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That which will become the earth
anarcho-indigenous speculative geographies
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Ce que deviendra la terre: les géographies spéculatives anarcho-indigènes

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Incoherence as possibility

> Anarchism is the link between community and revolution… And today we are adding a reconnection with the rituals and the indigenous way of life. Because the anarchists were totally atheistic, and I don't like that. That's why we call ourselves anarcho-ch'ixi–stained anarchists. Our anarchism is not pure. It is stained with indigeneity. It is stained with feminism. It is stained with ecology. It is even stained with religiosity, with spirituality.
>
> Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui[1]

This essay utilizes an anarcho-indigenous/mestiz@ lens to explore how the Guaraní concept of *teko'a* (tekoha) (settlement/village/community) can lead to different formations of the ways in which we relate to each other and to the earth. It is both a philosophical inquiry that aims to challenge the nation-state and capitalism, and also a practice of speculative geographies that imagines possible futures along with the creation of "a new world in the shell of the old" inspired by Indigenous epistemologies. My aim is to demonstrate that the Guaraní language is a bearer of revolutionary philosophical concepts and, as such, is a form of counterpower present in the lives of all Guaraní speakers, Indigenous and mestiz@ alike. My hope is to suggest ways to radicalize Paraguayan mestiz@ identity through the manifested revolutionary counterpower of the Guaraní language, in the effort to replace the Paraguayan state, a political formation whose existence is maintained by the colonialist persistence of a depoliticized mestiz@ identity, with another form of polity.

[1] Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, "Indigenous Anarchist Critique of Bolivia's 'Indigenous State': Interview with Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui" in *Upside Down World*. September 3, 2014. http://revistas.javeriana.edu.co/index.php/univhumanistica/article/view/2075/1315

This essay is a philosophical exercise rooted in *ava ñe'e*, the Guaraní language. The point is not to make assertions about First Nation societies pre-European contact, nor to try to glean some understanding about social order from historical texts written at the time of conquest. The aim is to look specifically for Guaraní epistemologies that reside within the language itself and to assess how these words point to concepts that describe a way of being in the world. Thus, my aim is not to fix, and therefore make these concepts "knowable," but rather to try to draw a way of thinking and being from the philosophy of my ancestors and Paraguayan culture.

I am acutely aware that to begin from an anti-colonial position and, at the same time, to demand that Indigenous epistemologies be recognized as philosophically rich within the academy is already an irreconcilable contradiction. In truth, however, what I want is for the academy to cease to exist, and to see in its place a multiplicity of fluid spaces, ways of knowing, and ways of being that create material change in the world that are not solely rooted in European ways of thinking or being.

For this essay, I have employed a compound methodology that engages both autoethnographic practices along with speaking with Paraguayans predominantly in Asuncion. My autoethnographic practice is grounded in my own dislocation from my culture, having emigrated to the us at the age of eight. My autoethnographic process, in relation to the Guaraní language, is informed by my experience of reading Guaraní dictionaries and discovering on my own that the words have deep philosophical meanings, and then taking those ideas back to my family members and other Paraguayans and having them corroborate my findings. It is clear that the ways in which mestiz@ identities are contemporarily formed in the us and in South America (in this case specifically Paraguay) are quite different, and this difference has also informed my way of thinking. Immigrating to the us as a child propelled me into a process of being racialized in a way that I would not have

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experienced had I remained in Paraguay. Through this process of racialization and othering that Latin@ immigrants experience in the us, and its relation to the violence of structural racism, I came to understand that not only did I, my family members, and my countryfolk have an ancestral pre-colonial language that we spoke and whose concepts were part of our culture, but that we were actively being perceived as people of Indigenous descent. This created a rupture in my own identity in relation to that of my family and countryfolk who stayed back home and were not racialized by the same processes and thus tend to actively self-identify as either a depoliticized concept of mestiz@ or, rather strangely, as white. In my practice, both as an artist and writer, I feel pressured to coherently define myself in relationship to the legacy of colonization; this is an impulse I actively reject, however, and much of my thinking is informed by this refusal. This process of self and outsider identification fascinates me, both in its specificity as it relates to Paraguay, but also in the broader ways that it defines these marked differences of Latin@ identity between the north and the south. Perhaps the ways in which mestiz*@s* identify themselves in the north marks a total conceptual break from the ways in which mestiz*@s* were identified and came to self-identify in the south, and this incoherence may be frustrating;[2] for me, however, it is laden with a positive tension. It raises the question of the desire for coherence, on whose terms and for what purpose? And, ultimately, the question of what political logic coherence in these identities would serve?

