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Mapuche Hunger Acts: Epistemology of the Decolonial

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The resurgence of indigenous struggles and knowledge in the Americas, especially from the Southern Hemisphere, has been tantamount to an epistemological shift in the colonial/modern difference first theorized by Aníbal Quijano. In a few nations, the force of indigenous movements, and their resolution into state heads, such as that of the election of Bolivian President Evo Morales, has decidedly pushed back against the hegemony of the Washington Consensus, creating a new paradigm for hemispheric interconnectivity and solidarity that disarticulates the US hegemony that had long defined the Americas. For indigenous resurgence projects, the revival of cultural practices, linguistic legislation, and social movements map an important arc of meaning to contemporary efforts that counter the logics of racial capitalism. The acute struggles of the Mapuche nation in the Biobío region of Chile, against racist extermination, and modern settler colonialism, occupy an essential, if often under analyzed role, for decolonizing and de-westernizing from the location of the Global South.¹

In the nexus of settler capitalism, Mapuche hunger strikes have become a dominant form of political expression, and of embodied cultural politics that transform the colonial relationship through collective and self-definition. Contemporary hunger strikes shape and are shaped by a neoliberal landscape that has both deepened and localized indigenous responses. In such locations, the starving body of the hunger striker has become the site of resistance against the modern nation state's continued practices of colonial subjugation. In spite of its pernicious and absent representation in the mass media, Mapuche hunger strikes can be located within an episteme of decoloniality that forces engagement with and proximity to the ethical encounter with states of native precariousness. As extreme bodily performance and political instantiation, the Mapuche starving body literally enacts the condition of precariousness, specifying the meanings of social death for indigenous peoples living within a state of permanent war.

Let me expand upon this statement, since the precarious character of Mapuche life can be described as a form of social death. Orlando Patterson first described social death as the refusal of the master to recognize the conditions of the slave, wherein the master's power ensured submission through a series of ownership, custody, paternity, and citizenship laws that excluded and legally disabled the slave (1982). In *Lose Your Mother*, Saidiya Hartman extends Patterson's analysis to describe the commodification of slave bodies in relationship to dispossession. As Hartman poignantly describes, the enslaved "Lived and breathed, but they were dead in the social world of

men” (67-68). Hartman attends to the discontinuous legacies in the fragmented afterlife of slavery as a form of self-identification with the history of African American dispossession, a potential basis for present day self-definitions that live with the remnants of the past. Applying Hartman’s conceptual frame to an ongoing colonial situation of indigenous subjugation, historical dispossession of land and resources has been at the core of Mapuche existence within a modern state context that continuously circumscribes native life to its barest condition. Identifying with ongoing coloniality and dispossession is not only a means of survival, but also the basis for a furious refusal and disidentification with the history of material and symbolic losses and efforts at forms of recovery.

Since 2004, Mapuches have used hunger strikes as a primary means of protest and resistance against the material and representational consequences of naming their people domestic terrorists. Rupturing the framework of political imprisonment and colonized subjectivity, Mapuche hunger strikes force an epistemological challenge, not as legitimizing struggles for recognition, but instead as a refusal to the forms of citizenship exclusions exacted by the State. Further, Mapuche bodily performances of self-starvation enact what it means to live in a barely livable state of colonial difference. In this new paradigm of ongoing hunger strikes as a feature of a permanent war, one Mapuche refrain has been “If there is no land, if there is no security, then we will starve ourselves and burn our land to showcase our plight.”

To survive in Mapuche territories today is materially to have little future, as the already meager access to food supply has dwindled under enormous pressure from multinational companies and the Chilean Ministry of Agriculture that administers forest territories (CONAF). Privatization and development schemes have rapaciously transformed ancestral Mapuche-Pehuenche lands into pine and eucalyptus forest plantations, wreaking environmental havoc in the area, while also forcing the migration of Mapuche peoples from these locations. During the last thirty years, such radical transformation of the countryside, and especially of the Biobío region, the forest rich region of the South, has produced numerous confrontations over the expansion of hydroelectric plants. In the face of privatization, occupation, land take overs, and legal pressures, Mapuche activism has been militant and bold, setting the scene for wider sets of conflict and insurrection against militarization, imprisonment, privatization and the mismanagement of resources that proliferates through the coloniality of power matrix.

