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Deep Silences in the Long Night: Meditations on Zapatismo, Coloniality, and the Global Ecological Crisis

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by

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Poem in Two Beats and a Subversive Ending

First Beat
I
slid
down
the smile
of
a word,
drilled.
That is my origin…
But,
I
don't remember
if
I
was expelled
or
if
I took my things
and
slid
down
thinking…

Second Beat
It was
words
that
created
us.

They
shaped us,
and spread
their lines
to control
us.

A Subversive Ending
But
I
know
that
a few men
gather
inside
caverns
in SILENCE

Never again will the Zapatistas be
alone…

–Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos
(In León 2001)

To the first ones
Those who came later understood
Health to you

—Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos
(In León 1999, 281)

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Introduction

On December 31, 1993 in Chiapas Mexico nothing happened. That is to say, the powerful did not see nor hear that anything was happening in that remote corner of the world, valued for its resources, its trees for lumber, its earth for uranium and petroleum, its indigenous people for museums and history books. In reality however, and in the land of La Realidad, much had happened and continues to happen. In La Realidad, those stubborn peoples who refused to be disappeared by oblivion made their final preparations to appear, to don masks in order to be seen. For the powerful, Zapatismo appeared in a magnificent flash; apparently in these days of political analysts and bureaucratic specialists, we needed a reminder that some people still valued that quaint, romantic word known as dignity. For power is not only encoded in the words of those benevolent administrators of the World Bank, Chase Manhattan, or that nation state called Mexico, it is intertwined in those of the intellectuals, NGO employees, the wide eyed liberal arts student with a penchant for what is called social justice. The power to speak and be heard is evident within this very text.

That night before the morning when ¡Ya Basta! reverberated throughout a previously deaf world still haunts us, the powerful. What did that night contain, that "500 years" of struggle? Though our deaf ears *felt* this "wind from below" (Marcos in León 1994, 34), have we *heard* it? This ancient wind that blows from the "mountains and canyons hasn't yet descended to the valleys where money rules… lies govern" (34) and we live. We embraced Zapatismo; we congratulated the campesinos, saying "why, you're *so* postmodern! How lovely that you've figured it out!" After 20 years of rebellion and resistance in the mountains of the Mexican southeast, however, many of us, the powerful,

have grown frustrated. It turns out "a world in which many worlds fit" didn't mean that the Zapatistas agreed with our personal model for a new International Left. It turns out that leading by obeying means that the Zapatistas refuse to support our shiny new political candidate (she's really going to change things!) It turns out that the Zapatistas rebel and resist in order to be free, "that is, free to chose its road, its errors, its successes" (Marcos in León 1995, 249).

In these 20 years, the Zapatistas have strengthened their autonomy. We could say that they have made improvements in women's empowerment, agro-ecology, indigenous education, and health initiatives but this perhaps misses the deeper realization that these struggles are irreducible from one another. For the Zapatistas, autonomy fosters dignity, illuminating a revolutionary path toward liberty, democracy, and justice. Walking in dignity sounds nice. The powerful, however, suspect that despite the postmodern jargon, the Zapatistas are longing for a world long past. Their struggle is just, even admirable, but not applicable, not to the world of the powerful. In 1994, Subcomandante Marcos said that the "wind from below, that of rebellion and dignity, is not just an answer to the wind from above. It is not just an angry response. Rather, it carries with it not just a call for the destruction of an unjust and arbitrary system but a new proposal: the hope of converting rebellion and dignity into freedom and dignity" (in León 1994, 34).

One no, many yeses.

A world in which many worlds fit.

In May of 2015, during the Zapatista *encuentro* on the subject *Critical Thinking against the Capitalist Hydra,* another Subcomandante by the name of Galeano (bearing an uncanny resemblance to that now non-existent Marcos) declared that Zapatistas "don't protest in order to defy the tyrant but to salute those who confront him in other geographies and calendars. To defy him, we construct. To defy him, we create. To defy him, we imagine. To defy him, we grow and multiply. To defy him, we live. To defy him, we die" (Galeano 2015c). By living in resistance, the Zapatistas create freedom through self-determination. In that same week, Subcomandante Moisés, the new spokesperson of the EZLN, reaffirmed that "the first thing is to organize yourselves, because if there is not organization there isn't anything (Moisés 2015b). In an earlier speech, Moisés laid out some of the many challenges of organization before saying "you will see that what we are telling you is true, when you try to do it, and that is why we are telling you this, because this is how it is, there isn't any other way. Even though you might want to try and find one, there just isn't any other way" (Moisés, 2015b).

I argue that the Zapatistas have much to teach us. Where intellectual efforts often reverberate around small circles of political, economic, or educational privilege, the Zapatistas' revolutionary reimagining from-below has, against tremendous forces, achieved great successes. The date December 31, 1993 that this essay begins with, attempts to approach that moment before the spectacle. The next day, we began to listen, although the work from below had been underway long before. This essay attempts to listen to the spaces in between the spectacles, the silence of struggle, in order to create new worlds alongside of the Zapatistas. I claim no great knowledge of the nuances of the movement nor do I attempt to speak for it. Zapatismo has taught me lessons, with which I

hope to construct new, ethical knowledge, rather than merely integrating it within a liberal paradigm (McFarlane 2006).

The Zapatistas have challenged and redefined sociological fields of inquiry and offer a chance to reevaluate profoundly ways of thinking around the most important issues of our times (Dussel 2013b; Mignolo 2002b; Grosfoguel 2008). In the contemporary period, the global ecological crisis is perhaps the most grave and total threat that we could imagine; I argue that the Zapatistas offer new ways of theorizing about the crisis that forces of industry and capital have wrought in the age of the Anthropocene. To clarify, I don't argue that from the Zapatistas we can glean *policy* insights. Producing new, ethical knowledge about the crisis requires a dramatic philosophical reevaluation of modernity. The system leading the planet over the brink of irreversible catastrophe has deeply problematic foundations, which must be addressed in order to understand the contemporary moment.

We are on the verge/in the midst of times of great transition. The "time of the posts" phenomenon is an indication of the breakdown of modern narratives to explain our current historical moment (Kuecker 2004). Along with this breakdown of narratives comes the breakdown of the system itself (Homer-Dixon 2015; Korowicz 2011; Kuecker 2007). We inhabit a world system that has been "globalized" for a long time (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2001); the contemporary moment entails a complete integration of the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres into an increasingly homogenized and interdependent global world-system mediated by a transnational financial system (Homer-Dixon 2015; Korowicz 2011). This unfettered expansion of transnational capital (Hardt and Negri 2001; Robinson 2008) is reaching a breaking point in which

intersectional crises are emerging in new force. Global power attempts to reproduce itself by shifting to new strategies of governance as evidenced in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, COP 21, and the Global Redesign Initiative. The modern system recognizes the profound nature of the global ecological crisis and attempts to reconstitute itself without addressing the underlying contradictions

Discussions of ecological crisis within the modern-liberal sphere often frame the issues in an abstract universalist discourse. In other words, would-be administrators of climate solutions posit that "humanity" must come to reckon for the "unsustainable" ways in which it has created its economy, energy networks, etc. These analyses ignore the ways in which these structures function for the benefit of a small transnational minority and at the expense of the global multitude of dispossessed peoples. They also ignore the ways in which world-historical structures of oppression engender contemporary global exploitation. There are two main reasons why these approaches are unable to generate counterhegemonic projects. Firstly, they tend to produce ethical arguments that merely posit that "we" or "global leaders" *should* do things differently, without any consideration of the structural constraints that produce a political situation that, again and again produces the same results. The cost of individual responsibility to become non-complicit in environmental destruction is both unrealistic, given the interwoven fabric of the global world-system, and, inconsequential, given that this interconnected global system cannot sustain a dramatic departure from any of its interdependent social, cultural, political, and economic systems (Korowicz 2010). Second, without addressing the ways that modernist thinking produces economic and ecological exploitation as mutually dependent, those attempting to address either are far

more likely to be coopted or sabotaged. For groups who engage issues through the lens of "Environmental Justice" these issues may be less pronounced, in this way activists have access to specific and local details that theoreticians or policy makers may lack. Nevertheless, by tracing philosophical and analytical connections to the roots of the modern project's genocidal/ethnocidal/suicidal trajectory, this analysis aims to give more theoretical weight to voices from below that global power has thoroughly excluded from the current debates.

Seeing the connections between economic-ecological exploitation depends on tracing the current environmental crisis is a result of modernity's much large ideological apparatus. Modernity's emergence and its connection to colonialism, capitalism, and state formation marked the ascendance of a modern epistemology, or way of seeing/being in the modern world-system (Mignolo 2001; Quijano 2000). This Eurocentric epistemic/ontological frame is categorized by a Cartesian mind-body ontological separation (Quijano 2000; Dussel 2013a; Tamdgidi 2013). Situating the mind as a reason/subject and the "body" closer to "nature," the Cartesian split produced a categorization of non-modern minds (indigenous peoples) as also closer to nature (Quijano 2000, 555). The ensuing project of modernity consisted of and continues to consist of a path to enlightened human perfection through the domination of both nature and (non-European or non-Europeanized) peoples.

The Zapatistas represent a profoundly different notion of time than the modern narrative of progression, modernization, and enlightenment. I argue that Zapatista temporalities are rooted in the cultural patrimony of subaltern identity, which are realized and nurtured in ever-new ways through the process of autonomy. This approach argues

that there is a pluriverse of different ways of knowing and being in the world that would be realized through autonomous organization around core principles of community resilience and democracy (Mignolo 2013; Escobar 2009, 2010). The modern narrative and world system are reaching their breaking point in which an increasingly interdependent and homogenous complex system reproduces capitalist logics to the decimation of different cultures, life forms, and ecosystems (Homer-Dixon 2015). The global world system is however, but another system, and is subject to the same laws of emergence, dissolution, and thermodynamics as any other (Kuecker 2007; Homer-Dixon 2015; Bryant 2015). Autonomy is the emergence of robust social ecologies, which are not homogenized by modernity's linear temporality, but able to respond to micrological stresses and adapt. Above all, these different universes of human meaning are constructed with dignity and democracy as guiding principles. Human communities collectively construct these narratives, rather than remaining captured to the logics of capital and the modern epistemology.

The Zapatistas' revolution is not subordinated to an "environmental" analysis, but rather, their revolution articulates that in the 21st century, revolution is irreducible, and must confront the intersections of the social, cultural, political, and economic spheres. As the internal contradictions of a global capitalist ecology bring the global world system to a moment of truly profound crisis, revolution may become the process assembling robust social ecologies predicated on dignity, and liberatory narratives. Subcomandante Galeano declared in the Zapatista's most recent *encuentro* that the General command of the EZLN had recently agreed that a "profound crisis" or "storm" was approaching "at the local level, and at the national and international levels as well" (2015c). The Zapatistas seem to

be inviting us therefore, to directly engage in these issues with them. The existential crisis that humanity faces demands a monumental response, a constellation of new revolutionary moments that surpass the failures of those past.

As the contemporary era becomes increasingly defined by intersectional, global crises, organizing in dignity sounds antiquated, unable to impact the modern reality. Intersectional crises of ecology such as anthropogenic climate change, food, energy, conflict and migrant crises illustrate ways in which the contemporary continues to experience coloniality through domination-over-human and domination-over-nature.

An (un)ethical Intervention

The critique offered here emerges from a sensibility of the author. It emerges from critical theory, poststructuralism, Marxism, and other -isms that seek to infuse ethics into the fields of the real, of pragmatic action. All of these urges toward liberation emerge from within a Eurocentric subjectivity, however. The thinking of the modern subject is infused with a subject privilege: the ability to name and know, rather than to struggle (Spivak 1988).[1] I've attempted to grapple with this paradoxical relation between

[1] "Modern subject" is employed herein, to denote those who generally fall into the category of having an "western," "Eurocentric" or "modern" epistemic orientation. While these contentious categories and their definitions are certainly in question, I posit that they are prevalent amongst large contingents of contemporary politics, namely, "liberal" paradigms (as they emerge out of Eurocentric Enlightenment legacies) and "progressive" politics (whose very name denotes a teleological narrative in which an authorized subject determines the nature of progress's subjective construction). The modern subject, authorized to represent the subaltern object, is itself a category to be contested, deconstructed, and overcome. Eliminating the term however, would imply that the modern's representative subversion is somehow liberatory. This act would be cyclical, unethical, and only reproduce the power and privilege of the speaking subject. The term, therefore, remains as a warning that the words employed here are ambivalent until they find material expression in struggle. It also denotes a challenge, that, one day through

the privileges of authorship (real and figurative) by maintaining awareness that the modern epistemology critiqued herein is intricately woven into my own worldview. Unable to always see or escape it, it serves as a reminder that, in a world shaped and molded through the "structural heterogeneity" (Quijano 2000) of coloniality of power, the subject (author) is blind.[2] Blind to see how coloniality is experienced, blind to see its own act of seeing is coloniality. Naming the modern epistemology, which cannot be entirely known or overcome, is not to produce a knowable object but to observe, identify, and deconstruct the tendencies of a worldview. The modern subject, rather than seeing more clearly, attempts to see that she doesn't see, slowly dismantles the subject category, and with it, the blindness.

The subaltern, on the other hand, understands coloniality profoundly, and does not need multisyllabic terminology in order to do so. The imposition of modern, objective, rational, and scientific interventions into the "savage" and "underdeveloped" ways of the subaltern has always appeared alongside of discursive tropes that provide a stark sense of continuity. This is not to say that the subaltern has retained an idealized past or a mystical otherness. The subaltern has always resisted and appropriated modernity that was only ever for the colonizer and those who conform to his conquest (for the colonizer is

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struggle, a transformation of structural and subjective power will yield a world in which the subject is truly dismantled.

[2]It occurs to me that there is a significant amount of language throughout this analysis that could well be construed as ableist. One reason that I employ concepts such as "listening" and "seeing" is because the Zapatistas use these terms in much of their communiqués and speeches. In dealing with complex and abstract ideas, these metaphors can be helpful, but also, perhaps, at a cost. In this way, I am captive to language and my own biases. I would add however, that they are but metaphors. If one doesn't "see" in the literal sense, they surely enjoy other dynamic ways of knowing and being, unique to them. This approach to the problem understands diversity and otherness as beautiful and quintessentially human, just as the Zapatistas do.

decidedly a 'he'). The subaltern continues in this way, always recreating histories and identities to retain that elusive sense of dignity. Dignity could be radical self-determination, right to the commons and the social nature of human communities, or "democracy, liberty, justice" (Marcos in León 1999, 282). Pragmatic political realists have no vocabulary for dignity. Should we then produce a politics of dignity?

The Zapatistas tell us that "dignity can't be studied. You live it or it dies" (Marcos in León 1995, 268). Employing the term here serves a type of resuscitation process, in which we modern subjects remember this thing called dignity. Dignity is the audacity of having dignity without justification, education, modernization, or development. Dignity comes from having autonomy, having the right to decide (Kuecker 2004), to struggle for liberation. It is a belief in a radical and direct democracy. Our universities, our theories, and our radical plans for liberation all fail human dignity when they serve as prescriptions, administrations, and assessments. Dignity comes from below, where it is constructed through struggle.

The intractable chasm that separates the modern subject from deep knowledges of the subaltern is traversed through "critical border thinking" (McFarlane 2006). Hoping to produce an ethical knowledge that doesn't merely consume and produce subaltern knowledge, it represents a deconstruction of the privileges of the modern subjects' knowledge. The author/subject doesn't seek to confirm her preexisting beliefs with subaltern knowledge through a gross, circular appropriation, but instead, to engage in a dialectical transformation.

Nevertheless, as an author re-presenting subalterns, I cannot avoid the trap of producing an "object" of study (Spivak 1988). While I seek to avoid subsuming Zapatista

cosmologies and discourses into an ossified theoretical postulate constituted by and for intellectuals, this ultimately seems impossible. While unable to avoid the inevitable subject privileging of authorship, I hope to use primary source documents from the Zapatistas themselves in order to demonstrate that the subaltern peoples in rebellion and resistance in Chiapas are the most important theoreticians. My interpretations, nor the Zapatistas themselves for that matter, can explain the nature or scope of the "worlds" that this world could contain. In all I write, however, I attempt to remain receptive to dignity of the "other others" (Marcos, in León 1999, 282), other subjects, and allow them space to present themselves as they see fit.