For the purposes of this text, I would like to blur the definitions or understandings of the distinct meanings between the concepts of mestizo and Guaraní (Indigenous) identities in Paraguay. There is both a biological and a cultural dimension to mestiz@

[2] I do not think that the different ways in which mestiz@ identifty in the north and south manifests itself represents a conceptual break at all. In fact, I believe that these differences point to the ways in which identities develop both in the service of coercive power and in opposition to domination concurrently.

identity (Cadena (de la), 2006), and I find both to be important. What I am most interested in for this text, however, is the part of Paraguayan mestiz@ identity that is defined by its relationship to Guaraní culture through the overwhelming use of the Guaraní language by Paraguayan people, along with the implications of mestiz@ Paraguayans claiming Guaraní roots without the ethical ramifications that I feel this identity necessitates. What I came to realize through my interviews is that ethnic self-identification in Paraguay has more to do with class than with biological conceptions of race. Upper-class, educated people tend to primarily identify as whites of European descent despite phenotypical characteristics that may point to a different version of this narrative. When questioned about their identity further, they either begrudgingly identify as mestiz*@s* with Indigenous ancestry, or more often simply identify as Paraguayans. This contrasts with the working-class and working poor people I interviewed (domestic workers, street vendors, field hands) who without exception or hesitation identify as people of Indigenous, specifically Guaraní, descent.

The interviews that I conducted were done for the purposes of collecting material for a documentary film about the medicinal plant culture of Paraguay, *pohâ ñana*.[3] For this film project, I interviewed Paraguayans from all walks of life, including: *yuyer@s* (sellers of plant medicine), a broad range of Paraguayans from different class backgrounds, Guaraní activists, and Western medicine doctors. The bulk of the interviews were conducted in Asuncion, though a number of interviews were collected in the south-eastern region of Paraguay, in the rural areas surrounding the town of San Cosme y San Damian. Part of what I am exploring with this documentary are the ways in which this practice of plant medicine, rooted in ancestral Indigenous knowledge, characterizes

[3] The documentary is in its post-production stage right now, but demonstrative clips can be accessed here: https://vimeo.com/236262344 and https://vimeo.com/193795066

horizon; the question is whether these solutions, these intensities, will be allowed to fully come into being.

I am in no way calling for a "becoming indigenous." This is not possible. Colonization has already strained the relationships that Indigenous Peoples have with each other, not to mention the incongruity among Indigenous Peoples and settlers. The issue is not for an individual to become something they are not, but rather for a centering of other ways of being in the world that may make our final years on this planet – however many or few there may be – ones worth living. We cannot transcend this earth. We cannot get out of it and expect to remain who we are. But we can open new territories for Indigenous epistemologies to make real change in the world, and we can resist domination and coercion while "building a new world in the shell of the old." And we can, over time, become a new people on an old earth and come to see that the horizon is all that surrounds us and that the only thing that matters is how we walk toward it together.[19]

The author would like to thank Andrej Grubačić, Josh Rutner, and Doro Wiese for their guidance and support. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Jacob Durieux for his patience for my many questions that perhaps bordered on interrogation. I would like to take a moment to recall that creating anything happens in relation to entire communities of people, other living beings, and the earth; so, although authorship creates the unfortunate illusion of a singular voice, know that this is merely an illusion. That being said, please be certain that all mistakes, inaccuracies, and challenges to reason are mine alone.

[19] This is a reference to *yvymarane'y*, the Guaraní concept of the after-life (paradise) that exists on this earth. One does not have to die in order to experience this place, which the ancestral Guaraní searched for through a practice of moving collectively towards the horizon.

to each other and to the earth? I, for one, am curious to see the Guaraní response to the questions of urbanism, the Diné solutions to the problematics of access to water, the Mbororo Fulani vision on the issue of property, the Kurdish answer to the complexities of self-government, the Maori understandings of the concept of family, and endless other multiplicities and possibilities of thought and materiality.[17]

This calls to mind Maia Ramnath's critically under-read book, *Decolonizing Anarchism: An Antiauthoritarian History of India's Liberation Struggle*, wherein she writes:

> With a small *a*, the word anarchism implies a set of assumptions and principles, a recurrent tendency or orientation – with the stress on movement in a direction, not a perfected condition—toward more dispersed and less concentrated power; less top-down hierarchy and more self-determination through bottom-up participation; liberty and equality seen as directly rather than inversely proportional; the nurturance of individuality and diversity within a matrix of interconnectivity, mutuality, and accountability; and an expansive recognition of the various forms that power relations can take, and correspondingly, the various dimensions of emancipation.[18]

Self-organizing communities all over the world, Indigenous or not, and explicitly anarchist or not, are already engaging with solutions to the problems we face and the crises that loom on the

[17] It would be a mistake not to note the hegemony of Guaraní identity in Paraguay to the detriment of other Indigenous identities whose philosophies also give shape to the Paraguayan identity and imagination and must be amplified if we are to be ever truly free; including the philosophies of the Nivaĉle, Yshir, Ayoreo, Ehenlhet, etc.