Consider the Chilean Anti-terrorist Law 18.314, which doubles the sentences for some offenses, conditions pre-trial release as more difficult, allows the prosecution to withhold evidence for up to six months from defendants, and permits convictions based on testimony given by anonymous witnesses. Such anonymous witnesses have been called “faceless witnesses” since they dubiously appear in court behind screens so they cannot be identified. The idea of “faceless witnesses” has become a trope for state and colonial power that continues to structure Mapuche daily existence through the advancement of capital and speculation. Mapuche peoples and leaders have been targeted through the implementation of Anti-terrorist Law 18.314, the pivotal piece of legislation that extended Pinochet’s state of emergency measures into neoliberal democracy. In this post-authoritarian, neoliberal democratic terrain the US-led global war on terrorism provides discursive weight and authority to continuing practices of colonial subjugation.

Giving this scene: In extreme states of insecurity, how does self-starvation draw attention to the body as a site of radical action? How do the politics of refusal and self-starvation counter the logics of extermination? What are the contours of strategies of proximity, and ethical engagement, with respects to Mapuche resistance?

Reduction, The Nation, and Neoliberal Multiculturalism

Mapuche resistance has a unique history in the Southern Cone by pushing back on Spanish eradication from 1641-1825. It was not until the eighteenth century, after a protracted resistance struggle by the indigenous population of Chile's Central Valley, that Spanish Crown settled Mapuches onto "reducciones" or reduced land parcels. For the *araucanos*, as they were called by Spaniards, the thirty treaties signed between the state and multiple native populations legalized sovereign territory that was recognized, however unstably, by the Spanish Crown.

During the independence wars, Mapuches were initially rendered as noble warriors that could fight for national independence and freedom in the name of love and loyalty for the new nation. A decade into nation building in the 1840s, elite economic interests vied for access to the resource rich Southern regions of the country, threatening native sovereignty and land claims. The growing popularity of scientific racism and national economic motivations helped produce a set of racist discourses that targeted Mapuche people for extermination by the state. For instance, in 1859, the national newspaper *El Mercurio* argued that "nature had spent everything on the development of [the Mapuche's] body, while his intelligence remained at the level of scavenging animals" and that "[the Mapuche] are nothing more than a wild horde, whom it is urgent to chain or destroy in the interest of humanity and for the good of society" (Pinto 154-155). Mapuches were depicted as wild and untamable, a common trope of colonial settler societies that renders indigenous bodies through animalistic metonyms aimed at dehumanization. Representing Mapuches as a horde and as potentially damaging to "humanity" during a key period of state consecration, uncovers the dominant and subordinate dynamic at the heart of the modern/colonial divide.

In key moments of nation building, Mapuche peoples were constantly inscribed through a set of racialized representations that historically established the tone for legal and military challenges to native territoriality. That is, the move from incorporation, in late eighteenth-century Spanish colonialism toward exclusion during nineteenth-century Republicanism, set the stage for a war against Mapuche bodies that resulted in not only massive displacement and deterritorialization, but also in a permanent war against the Mapuche population during modernity and its developmentalism against a more eco-centered epistemology and pattern of living. Indeed, the forcible removal of Mapuches into "reducciones" eliminated their legibility as sovereign subjects. Extermination has been a constant feature of the nineteenth century forward.

Skipping forward, after failed attempts at land reform in late 1960s and the early 1970s, the question of insecurity emerged as a primary feature of Mapuche existence. In this state of permanent scarcity, Mapuche communities teeter on the edge of subsistence and live at the edge of marginality as experienced through a consistent pattern of food insecurity (Clark "Putting the Market"), forced

migration, and ever shrinking land ownership. The nation state and structural economic policies push Mapuches further into barely livable conditions, which continuously ignites a more radical response by highly organized Mapuche sector that includes a broad network of organizations, and youth activism.