Terms and Definitions

The brief review of terms below should provide a basic orientation for my analysis. Many of the concepts are best understood together as they form part connected scholarly projects. Some, but not all, of the scholars that feature heavily in this collection are Walter Mignolo (2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2009, 2013), Enrique Dussel (2000, 2002, 2008, 2013), Anibal Quijano (2000), Arturo Escobar (1995, 2000, 2004, 2009, 2010), and Ramon Grosfoguel (2007).

Ethics of Liberation

"Ethics of liberation" emanates from the work Enrique Dussel (2013) and consists of a thinking "from the thinking of the excluded" (Mignolo 2002b, 268).[3] Dussel drew directly from "the ethical turn taken by the Zapatista uprising" in formulating this philosophy (in Mignolo 2002b, 267). This type of ethics is distinct from an "ethics of

[3] The discrepancy in dates reflects the later English translation of Dussel's text.

discourse," which "allows only the tolerance of diversity" within a modern and colonial framework. To borrow Marcos's words, "ethics of liberation" could be imagined as a place "where the other knows and respects the other others" (In León 1999, 282)[4] rather than an "ethics of discourse," which patronizes and subordinates other knowledges and other ways of being. The lofty ideal of "ethics of liberation" is problematic and ultimately impossible, however, as the subject privilege embedded in the modern epistemology can never be entirely left behind (Kuecker 2009), especially as it re-presents the subaltern (Spivak 1988). "Ethics of liberation," as an ideal, prompts a striving praxis, an ongoing impetus for internal transformation, in which theory and practice interact.

Border Thinking and Double Translation

Border thinking is the process through which the modern epistemology attempts to deconstruct and delink from its own modern and colonial privilege, in order to engage other epistemologies. Mignolo argues that thinking "at the borders" of different epistemologies is a method for "overcoming frameworks of thought structured by the coloniality of power in the making of the modern/colonial world" (2002b, 268). Essential to border thinking is the act of double translation, which Subcomandante Marcos fills in the Zapatista "theoretical revolution" (249).

Marcos is significant for modern subjects' understanding of Zapatismo, not because he is a sex symbol, empty signifier, *mestizo*, or intellectual. Marcos is significant because he inhabits the borders between the modern epistemology and subaltern cosmologies. While his modern epistemology remains intact to some degree, his time in

[4]This anthology, published in 2001, provides a collection of Subcomandante Marcos's writings. I cite them as such for ease of reference. Additionally, I cite the date they were originally released by Marcos in order to provide relevant context.

Chiapas had taught him to listen to other ways of being. Marcos had come to Chiapas as a guerilla to organize a revolutionary *foco*, in a Marxist-Leninist tradition, but "all of a sudden the revolution transformed itself into something essentially moral, ethical…*Dignity* becomes a very strong word. But it is not our contribution, a contribution of the urban component, but a contribution from and by indigenous communities" (Marcos in Mignolo 2002b, 246). Marxism as an abstract universal ideal, determined by an authorized subject, didn't resonate with indigenous communities, who had their own ways of organizing and struggling. Marcos says, "the end result was that we were not talking to an indigenous movement waiting for a savior but with an indigenous movement with a long tradition of struggle, with a significant experience, and very intelligent, a movement that was using us as its armed man" (In Mignolo 2002b, 248)

By learning to listen, rather than continuing to speak, Marcos began the process of learning how to struggle from-below. Marcos invites us, in his communiqués between worlds, to follow this example. The process of struggling from-below consists of decentering and delinking from the modern epistemology, to work with "other others" (Marcos in León 1999, 282). Years of listening and struggling led to Marcos being able to claim—with the consent of the EZLN General Command—that "through my voice speaks the voice of the Zapatista National Liberation Army" (Marcos in León 1996, 82).

In May 2014, Subcomandante Marcos "ceased to exist" (Galeano 2014). To elaborate, a Zapatista schoolteacher named Galeano had been killed and as a response, the Zapatistas decided, "we think it is necessary for one of us to die so that Galeano lives" (Galeano 2014). So, in one sense, Rafael Guillén, whose *nom de guerre* had been

Marcos, became Galeano. In another sense, however, Marcos never existed: "Those who loved and hated SupMarcos now know that they have loved and hated a hologram. Their love and hate have been useless, sterile, hollow, empty" (Galeano 2014).

Marcos's significance in my analysis may be the most fundamental problem of all the problems encountered and navigated below. The great diversity found in Zapatismo should not be subsumed into the writings of only one man. The Zapatistas are perfectly capable of self-representing how each individual "leads by obeying" *(Autonomous Government I; Autonomous Government II; Autonomous Resistance; Participation of Women in Autonomous Government*). Nevertheless, Marcos and his writings seem important as a "connecter" (Mignolo 2002b, 263) from the world of the modern subject to the subaltern realities in Chiapas. In this spirit, I hope to see how, as men and women "with heart and head, we must be bridges" (Marcos in León 1999, 369). By exploring new ways of knowing and being in the world, using Marcos as a bridge, I hope to establish methodologies for walking with the "other others" (Marcos in León 1999, 282).

Coloniality

Mignolo defines coloniality, a concept developed by Quijano, in the following manner: "coloniality is intrinsic to modernity, and consequently, coloniality at large goes beyond decolonization and nation building: coloniality is the machine that reproduces subalternity today in the form of global coloniality in the network society" (2001, 426). Coloniality is an apparatus of sorts that reproduces colonial difference. It is a global condition that reinforces the subject-object relationship established between modern and subaltern knowledges. As it is embedded in both the global world system and the hegemonic modern epistemology, coloniality is a relation of dominance coded into the

fabric of how modern subjects exist in and make sense of the world. This definition will be explained more fully in the subsection *Modern Temporality*.

Abstract Universalism

This brand of universalism operates according to a mono-logic, as defined by the Eurocentric modern epistemology. It is "the standard version of multiculturalism" in which the authorized subject engages in "benevolent recognition and inclusion…leav[ing] those to be included with little say in how they are recognized or included" (Mignolo 2009, 267).

Pluriverse

As opposed to abstract universalism, pluriversality is a universal "world entangled through and by the colonial matrix of power" (Mignolo 2013). Mignolo argues that the Zapatista's claim "diversity as a universal project: a world composed of multiple worlds, the right to be different because we are all equals, to obey and rule at the same time" (2002b, 263). These multiple worlds are rooted in "local histories" struggling for decolonial freedom (Mignolo 2013).

Social Ecologies

This term was inspired by Murray Bookchin's "social ecology," which he summarizes "in a fairly crisp formulation: the very notion of the domination of nature by man stems from the very real domination of human by human" (1982, 1). While neither his explicit causal claim nor his method of investigation impact this text, Bookchin's framework for "a truly free society based on ecological principles," a "nonauthoritarian Commune composed of communes," is compelling (1982, 2). His focus especially on how *individualized* concern for "urban decentralization… self-sufficiency… [and] self-

empowerment" often subverts the "radical focus" of "direct democracy" and "communal forms of social life" (1982, 2).

This general orientation provides an important problematic for modern liberal responses to the global ecological crisis. Often the terms "resilience," "transition" and "sustainable" carry dramatically different connotations, depending on who is speaking (Kuecker 2014b). Groups such as the Transition Network comprehend that "moving to a post hydrocarbon world of re-localized economies means breaking from the logic of modernity" (Kuecker 2014b, 8). Such a profound rupture with modern ways of knowing and being in the world, however, destabilizes more than the theoretical necessity of hydrocarbons. To elaborate, the Transition Network generates formalized and legitimized knowledge "that enhances it status" (9), whereas other knowledges, especially those marked by colonial difference, lack legitimacy in transition debates within the modern sphere. This reproduction of colonial difference limits the modern subject's ability to understand that dramatically different ways of knowing and being in the world exist. Our ignorance is our detriment, because in the coming era of crises, resilient communities will depend on local and contextual knowledges to navigate new problems (Kuecker and Hall 2011).

Social ecology, therefore, as an analytic frame, seems less useful than social ecologies as specific localities of struggle. A theoretical social ecology obscures the position from which this theory emerges and could facilitate universal interpretations from authorized subjects. Social ecologies should be based on self-determination, so that different communal forms determine how being with dignity emerges in and from a specific context. Social ecologies are for becoming, but they are situated in specific

localities and guided by specific temporal orientations. Social ecologies are connected to assemblage thinking in this analysis, and this relationship is outlined below.

Assemblage

McFarlane's enunciation of Deleuzian assemblage thinking (2011) presents one methodology for theorizing social-ecological ontologies. A concept of assemblage can take many different forms, including "an idea, an analytic, a descriptive lens, or an orientation… to connote indeterminacy, emergence, becoming, processuality, turbulence and the sociomateriality of phenomena" (McFarlane 2011, 206). An assemblage stands in contradistinction to the statist and capitalist territorialization of all aspects of sociomaterial life, which endeavor to become abstract universal signifying systems. In assemblage thinking subjectivities and collectivities aren't subsumed into totalizing, ahistorical forces such as state and market, rather, "it is the *interactions* between human and nonhuman components that form the assemblage—interaction as mutually constitutive symbiosis rather than just parts that are related—and these interactions cannot be reduced to individual properties alone" (McFarlane 2011, 208). There is dramatic resonance between this analytic orientation and Zapatista revolutionary praxis (Nail, 2012). Nail proposes that Deleuze, Guattari, and Zapatismo be read "side by side as parallel origins of the same strategies that have now become central to revolutionary and radical Left movements in the twenty-first century" (6). The converging influences in Zapatismo of Latin American revolutionary legacies, liberation theology, autonomous peasant organizing, and postmodern/academic knowledges demonstrate movement's recalcitrance to categorization. Furthermore, Zapatismo as assemblage offers a compelling explanation for understanding not only ideology but also their heterogeneous,

networked political organization (*Autonomous Government I*; Rus 2003; Stahler-Sholk 2008).

Assemblage thinking, as an analytic for understanding Zapatismo, however, only works to a certain extent. While it is tempting for Global North intellectuals to apply a theory because it clarifies their particular position, there is no guarantee that such an approach does justice to the object of study.[5] Ideas travel through many lenses of subjectivity in their representations of real human beings in struggle. For instance, approaches originating from Gramsci's work have gained traction in current studies of Latin America (Vergara-Camus 2014; Morton 2007, 2010), however, Gramsci's work has carried dramatically different connotations throughout its application in Latin America (Burgos 2014). It is, therefore, the author's responsibility to build a strong edifice defending the application, such as Morton has done in the case of Gramsci (2007).

Zapatismo is not an example that valorizes assemblage thinking; neither should assemblage serve to legitimize Zapatismo (Nail 2012, 6). Nail, expanding on Spivak, argues that, "this approach not only presupposes a privileged foundationalism of theory over practice, or practice over theory, but also risks perpetuating a long legacy of Eurocentrism and theoretical imperialism (6). Further, Spivak explicitly critiques the "political ambivalence" and "virtual hierarchy" that Nail also identifies as criticisms of Deleuzian thought (13-14). In her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak critiques

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[5] Global North subject" is used somewhat interchangeably with the term modern subject, although the former generally denotes a specific positionality as it relates to policy whereas the latter denotes a more general epistemic orientation. As problematic the as seemingly homogenous terms "North" and "South" may be, there is nevertheless some validity in acknowledging the caste-like, hierarchical nature of the global system as it relates to governance, economic absolutism and colonial difference. These categories should not be theorized as binary divisions between nation-states or geographic areas but as nebulous signifiers that may coexist within territories, countries, cities, etc.

Deleuze's "remarkable pronouncement: 'A theory is like a box of tools. Nothing to do with the signifier'" (1988, 70). This "slippage" illustrates the propensity of the intellectual to "speak for" whereas those who struggle must "*struggle* mute" (70). As I utilize assemblage, I remain aware of the subject-privilege of authorship, while simultaneously recognizing the impossibility of ever entirely escaping this category (Kuecker 2009).

Additionally, assemblage reaches this analysis through a critical approach adopted from McFarlane (2006, 2011). McFarlane calls for learning between contexts, specifically modeled on Spivak's concept of "planetarity" (2003) or a "more postcolonial social science" in which there is a pluralist production of knowledge (2006, 1417). McFarlane proposes a border thinking that is "ethical," because it avoids integrating subaltern knowledges into a liberal episteme, and "indirect" because it mediates knowledge transfers between "dissimilar" localities (2006). This first article deals with the ethical implications of critical border thinking in order to challenge hegemonic developmentalist paradigms in urbanism. In his later article, however, McFarlane uses assemblage as an addition to the tradition of critical urbanism. Therefore, I read this second article as moving beyond a merely critical perspective to a more praxis-oriented approach in order to account for the structural political-economic constraints that block counterhegemonic approaches to development. Additionally, McFarlane has already established the subaltern as a privileged subject in his analysis, and demonstrated a certain awareness of the limitations of theory.

In addition to McFarlane's convincing theoretical edifice, his particular interpretation of Assemblage imbues the sociomateriality of phenomena with a profound

sense of agency, which finds similar articulations in expressions of Zapatismo's ecological and cosmological ontologies. For instance, McFarlane quotes McGuirk and Dowling (2009), who explain, "the analytic of the assemblage offers one possible route for conceiving neoliberalism not as a universal and coherent project, or even as a generalized hegemonic process characterized by local contingencies, but as a loose collection of urban logics and processes that may or may not structure urban change in different places" (209). This nonlinear reading of historical process provides theoretical space for communities in struggle to proactively occupy commons, in their own specific and contingent locality. While the Zapatistas have become subjects of history, able to dismantle developmentalist, and mestizaje discourses in order to represent themselves (Saldaña-Portillo 2003, 152, 255), that is only one side of the struggle. Assemblage provides a theoretical lens to understand the ecological implications that "there is only one world" (Badiou, 2008). Badiou continues, "That is where we reverse the dominant idea of the world united by objects and signs, to make a unity in terms of living, acting beings here and now (2008). To clarify, the world of objects and signs continues to carry profound relevance in this analysis. All the same, "part of this vital materialism is to examine the shared experiences of people and materials, 'to take a step towards a more ecological sensibility'" (Bennett in McFarlane 2011, 215).

The Zapatista's calls for international solidarity, as well as slogans that resonate with concepts of a pluriverse, have created explicit and implicit contradictions in the reactions of their more postmodern admirers and detractors. I approach the Zapatista's "world in which many worlds fit" in terms of the pluriverse (Escobar, 2009, 2010; Mignolo, 2009). This universal, decolonial liberation project is unified by modernity's

temporal dislocation of local histories; each locality, however, constitutes its own episteme and ontology. Galeano prompts people to resist from different "calendars and geographies" (2015b; 2015c) as a theoretical statement analogous to universal decolonial humanism, constituted by incalculable, distinct human universes. Each *Compañeroa* must resist the hydra in their own reality.[6]

Finally, there is the question of whether urban applications of assemblage thinking are appropriate in the context of subaltern, peasant, Zapatista communities. McFarlane cites Brenner's suggestion (2009) that "urbanism… can no longer be viewed as distinct, but has become a generalised, planetary condition in and through which capital, politics, everyday social relations and environmental politics are simultaneously organised and fought out" which leads him to ask "whether it is possible to have a critical theory which *isn't* urban" (Quote by McFarlane 2011, 206). In addition to this clever inversion, World Systems Theorists have established the intricate connections between core and peripheral zones of capitalist production, connecting urban expansion and global markets with raw material extraction, proletarianization, and capitalist territorialization (Wallerstein 1974; Chase-Dunn 1992). Scholars have also analyzed indigenous peoples globalization-resistance movements, and Zapatismo specifically, within the World Systems framework (Hall and Fenelon 2009; Kuecker and Hall 2011). Most compelling, however, Wilson has argued that current development efforts in Chiapas represent an "apolitical" "urbanization of the countryside" (2013). Counterinsurgency projects explicitly attempt to inject capitalist social relations into autonomous and semi-autonomous collectivities. Furthermore, accounts of community disintegration and

[6] This amalgam of the Spanish masculine and feminine is a non-gender specific pronoun utilized by the Zapatistas.

injection of capitalist social relations in Chiapas (Mora 2008; Swords 2008) share similarities Harvey's urban concept of "accumulation through dispossession" (2008).

