably binational Tijuana—through a singular group of moving images that has recently emerged in two experimental moving-media practices. The moving images I now turn to enact the staging of phantasies that not only externalize cross-cultural and transnational, intersubjective encounters but also make tactile the shock of modernity and its attendant interplay of organisms, machines, and the ghostly life-forms that move in between.<sup>15</sup> These ghosts, the ghosts of modernity, cannot be visualized, but become, provisionally, actualized as “haptic visibility.”<sup>16</sup> They are imperceptible to both gaze theory and its attendant epistemological reversals as well as to most intercultural frameworks and their attendant contamination by the iterations and performativity of the “national.”

#### An Ur-Image: Tijuana Women Workers Leaving the Factory

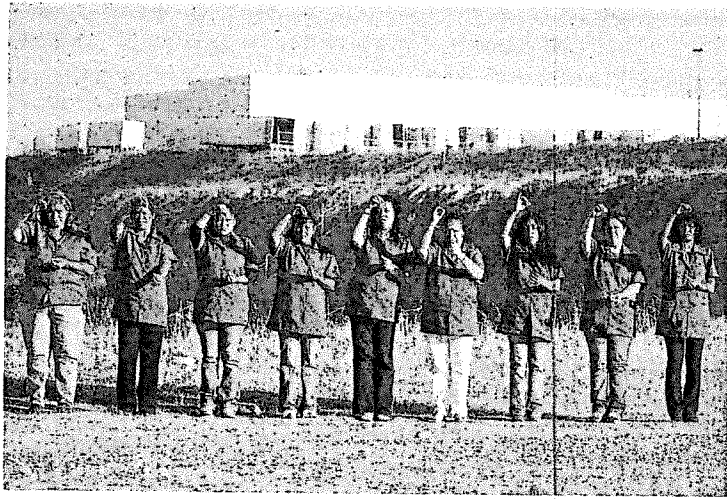
The experimental documentary *Maquilapolis: City of Factories* (2006) is a provocative collaboration between the Bay Area filmmaker Vicki Funari and the artist Sergio de la Torre. The vivid color documentary, shot in both 16 mm and digital video, is a powerful mixture of observational documentary, experimental ethnographic film, and carefully crafted *mise-en-scènes*. It explores the daily lives of women who work in Tijuana’s maquilas (assembly plants located in so-called free-trade zones) through poignant interviews, and reflects on the state of the factory economy and culture in contemporary Tijuana. A city that has been labeled the Factory City—as the subtitle of the film reminds us—Tijuana continues to be a major transit zone for migrant workers, the majority of which are women. As further restructuring of the global political economy proceeds, indeed as factories relocate toward Asia, China in particular, the futures of Tijuana remain uncertain. *Maquilapolis* evaluates these futures in the form of a contemporary meditation, collective and personal at once. That it manages to do that, and act as a much-needed breath of fresh air in contemporary documentary film practice, is one of the several achievements of this intriguing piece of experimental documentary filmmaking.

The film focuses on two women, Carmen Duran and Lourdes Lujan, who detail their own specific economic hardships and their chronicle of a hyper-medicalized everyday life, ranging from being exposed to toxic fumes in the workplace to seeing their neighborhood-*quahetto* being flooded by industrial sewage from the factories. As the women mobilize to protest one particular waste site, an abandoned battery recycling factory that has been leaching tons of cadmium, arsenic, and lead into the soil, maquiladora promoters—site

owners, developers, trade officials—still boast the *benefits of this trade arrangement*. Meanwhile, a representative of Tijuana’s Secretary of Industrial Development boasts about the higher wages and standard of living enjoyed by maquila workers compared to workers living in the rest of Mexico. But for employees in this informal economy, who migrate from all over the country and from Central America for work, these jobs are far from a dream come true.