The human rights violations and economic fundamentalism of the Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1990) is well documented, and produced continuities rather than distinctions between authoritarian neoliberalism and a version of liberal democracy anchored in late capitalism (Gómez-Barris *Where Memory Dwells*). What is lesser known is the degree to which the military regime imposed racialized politics through privatization of the land that reduced Mapuche lands to 510,000 hectares, or just 6.4 percent of their original territory. The legal lynchpin of the new politics of reduction was the 1979 Decree Law 2.568.

As Timothy Clark details in his analysis of food security in the region, the law's "intentions were clearly spelled out in its name: Division and Liquidation of the Indigenous Community. Decree Law 2.568 allowed for the division of indigenous communities, on request by only one occupant, who need not be either indigenous nor a landowner in the community" (160). The *Concertación* government ratified the Indigenous Law (1993) that established National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI). Yet, Mapuche peoples were still not constitutionally recognized. Further, the new governments left in place economic policies of the Pinochet regime that directly supported multinational forest companies, while not recognizing collective indigenous land claims. Thus, despite the long "democratic" transition that produced a climate of liberal democratic change, in the Biobío region the government further criminalized and conducted campaigns of state terror against the Mapuche nation, most notably through accusing activists of terrorist acts.

With the support of the US, the Pinochet regime of the 1970s and 1980s was successful in disarticulating all kinds of political forms of dissidence. Mapuches continued their struggle for land and self-autonomy. The fundamentalist neoliberal decimation of the rural sector was particularly egregious in terms of Mapuche poverty rates, health status, and education. The Pinochet regime also organized a series of legal codes that continue to remain operative in a war on "internal" terrorism that gained credibility and international legibility only through Bush's global war on terrorism. The last twenty years have marked an acute period in the permanent war on Mapuche people.

Perhaps ironically, where there is a resurgence of indigenous identities on a global scale, and the reduction of every day possibility at the local scale, Mapuche cultural production at the national level has been at an all time high. The rise of Mapuche poetry over the last two decades has been particularly salient evolving into what has become an international circuit. This cultural scene emerged mostly with male Mapuche poets as the most visible figures, despite the fact that it was the New York based performance artist and poet Cecilia Vicuña who helped launch Mapuche poetry with *UL: Four Mapuche Poets* edited collection in 1998. The heroic and folkloric orientation of some of the poetry notwithstanding, there is a palpable attempt in this genre to de-westernize and reorient toward a Mapuche epistemology and sensibility of time, space, and the natural world with this startling collection of new Mapuche poetics.

By the 1990s, as the transition from neoliberal authoritarianism to neoliberal “democracy” continued rather than ruptured prior patterns, the rise of Mapuche poetry became widely celebrated through the paradigm of liberal multiculturalism. New Mapuche poetry incorporated the work of Elicura Chihualiaf and Leonel Iván Lienlaf, two nationally recognized poets, and given wide recognition by official discourses of multiculturalism as important new expressions of indigenous identity. If such work circulates within the context of a capitalist agenda that underscores stardom rather than precarious living, then these celebratory moves authorize a domesticated native figure that does little to ameliorate the conditions of precariousness experienced by most contemporary urban and rural Mapuches. As Johanna Crow cogently argues in “Mapuche Poetry,” following the work of Charles Hale, the poet in these new celebrations is depicted as *the indio permitido*. In contrast to the liberal celebration of aesthetic production, the legal structures of the state frame Mapuche land and political activism as domestic terrorism. It is within this economic, political, and cultural imperative and representational terrain that repetitive durational hunger strikes invoke a history of embodied resistance as the radical site of demarcation, and with potentiality re-open the colonial wound toward another kind of indigenous representation and decolonial episteme.