Assemblage thinking as it related to urbanism begins to approach more robust ways of seeing and being ecologically. Whereas Eurocentric intellectual legacies have obfuscated Global North subject's ability to think in these terms, the historical moment demands a dramatic reimagining. Assemblage, in the context of this thesis, is not the construction of a social-ecological ontology for Global North subjects. Assemblage functions instead as itself a type of critical border thinking in which the theoretical postulates built upon herein self-immolate, leaving only the impetus for radical self-transformation, liberty, justice, and democracy. By traversing the spaces between different types of knowledge, we endeavor toward new ways of being, while remaining aware of our epistemic limitations.

Discipline and Compartmentalize[7]

Galeano, while speaking about the coming storm, critiques compartmentalized realms of knowledge and social reproduction when he asks "Culture? Art? Science? These will be clandestine activities if they remain independent" (2015c). In the modern epistemology, there remains a deeply ingrained tendency to classify and separate constituent parts of larger, interconnected systems. This dualism keeps us from thinking ecologically. Additionally, Grosfoguel argues that despite formal acknowledgement of such problems in compartmentalized knowledge generation, scholars often have difficulty applying these critiques in order to produce more cognizant scholarship (2008).

[7] This section's title is a play-on-discourse reference to Foucault (1995).

At great risk of reductionism, two general approaches to Zapatista scholarship influence my reading. First, are the more philosophical, post- trans- modern, semiotic, and epistemic approaches (Mignolo 2002b; Saldaña-Portillo 2003; Nail 2012) and second, are the approaches situated in materialist legacy, concerned with peasant issues, political economy, and historicism (Vergara-Camus 2014; Morton 2007, 2010). The former tends to focus on Zapatismo's epistemic resistance, whereas the later highlights historical continuities of political/economic concerns such as national liberation or peasant issues. None of the cited authors stand excused of excluding other forms of knowledge dissimilar to their own projects; it is difficult to write about Zapatismo without some acknowledgement of how the fluidity between traditional academic disciplines.

Nevertheless, I suspect that the alternative epistemologies/ontologies comprised in Zapatismo indicate a more dramatic departure from conventional scholarly paradigms. Along with Mignolo, I believe that "changing the terms of the conversation implies going beyond disciplinary or interdisciplinary controversies and the conflict of interpretations. As far as controversies and interpretations remain within the same rules of the game (terms of the conversation), the control of knowledge is not called into question" (2009, 4). The control of knowledge is paramount for liberation, but addressing the "terms of the conversation" within an incredibly esoteric and inaccessible academic discourse remains problematic. So, in my exploration of collapsing times and collapsing systems, I also seek to collapse the self-knowledge and authorized knowledges that make these former collapses knowable.

This analysis, then, becomes something profoundly aesthetic. In becoming aesthetic, it is also deeply irreverent. It is scholarship that refuses to be scholarship, not because its author is changing the terms of the conversation, *but because the Zapatistas already have.* Zapatismo surprised, disoriented, and educated me. As an aesthetic methodology, this text attempts to surprise, disorient, and educate its readers as well. Together, we can walk in and out of the text, collapse it, and assemble new worlds from what remains.

Beat One: Collapsing Times

On July 27, 1996 in Oventic, Chiapas, at the Zapatistas's "International Meeting for Humanity and against Neoliberalism," Comandante David told a crowd of 5000 visitors, "'*Hasta que quarden silencio, no podemos empesar'* [We cannot begin until you keep silent]" (Saldaña-Portillo 2003, 191). The excited crowd and the Comandante processed different ideas of what silence entailed, and the Zapatistas patiently waited until "eventually, after about fifteen minutes, when we realized we had no choice, that he was serious, that there might be a point to this, it happened. We were silent" (Saldaña-Portillo 191). As María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo sat in reflective silence, she realized all of a sudden that "the Zapatistas had been on the move and quieter still. I had not heard hundreds of Zapatistas filling up the seats all around us" (192). She continues: "the performative act of silence imposed on our group that evening functioned as a political metaphor: if it was this difficult for me, for us as a groups of some five thousand people to keep silent for ten minutes, what had it been like for the members and supporters of the Zapatistas to keep silent for ten yeas—on minute for every year?" (192). It was far more than the beginnings of a political act, however, "For it was in human silence that we were able to recognize the musicality of noise, the seemingly infinite possibility of differentiated sound, extending community beyond the territory marked as human" (192).

"We are the product of 500 Years of Struggle;" this was the Zapatistas's message to the people of Mexico and to the world on January 2, 1994 in the First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle (Marcos in León 1994, 13). This message, this telling of a long silence in "this night that embraces our lands" (Marcos in León 1999, 368) still

reverberates. What did the Zapatistas's 500 years of struggle and 22 years of "War Against Oblivion" contain? The Zapatistas are still speaking:

> For more than 500 years we have endured the war that the powerful from different nations, languages, colors, and beliefs have made against us in order to annihilate us.
>
> They wanted to kill us, be it through killing our bodies or killing our ideas.
>
> But we resist.
>
> As original peoples, as guardians of mother earth, we resist.
>
> Not only here and not only our color, which is the color of the earth.
>
> In all of the corners of the earth that suffered in the past and still suffer now, there were and there are dignified and rebellious people who resisted, who resist against the death imposed from above. (Moisés and Galeano 2016)
>
> Let us be silent and try to listen.

***

While addressing an interdisciplinary convention of both Latin American and South Asian subaltern studies academics, Ranajit Guha remarked that temporality, not territoriality, marked the connection of the two projects (Mignolo 2001, 242). Temporality is the "collapsing of local and global times—the time of the Naxalbari uprising in India and that of the Cultural Revolution in China, the time of the Nicaraguan

elections and that of the fall of the Berlin Wall—is of course one of the most salient features of capital's 'self realization process' in the course of which it strives to annihilate space with time, as Marx has argued" (Cited in Mignolo 2001, 424). This observation of collapsing temporality ignites a fresh perspective for the problematic of the postcolonial condition, or the trap of coloniality as it reproduces subalternity.

Poststructuralism and postmodernism had identified objects of critique, namely Eurocentric metanarratives, and the fragmentation of those narratives created a theoretical space for the subaltern to emerge as a subject of history. Modernity's teleological and linear narratives, whether hegemonic or critical, crumbled as reasonable analyses of historical phenomena. Global North intellectuals' postmodern deconstruction of modernity's universal and linear progression, however, emerged within an epistemology marked by coloniality; critiques of Eurocentrism were themselves, Eurocentric (Mignolo 2001, 435). Therefore, Mignolo argues, "poststructuralism and postmodernity functioned as orange cones blocking the road that connected Southeast Asia with South America. Furthermore, and because of the hegemonic power of modern epistemology, Indian and Peruvian intellectuals had their backs to the pacific and were looking toward France, England, and Germany" (435). Modernity's totalizing and homogenizing impetus had constructed a global world system marked by an *internalized* epistemic coloniality, which proved impossible for Global North intellectuals to exercise entirely from their colonized thinking. Homogenous modern metanarratives, imposed on diverse global localities, prevented some critical intellectuals from identifying the *temporal* connection between dissimilar, relative, and non-modern *localities* resisting similar ideological forces.

In the contemporary moment, collapsing temporality provides counterpoint to collapsing systems, or modernity's attempt at reproduction in the Anthropocene. Soja argues that modernity reconstitutes its narratives through crisis:

> (Modernism) encompasses a heterogeneous array of subjective visions and strategic action programmes… which are unleashed by the disintegration of an inherited, established order and the awareness of the projected possibilities and perils of a restricted contemporary moment or conjecture. Modernism is... a "reaction formation," a conjectural social movement mobilized to face the challenging question of what now is to be done given that the context of the contemporary has significantly changed. (1989, 29)

Modernity's reconstitution occurs at transitional moments, in this way, its contradictions are subsumed deeper as new subjectivities emerge in a continual process of becoming. Despite the "heterogeneous" nature of these conscious articulations, the modern epistemology remains rooted in colonial difference and therefore carries the unconscious and "homogenous" weight of a Eurocentric, temporal subjectivity. Soja, noting the predominance of temporality in academic discourse, argues for an intensified analysis of spatiality, an "appropriate interpretive balance between space, time, and social being" (1989, 23).

Given capital's annihilation of space with time, a reassertion of space maps landscapes for resisting metanarrative in specific spatial localities. Ultimately, space invokes ecology or material collections of complex interconnected systems. Our social constructions of such spatiality give meaning to how we exist in the space-time-being matrix. Modernist conceptualizations of space-time-being, however, run into a problem: modernity's linear temporality, both in epistemology and its material expressions, subordinates space and being, to time. This subordination elucidates connections between coloniality of power and global ecological crisis. The modern epistemology

conceptualizes social and spatial formation as objects to be rationally administered, *with time*. Laid bare, modernity's linear temporality, at its most fundamental, is narrative, myth. The modern epistemology's pretension to scientific and rational administration, and its infallible and inevitable faith in its own progression are what distinguish it from other epistemologies.[8]

The continual process of becoming modern, and the teleological weight of authority it implies, forgoes realistic analysis of collapsing narrative from within the liberal sphere. The modern subject continues to believe that the global world system exists above basic ecological realities. This believe, this faith, is rooted in Cartesian ontological mind/body split in which a Eurocentric subjectivity, and its enlightened administration, could perfect the base, natural world (Tamdgidi 2013; Dussel 2013a). By repackaging the problem as solution, modernity pushes interconnected planetary, financial, and ecological systems to the brink. The general unwillingness to engage in honest discussion about modernity's fundamental contradictions, usually punctuated with vague declarations of the technology-as-messiah narratives, illustrates the still-profound ideological power of modern epistemology. Complex systems theorists have argued that that large scale, intersectional crises already emerging and will continue, due to increasingly interdependent and homogenous social, political, and economic systems in which energy flows and a high-capacity, growth-dependent economy are mutually linked (Homer-Dixon 2015; Korowicz 2010). Mainstream currents surrounding ideas about transition, resilience, and sustainability often carry with them deep modern biases, which

[8] Science and rationality as such are distinct from administrative systems of social and ecological domination that deploy so-called enlightened prescriptions for sociomaterial systems containing unknowable levels of complexity and contingency.

facilitate laughably insufficient solutions such as carbon trading (Conference of the Parties, 21st Session 2015). Modern epistemology's arrogance has run headlong into the reality that it is but another system, prone to basic laws of emergence and dissolution, within ecological processes (Homer-Dixon 2015; Kuecker 2007).

Modernity's Temporality

Modern epistemology carries deeply ingrained ideological presuppositions, which, while often discredited in formal and popular discourses, nevertheless punctuate the global world system's ideological and material manifestations. For example, Mignolo explains how scholars act as a "knowing subject (that) maps the world and its problems, classifies people and projects into what is good for them" (2009, 1). This myth is tied up in the modern epistemology and the Cartesian mind/body split; even though we understand that knowledges emanate from specific contexts, we cannot help but fill the subject category as we signify this observation (Mignolo 2009, 2). Mignolo argues that "asking these questions means to shift the attention from the enunciated to the enunciation" (2). In other words, "the question of our times is not 'what we were thinking', but a deeper, epistemological question of 'how we are thinking'" (Kuecker 2014, 155). The modern epistemology, as I argue below, was forged in a paradigm of domination-over-human and domination-over-nature. While we can identify the roots of our colonized thinking/being, we can only do so from that same paradigm.

Quijano identifies three important elements of Eurocentrism within modern epistemology (2000, 552). The first is the "particular articulation" of a binary dualism between elements such as traditional-modern, primitive-civilized, and a "linear, one-

directional evolutionism" (553). This teleological framework emerges, Quijano argues, as an *inevitable progression* from the Hobbesian State of Nature to modern, capitalist European society (533). European intellectuals, besides reducing complex historical processes into an absolutist paradigm, additionally center this constructed European experience as a universal narrative.

With the European narrative centered as the sole legitimate path of human progression, Europeans reinforced the narrative by delegitimizing all others. Quijano's other two elements of Eurocentrism are the "naturalization of the cultural differences between human groups by means of their codification with the idea of race; and … the distorted-temporal relocation of all those differences by relocating non-Europeans in the past" (553). European epistemic violence was particularly effective in its dynamic ability to maintain its dominance at the expense of all other types of knowledge, which are forever restricted to the category of past. In this sense, while colonialism proper crumbled from its own contradictions, coloniality of power persisted. In the case of the Americas, Mesoamerican peoples, with vastly different cultural patrimonies and ontologies became "Indians" in need of modernization and development (Bonfil Batalla, 1996). Once signified as primitive, indigenous peoples' realities were reproduced by this metacategory, which they have nevertheless always met with resistance and appropriation (Scott 1990).

The modern rational subject, from its earliest formulations, was always intended for some, at the exclusion of others (Mignolo 2009). Quijano identifies Descartes's dualism—and by extension, foundations of modern western philosophy—as constituting a radical separation of the "reason/subject" from the "body" (2000, 555). A culturally

specific Euro-Christian soul became, in the secular sense, "the only reason/subject capable of rational knowledge" (555). More importantly, the distinction between reason/subject and the body, meant that while the reason/subject (enlightened, rational thought) had agency, the body had no agency. The body, in other words, was restricted to being "an object of knowledge" (555). Mignolo, in an argument expounding upon Chatterjee's 1998 critique of Kant and Foucault's essays on Enlightenment, says that that "freedom and maturity…[were] based on the European concept of Man from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment and not on the 'lesser humans' that populated the world beyond the heart of Europe" (Mignolo 2009, 11). For the conquistadores, indigenous peoples were, in the Cartesian sense, "objects of study, consequently bodies closer to nature" (Quijano 2000, 555). In the European episteme, the body constituted a base natural phenomenon progressing on a *linear* path to Enlightenment, whereas the indigenous were "closer to nature than whites" (Quijano, 555). Quijano argues that by situating the indigenous as objects of study, Europeans inaugurated a new concept of "race" as a "biological" and "scientific" category where previously difference had been primarily categorized in religious terms (533, 555). Biological development invokes the certainty and linearity with which societal and human development would eventually become associated.

Having signified a massive diversality of non-European, epistemologies/ontologies into the abstract universal categories primitive and "indigenous," the modern epistemology situated itself as the sole legitimate ideology. While an extensive literature is emerging to frame liberation struggles as decolonial alternatives (Mignolo 2002b; Escobar 2009), this contribution hopes to critique modern

dualism in order to link decolonial human liberation with a broader decolonial social ecology. Significantly, indigenous peoples exist as bodies "closer to nature" (Quijano 2000, 555). Along with this racist elevation of European bodies is the simultaneous assertion that enlightened, rational thought is also somehow above nature. Nature and the bodies closest to it are both categories to be dominated, subjugated, and rationally transformed. Nature itself, however, is a constructed category that cannot exist outside of the human imaginary. That is to say, human beings can only constitute an inclusive component of the global ecological system; neither they nor their supposed 'rational thought'—produced by complex biological-material processes—are above the worlds that produced them.

Modernity is a universal European modernity, experienced by indigenous peoples as colonial and postcolonial imposition, which forever excludes the possibility of multiple rational thinking (non-European or non-Europeanized) subjects using new technologies and knowledges to construct their own modernities. The act of becoming-modern is irreducibly tied up in a temporal progression, in which the unfolding of modern time dominates and transforms both space and being toward rational perfection. This Eurocentric orientation remains embedded into the abstract universalism as coloniality of power, even formal colonialism dissolved. While terms such as indigenous or subaltern obscure the diversality of peoples lumped together under these labels, these discursive tropes became their own reality in the modern imaginary. The indigenous needed to be developed if they were ever to reach the great culmination of European teleological progression. Today, however, the fault lines of progress are emerging clearer than ever before, as global civilization reaches the limits of its expansion.