As one of Carmen’s coworkers says: “I make objects, a replaceable part of a production process. . . . I don’t want to be an object. I want to be a person. I want to realize my dreams.” While one may infer from this comment a naive deployment of the Enlightenment distinction between person (subjectivity) and object, the annihilation of subaltern subjectivity by a ruthless capitalist mode of production, Carmen’s statement is more of an affirmative form of resistance through an invocation of modernity’s foundational distinction between mechanism and organicism that continues to haunt our internationalist encounters. And in this sense there is perhaps more than codirector Vicky Funari’s claim and motivation to undertake the *Maquilapolis* project: “The factory workers who appear in *Maquilapolis* were involved in every stage of production. We wanted to embrace subjectivity—their subjectivity—as a value, and to merge our filmmaking with their voices.”<sup>17</sup> This statement is intimately related to another dimension: the question of technologically mediated self-representation as a form of counternarrative and redemption of desubjectivized and disembodied selves. Reparative theories of subjectivity are indeed a powerful conceptual paradigm to think and transform limit-experiences that complicate our contemporary ontologies of life and death, subject and object, elite and subaltern, observer and observed, North and South geopolitics. This is not to say, however, that Funari’s comment repeats the antimachine attitude at the core of many theories of subjectivity, nor does she embrace the technocultural fabrications of cyborg theory that would no doubt be appropriate in this context given the fact that *Maquilapolis* could lend itself to an aesthetics of the prosthetic or more classical phenomenological theories of embodiment. On the contrary, Funari’s passionate observation points to the very fragility of our conceptual weapons when dealing with ghostly limit-experiences such as those of Carmen and her coworkers.

Indeed, to watch maquila women workers, uniformly dressed in dark blue blouses, leaving Sanyo and Mitsubishi factories in Tijuana is to think of the ghostly quality of the contested ur-image of cinema, cinema’s symptomatic image. Like a flash, another eventful cinematic intervention comes to mind,



Harun Farocki's found-footage film project documenting twentieth-century images of workers leaving the factory:

The film *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon (La Sortie des Usines Lumière à Lyon, 1895)* by the brothers Louis and Auguste Lumière is 45 seconds long and shows the, approximately, 100 workers at a factory for photographic goods in Lyon-Montplaisir leaving through two gates and exiting the frame to both sides. Over the past 12 months, I set myself the task of tracking down the theme of this film—workers leaving the workplace—in as many variants as possible. Examples were found in documentaries, industrial and propaganda films, newsreels, and features. I left out TV archives which offer an immeasurable number of references for any given keyword as well as the archives of cinema and television advertising in which industrial work hardly ever occurs as a motif—commercial film's dread of factory work is second only to that of death.<sup>18</sup>

*Maquilapolis* can be located within recent debates in documentary film studies in general, and specifically in relation to the category of the "performative documentary" introduced by Bill Nichols. This emerging mode of documentary filmmaking not only enables innovative uses of the now-conventional gesture of handing the camera to film subjects to allow them a measure of self-representation, but also stages scenes of a more conceptual character

that allow for a blurring of the ontological divide between the fictional and the factual that has always haunted documentary film studies. One such scene shows maquila workers standing on a dusty plain—one of the many hills in Tijuana that have been flattened to accommodate industrial parks—miming and enacting in mechanistic fashion their daily movements on the assembly lines. In another scene, the camera zooms in on women's faces as they recite the name of their employers, which appear on the screen as they are spoken: Samsung, Panasonic, Sanyo, Sony, and dozens more, until the screen is filled.

Such a highly stylized scene presents a "distinct disturbance to ethnographic and documentary film, and clearly embodies a paradox: it generates a distinct tension between performance and document. It uses historical referentiality less as a subject of interrogation."<sup>19</sup> Rather than acting in the realist documentary mode that pits social facts against reflexive and conceptual labor, *Maquilapolis* directs its message elsewhere where political life, indeed the life of the political, and experimentation with film form coexist productively. The choreographed scenes reveal a creative way of sensing, beyond visual visibility, contemporary forms of living labor, the remaking of industrial machine-human interfaces through gendered forms of resistance, while also inviting viewers, us, to confront our agency as consumers in the context of a biopolitical order of things. Moreover, the spectral quality of these scenes sets in motion the return not only of the Gaze that reveals the *dispositif* of power-knowledge-vision that structures the rapport between observer and observed in classic/colonial ethnographic film,<sup>20</sup> but also of the very substance of the image movement that gives it its ghostly, uncanny quality in the first place. For these reasons, and tensions that haunt the production process itself, of filmmaking, of object-making and self-fashioning, *Maquilapolis* allows something ambiguous to emerge, something paradoxical that requires us to rethink and to tone down current celebrations of the so-called postindustrial age and its attendant immaterial forms of labor. It reminds us of the persistence of industrial cultures in the midst of postindustrial political economies, in the midst of outsourcing and factory relocation from powerful centers to developing political economies. It certainly puts in trouble recent exalted claims of a porous and interstitial so-called postborder condition that would have us think that Tijuana is the site-specific paragon of a city that harbors a hybrid model of cultural identity.