Recently, the Mapuche situation has been analyzed through a theoretical discussion of neoliberal multiculturalism, proposing that the state has worked to thematize Mapuches and their demands through the question of development oriented solutions including land subsidies, education, housing grants and training programs. As Richards suggests,

neoliberal multiculturalism had done little to challenge dominant racial hierarchies in the Chilean South and indeed the multicultural reforms have not been directly aimed at transforming the subjectivities of local elites. This should hardly be surprising, given that the rationale behind neoliberal multiculturalism is less about changing racial hierarchies than it is about creating self-governing indigenous subjects that will not challenge the political-economic goals of the state (90).

While Richards rightly points out the aims of multicultural democracy as incorporative rather than ameliorative, what is often left out in such analyses of liberal multiculturalism are the fundamentalist exclusions of Mapuche and Pehuenche peoples by the colonial and neoliberal state. In other words, in earlier periods the state chose either an incorporative model or extermination against native peoples. Newer forms of state capitalism use and defend both strategies. Further, within the configuration of privatization, deregulation, and state management of lands, there is no “right kind” of multicultural arrangement. Thus, an analysis that centers multicultural inclusion rather than a decolonial frame, fails to consider the starvation tactics of the Mapuche people. Namely, under what conditions do repetitive and durational (eighty and ninety day) hunger strikes emerge by groups of indigenous people? Ultimately, how do we consider the practices of resistance and struggles for indigenous self-authorization through a de-westernized lens?

Hunger Acts

As Glen Coulthard describes, the colonial relationship between indigenous peoples and the state cannot be significantly transformed through a politics of recognition. Coulthard deftly argues that there is no renewed version of the colonial relationship that magically absolves the internalization of racialized difference. Indeed, the hyper celebration of Mapuche poetry and its incorporation suffers from what Fanon discussed as psycho-affective attachments that maintain a “master sanctioned” form of recognition (148). And racial capitalism assigns no value to making precariousness visible, unless it returns the native body to the logic of minimalization and reduction. Therefore, the emaciated wasted body is much less easily absorbed into the logics of neoliberal capitalism than that of the poet male. In these durational performances of precariousness, the state steps in as the rescuer of the Mapuche prisoner by sanctioning force-feeding to “save” the body from extinction. Yet, the force-fed native body does not sell well within the parameters of liberal democracy, and, as a figure that refuses the material realities of dispossession and colonial subjugation blocks the mechanisms of the market. In Bush’s global war on terror, the legality of force-feeding at Guantanamo Bay has been organized around the idea of the ethical intent of “sustaining the life of the prisoner” despite the fact that such logics can never enter into the issue of what life is being sustained in conditions of incarcerated precariousness. Giving primacy to hunger strikes as the act of contemporary Mapuche expression, and situating it in opposition to the fair trade circulation of Mapuche jewelry, artifacts, and the celebrated heroism of the male poetic voice, addresses how the hunger striking performance of the Mapuche body is a definitive site of cultural and social meaning that forces a confrontation with the colonial relationship to the Chilean state.

The spectacular ravaged body of female political prisoner Patricia Troncoso, as the result of her durational hunger strike breaks with any notion of easy, incorporable spectatorship. As an active subject of resistance and refusal, Troncoso changed the schema of historical representational by making the body the central site of self-governance and self-inscription. Troncoso has spent the past ten years in prison charged with committing domestic terrorism. Her 2010 hunger strike of 112 days was one of the longest in the history of the nation. Called “tricky” and “cunning” by the national mainstream media, in the international setting of social media and activists’ networks her message and image has traveled differently over the past two years, producing a series of solidarity effects to differing results. One of the most significant aspects of this circulation is access to Troncoso’s narrative about the conditions of forced imprisonment and colonial subjugation. As Troncoso declared from the physical space of her near death:

the illegitimate violence of money and power, that imprisonment, persecution and criminalization of our cause, that police brutality, are not the way to solve the historical and political problem with our people. Because while you, the politicians, come and go, future generations of Mapuche people continue to germinate and grow. And the Mapuche will continue to resist your arrogance and domination. We will continue to struggle, we will continue to resist and we know that for each one that falls, ten shall rise up. (Carerre n.p.)