Zapatista Temporalities

To what extent can we speak of a Zapatista temporality? Marcos, in his closing speech at the National *Encuentro* in Defense of Cultural Heritage, begins his story: "Long, long ago, time was still waiting for the time to make time" (Marcos in Haydn 1999, 288). This enigmatic introduction to a retelling of Mayan myth provides a provocative and potentially troubling aesthetic for his narrative. While temporality surely plays a role, the modern epistemology balks; the statement must merely be a poetic flourish, nothing more. Marcos, however, by inhabiting the borders between subaltern knowledges and the modern epistemology, has constructed an argument that is political and analytic as much as it is ethical and aesthetic.

Marcos's intervention into the modern, linear temporality explodes a modern subject's understanding of time. Multiple temporalities interact in this formulation, multiple universes of meaning. Time is not only intricately tied up in space and being, it is both the constructer and constructed, subject and object. After all, the meeting was a "defense of memory" (289). This defense is not an abstract act of reflecting on historically "past" events. Rather, it is a rebellious assertion of past being, past space, past community, as those pasts animate the present and future in a cosmological unity. Marcos's musings transition to the political: "There have been, and are, those who believe themselves to be sun and moon, and they boast of great and powerful light. Such is gold, money and political power that is raised as path and destiny… With stones and maize as arms, young and old will undress the power" (288). Power and money represent

modernity's temporal "destiny" or telos. Money, "made into lying gods across the land," (288) obliterates all other times that do not submit to its false light.

The Zapatistas's "theoretical revolution" initiates a delinking from modernity's linear temporality into possibilities of multiple, self-determined universes through which robust social ecologies might emerge (Mignolo 2002b). The pluriverse of different ways of being and knowing are ecological because they are not constructed by a coloniality of power that imposes the modern temporality. In hearing the argument, however, the modern subject inevitably signifies the Zapatistas with colonial difference, attributing their language to a mystical otherness.

Unable to escape coloniality of power, and its related subject-object relationship, the Zapatistas traverse the borders between the modern and the subaltern. Their double translation, however, allows them to emerge as subjects because they fill the empty signifier of Indian difference with Indian specificity that is also Mexican national (Saldaña-Portillo 2003, 235). In other words, multiple temporalities unfold concurrently; the Zapatistas identify in terms of modern time and subaltern times. The temporality of the modern Mexican citizen and the temporality of the past Indian collide, producing an Indian specificity, a temporal orientation previously illegible to the modern subject. This process is in play when Marcos says, "Here we are, the dead of all times, dying once again, but now in order to live" (Marcos in León 1994, 17). By identifying as dead, the Zapatistas situate themselves in a temporal past, "like our ancestors" (17), but also a current past that is non-modern. Saldaña-Portillo suggests that the "dead of always" exist "outside of chronological time: they were here/have always been here/are here/will always be here. Naming themselves in this way, the Zapatistas stake a claim in a cyclical

identity which refuses a mestizo future in favor of an imminent present" (2003, 232). This disjunction of temporalities imbues the Zapatistas with agency because they die so that they might live. In some sense, they emerge as subject by paradoxically inhabiting and deconstructing their object position.

Time informs being because the histories, memories and legacies of the temporal past become situated in the ontologies of those who carry on. The meanings of these pasts are tied up in the being of the "true ones" of today and tomorrow. Next, I will examine how the Zapatistas temporality is bound up in spatiality, the land itself.

Tierra y Libertad Epistémica

Zapatista temporalities also connect human sociality to land. For the modern epistemology, this relationship invokes an assemblage of social ecologies in which different collectives, times, and lands exist in different universes of meaning. To elaborate, the binary dualism necessary to conceptualize an "environment" as a sphere for human subjugation doesn't exist in subaltern cosmologies. Additionally, contemporary understandings of ecology and complex systems, within the modern epistemology, demonstrate a related conclusion: humans are but a constituent part of larger material systems of emergence and dissolution. Despite the modern subject's acknowledgement that enlightened thought cannot transcend material and planetary constraints, the modern epistemology's linear temporality continues to "annihilate space with time" (Guha in Mignolo 2001, 424).

While modern subjects employ domination-over-human and domination-over-nature in pursuit of modernity's telos, the Zapatistas inhabit more ecological spaces

within different times. Marcos reminds us that "the word [was] born in these mountains, in these Zapatista mountains" (In León 1996, 108). The narratives and meanings constructed by Zapatista communities didn't emerge by following modernity's narrative of progress, but rather from the ecologies, social and spatial, that *continuously* reproduce the communities.

Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, in a sub-section of *México Profundo* (1996) entitled "To Name is to Create," declares, "we Mexicans who do not speak an indigenous language have lost the possibility of understanding much of the meaning of our countryside" (13). This provocative statement emerges from Bonfil's argument that contact amongst Mesoamerican cultures had constituted a common "civilization," that represented some common ideologies while maintaining dispersed and pluralistic ontological experiences. He also establishes that indigenous languages, rather than dead or dying, "continue as linguistic systems that express and condense the knowledge base of Mesoamerican civilization" (15). Understanding the connection between ideology and territoriality depends upon understanding indigenous "conception(s) of the natural world and the human being's place in the cosmos" (27). Rather than the modern epistemology's distinct binary dualism, in which "nature" is a category to be feared, overcome, and dominated, as part of a teleological progression to instrumentalist perfection, in Mesoamerican cosmologies "a person's condition as part of the cosmic order is recognized and the aspiration is toward permanent integration, which can only be achieved though a harmonious relationship with the rest of the natural world" (27).

Arguments regarding indigenous and subaltern relations to land, framed within the modern epistemology, cannot avoid a romanticized view of their connection to nature.

This trope ironically reproduces the Cartesian dualism that situates indigenous peoples as closer to nature, and thus, reproduces coloniality. Saldaña-Portillo, however, argues that the Zapatistas intentionally exploit "representations of indigenous people living in harmonious relation with their environment" (2003, 234). For example:

> In our hearts there was so much pain (dolor), so great was our death and our misery (pena), brothers [and sisters], that it no longer fit in this world that our grandparents left us to continue to live and fight in. So great was our pain and misery that it no longer fit in the hearts of a few, and it overflowed, and other hearts were filled with pain and misery…and it filled the hearts of the animals and plants, it filled the hearts of the rocks as well… and the earth felt pain and misery. (EZLN in Saldaña-Portillo 2003, 234)

Modern subjects can use border thinking in order to both acknowledge their romanticizations of subaltern knowledge, *as well as* acknowledge the irreducible connections between humanity and nature that are obfuscated by our own dualist epistemology.

Subaltern languages themselves influence this deconstruction of our deeply ingrained dualism. For example, Mignolo claims that various languages of Zapatistas, such as Tojolabal, are what he calls intersubjective, featuring a "correlation between first and third persons" (2002b, 254). Intersubjective languages always invoke—what a romantic language user would call—a subject-object relationship, without a dichotomy between the two. For example, Mignolo explains that the phrase "I told you" in English or Spanish would be impossible to say in Tojolabal. Instead something closer to "I said (it), you/they heard (it)" (255). While it doesn't translate to English either, the important theoretical point is that "I" and "you" translate to what an English speaker might think of

as interrelated subjects rather than a subject-object dichotomy. The very idea of a distinct subject or object is impossible to conceptualize in this non-dualist language.

Unable to communicate in dualistic—and colonial—communication, speakers of these languages engage in a knowledge that comes to knowing through a complex ecology, an inclusive, pluralistic cosmovision containing an infinite assemblage of subjects. In this manner, the Zapatistas can say that, "where others hope that those above will solve the problems of those below, we Zapatistas began to build our freedom as it is sown, how it is constructed, where it grows, that is to say, from below" (Moisés and Galeano, 2016). Decolonial freedom, then, could be imagined as the cultivation of diverse and self-determined social ecologies. This freedom is shaped and constrained by the surrounding environment but guided by narratives that foster dignity.

After the modern epistemology has been thoroughly jumbled and befuddled, Marcos often reorients our gaze. For example, Marcos clarifies, "For some strange reason, the Zapatistas speak to the future. I mean our words don't fit in the present, but are made to fit into the puzzle that is yet to be finished" (In León 1999, 280). Zapatista temporalities don't represent a retreat to a past that is gone, in what might be called a "third world fundamentalism" (Grosfoguel 2008). Instead, they point to a transmodern future in which communities can determine their own anti-Eurocentric modernities.

Collapsing Temporalities, Emergent Temporalities, Temporal Recurrences[9]

[9] This interjection of Nietzsche's ideas surrounding "eternal recurrence" or "eternal return" (2001) serves as a playful disjuncture. While a direct dialogue between Nietzsche and Zapatismo could conceivably aid a double translation, that approach is not pursued here.

Zapatista temporalities, as they are presented in the communiqués, consist of non-linear, circular trajectories. These representations of the cosmos engage in multiple, overlapping temporal circularities. I read the overlapping temporalities as collections of social ecologies within a larger cosmos. Marcos's 1999 communiqué "The Words that Walk Truths" encapsulates the complex notions temporality in the Zapatista imaginary. Marcos explains that the story he is telling comes from "very far away," but that he doesn't speak of "distance or time but of depth" (In León, 364). He argues that the "stories that gave birth to us don't walk through time and space. No, they are just there, being" (364). The life and histories that go on above these stories wrap themselves, "one above the other, so the oldest are quite deep and far away" (364). These knowledges may represent the foundations of common life, the dignity of being "other" and the unique history that entails. Rooted identity and knowledge exists outside of chronological temporality, dismantling past, present, and future into a cosmological unity. Further, Marcos connects these deep knowledges with identities saying,

> when the eldest of the elders of our peoples speak of stories that come from far away, they point to the earth to show us the place where the words that walk truths are. Dark is the earth, and dark is the dwelling where the first word, and the true word, rests. That is why our very first fathers and mothers had dark skin. That is why those who carry history on their shoulders go about with faces the color of night. (364)

The place of truth is both dark, and it is earth, but it is also mother and father. This myth conceptualizes a profound unity of between territory, cosmology, and identity. Trying to conceptualize this synthesis within a modern epistemic framework proves exceedingly difficult. While a modern can see that the social reproduction of a Mayan cultural patrimony bridges the gap between land and community, a modern and disenchanted

worldview cannot *experience* this as truth. Marcos, however, inhabiting the borders between the modern epistemology and subaltern cosmologies, invites us to decenter and delink from the modern epistemology to the extent possible.

The Zapatistas experience the truth of this cosmology because, while the story is "very far away," the "ancestors" do not contain it. Rather it is carried on the shoulders of those who retain the truth. Neither time nor distance are barriers to this deep knowledge, it walks with those who carry it. Walking, for the Zapatistas, denotes the praxis of struggle in which truth is not a relic of the past to be guarded but rather, lived, through dignity. In this sense, Zapatista temporality informs and empowers self-determined narratives that give meaning and direction to communal life.

"The Words that Walk Truths" is a Zapatista retelling of a Popol Vuh creation myth in which the "men and women of corn" or "true ones" help to bring light into the world when the first gods fail to do so. These first men and women represent the Zapatista strength and silence for "they understood that the word doesn't walk with shouting or fighting, in order to embrace men and women" (364). So while the others went about in confusion, the men and women of corn knew that all the people were seeking "light." Through silence, thought, and persistence, the men and women of corn constructed a vessel, in the shape of a human, for carrying light to the world. This vessel in the story is called a "something." It was made of earth but constructed as well with "water, fire, wind" so that it would hold together.

While the men and women of corn walked through "night and water," Hurakán, the Heart of the Sky, used the "something" to scratch a little hole in the sky so the men and women or corn could see their path. This act turned the "something" into a five-

pointed star, representing the Marxist-Leninist origins of the FLN *foco.* While the men and women of corn had a little light, they found that the star wouldn't move. The eldest of the elders told them "that something doesn't walk because it doesn't have a heart. Only things with hearts walk" (367). Marxism or socialism, conceived as abstract universals (Mignolo 2009), didn't leave space for the dignity and heart of the people. The men and women found the only way to give the star a heart was by each one of them tearing out their own heart and uniting them collectively within the star. Once the star could walk, it wandered haphazardly until the men and women realized that it needed "the word" because "only things that think can have a destiny and a path" (368). In this way, the "something" was made of the seven elements: "earth, water, fire, air, lightning, heart, and word" (368). The men and women of corn waited and waited for the light to come, and although it "was gone for some time," they "didn't despair" (368). The story concludes in the following way:

> So it passed that some time later, that something could be seen far off, slowly returning. Step by tiny step, it was coming over to this side, walking the sky. And once it arrived, more time passed and the light came right behind it… if you were to keep vigil in the night that embraces our lands, you could see at daybreak, to the east, a star. She announces the day. Some have called her "dayspring" or "the morning star." Scientists and poets have called her Venus. But our most ancient ones called her Icoquih, which means "she who carries the world on her shoulders," or "she who carries the sun on her back." We name her "the morning star" because she announces that night is ending and another morning is coming. This star, made by the men and women of corn, the true ones, walks with feeling and thought, and, faithfully, it comes at daybreak… I'm telling (this story) to you because this story that comes from so far away reminds us that it is through thinking and feeling that comes the light that helps us to seek. With heart and head we must be bridges, so that men and women of all the worlds may walk from night to day. (369)

From this story emerges a deep and robust cosmological unity in which humanity is but one part of a unified universe. The seven elements illustrate that the material

existence of the 'natural' world we inhabit is but one component of our universes, which are imbued with meaning only through "heart" and "word." The gods, which may be considered the "natural" world in the modern epistemology, cannot bring the world to the light by themselves. So the men and women of corn not only demonstrate agency within this cosmology, they and their struggle are the crucial components that give it meaning. The path that the men and women of corn walk, further illustrates the Zapatistas specific historical struggle and their roots in Marxist-Leninist tradition. The star's immobility without "heart" serves as a critique of more orthodox interpretations of strictly materialist interpretations of Marxism. The Zapatistas move beyond authoritarian interpretations of socialism because their struggle has the collective heart of the people, and the true word of dignity, which presents their path.

Distinctly circular temporalities guide this cosmovision, destabilizing the modern subject's linear narrative. The story is indeed a creation myth, giving narrative to the emergence of light in the world, the rising of the sun. It carries with this interpretation an inclusive second interpretation, however, in which the Zapatistas' specific and contemporary struggle is united and intertwined with the original creation. When Marcos describes the emergence of the morning star saying, "if you were to keep vigil in the night that embraces our lands, you could see at daybreak, to the east, a star" (369). This particular articulation of "night" is difficult to analyze in a strictly literal interpretation. In this cosmology, a circular regeneration of order and disorder is embedded in the concept of night's transformation to day. The strictly linear imposition of a Eurocentric modernity represents disorder, or night. The Zapatistas, as the men and women of corn, as the keepers of the true word, are the morning star that signals the coming of the light. Even

as the true ones wait for the long night to end, however, the sun daily rises, through their walking.

The inclusive reading of these smaller circles within larger, interconnected ones speaks to "a world in which many worlds are possible." Daily action, daily struggle, or walking in revolution are the methods that carry memory to the future, that assemble narratives and spaces for being. Yet, these temporalities compose systems in the larger cosmos that moves from the "long night" to day. This cosmological unity is not "universality understood as an abstract universal grounded in a mono-logic" (Mignolo 2002b, 262), rather, it is a pluriverse of different temporalities, different spaces, moving to a decolonial future where "the men and women of all the worlds may walk from night to day" (Marcos in León 1999, 369).

Beat Two: Collapsing Systems

In this section I transition from the abstract, philosophical, and epistemic, to the material, spatial, and the real. One problematic addressed throughout this investigation is the compartmentalization of different critical fields of knowledge, and their often-strained ability to communicate amongst themselves. If modernity's linear temporality, its narrative, continues to obliterate and homogenize diverse epistemologies and ontologies, then this process will beget real struggles in concrete *spaces*, and through resistant ways of *being*. The abstract themes addressed in the First Beat are of limited use unless translated into micrological sites of struggle (Spivak 1988). The goal of this Second Beat, then, is to conceive methodologies for how actual humans resist modern time in actual spaces.