Rare are the occasions when are we fortunate enough to view contemporary films and videos that provocatively and intelligently blur the foundational and constitutive distinctions between fiction and nonfiction film, mainstream and experimental cinema, autoethnography and observational

documentary, cinema verité and mise-en-scène. Even less frequently are we presented with the chance to encounter a piece of filmmaking that gives that perverse pleasure we derive from repetition of uncanny images, images at the limit point of collapse of the strange and the familiar, and when we witness a singular, although always partial, recapitulation of the history of early moving images. But what is even more rare is when the combination of these formal and aesthetic gestures in the liminal space of a movie theater transforms the collective and personal act of viewing into both an ethical and political one. It is perhaps for that reason that those fleeting moments experienced in the midst of our disenchanting late modernity can be referred to as events. It is always an uncanny sensation to have a glimpse of the spectral quality of cinema's ur-images of workers leaving the factory, to have a glimpse of their afterlife. It will come as no surprise, at least to those whose relationship to images is a vocation, that coincidence and resilience sometimes produce eventful moments where the history of moving images and political economy reconnect in "productive" ways.

For this and other reasons Maquilapolis is a complex audiovisual experiment and collaborative process (between artist and filmmaker; among artist, filmmaker, and local factory workers/activists) that not only takes for granted the obvious hybridity and porosity of any given cultural and political context, but also tackles the most difficult issue of visualizing and gendering labor processes and life histories at the point of contact where the "industrial" and "postindustrial" meet, and are resisted via multiple strategies, including filmmaking. Tijuana's ghosts had already appropriated and possessed the names of ominous film titles: Orson Welles's *Touch of Evil* (spirit gone awry through its encounter with the frisson-generating cultural and illicit Other), Chantal Akerman's *From the Other Side* (death drive), *Maquilapolis* (ghosts in the machine). This spectrality too operates in Sergio de la Torre's recent installation *Nuevo Dragon City*: a mise-en-scène of ten third-generation young Chinese Mexicans from Tijuana locked in and instructed to perform a sensation of confinement through repetitive movements, pacing back and forth across the rooms that make up one of the city's many decrepit and abandoned spaces in which they were thrown as material for a site-specific installation. This action, documented and looped as a video piece, somewhere between film and contemporary art, operates a ghostly return of constitutive outsides that comes back to haunt the nation, at its imagined extremity, Tijuana, and if one digs a bit deeper one will find that *Nuevo Dragon City* unmakes the very fabric of mestizaje that subtends both Mexican nationalism and cultural identity among the Mexican American/Chicano diasporas. By zooming in on Chinese Mexican subjects

that do not fall within the constitutive exclusion of indigenous groups that would culminate in theories of mestizaje from 1920 on, de la Torre's installation opens the possibility for a nonindigenous media practice and alternative historiography of migrancy in Mexico and, indeed, the United States. Postcolonial theory's key signature, that of performing historiographic revisions through the blind spots of national culture, is here expanded and inscribed onto the phenomenology of the loop at work in the installation. In addition to indigenous groups and media, both *Maquilapolis* and *Nuevo Dragon City* open the possibility for a renewed history of workers and nonindigenous groups.

And one cannot but be possessed by these two screen experiments and conjure up how one's encounter with Tijuana itself brings back, in unexpected forms, the ghosts of modernism and modernist film theory<sup>21</sup>—the spectral quality of ghosts and machines characteristic of early avant-garde city symphonies and the ur-scene of women workers leaving the factory in the Lumiere brothers' actualities—that have been spirited away by hasty claims of a porous and interstitial "post-border condition"<sup>22</sup> stretching from south of the border to Los Angeles. The ghosts are effects of the violence of the "post" itself, and welcoming them back generates the possibility of a para-ethics of research, conviviality, spectatorship, and sensorial pedagogy that requires much more than cross-cultural forms of spectatorship and research strategies. Both *Maquilapolis* and *Nuevo Dragon City*, the experimental documentary and the site-specific installation project, enable a spectral approach to the cinematic imaginary of Tijuana that condenses both larger political economic processes marked by the diacritic INDUSTRIAL and the nationalist-cosmopolitan tensions of Tijuana. Almost like companions to one other, these two films incarnate the spirits that return to haunt binational border life in Tijuana and, by extension, ongoing efforts to perform a geopolitically situated haptic criticism at the border between film/media studies and contemporary anthropology. As concretely and elegantly put by Avery Gordon, this would require that we not only give up some of our romantic inclinations by relating to "those who live in the most dire of circumstances as possessing a complex and often contradictory humanity and subjectivity that is never adequately glimpsed by viewing them as victims, or on the other hand, as superhuman agents,"<sup>23</sup> but also by engaging life, border life, and its ghostly forms through the design of equally complex interdisciplinary frameworks that seem to invent new object-subject relations.