In these powerful words, Troncoso maintains a longer view of the potential impact of her durational

practice that extends beyond the immediate precariousness and barely livable condition of Mapuche life toward the possibility of a reversion of coloniality. Rather than accepting the genocidal logic of inevitable assimilation, or the finality of indigenous defeat, Troncoso invokes a history of Mapuche struggle from the colonial past that, while masculinist in its discussion of native heroism, becomes inverted through the present day female body. This discontinuous, contingent, partial, and incomplete story of resistance does not depend on the construction of national mythology, or an overarching narrative that would have Mapuche masculine heroism as the new center of a nationalist project, whether it be it during independence, or in the transition to a liberal democratic regime. Further, in contrast to the minimal future or no future paradigm as the temporal determinant of the colonial state, Patricia Troncoso declares an unending battle and challenge to the dominant frame of indigeneity as disappearing. Rather than fusing corporality and carnality to one's ancestral lands, and thereby essentializing female indigeneity, Troncoso's mode of enunciation makes visible the coloniality of power matrix that is present within dominant culture.

The year 2004 marked the initiation of multiple hunger strikes that included Troncoso's participation after activists were prosecuted for burning one hundred hectares of pine plantations officially owned by Chilean and multinational forestry companies. In an extensive rapporteur report on the human rights impact of global terrorism, the 2004 case is notable, not only because of the repetitive durational hunger strikes by Patricia Troncoso, and other political prisoners, but also because of how the state narrativized these political acts. In most cases, nations around the world that have been accused of committing rights violations there is no response by their governments: In China, no response; El Salvador, no response; however, the Chilean government provides detailed explanation of its imminent medical attention and preoccupation for the hunger strikers, especially Troncoso (Sheinin "Promotion and Protection"). Such preoccupation becomes the focus of the discursive and representational act of international reporting, where the state response focused on an interest in health and well being without a broader context for the sanctioning colonial violence.

While the other three male Mapuche activists ended their fast after two months in the first round, Troncoso persisted in self-starvation and was transformed into a kind of Youtube and Twitter heroine. In such moments of global circulation, Troncoso enables and instantiates a different and viable form of female Mapuche agency in an otherwise overdetermined representational void. Rendered mute by the status of her imprisonment, Troncoso's hunger act refuses silence and alters precariousness by countering the assignment of social death. As Avery Gordon points out within prison regimes, "the prisoner cannot be permitted to speak for him or herself, since as property, he or she lacks civil integrity...it is 'utterly' impossible to communicate with the 'force,' much less the people, holding you in subjugation "(20). In Troncoso's case, delegitimizing, and de-authorizing the act of colonial/modern violence occurs not only through the speech act, but also through the bodily and political act of self imposed hunger. In a climate of censorship and blocked access to mainstream media, social and alternative media shift the conditions of representational possibility producing another kind of imagined solidarity. For instance, the circulation of native publications and local media that is then translated on an international circuit works to interrupt the racial logics of the earlier representational schema of

either “the horde” on the one hand, or the “the domestic terrorist” on the other.

De-humanizing Rights

The Mapuche-led organization *Consejo de Todas las Tierras* has used *quemadas*, or arson, as a mode of resisting racial terror and military and police brutality, a strategy that has gained momentum over the last decade as one of refusal, renewal, disarticulation, re-articulation. Burning the land, as founder and leader of the organization Aucán Huilcamán Paillen told me in 2004, is a form of “land recovery” and “symbolic” occupation, methods that counter the vast police and military regime of the Chilean state. Indigenous protestors have been treated with special legislation that includes the anti-terrorism law, prosecuting activists during confrontations that are usually state initiated. In September 2006, for instance, Huilcamán returned from a meeting where he was involved in drafting the UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples and was arrested for promoting ‘illegal’ acts.