I begin first with a discussion of the concept of the "500 years of struggle," a popular trope, which finds resonance in popular, indigenous, and academic discourses and explicitly in the rhetoric of the Zapatistas (Bonfil Batalla 1996; Esteva 2006; Marcos in Leon 1994, 13; Benjamin 2001). While a historical inventory of this line of analysis is far beyond the scope of this project (or perhaps any project), I will establish the academic legitimacy of this approach in order to engage in the discursive transmissions of coloniality from conquest to the present historical moment. I trace the parallels between the colonial project and the developmentalist project through what Saldaña–Portillo terms "regimes of subjection" or subjective constructions of revolutionary and developmentalist subjects (2003). The injection of the Eurocentric modern epistemology into subaltern

groups seeks to orient them to modern time. This imposition is detrimental to both decolonial freedom and social ecologies.

Second, I analyze Mexican development from International Political Economy (IPE) perspective, built on "Gramscian way of thinking (Morton, 2007; Vergara-Camus, 2014). This approach is synthesized with Gilly (1998) to show how the Mexican and political class and international political class imposed the modern epistemology through developmentalism. The ongoing struggles in Chiapas illustrate how non- anti- capitalist dynamics in communal social forms remained illegible to modern subjects until the neoliberal reforms.

Assemblage thinking endeavors to conceptualize ways that autonomous and social-ecological collectives struggle against hegemonic structures. To elaborate, McGuirk and Dowling (2009), explain how "the analytic of the assemblage offers one possible route for conceiving neoliberalism not as a universal and coherent project, or even as a generalized hegemonic process characterized by local contingencies, but as a loose collection of urban logics and processes that may or may not structure urban change in different places" (Cited in McFarlane 2011, 209). This analysis of the city has direct applications for Chiapas as well; discussion solely of neoliberalism or developmentalism gives the impression of a hegemonic imposition in which there is no agency or alternative. Assemblage thinking however, engages the sociomaterial agency of peoples, materials, and territories that constantly resist, appropriate, and forge autonomous alternatives to this temporal impulse, which exists within a panorama of conflicting political projects.

Contemporary developmentalist discourses, when critiqued through a critical decolonial lens, can demonstrate disturbing continuities with original colonial discourses. Dominant liberal discourses today employ abstract universalist assumptions about "underdeveloped" countries and peoples, which fail to acknowledge the ways in which modern epistemology and world-historical structures of oppression overlap to reproduce exploitation and inequality in material and epistemic terms in those localities. In order to expose coloniality in contemporary modern/liberal thinking I discuss development in practice and theory, moving toward an analysis of contemporary "Climate proofing" efforts which build on the foundations of green neoliberalism.

500 Years

Tracing the continuities of the modern/colonial episteme and its manifestations from colonial times to the contemporary historical moment is a daunting task. Perhaps fully impossible, any and all accounts must be reductionist at some level. Nevertheless, rather than balk at the scope of such a project, scholars should instead challenge the conventions of what may be posited, what may be studied. Even an unconventional interdisciplinary academic critique would be unable to make a satisfactory connection between these decidedly distinct eras. Critical border thinking using insights from Zapatismo however, can provide a space for thinking outside of conventional categories to see how the modern epistemology clouds our ability to see continuity. For our purposes, development can illustrate ways in which the domination of humans and nature are dual components of modern epistemology.

An ethical and aesthetic narrative, guided by scholarly rigor, can move us toward a more worthy praxis for contesting domination of humans and nonhuman systems. The 500 years trope is a valid discursive object of study because it has gained such prevalence in both scholarly and popular discourses; it is therefore worthy of investigation, and as I conclude, worthy of an ethical impetus to direct future explorations. Profound continuities in discourse emerge from the time of Cortes to the present in terms of how power constructs speaking, knowing subjects, and passive, silent objects.

Progress along a linear, Eurocentric temporality has remained central from early colonialism's "civilizing mission," to the modernization theory of the 1950's, up to contemporary green neoliberalism and "climate proofing" efforts today (McMichael 2009). Development, though typically conceptualized in terms of the modernization theory after the Second World War (Sachs, 1992), resonates deeply with previous interventions occurring since the times of colonial empires. To an even greater extent, the object of the postcolonial Mexican state has long been a pursuit of modernity's horizon. The Zapatistas's 500 year struggle draws continuity between Cortes, the Porfiriato, French rule, the PRI, through to contemporary counterinsurgency tactics involving ecotourism and extractionism (Marcos in León, 13, 19, 40; Marcos 2013; Galeano 2015c). It is telling that the Zapatistas often frame their struggle in the context of foreign impositions that are not formal colonialism but instead represent postcolonial epistemic interventions (Saldaña-Portillo 2003, 224). Zapatista discourse laments and damns the irreparable wounds of colonialism. But rather than a backward-looking ethical critique, Zapatista communiqués appropriate the liberal notions of democracy and citizenship to challenge neocolonial domination, whether it emanates from a *caudillo,* World Bank

technocrat, or patronizing charity worker. By self-identifying as a "'product' of nation state formation" (224), the Zapatistas orient themselves toward a transmodern conception of a nation, in which the body politic treats the pluriverse of human difference with dignity.

Bonfil's seminal 1989 work *Mexico Profundo* in some ways anticipated the 1994 rebellion in Chiapas due to its acknowledgement of continuing existence of non-Eurocentric cosmological frames (1996). Bonfil Batalla provocatively declared, "The last five hundred years [in the history of Mexico] is the story of permanent confrontation between those attempting to direct the country toward the path of Western civilization and those, rooted in the Mesoamerican ways of life, who resist (xv). Gustavo Esteva echoes this argument saying that "For more than 500 hundred years, indigenous people have confronted forces that sought to destroy them or contribute to their disintegration, or, alternatively, to "preserve them" in a subordinated position" (In Rus 2003, 261). The Zapatista's proposed political project of pluralistic indigenous autonomy within the context of a reformed state apparatus has inspired Esteva to echo this approach as a first step in reconciling the dramatic contradiction of Mesoamerican ontologies with the European political forms (261). Esteva dryly declares, "the invention of Mexico was unfortunate: it adopted the form of a homogenous nation-state in spite of the fact hat the country, at the time of Independence, was made up of not one but many peoples" (2003, 243). The results of this colonial contestation meant, "entire peoples were exterminated or ceased being what they were. None were able to avoid the fragmentation of the native forms of political life, economic exploitation, and political control from the dominant regime" (261). The profound loss of human diversity and destruction of the conquest can

never truly be reckoned with. While the majority of early-contact deaths resulted from European diseases (Crosby in Kuecker 2009), this hardly provides any alibi for the conquistadores who, on no uncertain terms, brought only conquest, exploitation, and subordination to those surviving. Neither does it absolve contemporary humanitarian "missionaries" whose charitable work categorically ignores the historical processes that produced such structural violence whilst they continue to attempt to orient subaltern peoples toward the ideal of Western market society.

The justification for conquest is illustrated by the 1550 debate between Bartolomé de las Casas, Bishop of Chiapas, and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, an influential philosopher, as to whether the indigenous had souls. Dussel explains that Ginés's argument—that the indigenous have no soul—was a representative "modern… hegemonic Eurocentric" intellectual discourse (2002, 222). He goes on to argue that Bartolomé de Las Casas's defense of indigenous rights—not to mention their status as full human beings—marked the beginnings of the Modernity's "antidiscourse" (2002, 222). While his argument may have appeared in a paternalistic framework, its significance as "antidiscourse" resides in the context of a Christian soul and its subsequent incorporation into a Eurocentric subjectivity.

In the formative moments of colonial/modern discourse, the focal point of the debate is illustrative. The focus on a 'Christian' soul, while dependent on a Europe-specific religious orientation, also reflected a new Eurocentric subjectivity emerging within the colonial framework. Given the centrality of Christianity in the era's intellectual framework, the debate centered on whether the indigenous were indeed human, or whether they were objects of nature, to be studied. This colonial foundation of

the still pre-modern Spain constituted the colonial matrix in which modernity was forged. Dussel, opposing Wallerstein's identification of modernity in enlightenment, identifies Spain as the "first modernity" (2002, 222-3). Modernity's foundation resided upon a "specifically global mercantilist/capitalist market" that emerged "on the back of the Spanish (American) Silver Peso and the massive displacement of labor force from Africa and elsewhere" (Guardiola-Rivera 2013, 51). Coloniality was a foundational precondition for Eurocentric ideological formation as well as Europe's material wealth. As Europe experienced a modernity, marked by coloniality and producing modern philosophy and enlightenment, the Christian soul of its infancy disappeared formally, only be embedded within the rational Eurocentric subject of enlightenment.

Developing Subjectivities

How does the development industry, in all its contemporary permutations, reproduce coloniality in the everyday lives of human beings? Saldaña-Portillo in *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development,* examines connections between "regimes of subjection" in both revolution and development (2003). Her central problematic is "the ideological collusion between developmentalist and revolutionary models of subjectivity" (2003, 13). In other words, both modern revolutionary movements and the development industry transmitted the modern epistemology in their prescriptions for human progress. The construction of authorized subjects of revolution and development required radical transformation, a profound shift from a primitive and feminine obstruction to an empowered, masculine, and Eurocentric subjectivity (67). Saldaña-Portillo argues that the root of this mutually constituting

relationship between development and revolution (4) is "the legacy of colonialism in the Americas," which "profoundly influenced the discursive formations of development *and* revolution in the second half of the twentieth century" (14). Modern episteme and its foundational coloniality were bound up in both the propagation of neocolonial domination as well as in the modernist revolutionaries' contestation of that domination.

Saldaña-Portillo references Larrain when she argues, "although development has occurred throughout history and across civilizations, its formal, self-conscious articulation as a necessary and self-evident social process is of fairly recent elaboration" (17). As one of capitalism's supplementary discourses, "development replaced the 'civilizing mission' of the age of colonialism with the imperative of self-determination, independence, free trade, industrialization, and economic growth in a postcolonial era" (20). That is to say, the discourses of 20th century developmentalism and colonial concepts of a "civilizing mission" both constitute mimetic expressions of the Eurocentric modernity outlined above. It is important to note that "a nonbiological, evolutionary sociology of 'less developed countries,' and a universalized 'productive capacity' of all world citizens" (21) masked the realty of structural inequality wrought by colonialism, which depended on domination in more explicit terms. Therefore coloniality's transition from one discourse to the other must feature in any analysis; and "it is important to see development's *difference from* colonialism, rooted in its action as a vehicle for facilitating decolonization, and its *links to* colonialism, rooted in its redeployment of colonialism's logics and structures" (21). The colonial difference inherent between those administering the transition, and those subjected to it, shrouded domination's reproduction into abstract and ethical discourses. These ethical articulations facilitated

the transmission of coloniality throughout the restructuring of contradictory and formal colonial apparatuses.

Postdevelopment scholars have traced development discourse's emergence as a coherent project to President Truman's inauguration speech (Sachs, 1992) in which he "shift(ed) the target of development from national economies to individuated subjectivities" (Saldaña-Portillo 2003, 24).[10] Development's articulation in post-war restructuring represents an unprecedented situation in which devastated European countries and Third world counties with "hindered" development "existed on the equal footing of 'aid recipient'" (21). Truman's Point Four Program in the 1950 Act for International Development, however, marked "a significant augmentation in the discourse of development" because, while the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development's (IBRD) early efforts targeted "communication, transportation, and energy infrastructures at the national level," this program targeted the construction of a "national citizen" (25). Saldaña-Portillo's incisive critique is worth quoting at length:

> Its aid was directed at constructing appropriate subjects for national development, at reforming the illiterate Indian, the diseased Burmese, the unskilled Libyan. Because its development was ideological more than economic, because its addressees were individual subjects more than national economies, the Point Four Program, with its microfunding for small-scale programs, made *individuals* available for development. (25)

Within an ethical framework, developmentalism propagated the white man's burden, not only by constructing and representing the needs of subaltern peoples (Spivak, 1988) but also producing a new matrix of domination reduced to a discourse in which development subjects had to make the "'proper choice,' free of material of historical constraint"

[10] Postdevelopment is an extremely heterogeneous field of critical analysis that Escobar summarizes well (2000; 2006; 2010). Saldaña-Portillo's critique is particularly relevant to this project's content and context.

(Saldaña-Portillo 2003, 29). Put simply, development's administers placed the burden of blame on the victim. Colonialism's victims—and their unwillingness to cooperate with benevolent development efforts—only confirmed their primitive nature to the authorized voices of human universalism. A homogenous and Eurocentric conception of what more "advanced" societies looked like blinded the modern subject from realizing that non-European conceptions of world, and the human position within it, could be in complete contradiction with that of the modern episteme.

Subaltern peoples, rather than backward-looking and tradition-preserving, have always resisted, appropriated, and adapted to imposition marked by coloniality. The very fact of the continued existence of indigenous languages, practices, and self-identification represents an impressive historical victory, given the hundreds of years of genocidal and ethnocidal efforts to eradicate indigenous ways of life. The resistance of autonomous Zapatista communities represents a radical confirmation of self-determined cultural patrimonies and counterhegemonic ontologies.

Saldaña-Portillo analyzes how Zapatista's communiqués contest regimes of subjection in developmentalism and revolution to elucidate how they so profoundly impacted national and international audiences. In Mexico, revolution and development took on a unique context due to the PRI's appropriation and institutionalization of the 1910 revolution. Following massive peasant insurrections Mexico unfortunately followed a "European paradigm of nation" (253). Mestizaje developmentalism in postrevolutionary Mexico depended on discourses of a mestizo future, in which revolutionary indigenousness paradoxically represented a moral legitimation of the state (in the historical memory) *as well as* an obstacle to a true Mexican modernity (in the

contemporary moment). Modern temporality trumped diverse realities. Saldaña-Portillo claims that the Zapatistas overturn this paradox by appealing to subjective Indian difference in the indigenous population as well as to the Indian difference embedded in each mestizo citizen (253):

> The Zapatistas have disrupted the semiotic chain of national meaning…in the only way possible, by occupying the terms of signification made available by it: they persistently write in a folkloric authorial voice, thematizing their own abject state as Indians. In doing so, they stretch the limits of Indian difference in include self-authored Indian experience and specificity. (233)

By claiming Indian authorship, the Zapatistas profoundly disrupted the state and development industry's authority to speak for. The Zapatistas claimed both the identity of national citizen as well as an Indian specificity in order to link and delink from discourses at will, unsettling the very foundations of such discourses in the process. For instance, by naming the indigenous as the "dead of always" in their analyses, the Zapatistas suggest "a syncretic identity existing outside of chronological time" (232). The mestizo citizen reads the temporal disjunction of this formulation as Indian romanticism and spirituality; it has little resonance in terms of realpolitik. Nevertheless, "the appropriation of Christian rhetoric, of the resurrection theme, not only makes evident the influence of liberation theology on the Zapatistas but also registers an entry by the subaltern into Western historical time" (232). Seamlessly interwoven temporal fabrics in these "messianic communiqués" (232) produce a newly intelligible indigenous subject, which deconstructs the marginalizing discourses it navigates. Dying "in order to live" Marcos in León 1994, 17) not only allowed the Zapatistas emerge as subjects newly-recognized by Mexican civil society, they emerged with a Christ-like and redemptive power.

This empty signifier of Indian difference, for Saldaña-Portillo, represents a more grave a threat to the state than even material gains of the rebellion (252). To demonstrate this claim, she builds on Laclau's theory that "empty signifiers function at moments of potential hegemonic transition when various working-class struggles achieve unity in their confrontation with a repressive regime" (254). An incomplete passive revolution in the Mexican countryside and the old corporatist structures were destabilized by "ten years of structural adjustment policies, followed by two years of neoliberal reform" (255), making space for the Zapatista to dismantle foundational state, and modern, myths.