And so the borderline ghost asks, between bare and impersonal life: how can you, living in the context of the cruel economy of attention and distraction characteristic of industrial and postindustrial capitalism, living in our



border city where maquila factories have become totems of political and cultural life (representations), fail to sense these moving images as looped returns that exceed the hybridity and interculturality of all border life?

#### Notes

- 1 This includes not only the watershed work of Gloria Anzaldúa and the scholarship specifically addressing questions of binational or minority media and film representation at the U.S.-Mexico border (Maciel, Fregoso, Lerner, Noriega, Fusco, Gómez-Peña), but also the more general cross-cultural reflections on borderland cinema and media arts in the work of Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin; A. Guneratne; Hamid Naficy; Lucy Lippard; Michael Renov; and Ella Shohat and Robert Stam.
- 2 See especially Laura Marks, *The Skin of Film*.
- 3 See the sharp literary criticism and novels of tijuanaense writer Heriberto Yépez, especially his recent *Al Otro Lado/On the Other Side* (Planeta, 2008) and its attendant critique of the “hybrid.” Noteworthy here are also the writings of leading chronicler of Tijuana Humberto Berumen, and the encyclopedic three-volume book on representations of Mexico in world cinema in film historian Emilio García Riera’s *México Visto por el cine extranjero*.
- 4 See also the hard-boiled fictions of the Mexico-U.S. border from Gabriel Trujillo Muñoz’s recently translated *Tijuana City Blues* to James Ellroy’s classic *Tijuana, Mon Amour*.

- 5 Robert Stam, “Hybridity and the Aesthetics of Garbage: The Case of Brasil,” in *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de America Latina y del Caribe*.
- 6 See Anthony Guneratne, *Rethinking Third Cinema*, p. 29.
- 7 Laura Marks defines intercultural spectatorship as “the meeting of two different sensoria, which may or may not intersect . . . an act of sensory translation of cultural knowledge.” *The Skin of Film*, p. 153.
- 8 It should be obvious that I am arguing contra this specific vision of the disorderly while searching for other forms of disorderly resistance that do not conflate intercultural spectatorship to clearly defined binational/cultural sensorial-scapes. Rather than a contrast between moving images on each side of the Wall separating Tijuana from San Diego (juridico-political dimension) or Tijuana from Mexico City (national-ideological), either by taming through militarization, or overflow through border crossing, or resentfully performing TJ as cosmopolitan versus nationalist Mexico City, without being dismissive of the productivity of symbolic and physical boundaries, the disorderly I have in mind would have affinity to Benjamin’s “blasting open” of historicist accounts that frame the trans-cultural as neatly distributed between geopolitically overdetermined sensorial categories such as North/South and center/periphery.
- 9 That the disorderly interrupts the continuous flow and order of things is not inherently a decolonizing political-ontological horizon, nor is saying the latter a wishful return to the certainty of the grid. Approaches hinged on ontologies of purity and garbage are important steps, but they always seem to rely on gestures of reversal. It might be more useful to view this ever-changing and always already hybrid disorderly as any other singularity, neither derivative of nor constituted by contrast to something ontologically different allegedly lacking chaos in the first place. Tijuana is a “whatever” disorderly City, in the sense of Gilles Deleuze. The more we understand our border worlds as always already polyphonic, the less we will conceptually invoke hybridity, and its attendant purity/contamination ontological underpinnings, and the more we will attempt to theorize the Whatever as a more radical category of the political.
- 10 This history of representation is, for instance, carried out in the work of Norma Iglesias. See her valuable “Border Representations: Border Cinema and Independent Video” in *The Post-Border City: Cultural Spaces of Baja California*, pp. 183–213. Although her contribution and encyclopedic knowledge of the region is not questioned here, her mode of historiographic approach leaves very little room for further theoretical elaboration for thinking an extratextual taxonomy of moving image of the region.
- 11 It should be noted that I adopt here the concept of assemblage from Gilles Deleuze, in particular in his implicit reevaluation of the concept in his *Essays Critical and Clinical* and in *Dialogues with Claire Parnet*. Tijuana, the name, exceeds the regional geographic, urban, and binational location that fixes it. Approached as an assemblage, “Tijuana” becomes a syndrome of sorts, a convergence of symptoms grouped, dissociated, and regrouped in new forms so that it is made to exceed Tijuana’s repeated denomination as a border city. Alongside its history of representations, Tijuana becomes freed from itself.