As Aucán Huilcamán has stated, “The promotion of the right to land, as well as the civil, political, social and cultural rights of the Mapuche places human rights defenders in situations where they be perceived as committing illegal acts, given that the Chilean State does not recognize land eviction against the indigenous peoples of the country” (Huilcamán n.p.). Mapuches, like many indigenous groups in Latin America and beyond, have re-purposed the language of human rights to not only make claims on existing institutional resources and frameworks, but also as a method of opposing the criminalizing discourses of the state, toward the broader goal of land recovery. Importantly, Mapuche present-day activism falls within a radical historical praxis that has emerged from the colonized condition of many indigenous peoples, but also reconfigured as a sharpened response from within the Biobío region, one heart of the fundamentalist experiment of neoliberal Chile, and, an epicenter of de-colonial struggle since the sixteenth century.

In the face of historical oppression, Mapuche radical praxis is both about a history of subordination to a racist regime of colonial and modern power, and a reemergence as a sequence of imprints from a past route of collective resistance, forming into spectacular violence and acts of self authorized performances. The general insurrection on November 5, 1881 against the *criollo* and anti-royalists represents one origin story of unification and insurrection. This momentous event consolidated the Mapuche into a single revolt, not by focusing upon a teleological notion of “victory,” but by locating the horizon of freedom, through a politics of collective death. As Pepe Bengoa notes, “the Mapuche knew perfectly well that they were going to lose and that the majority of them would die in this general insurrection...a cultural imperative that obligated (the Mapuches) to appear with their lances, in front of the *huinca* (White man) to say, “We are still an independent people and we will cease to be such only in a ritual act of combat and death” (qtd. in Worthen 253).

Subsequent to nineteenth-century pacification, the history of insurrection, and coordinated acts, culminated in the 1970s with the takeover of privatized land by groups of peasants that included Mapuches, though the latter’s concerns were subsumed into the Pinochet dictatorship backlash, especially through the disappearance of Mapuche organizers. The radical acts of self-harm

by indigenous leaders and peoples at the site of colonial/modern terror, which in this case is their own ancestral lands, force us to counter-intuitively understand arson (burning their own land) and starvation (ruining their own bodies), as practices of self-determination and signification. In this sense, human rights are strategically deployed to expose the inhumanities of nation-based rights discourses, re-semanticizing the possibility of rights claims. As Aucán Huilcaman asserts, “My experience of almost two decades defending the rights of the Mapuche has been marred by the historical doctrine of non-recognition, as well as the criminalization of any activities related to promoting and defending the rights of the Mapuche” (“Chile, Aucán Huilcaman Paillama”). The promotion of the right to land, as well as the civil, political, social and cultural rights of the Mapuche references the human rights framework of the UN declaration that Huilcaman had a hand in crafting. Such efforts work to mark the failures of liberalism, and its inability to question the legitimacy of the nation state. Dale Turner discusses in relation to indigenous politics, “the existence of the nation state is not a given” (37). For Mapuche collective autonomy, this is where the imaginary of the future toward freedom is instantiated.

Death Ethics

Aníbal Quijano has described coloniality as the structures of power, control, and hegemony that have emerged during the modernist era, the era of colonialism, which stretches from the conquest of the Americas to the present. Nelson Maldonado-Torres describes these power relations as those that sustain a fundamental social and political divide between masters and slaves. In such a system, there is an effort to create a world that is organized and reproduced by a “community of masters,” where a class of others must become subordinated to this project. Maldonado-Torres writes, “In a racist/imperial world the synchrony of signification turns excessively violent: it does not only domesticate the particular to the universal or to the concept, but it also turns against the very existence of another subject. In modernity, this fundamentally anti-ethical and genocidal modality has become naturalized through racisms of various kinds” (240). Within such an anti-ethical and genocidal world, death ethics are the naturalized condition, yet however powerful and far-reaching, genocidal racisms can never universally accomplish its tasks, since there is always a denunciation, or a Fanonian cry from the position of the subordinated.