Mexican Development

Mexico's counterinsurgency project in Chiapas—as well as more well-meaning and charitable transmitters of modern episteme—reflects the teleological foundations of modernization discourse. Since the Fox administration, the state has generally denied and ignored the Zapatistas's relevance in Chiapas. Beside the continued support for/complicity with paramilitary groups, another, perhaps more important struggle takes place over development projects (Stahler-Sholk 2008, 114). The Zapatistas's autonomous holding of land means that "the real challenge to PRI hegemony lies in the Zapatistas' development projects, including collective agriculture, building local infrastructure, piping water from streams, training health promoters and starting up small enterprises" (Stahler-Sholk in Morton 2007, 196). I argue that Zapatista initiatives actually destabilize the very notion of development, generally conceived of as top-down prescriptive solutions emanating from a more privileged or enlightened position; Zapatista

alternatives to development are self-determined, resilient, radically democratic and capable of empowering counterhegemonic articulations of the self and the collective.

Development dynamics consist of overlapping matrices that must be unpacked to understand the struggle for autonomy from market and state forces.
Development discourse carries with it a liberal appeal of charity toward underdeveloped indigenous and subaltern peoples, which continues to carry tremendous power for modern subjects. Mega development projects utilize modernization discourse to forward a progressive narrative in which campesinos can become more modern citizens (Wilson 2013).

Successes and visibility of indigenous issues in recent years however, may have contributed to a trend of "neoliberal multiculturalism," in which the rights of indigenous peoples are supposedly accounted for in legislation and discourse (Hale 2005). This approach only accounts for diversity in abstract universal terms, while effectively making *usos y costumbres* impossible to actualize in practice. Additionally, development discourse in Chiapas has been entirely depoliticized, most likely as a response to Zapatista autonomy (Wilson, 2013). Following the severe backlash against the Plan Puebla Panama (PPP) from indigenous and activist networks (Wilson 2013; Stahler-Sholk 2008; Swords 2008) the state said in 2008 that it would abandon the plan and adopt a new Mesoamerica project. Wilson has categorically shown, however, that despite claims that the plans had been abandoned, the state continues to carry out the original designs (2013, 219). Development, at its worst, is naked coercion and expropriation, and at its best, is an apolitical modernization or poverty-reduction narrative, which doesn't

address how the modern epistemology and its abstract universalism reproduce inequality in Mexico.

Ultimately, development discourse is irreducibly tied up in a messy framework of rule contingent upon the interactions of market bias, technocratic episteme, political/economic structures, and communities. The making of modern citizens with Eurocentric subjectivities, however, remains an underlying condition of development. Due to their particular histories, the indigenous of Chiapas were in a unique position to resist the Eurocentric subjectivities being imposed on them.

The "transnationalization of the state" in the contemporary era is a much discussed (Morton 2007; Robinson 2008; Hardt and Negri 2001) and important factor for understanding development in Chiapas. Morton argues that transnational capitalist interests intersect with particular forms of sovereign national forces in which a technocratic Mexican political and professional class adopted "neoliberalism [as] the sole model of development by disseminating the notion of market civilization based on an ideology of capitalist progress and exclusionary or hierarchical patterns of social relations" (2007, 126-127, 150). Foreign ideas had been increasingly prevalent in Mexico since 1968 when the state used scholarships abroad to pacify disenfranchised and rebellious sectors following the massacre at Tlatelolco (158). The 1982 Mexican default and debt crisis, however, prompted neoliberal adjustments to the national economy, which helped produce a transnationalization of class forces within state itself (156).

Morton argues that the "growing influence of neoliberal ideas in Mexico can be… linked to the existence of a transnational capitalist class connecting IMF analysts, private investors, and bank officials as wells as government technocrats in and beyond the PRI"

(157). This class of technocrats produced a "new constitutionalism" of neoliberal policies and "concomitant spread of market civilization" (127). Places such as Chiapas as an impediment to the progressive unfolding of Mexico's development into a modern country. Such was the hubris of these administrative technocrats that then-undersecretary of agricultural planning Luis Tellez said in 1991 that "it is the policy of my government to remove half of the population from rural Mexico during the next five years" (Barkin in Vergara-Camus 2014, 59).

This emergent national social class, however, wasn't able to develop a "historical bloc" capable of imposing *cultural* hegemony on society (155). In order to make NAFTA legal under the Mexican constitution, the Salinas administration reformed Article 27 in 1992. This article established the right to collective and traditional administration of *ejido* land, and its reform was instrumental in undermining the state's legitimcay in Chiapas (Gilly 1998, 276). Morton argues that the Zapatista rebellion can be understood as a response to the PRI's crisis of hegemony due to an incomplete "passive revolution" (2007, 203).

In the context developing subjectivities, Morton's argument means that neoliberal restructuring destabilized corporatist structures upon which the PRI's power had rested. Gilly explains the nature of these structures: "the state successfully incorporated communities that had their own ancestral, corporatist traditions of social organization and politics, interlaced with community beliefs and religious offices" (1998, 283). Therefore, in these "institutionalized revolutionary communities" (Rus in Gilly 284) non-capitalist social forms existed as parts of a larger capitalist structure. As Quijano has shown, even though "from a Eurocentric point of view, reciprocity, slavery, serfdom, and independent

commodity production are all perceived as part of a historical sequence…in America they did not emerge in a linear historical sequence; none of them was a mere extension of the old precapitalist form, *nor were they incompatible with capital* (2000, 550; emphasis added). Therefore, neoliberal restructuring in Chiapas profoundly destabilized the "*permanent negotiation of authority*" in Mexican statist capitalism (Gilly 1998, 273). Neoliberal development in Chiapas only negotiated the terms of material production without addressing social reproduction; this "'modernization' without social change" meant that Chiapas's indigenous inhabited "a world apart, subordinated to, but neither modified by nor absorbed into the political culture of the ruling regime (285). Capital needs to develop Eurocentric subjectivities in Chiapas for green neoliberalism to be viable.

The totalizing force of capitalist social relations in the contemporary era obscures the political-economic foundations of development discourses, which construct universal plans for improvement. As Marx noted, "one of the fundamental conditions allowing the development of capitalist social relations in agriculture is the total subordination of land to capital" (In Vergara-Camus 2014, 40). Building on this concept, Wood explains that capitalist social relations are built on "absolute private property" (In Vergara-Camus 41). In this sense, "Capitalism represents a radical historical break, because… it relies on a conflictive separation of the economic from the political that insulates the moment of appropriation from the moment of coercion (the state)" (41). It is precisely this bias toward liberal conceptions of development—predicated on private property law and the modern citizen—which can produce similar policy results from corrupt political regimes as well as well-intentioned NGOs. Autonomy is the method of contesting the moment of

coercion from the state or any "fundamentally liberal" mainstream institution that views development as "individual or community integration into the market" (16). The Zapatistas contest the structural violence and ecological destruction generated by a *political* market expansion; in this sense they could represent a "development subject" that is "no longer the high-mass consumer, but a politically mobilized social and ecological steward (McMichael 2009, 260).

Assembling Diverse Subjectivities

Zapatista autonomy resists the imposition of Eurocentric and masculine subjectivities with the cultivation of diverse subjectivities situated in self-determined communities. Social-ecological communities depend on subjects' self-determination of how to define themselves and how to live. Zapatista subjects resist the insidious encroachment of Eurocentric subjectivities by shielding themselves from neoliberal multiculturalism and maintaining an explicitly anti-capitalist stance.

Neoliberal multiculturalism is an abstract universal, framed in postpolitical discourse. The term postpolitical "denotes a specific modality of depoliticization that operates *as if this were the case* even as it facilitates processes of neoliberalization that intensify the material contradictions of global capitalism" (Wilson 2013, 120). In the context of developmentalism, postpolitical strategies operate as though development is a universal good and not a matter of political dispute. Technocratic administration of supposedly postpolitical neoliberal hegemony emerged in what Hale calls "managed neoliberal multiculturalism" (2002).

Stahler-Sholk, in reference to the San Andres Accords, defines neoliberal multiculturalism in the following terms:

> the neoliberal model recognizes the pluralism of indigenous identities as long as those identities do not become the basis for collective organization around substantive rights… the same states that oversee economic liberalization and privatization are establishing themselves as arbiters of the boundary between individual and group rights. (2008, 118)

The negotiation of San Andres Accords in 1996, between the Zapatistas and the Congressional Commission for Concord and Pacification (COCOPA), resulted in an initial agreement, which recognized indigenous rights in a meaningful way that allowed for traditional *usos y costumbres* serving as governing structures for autonomous communities (Stahler-Sholk 2008, 118). The state had no intention of enacting the more robust agreement however, and after five years of delays, redrafting, and simultaneous state military mobilizations, it put forward a "compromised, watered-down text" (118). The Zapatistas tentatively agreed even to that document—while not ignoring its limitations—in the spirit of peaceful negotiation, but the state was unwilling even to enact even that. Finally, after the Zapatistas historic caravan to Mexico City in March 2001 and Comandanta Ester's address to congress, the state enacted an "indigenous rights law" which passed "despite being denounced by every major indigenous and human rights organization and voted down in all the states with large indigenous populations" (119).

Top-down prescriptions of indigenous rights strip both the agency and diversity away from pluralist indigenous communities with unique customs, dynamics, and struggles. Neoliberal multiculturalism has the potential to resonate in a "postpolitical" international community due to its seemingly ethical response to cultural rights, even if

these theoretical rights are paralyzed by structural realities. The liberal appeal of neoliberal multiculturalism contains echoes of Dussel's "ethics of discourse," which builds an appealing rhetoric while stifling any self-determined, from-below liberation (Mignolo 2002b, 268). Cultural rights and class-based rights need to work together for either to carry meaning. The deconstruction of neoliberal multiculturalism forges a synthesis in which the cultural elements of autonomous and self-determined *usos y costumbres* interact with substantial material empowerment, specifically, the collective working of the commons.

Comandanta Esther's 2001 speech is a powerful illustration of a Zapatista subject representing the collective struggle. Rather than having Marcos speak at congress, the Zapatistas chose to have Esther speak because, in her own words, "Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos is that, a Subcomandante. We are the Comandantes, those who command jointly, the ones who govern our peoples, obeying" (Esther 2001). Additionally, Esther's positionality as an indigenous woman in Mexico, situates her at the bottom of class, racial, and gender hierarchies. Acutely aware of these biases after the difficultly of gaining her audience that day, she said, "No one will have any reason to feel attacked, humiliated or degraded by my occupying this tribune and speaking today" (Esther 2001). The symbolism embedded in the Zapatistas's masks takes on a dramatic character in this context. As Marcos had previously said, the Zapatistas "use black ski masks to show our faces" (Marcos in León 1999, 193). An indigenous woman has no voice in the halls of power, her words may be met with sympathy but not treated seriously in her ability to define her own struggle. By donning a mask, Esther overcomes the station of object to become an empowered subject addressing constituted power. She

challenges the politicians saying, “we are certain you do not confuse justice with charity” (Esther 2001). Only a symbol, the mask represents a reverberation of ¡Ya Basta! for those who were previously deaf to the voice of this “Zapatista woman” (Esther 2001).

Along with a call for a robust, self-determined cultural justice, Esther presents a compelling critique of state and market. Her argument is worth quoting at length:

> This proposal was accused of balkanizing the country, ignoring that the country is already divided. One Mexico which produces wealth, another which appropriates that wealth, and another which is the one which has to stretch out its hand for charity… This proposal is accused of promoting a backward legal system, ignoring that the current one only promotes confrontation, punishes the poor and gives impunity to the rich. It condemns our color and turns our language into crime. This proposal is accused of creating exceptions in political life, ignoring that in the current one, the one who governs does not govern, rather he turns his public position into a source of his own wealth, and he knows himself to be beyond punishment and untouchable as long as his term in office does not end. (2001)

For the Zapatistas, the moment of coercion emanating from the state is all too obvious. They understand that the real function of the “backward legal system” works to alienate them from their land and their customs, which would entail the full expansion of capitalist social relations into their communities. Additionally, these issues are addressed within an amalgam of political-economic analysis and sociocultural experience interwoven into one project of imposition and oppression over subaltern knowledges.

Mora identifies the inauguration of Other Campaign (2006) and the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle EZLN, (2005) as demarcating a new phase of national struggle (2008, 151). In finding a “new way of doing politics” outside the confines of a traditional political party, the Zapatistas reclaimed anticapitalist politics, a focus that Mora claims had been less explicit since 1994 (152). While 2005 was the moment that the Zapatistas chose to present their “national campaign for building another

way of doing politics, for a program of national struggle for the left, and for a new constitution" (EZLN, 2005), the creation of the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* in 2003 facilitated and empowered this shift in strategy (*Autonomous Government I*). Following the state's unwillingness to negotiate in any meaningful way regarding the San Andres Accords, the *Juntas* began moving toward freedom themselves.

These social programs aim to make modern citizens of indigenous communities, undermining their more resilient and communal tendencies. In lieu of the direct interventions of old statist developmentalism, the transference of state responsibilities to the non-state actors (primarily markets but also NGOs), had come paired with "socializing the poor to think about themselves in new ways, for example, as active, rational, and responsible" (Luccisano in Mora 156). While these initiatives have a strong moral defense in the eyes of Global North subjects, they "reproduc(e) ethnocentric and economistic perspectives of social well-being" (139). In other words, the policies attempt to integrate the modern linear temporality of universal progress by reorienting social and communal tendencies toward capitalist individualism. This strategy presents a seemingly inclusive multicultural perspective while seeking new ways for capital to insert itself into the identities of indigenous people who have always proved recalcitrant to its logics.

Policies of self-management in the neoliberal landscape can, at first glance, look similar to autonomy; however, autonomy allows space for a collective to form its own identity in ways that seek to challenge and deconstruct structural inequities in the larger context. The "culturalist" discourses that accompany new social programs, continue to propagate "mestizo universalism" (158). The program *Oportunidades* (formerly *Progresa*), a 1997 government initiative, presents a good example of such programs

(155). Claiming to "elevate the self-esteem [of] indigenous women," can present a compelling moral argument (Davalos in Mora 155). Just as diversity and empowerment are praised in discourse, market forces and state enforcement endeavor to eradicate any meaningful practice of the common social life entailed by such identities. In this context, Zapatista resistance has needed to reclaim anticapitalist politics in order to fight the encroachment of the territorialization of neoliberal hegemony.

During the Zapatista's national tour for the Other Campaign, Marcos, dubbed Delegado Zero, met with indigenous groups in Guerrero and Oaxaca who identified the commodification of traditional knowledges in such cases as the genetic patenting of vital corns and medicinal plants, as well as the privatization of seed banks and water (Mora, 155). These policies ensure the state's "capacity to govern specific population groups" (156). In real terms, these resources—as well as the forms of collective social distribution of them—are what facilitate the social reproduction of indigenous communities. The State and market-oriented NGOs don't empower more resilient indigenous communities; they orient them to a way of life in which the communities must self-manage dispossession from both their cultural patrimony and land.

A Storm

Temporality as a unifier of diverse localities resisting epistemic and material domination permits space to theorize a crisis of narratives. The subordination of space and being, wrought by global world system, however, also produces a material crisis, a profoundly planetary crisis no longer possible to ignore. Capital's "self realization process" of annihilating space with time (Guha in in Mignolo 2001, 424) finds new

context in the age of the Anthropocene. To be sure, capital's desecration of "non-productive" cultures, peoples, and ways of life could not have been in dispute for those paying attention before (Hall and Fenelon 2009). As Marcos sagely reminds us, however, "the powerful don't hear; they can't hear, they are deafened by the brutality that the empire shouts in their ears" (in León 1994, 33). The powerful, being the modern subjects, have internalized a coloniality of power that precludes any understanding of the ethnocide that modernization has brought subaltern peoples as it expands over every inch of the Earth's surface. In a certain sense, the modernist arrogance in the realm of epistemic violence finds its material articulation—this time on the global scale—in the era of global ecological crisis. Industrial capitalist development has always been an insane project, as "successful" implementation of industrialization in all parts of the world would require 5 to 6 planets to sustain such an arrangement (Sachs 1992, 2). The lunacy of unlimited growth on a finite planetary scale finally reaches the point where it can no longer be ignored.