- 12 See the work of Norma Iglesias and especially the curatorial statement and introduction essay by curator Rachel Tigael to the exhibit *Strange New World* held at the Contemporary Art Museum, San Diego. For an incisive critique of *Strange New World* (in particular) and curatorial visions of Tijuana (in general), see especially Fiamma Montezemolo: "Eco, Narciso, y Los Procesos Fronterizos" (*Letras Libres*, 2005) and "Bio-Cartography of Tijuana's Art Scene," *InSite 2005*.
- 13 I have in mind here the pioneering performances and writings of Guillermo Gómez-Peña and his transgressive "border brujo" projects that rely on reverse anthropology that once had powerful political-decolonizing purchase. I suggest here an attitude of transgression that is less spectacular and sovereign, less bound to classic ethnographic categories and more attuned to contemporary anthropology, in the end an attitude or ethos that complicates the lines between outside and inside from a more vulnerable and less heroic position.
- 14 See Slavoj Žižek, *The Fright of Real Tears: Krzysztof Kieślowski between Theory and Post-Theory* (British Film Institute, 2001), p. 34.
- 15 See Akira Lippit's (2007) reflection on the fake documentaries and found-footage films of Waleed Raad and Jay Rosenblatt. "Staged and performed, phantasies can be seen as psychic film projections," p. 180.
- 16 See Laura Marks's concept of haptic criticism in *Framework* (2004).
- 17 Interview with PBS, 2007.
- 18 See Farocki in *Senses of Cinema* (online journal).
- 19 See Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries*, p. 63. It goes without saying that Nichols's heuristic modal taxonomy allows for interconnections between participatory, reflexive, and performative modes of documentary filmmaking.
- 20 See especially, Fatimah Tobing Rony's discussion of Felix Regnault's protoethnographic film apparatus in *Third Eye*, in particular chapters 1 and 2. Although a gesture that has now become familiar to those of us who are passionate about experimental cinema, *Maquilapolis* exemplifies Tom Gunning's now-famous theory, on which Rony and others like Catherine Russell rely, that this main feature of the "cinema of attraction" has gone underground only to reappear in avant-garde and experimental film, among other minor genres. For an incisive use of the Deleuzian concept of the minor, see in particular Akira Lippit, "The Only Other Apparatus of Film," pp. 177-79.
- 21 Malcolm Turvey's article "Vertov: Between Machine and Organism" is a symptom of our fascination with both modernist film theory and city symphonies, and the complex intersections between historiography, theory, and screen practices. These returns to Vertov, for instance, are more than mere cinephilic dispositions: they are the effect of the spectrology that guides the hand writing this essay on *Maquilapolis*.
- 22 Michael Dear and Gustavo Leclerc (eds.), *The Post-Border City: Cultural Spaces of Baja California*.
- 23 Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 2.

## References

- Anzaldúa, Gloria (1987), *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.
- Berumen, Humberto Félix (2003), *Tijuana La Horrible: Entre la Historia y el Mito*. Tijuana: Colegio de la Frontera Norte.
- Cusset, François (2008), *French Theory: How Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida, and Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- de la Torre, Sergio, & Funari, Vicky (2006), *Maquilapolis: City of Factories*. Video. Mexico and United States, 70 mins.
- Farocki, Harun (2001), "Workers Leaving the Factory," in *Senses of Cinema*. [http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/02/21/farocki\\_workers.html](http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/02/21/farocki_workers.html).
- Fargoso, Rosa Linda (1993), *The Bronze Screen: Chicana and Chicano Film Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Fusco, Coco (2002), *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas*. London: Routledge.
- García Canclini, Néstor (1995), *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ginsburg, Faye D., Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin (eds.) (2002), *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Gómez-Peña, Guillermo (2000), *Dangerous Border Crossers: The Artist Talks Back*. London: Routledge.
- Guneratne, Anthony, & Dissanayake, Wimal (eds.) (2003), *Rethinking Third Cinema*. London: Routledge.
- Herzog, Lawrence A. (2003), "Global Tijuana: The Seven Ecologies of the Border," in *The Post-Border City: Cultural Spaces of Baja California*. Ed. Michael Dear and Gustavo Leclerc. London: Routledge, 119-42.
- Iglesias, Norma (2003), "Border Representations: Border Cinema and Independent Video," in *The Post-Border City: Cultural Spaces of Baja California*. Ed. Michael Dear and Gustavo Leclerc. London: Routledge, 183-213.
- Lerner, Jesse (2005), "Arqueología Fronteriza." *Replicante* no. 2: 24.
- Lerner, Jesse, and Rubén Ortiz Torres (1995), *Frontierland/Frontierlandia*. Chicano Studies Research Center Cinema and Media Art Series.
- Lippard, L. (1990), *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America*. New York: Pantheon.
- Lippit, Akira Mizuta (2007), "The Only Other Apparatus of Film," in *Derrida, Deleuze and Psychoanalysis*. Ed. Gabriele Schwab. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Maciel, David R. (1990), *El Norte: The U.S.-Mexican Border in Contemporary Cinema*. San Diego: Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias / San Diego State University (Border Series).
- Marks, Laura (2004), "Haptic Visuality: Touching with the Eyes," in *Framework: The Finnish Art Review* no. 2 (2004): 79-82.
- (1999), *The Skin of Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.