As late as December of 2010, Edmundo Pérez Yoma, the minister of the Interior of Michelle Bachelet’s government, discussed with the United States the worry of the Mapuche problem asking for intelligence to combat “potential” transnational connections of Mapuche leadership to groups like the FARC and ETA. During 2009, Ambassador Paul E. Simons stated that the “The Mapuche communities are incoherent, and present demands that oscillate between logic and fantasy...and thus, the successive governments of the Concertación have developed indigenous policy that is incapable of establishing and reaching realistic objectives” (Reported in the Spanish Newspaper *El País*). The notion of Mapuches as incoherent and within oscillating notions of reality and fantasy maintains the coherence of colonial productions that destabilize native epistemes and minimize the vernacular experience of precariousness, and potentiality of the future for these

communities.

In their encounter with war, indigenous bodies are literally used as the first front with coercive power. Such bodies are deployed as sites of self-inscription and communal relation, where in their physical and symbolic force field, work against normative discourses of progress, westernization, and modernity, orienting away from linearity and towards something else. Such body politics, disperse, fragment, emaciate, waste, and risk the body, and in the process call attention to the forms of power that have mentally, physically and epistemologically occupied it. As such, occupation is not only about taking land (through militarization, privatization, bureaucracies, laws, control of movement, etc.), but also about the forceful occupation of the body's representation in the wider structures of domination.

In his recent book on self-starvation, Patrick Anderson calls attention to the multiple sites where hunger emerges, in the clinic, in performance spaces like the gallery, in the prison, and in cells. He describes these domains as performances of self-starvation where “form and practice, as representation and ontology, as presence and disappearance, performance has forge from hunger's undying demands a ghostly premise (if not promise) of hope” (139). Anderson makes important theoretical points about self-starvation as embodied theatricality and subjectivity, where the body is a site of ideology, a comparative analysis that elaborates on the differences of the social, political, and structural intent of hunger strikes in places like Usak Prison and Guantanamo Bay as not synonymous with anorexia in the United States amongst adolescent boys and girls. If we take seriously Foucault's (1988), and later Butler's (1990) notion of the body as a site of subjectification, assigning different weights to sites of unfreedoms is counterproductive, even while it is important to specify the contexts of suffering. The Mapuche hunger striker is literally fighting, when rendered inexistent, for the right to socially exist in a state of absolute denial.

Though social death can adequately describe the experience of Mapuche dispossession, it is only in Hartman's reformulation of the concept that we can understand the ongoing forms of dispossession and its temporal effects in the present day. Mapuche hunger strikes certainly embody the historical politics of death, yet Mapuche identification and orientation is decidedly life and future oriented. Aymara scholar Sylvia Rivera Cusicanqui describes how “There is not a post- or a pre within a historical vision that is not teleological or linear, and that instead moves in cycles, spirals, and is marked by a path does not return to the same point. The indigenous world does not conceive of time as linear, but the past-future are contained within the present, as regression or progression, repetition, or sublimation of the past in constant play within each act that depends on our acts more than our words. The project of indigenous modernity can grow from the present, as a spiral movement that is continually feeding the past in relation to the future, in a principle of hope or anticipated consciousness (Bloch) that illuminates de-colonization and at the same time produces it.” (Cusicanqui N.P.). The hunger strikes, as events and movements of subjectivity, operate within a relation to the future that illuminates colonial subjugation to also decolonize its frame.

The act of Mapuche political self-starvation and burning in the face of faceless witnesses represents, in such instances, self-determination, and at the same time reorganizes the coordinates of western, nation-state based claims on territoriality, on nature, and the practice of immobility. In

other words, if we think of self-determination, or the de-colonial turn in terms of acts of material (self) extermination, what in the end are we saying about life, death and resistance in the age of neoliberal militarism? Are these new notions of what it means to live and die in the shadows the colonial/modern nation?

Notes

¹ On the conceptual discussion of difference between rewesternization and dewesternization see Walter D. Mignolo's *The Darker Side of Modernity* (2011).

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