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On May 4, 2015, at the Zapatista *seminario*, "Critical Thought against the Capitalist Hydra," Galeano made an announcement connecting capitalism to the global ecological crisis:

> After talking and listening, we came to the conclusion that what we saw was the same thing: a profound crisis was approaching—not only an economic one, although it was also economic. A storm, in fact. Synthesizing that early morning's sharing: The signals?
> One. – An economic crisis like never before. What we are seeing now are just the very first rains. The worst is yet to come. The economists up above have claimed

> that the turbulence will be overcome in a few months. At the latest, a few years. They are not allowed to tell the truth: that they have absolutely no clue where this crisis is headed. And that's because it turns out that it is not only an economic crisis. It has to be multiplied by the unnatural environmental disasters, seeing as they are the effect of a man-made cause: the transformation of everything, including the most basic and elementary of things —water, air, sun and shade, earth and sky—into commodities. And from there, the exploitation of these things, far beyond the most elementary logic. And not only that, there are also the planned catastrophes, but we will talk about those later. (2015c)

Land's transformation into a commodity puts the world out of balance, creating an unresolvable crisis in which the cosmological ecology is disrupted, oscillating until balance is restored. This radical transformation of irreducible ecological assemblages into commodities entails a dramatic shift in how human life is reproduced. Galeano's (semi)-enchanted account of this disorder walks borders with realist and scientific understandings of anthropogenic climate change. Furthermore, his attention to exploitation "beyond the most elementary logic" demonstrates the uncontrollable drive to commodify beyond the brink of even planetary boundaries. This is modern, linear time in action; it is a narrative that is not rational, but churns along oblivious to all but its own logics, compounding its contradictions.

Gilly, in comparing modern, "disenchanted" time with "enchanted" cosmovisions, declares "Societies based on relations of personal dependence, which is to say all societies prior to modern society, regard themselves as part of the natural order… Modernity conceives itself as a radical break from that order. Its defining features are the disenchantment of the world, the quantification of the world, the mechanization of the world, rationalist abstraction and the dissolution of communitarian social bonds" (Löwy and Saury in Gilly 1998, 318). Modernity's new supplementary discourse, abstract sustainability, seeks to address the pathological and contradictory myths of a rational,

efficiently administered globe. An ecology of domination emerges in global capital's "late conservation phase" (Kuecker 2014a, 166), which is coloniality in reproduction. How long before the apparatus, the complex system, dissolves from its own internal contradictions?

Global Ecology

The inherent complexity of a pluriverse of decolonial liberation projects perturbs a liberal sensibility that values the order and foundationalism of law and state. Ironically, however, in the contemporary era, the global world system obliterates both these very structures through the expansion of capital. The conceptual move to topologies and complexities is indicative of the global order's future direction, which attempts to deal with crises without resolving the contradictions. For example, Escobar notes that in the context of the "emerging global economy, large corporations have a profound role in shaping the *networked economy*" (2009, 397; Emphasis added). Processes of depoliticized financialization, such as high frequency and computerized trading, mediate the global world system's growth and expansion (Thomson and Dutta, 2015). A complex global economy operates in an increasingly abstract and intuitively mechanistic manner, in some ways mirroring the "fluid architecture" of the internet (Escobar 2009, 395). The same suicidal inclinations of constant growth churn along without any mechanisms to account for environmental degradation. Social-ecological and sensible alternative notions such as degrowth (D'Alisa, 2014) cannot affect any change to abstracted global markets because these markets are *predicated* on neoliberal suppositions. Global power's transitional process represents a recoding of coloniality into an increasingly abstract

variant of abstract universalism, producing a genocidal callousness toward those who suffer the global economy's infinite growth.

Global power understands the scope and scale of transition, and the threat of collapse, emerging from the convergence of climate change and economic failure. Gleckman argues that the "World Economic Forum's Global Redesign Initiative is perhaps the best reflection of how corporations and other elites envision the future of governance" (2016, 91). During an 18-month program, a framework emerged in which multi-stakeholder governance councils (MSGs) were developed thematically, consisting of a mix of "corporate, academic, government, entertainment, religious, civil society, and academic worlds;" furthermore, this "ingenious and disturbing…proposal does not require approval or disapproval by any government body (92). The transition from consultation to governance is intentionally ambiguous; a telling comparison could be made between the Trans-Pacific Partnership's "investor-state dispute resolution system," which would allow corporations to circumvent impeding governmental environment, health or trade regulations (Wallach 2015). The format's hierarchizing of corporate interests above those of traditional governing bodies is self-reinforcing because corporatist hegemony continually desecrates already weakened – or non-existent –sectors such as national civil societies.

Ironically, many of the same nomadic and complex features of resistance networks also exist in a nomadic and abstracted "Davos Class" and its more adaptive global economy. George notes that this transnational elite class is "nomadic, powerful, and interchangeable" (2010). Increasingly, it seems that the strategy for maintaining this power will depend on transitioning the function of empire into a more fluid and complex

system predicated on transnational capitalist interests. McMichael argues that in the context of the sustainable development industry, this transitional reconfiguration "recycles the problem as solution—a problem rooted in the geopolitics of an unsustainable global 'metabolic rift' and a discourse of global ecology reinforcing international power relations" (2009, 247). "Global ecology" is discursively traced to the 1992 Earth Summit and denotes how such a discourse "appropriates and/or manages environmental knowledge to protect planetary carbon sinks and natural resources for a global development project (247). The fundamental contradictions of a colonial global order and Eurocentric notion of industrial development that produced the global ecological crisis, therefore, remain fundamental to its solutions for market-based solutions. Global power's maintenance of its interests represent the aim of this constructed "global ecology," rather than a more realistic, rational, and scientific assessment of planetary boundaries, ecosystems, carbon sinks etc.

No climate solution is possible without acknowledging coloniality in the global world system. Roberts and Parks (2006) argue:

> When powerful states disregard weaker states' position in the international division of labor in areas where they possess structural power, they run a high risk of weaker states 'reciprocating' in policy areas where they possess more bargaining leverage. The issue of global climate change—which itself is characterized by tremendous inequality in vulnerability, responsibility, and mitigation—can therefore not be viewed, analyzed or responded to in isolation from the larger crisis of global inequality. (14)

Their 2006 argument finds tremendous resonance in the unfolding of the COP21 agreement in late 2015. Following a series of terrorist attacks, the French government took advantage of this tragedy to criminalize protests, excluding non-elite voices attempting to move the discussions from the politically-possible to the ethically- and

ecologically- admissible. Alberto Saldamando, legal counsel for the Indigenous Environmental Network, assessed the deal, stating that,

> The Paris accord is a trade agreement, nothing more. It promises to privatize, commodify and sell forested lands as carbon offsets in fraudulent schemes such as REDD+ projects. These offset schemes provide a financial laundering mechanism for developed countries to launder their carbon pollution on the backs of the global south. Case-in-point, the United States' climate change plan includes 250 million megatons to be absorbed by oceans and forest offset markets. Essentially, those responsible for the climate crisis not only get to buy their way out of compliance but they also get to profit from it as well.

Corporate plutocracy propagates itself according to its own logics, and institutional responses are wholly incapable of unsettling the prevalent market episteme.

The problem with the new coloniality of global ecology is that capitalism's endemic crises become more interconnected and prone to systemic collapse (Homer-Dixon 2015). Food shortages, energy infrastructures, effects of climate change and global warming, and conflict are mutually interdependent in a "just in time" and increasingly interconnected system (Homer-Dixon 2015). Homer-Dixon, et al. argue that this systemic interconnectivity will mark an increasing complexity and scope of intersectional crises, utilizing the 2008-9 financial-energy crisis as an illustrative case study (2015). They identify three "underlying, long-term, causally linked global trends" that create this arrangement (6). The three trends are, firstly, "dramatic increase in the scale of human economics activity in relation to the Earth's natural resources and systems," secondly, "rapidly rising density, capacity, and transmission speed of the connections carrying material, energy, and information among the components of human technological, economic and social systems," and finally, "increasing homogeneity, or declining diversity, of human cultures institutions, practices, and technologies including

technologies that exploit ecosystem services such as agriculture or aquaculture" (6). Totalization facilitates increasingly catastrophic results when the failure of stressed systems cause the failure of interconnected systems.

The global world system, mediated by the logics of capital accumulation, enables this "autocatalytic" process by redistributing crises into ever deepening and insoluble contradictions (Korowicz 2014). In other words, modernity constitutes a complex global (political-economic-social-cultural) system that demonstrates "bounded resilience" and is unable to adapt beyond its own structural constraints (Korowicz 2011). A complex system cannot be administered by its very nature; its internal complexity is too "opaque" (Korowicz 2011). As market restructuring and financialization supersede the traditional roles of governing bodies, the preconditions for a complex and self-perpetuating machine are established, regardless of its internal contradictions. The global system's "lock in" represents a point in which institutions and human practices can no longer use innovation to adapt to problems (Korowicz 2011). "Lock in" in a complex system of this sort means that the system can only adapt in piecemeal ways that are unable to address the roots of issues.

Crises in financial systems, food production, conflict, migration, extreme weather, etc. are dramatically more likely to trigger ripple effects in other systems. The relevance of these complexity analyses means that the neoliberal crisis of accumulation in the era of the Anthropocene may have already passed its 'lock in' point. If this is the case, it would render any life-preserving shift in environmental policy *financially catastrophic* and therefore just as likely to initiate crises as inaction would be.

Mother Earth

In the context intersectional crises, communities already existing in socially and ecologically resilient ways stand better chances to weather the storm. Moisés, explains how indigenous lived in the Montes Azules Biosphere, when "nobody counted how many little boys and girls were born there" (2015b). He continues: "So then how did we survive there? Well, with Mother Earth. Mother Earth is what gave us life even though there wasn't any government…taking us into account" (2015b). When other indigenous people ask what they should do to be more like Zapatistas, the response remains "organize yourselves, brothers and sisters" (2015b). This organization entails addressing specific communal needs. For instance, Zapatista communities originally only did collective work but after issues arose due to environmental constraints and allocation of labor, communities worked out balances between familial and collective work on the basis of individual communities (Moisés 2015b; *Autonomous Government I)*. Regardless, when Global North subjects hear this advice, it lacks specificity, applicability. To this the Zapatistas respond again, "how you live, start from there" (Moisés 2015b).

In the contemporary moment of crisis, one most basic question human reproduction resurfaces with glaring new implications: how food is produced and by whom. McMichael contextualizes the contemporary "corporate food regime restructuring," by arguing that the present land-grab "is symptomatic of a crisis of accumulation in the neoliberal globalization project" (2012, 381). Land-grab is specifically addressed in the Zapatista account of political economy. For instance, Moisés tells about a community in Roberto Barrios, Chulum Juarez, in which the state forces have told residents they have to leave or "you will be forced to do so" (2015b). For

indigenous communities, with limited access to resources to resist state violence, the term of "land-grab" appropriately "invokes a long history of violent enclosure of common lands to accommodate world capitalist expansion" (McMichael 2012, 381).

Though accumulation by dispossession (Harvey 2008) in the countryside takes on a different context then the urban process, it is a process of "urbanizing the country" (Wilson 2013). Stahler-Sholk explains how states, capitalist interests, and corporate NGOs "argue that small-scale peasant agriculture is an inefficient throwback, unsustainable in the era of corporate-dominated globalization," even though "that corporate model appears 'sustainable' only if it is subsidized by infrastructural investments and, for that matter, by military (and paramilitary) coercion that structures the market by clearing resistant communities from the area to be 'developed'" (2008, 125-126). As noted before, so-called liberal and free market relations depend on an *a priori* political assertion of a specific type of property law and Eurocentric social relations. The injection of the state into Chiapas is constituted by explicit state violence as well as non-governmental bodies geared toward developing Eurocentric, market-oriented subjectivities. Therefore, taking control of food production is a matter of autonomous material production as well as social reproduction.

While food production illustrates a one example of a system subject to capital's totalizing capacity, it is also a more archetypal and fundamental issue for the reproduction of human life. McMichael explains, "agriculture is about food production first, and that an overriding task for small farmers is to reproduce themselves, and their fellow citizens, with locally produced preferably with 'locally appropriate and democratically controlled agro-ecological methods'" (2009, 256). For all human beings

in all the worlds within this world, food is a foundational component of "how you live" (Moisés 2015b). Collectives forge social ecologies by occupying and animating the commons that sustain both the ecological and social reproduction of the community.

The Zapatistas's resultant autonomy is robust type of social and ecological resilience, defiant to crisis. Global North subjects can conceptualize this resilience as social-ecological in the sense that it is an inclusive assemblage of the social and ecological, not an ontological split between the constitution of sociality and materiality. For example, sociality represents an *ecological sensibility* in which a complex array of *Caracoles*, *Juntas de Buen Gobierno*, and communities adapt to specific territories and challenges, too complex for a state form to administer ethically or democratically (*Autonomous Government I)*. Conversely, collectives give social meaning to materiality (land, food, water), not through capitalist utilitarianism or sustainable conservation, but by the socially constructed myths, norms, and *usos y costumbres* as determined by the collective. The assemblage thinking employed here is necessarily reductionist compared to dynamic and specific communal knowledges, nevertheless, this type of thinking initiates a process of decolonizing liberal understandings of what sustainability and resilience entail. Furthermore, a transmodern, and resilient sensibility, dedicated to democracy and dignity can, and indeed, should, integrate some better elements of the liberal knowledge that remain constitutive of the modern epistemology.

People the color of earth

If the modern subject's deep biases cloud us from a cosmological worldview, what might a more resilient, social-ecological ontology look like? For the Zapatistas, a

rediscovery of autonomous forms is a question of memory: “Do you remember that part about the choice between seeing the tree or the forest? Well, as Zapatistas, we see the roots” (Galeano 2015c). The roots of the Zapatistas’s deep premodern knowledges propagate a cosmological balance by situating patterns of thought and being in the world as the primary constitution of that same world. Recall from the “The Words that Walk Truths” that the concept of “deep” is a matter of a collectively constructed patrimony, which is not chronological but inclusively representative of a shared cosmological universe of human and nonhuman, past and present. Furthermore, the Zapatistas, or men and women “the color of earth” (Marcos in León, 364), being of earth and earth itself, enjoy a unique perspective of the constitution of the forest through their knowledge of the roots. The Zapatistas maintain communal roots and social traditions that they continue to nurture as tools of resistance and rebellion. Even as Global North subjects experience post-industrial and late-cultural capitalism, we can look to these subaltern knowledges in order to imagine what social ecologies look like.

The interconnections of the storm, whether they be loss of democracy, loss of autonomy, land-grab, enclosure of the commons, dispossession, displacement, food shortage, or extreme weather, seem impossible to address. With a shared consensus among the forces of global economic, state, juridical, and military power that dictate the administration of issues of Anthropogenic climate change and the global economy, what can social-ecological ontology contribute? For the Zapatistas, “it doesn’t matter if a storm comes, because, believe it or not the originary peoples are specialists in storms. And they’re still here and we’re still here” (Galeano 2015b). The continuing existence and resilience of subaltern peoples represents a survival of a five hundred year storm that

continues to reproduce its contradictions to its own dissolution. The Zapatistas's refusal of aid, of government charity means that they owe "their existence, their resistance, their rebellion, their freedom… 'TO NOBODY'" (Galeano 2015b).

For the Zapatistas, autonomy means that only those who exist in and contribute to the collective deserve a say in its collective reproduction. Refusal to take power is both a point of subaltern pride for a unique and self-determined existence as well as a dedication to communal ontologies, which reject domination and subordination in human relations among human and nonhuman actors. Galeano continues: "NOBODY is who makes the wheels of history turn. It is NOBODY who works the land, who operates the machinery, who constructs, who works, who struggles. It is NOBODY who survives catastrophe" (2015b). By identifying with the label NOBODY, Galeano continues in his tradition of upsetting discursive tropes to evoke a representation of indigeneity with agency, hybridity, and power. By framing the scope of catastrophe as both a historical unfolding of Eurocentric modernity, as well as a literal, cotemporary, "economic," and "environmental" storm, however, Galeano performs a temporal dislocation, an apocalyptic and ethical intervention into the Western calendar.

The global majority of NOBODY experiences "a brutish hell of alienation and desperate survival" in the global world system's "late conservation phase" (Kuecker 2014, 165). However, "it is the release phase of the complex system that is the time for the transmoderns to flourish" (165). As the untenable global world system lurches along, piling catastrophes, there remain those below who have survived; there remain those who will survive. These "non-capitalist, autonomous, small-scale, subsistence communities [have] demonstrated amazing resilience in a harsh world" (Kuecker and Hall 2011, 34).