- Montezemolo, Fiamma (2006), "Bio-Cartography of Tijuana's Art Scene," in *Situational Public: InSite 2005*, pp. 314–18.
- (2005), "Eco, Narciso, y Los Procesos Fronterizos," in *Letras Libres*, 53.
- Naficy, Hamid (2001), *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Nichols, Bill (1994), *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Noriega, Chon (1992), *Chicanos and Film: Representation and Resistance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Renov, Michael (1995), "New Subjectivities: Documentary and Self-representation in the Post-Verité Age," in *Documentary Box 7*: 1–8.
- Riera, Emilio Garcia (1988), *México Visto por el Cine Extranjero*. Universidad de Guadalajara.
- Shohat, Ella (1994), *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. London: Routledge.
- Shohat, Ella, & Robert Stam (eds.) (2003), *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality and Transnational Media*. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Stam, Robert (1998), "Hybridity and the Aesthetics of Garbage: The Case of Brasil," in *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de America Latina y del Caribe* 9, no. 1. [http://www.tau.ac.il/eial/IX\\_1/stam.html](http://www.tau.ac.il/eial/IX_1/stam.html).
- Tigael, Rachel (2006), *Strange New World: Art and Design from Tijuana*. San Diego: Museum of Contemporary Art.
- Tobing Rony, Fatimah (1996), *Third Eye: Race and Ethnographic Spectacle*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Trujillo Muñoz, Gabriel (2009), *Tijuana City Blues*. France: Les Allusifs.
- Turvey, Malcolm (2007), "Vertov: Between the Organism and the Machine," in *October* no. 121: 5–18.
- Yépez, Heriberto (2008), *Al Otro Lado / On the Other Side*. Mexico City: Planeta.
- (n.d.), "On 'Hybrid.'" <http://heriberto-yepez.blogspot.com/>.

Josh Kun

NINETEEN

## The Kidnapped City

The finger arrived in the mail next to the gas bill and the grocery store coupons, bubble-wrapped in a sealed envelope with no return address. By then, Luis had already been gone for two months of his thirty-four years. His severed finger—they didn't even put it on ice; they just let the blood dry, the skin purple, the smell swell—was proof that he was alive, that he existed, that the rest of his body was somewhere, still warm, still beating. The finger meant they wanted more money. If he was still alive enough to lose a finger, then there was still money to be made. They took him from right in front of his house, in front of his wife, his three young children inside, in plain view in the middle of the day on his quiet street in Playas de Tijuana—a tranquil coastal neighborhood known for its remove from the chaos of downtown where the only big news of late was the opening of a Starbucks. They asked for directions and Luis walked over to the car to help out. They pulled him inside. They were not wearing masks. As soon as my wife heard that, she knew things would be bad for her cousin. In the logic of kidnapping, the mask is a chance for survival; if the kidnappers cannot be identified, they might consider releasing their hostage. No mask and the release is harder to imagine. Luis must have known that too; he knew his fate as soon as he hit the backseat. He was never coming home.

My in-laws were active in raising money. There was a breakfast—the whole extended family brought checks, whatever you could afford. Every dollar counted. They wanted \$2 million. We raised \$100,000. We don't know when they killed Luis, if he was even alive when the money was being gathered. We do know that they drove out of town to dump his body alongside the highway to Tecate. He was picked up and brought to the city morgue as a John Doe and only weeks later did a family friend who works in forensics recognize his face in a photo search.

The memorial was wrenching. There were people everywhere. The men stood on the steps by the entrance, as if they were guards