The maintenance of social-ecological ties to community and dignity are paths to tomorrow, to new worlds in the re-ordering of the old one.

Practicing Apocalypse[11]

> Subcomandante Moisés on February 29, 2016:
>
> Considering:
>
> That the serious crisis that shakes the entire world, and that will only worsen, puts the survival of the planet and the entire population, including human beings, at risk….
> That politics from above is not only incapable of coming up with and constructing solutions, but is also among those directly responsible for the catastrophe already underway….
> That the sciences and the arts now represent the only serious opportunity for the construction of a more just and rational world….
>
> The Sixth Commission of the EZLN and the Zapatista bases of support:
> CONVOKE ARTISTS, FORMAL AND NATURAL SCIENTISTS, COMPAÑER@S OF THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SIXTH, THE NATIONAL INDIGENOUS CONGRESS, AND WHATEVER HUMAN BEING WHO FEELS CALLED
> [to]
> the CompARTE FOR HUMANITY…[and]
> The Zapatistas and the conSCIENCES FOR HUMANITY.
>
> (Moisés 2015g)

[11] "Practicing apocalypse" is a phrase used Bryant (2015) in his development of an "apocalyptic pedagogy... that aims at subjectivizations cognitively and affectively attuned to the unveiling of beings or machines, including ourselves, as they dwell" (52). This type of assemblage thinking demonstrates that "the ambient... is ecological" (53) so that when "we experience ourselves as merely dealing with things, with objects, we [overlook] the ambience of social relations, the background, the ecology of societal relations that renders these commodities possible" (54). Rather than his more poststructuralist approach to apocalypse, I attempt to get to similar realizations by analyzing narrative, an analysis I hope has more resonance with a general audience.

The Zapatista's call to their 2016 gatherings dismantles false binaries between the sciences and the arts; the survival of humanity means constructing narratives and aesthetics that guide and nurture more just, democratic, and ecological action. The invited artists and scientists will have the opportunity to translate ways that their work intersects with the ecological aesthetics of free and autonomous communities. "Words created us" (Marcos in León, xvii) and the narratives and memories we construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct give shape and meaning to the paths we walk.

Discourses of modernization myth and "capitalism as religion" mutually constitute their respective narratives to keep Global North subjects from acknowledging the roots causes and implications of the Anthropocene. Critical perspectives must name capitalism, and detail the ways it constitutes climate-proofing and sustainable development narratives steeped in material and intellectual legacies of white supremacy, patriarchy, colonialism, domination of man-over-human, domination of man-over-nature. Guardiola-Rivera accounts how the 21st century is witnessing a resurgence of "empire" and "white man's burden" has indicated by tropes such as "saving the global economy, or behaving as global protector" (2013, 33). Elite efforts to administer the Anthropocene, such as COP 21, which depended on silencing and criminalizing dissenting, democratic, and indigenous voices, indicate this disturbing trend. Invoking Benjamin, Guardiola-Rivera notes that

> those struggling against racism, economic oppression, debt, forced displacement, land-grab, and the loss of sovereignty that leads to diminution of democracy and to the inability to decide one's own economic and political destiny, are realizing that their constraints are connected, in concrete ways, to the constraints being placed upon non-human environments by a form of "progress" that continues to pile catastrophe upon catastrophe, and moves forward blindly, reaffirming the very limits of capitalism, of humanity, of nature. (45)

By privileging the "plight of communities that are being most directly damaged by the environmental crisis brought about by a sacrificial model of capitalist consumption," Guardiola-Rivera argues that the 2010 World People's conference on Climate Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Bolivia represents a radically different and emancipatory way of doing politics (45-6).

The Zapatistas share important theoretical formulations in connection with this example, namely, they both entail transmodern, syncretic, and ethical politics based on self-determined human needs. For instance, proposals to "leave resources in the soil" share precedents with the Anglo Charter of the Forest and Amerindian Law of Peace (46) which together help constitute a revolutionary document that shares diverse legacies in dissimilar contexts. Likewise, the Zapatistas legitimize their revolutionary resistance through indigenous specificity, rooted in Mesoamerican legacies, as well as Mexican National identity, rooted in Western constructions of nation-state formation.

A new pluriverse of self-determined modernities (Mignolo 2002b) depends on radically transforming the *potentialities* and *constraints* of our historical legacies. We must have a common "heart" for "walking" toward radical change; we must be able to decolonize our liberal, modern knowledges to relearn and relink to social-ecological forms. No longer is it acceptable to posit Eurocentric models for radical transformation predicated on an individual agency authorized to administer the collective. The Zapatistas reject this vanguardism through their prefigurative politics and understand that different collectivities must learn to constitute themselves in emancipatory ways. A universal conceptual frame—while problematic or wholly unacceptable for some stains of academic critical inquiry—is not only appealing and intrinsic to emerging networks of

international solidarity, *it may be necessary to theorize an ethical response to the Anthropocene*. Rather than producing abstract universalist arguments about a shared universe, which displaces guilt and responsibility, it must be specific and history-critical. Diverse subaltern and marginalized localities and positionalities have suffered, and will continue to suffer, the brunt of intersectional crises caused by industrial society despite having contributed least to their root causes. These local histories are intertwined in the catastrophic unfolding of modern time.

Ongoing developmentalism depends on the hegemonic argument and continuing metanarrative that there-is-no-alternative to capitalism (Guardiola-Rivera 2013; Kuecker and Hall 2011). It is therefore important to reiterate how the Zapatista's premodern Mesoamerican legacies are non- anti- capitalist, and that they construct these traditions anew through resistance. The religious hold of modern progress blinds Global North subjects from seeing the pluriverse of different ontologies that have existed in resistance to capitalism and Eurocentric modernity. The very bonds that constitute a social, communitarian life are in resistance to the totalizing impulse of the market's constant expansion and territorialization of material production and social reproduction. In response to the now internationally popular slogan that "another world is possible," Escobar correctly reiterates that other *worlds* already exist, the problematic remains whether/how these distinct universes can become a truly counterhegemonic response to the state of global power (2009).

Regardless of modernity's pretensions to rational administration, myth continues to shape our symbolic and material worlds, whether these teleological narratives presume capitalism, developmentalism, or modernity. State communist and vanguardist

approaches to revolution reproduced modernity's arrogant presumption that an enlightened elite could administer a radical transformation to society (Scott 1998). Rather than pretending that narrative and myth could ever be exercised from human life, peoples struggling for democracy and dignity construct emancipatory, social-ecological myths in the search for liberation.

Coloniality reproduces itself in the Anthropocene through narrative and myth, as do decolonial resistances to it. The differing nature of the narratives is illustrative. For instance, Guardiola-Rivera demonstrates the contemporary rehabilitation of empire and liberatory religious impetus by juxtaposing Latin American Catholicism against the European variety (2013). He uses Dussel's readings of *Kairós,* liberatory event, and Paul of Tarsus to demonstrate how different interpretations of Christianity can produce dramatically opposed politics. For instance, he outlines "the tension between conceptions of law and political institutions that see it as their task to normalize, manage or master the contingency of time," which is embedded in a Christian Sovereign, and the "crucial notion of the 'Final Judgment', as both the principle and the event or act of bringing to an end the inequalities of oppression and empire" (36). This tension produces an ambivalent doctrine through which, according to Dussel, the "heretic" presents internal criticism, which collapses the "very criterion of truth and justice" (43). Rather than "demanding that we do away with contradiction—or conversely, that we do away with consistency and logics—it is shown that consistency has to do with incompleteness and observation, and that a logical system of truth or justification is consistent only if it does not exclude its own problematic nature" (43).

This argument's resonance with Zapatismo goes beyond the enormous influences of Bishop Ruiz's organization based on Liberation Theology. The Zapatista principles such as "lead by obeying" guide their democratic action. With sovereignty situated resolutely in the people and self-determined by the people, the Zapatistas have been able to adapt the collective ethically, democratically, and ecologically. For instance, when women in the organization demanded a bill of Women's Revolutionary Laws before the beginning of the armed struggle in 1993, they presented a moment of heresy that forwarded liberation. Likewise, the subordination of the military wing of the organization in 2003 and the metaphorical "death" of Marcos in 2014 also represented Zapatismo's ability to make revolution the path that one walks. The reconstruction of ethical myth and cosmology in Zapatismo demonstrates that "religion becomes heresy when it emphatically takes sides with those who remain invisible, as a residue, in the present order, question its justification, and having found all justifications wanting, reasonably conclude they ought to overcome it" (Guardiola-Rivera, 43). A particularly interesting heretical and apocalyptic revision was announcement of Marcos's nonexistence and subsequent demotion of Galeano.[12] While explaining the decision, Galeano irreverently stated, "to struggle, one only needs a sense of shame, a bit of dignity, and a lot of organization. As for the rest, it either serves the collective or it doesn't" (Galeano 2014).

One great tension in Global North responses to Zapatismo emerges from this paradox of myth, liberation, and heresy. While the Zapatistas attracted support and solidarity in part because of their ability to awaken deep, repressed memories of colonial injustice, those with guilty consciences were less willing to decolonize their new

[12] Subcomandante Moisés now serves as the spokesperson of the EZLN (2015b; 2015c).

religions: their modern progress, their authorized knowledges, their privileged position in a world still forged in the flames of coloniality. The Zapatista implore us,

> Don't abandon us brothers, drink our blood as food, fill your hearts, you and all the good people of these lands, Indians and non-Indians, men and women, old folks and children. Don't leave us alone. Don't let this all be in vain. That the voice of the blood that united us when the land and the skies were not property of the powerful to call to us again, that our hearts beat together, that the powerful tremble, that the hearts of the small and miserable be made happy, that the forever dead have life. Don't abandon us, don't leave us to die alone, don't leave our struggle in the emptiness of the powerful. (Marcos in Gilly, 322)

Those who say "for everyone everything, for us nothing" show us that imbibing the blood of the martyr should not valorize dogmatic law. Instead the "apocalyptic" and "truly ethical act is the questioning, transgression or disobedience of the Law" (Guardiola-Rivera 2013, 47).

The ethical act is not academic, nor reformist, nor pragmatic, nor abstract. Thinkers such as Benjamin have "spoke(n) of catastrophes piling upon catastrophes, of our blindness, and of the storm called progress" (Guardiola-Rivera 2013, 46). The Storm piles not only crises, but also a deepening commitment to the dogma, embedded ever deeper. The Storm's disciples, unable and unwilling to decolonize the modern epistemology, produce discussions of liberation and resilience; "all sound and fury, signifying nothing."[13]

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[13] A speech given by Michelle Alexander (2015) inspired this Shakespeare quotation.

At the 1999 National *Encuentro* in Defense of National Heritage, Marcos told a story about a crazy man, ridiculed by his community because he only planted trees instead of tending his field (In León 1999, 280). Years after the old man was gone and almost forgotten, however, and a group of children "found a place filled with huge trees, with a thousand birds living in them and their great branches giving shade from the heat and shelter from the rain" (281). The people gathered, "with wonder," and learned that "memory can travel very far and arrive where no one can guess" (281). In the midst of their celebration, a faint light from the moon illuminated a sign that read "To the first ones / Those who came later understood / Health to you" (281).

Marcos told this story in order to explain "what the Zapatistas want" (282). He explained:

> To plant the tree of tomorrow, that is what we want. We know that in these frenetic times of "realistic" politics… saying that we want to plant the tree of tomorrow sounds foolish and crazy; but nevertheless, to us it is not a phrase born of drama or obsolete utopianism…We think…that the worlds of the world are filled with crazy and foolish people each planting their trees for each of their tomorrows and that the day will come when this mountainside of the universe that some call Planet Earth will be filled with trees of all colors, and there will be so many birds and comforts that…yes it is likely no one will remember the first ones, because all the yesterdays which vex us today will be no more than an old page in the old book of the old history. The tree of tomorrow is a space where everyone is, where the other knows and respects the other others, and where the false light loses its last battle. If you press me to be precise, I would tell you it is a place with democracy, liberty, and justice; that is the tree of tomorrow. This is what the Zapatistas want. It might seem I've been vague in my answer, but…I have never spoken so clearly before. In any case, times will come in which these words will fit, and together their embrace will expand, and they'll be heard and guarded, and they'll grow. That is what the words are for, and, yes, also those who go speak them. (Marcos in León 1999, 282)

What more can be said? Somehow, these memories, these words, travelled great distances to arrive in surprising places. Words, like the "morning star," announce that

“night is ending and another morning is coming. This star, made by the men and women of corn, the true ones, walks with feeling and thought, and, faithfully, it comes at daybreak” (Marcos in León 1999, 369).

An Ending?

From the flatlands of the valley of money, encased in high facades of thought and brick, where the true light is called darkness but the darkness is planted in what is called tomorrow: it is 15:59 on the 12th day of April in the year of 2016 according to the time of the Gregorian calendar of the Planet Earth.

P.S.

Shit, err... *mierda.* Well, this is awkward but—that is to say—I've fucked it up. How uncomfortable. But it is true and we would do well to get used to it. I warned you there would be a subversive ending. Those who came later understood.

And it is not even that bad, this fuck-up. Conceivably, it could have been much worse, had I not noticed it. As the clock will tick, ticks, ticked, I remembered: "Neither theory without practice nor practice without theory" (Galeano 2015c). And as I said before: well, shit.

How curious that a text so interested in exploring the multidimensional, manifold trajectories of times, becomings, and spaces, so interested in liberating itself from the imposition of a sovereign authority, so interested in rejecting a linear destination, is a *text*? That is to say, for all intents and purposes, this *something* you hold in your hands is an object written and planned and finished and (relatively) rationally administered by a subject. And somewhat like modernity, it didn't turn out as planned. As an ossified artifact, this text doesn't seem to tell anything of the walking. Because it's done. Because its finished. Because its time is at an end.

This *something* is an anti-teleological telos; it is a roadmap for the contingent performance of the assemblage, assembled definitively and forever, by an anti-colonial colonizer….

"Will you kindly shut the fuck up with all that nonsense?" interrupts a voice. I jump.

"Sorry…I… have I been speaking out loud?" I query into the darkness.

"You have, and it is, frankly, insufferable," returns the voice. As the words echo off into the silence, and with them, the last of my confidence, the spark of a match illuminates a face. It is the face of a small and bespectacled dog, next to a thick book and underneath a great tree; she is lighting a well-chewed pipe.

"I apologize; and, who exactly are you?" I ask.

"I'm Cat," she replies.

"But you're a dog," I bark back, more rudely than I had intentioned.

"Don't you think I know what and who I am?" she answers, unperturbed. As I chew on her response, she chews on her pipe silently.

Time passes.

Cat begins to read. I ask her, "what are you reading?"

Silence.

"Anyway, I've realized that I've tried to produce theory without practice," I venture. "Practice is quite hard, especially if you want to do it right, since there's no blueprint," I offer to the night, and to the silence. Cat continues to read, but I continue to speak. "And you need a collective. That's for sure. But where's the collective? I think there's a mall where the collective used to be and a cell phone where the individual used

to be… So, anyway, I've tried my best to write some theory. I don't know, though. I don't know if it's any good, it might be good, it might be bad." Silence. "Either way though, it seems as though it is one thing for sure: pointless." Silence. "…yeah, that has a nice ring to it; by ring, I mean that it resonates and reverberates around the high places, producing overtones that merge and reemerge before reaching ears… Yes, pointless," I say, more resolute.

"I hear that that is the same word SupGaleano used to describe SupMarcos" Cat responds, somewhat snidely.

"No, and also yes, if I've done the translations correctly," I murmur.

Another silence passes. Cat lets out a deep sigh and says, "I've also heard it said that 'the struggle is collective, but the decision to struggle is individual, personal, intimate, as is the decision to go on or to give up'" (Marcos 2013). "So," Cat continues, "'understanding that there is injustice, then trying to understand the roots of this injustice…invariably leads you to ask yourself: and you, what are you going to do about it?'" (Marcos in Henck 2007, 10).

(Silence)

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