[18] Maia Ramnath (2011: 7).

mestiz@ identity in Paraguay, along with the tensions this practice of *pohâ ñana* manifests in Paraguayan identities. It was through this dual process of investigating the language and the medicinal plant use that I reached many of my conclusions. My background is in the arts, predominantly film and photography, so I am very aware that the methods I use for my work are decidedly outside of the boundaries of what is accepted as the "classical methodology" of the discipline of anthropology. But that is precisely the point of the work: to work outside set boundaries with the intention of opening up spaces of possibility.

The first creation

Peteiko'éme	In an awakening
Ojavaekue	It glued itself
Chekure	To my tongue
Opuvaekue	It lingered
Chejurúpe	In my mouth
Mba'eguasuete	An unexpected thing
ñe'ẽ	The spoken word
Mba'ekyryimi	An extremely tender thing
Marangatuete	Truly good
Árapytumi	A breath from the skies
Ñanemoingovéva	What gives us life
Sapy'aitemi	In a moment
Pyharepytépe	In the middle of the night[a]

[a] Susy Delgado, *Ayvu Membyre*, trans Susan Smith Nash, http://www.thing.net/~grist/ld/ssn/delgado.htmThe purpose of placing Delgado's contemporary poetic work before an examination of Guaraní cosmogony is to generate an understanding of the position and importance of the Guaraní language and Guaraní cosmogony in contemporary mestiz@ Paraguayan culture.

Ñamandú, the First One, created words in the darkness before the earth: *ava ñe'ẽ*, the language of the people (Cadogan, 1959: 13-16). Words existed before people existed. Words, for the Guaraní, are a sacred creation—speech, a sacred act. *Ñe'e*, words/speech, is the manifestation of *ñe'a*, the soul. Speech is the means through which *ñe'a* is expressed and comes to be known.

Ava ñe'e, the Indigenous language of the Guaraní people, is spoken by over eight million people throughout Paraguay, southern Brazil, southern Bolivia, northern Argentina, and in the Guaraní/mestiz@ diaspora throughout the world. Guaraní philosophy is rooted in its language. In *ava ñe'e,* the meanings of words shift and expand as they are fused together with other words. For example, *teko* means "to be, a state of being, our way of being, our culture, one's temperament," *sã* means "rope, chain, obstacle, slavery," and *sõ* means "to cut or break." *Teko sãsõ* is how you say "free / the state of being free," but it literally means "to exist in a state of cutting that which binds you or keeps you from being free," which implies that to be free requires action.[4] The concept is a lesson both for the one who seeks their freedom—you must take action and "cut" that which keeps you from being free—and for the one who seeks to take someone's freedom—your actions have put you on the wrong side of the Guaraní blade and you will be cut. In Guaraní epistemology, to exist freely requires you to actively resist oppression. Within this framework, you yourself are responsible for your emancipation, and the construction of a state of freedom is a constant act of engaging with forces that keep you from being free.

Another example is the word *yvyra. Yvy* means "soil / earth / the world," and *ra* means "it will become" or "it will be." *Yvyra* is how you say "tree" in Guaraní, but the deeper meaning is "that which will become the earth." This conceptualization of a tree sees it not

[4] I use the *Diccionario Básico Guaraní,* compiled by Antonio Guasch, and revised by Bartomeu Melià, (Asunción: Centro de Estudios Paraguayos, 2003) along with interviews with family, friends, and other Paraguayans about our language.

Ava ñe'ẽ is a rebellious language. It moves. It mutates. It refuses to die. It's always speaking and it creates new territory as it is spoken. Struggling to learn it from a distance, I have come to know that every word, every phrase, is a world of its own, and these worlds collide to form concepts that feel urgently necessary in our time of world-wide crisis wrought by unmitigated industrialization and subsequent man-made climate catastrophes. Guaraní philosophy is immanent in *ava ñe'ẽ* – it lives in the words, just as it was meant to when the language came into being in the darkness before the earth. I want to draw these ancestral ideas into the present and make the case that these philosophies recenter themselves in the construction of the south—both in the restructuring of identities and also in recreating different ways of relating to the land, to each other, and to the future. I want to live through a change in the concept of love and have it mean solidarity, so we can know what it is like to live in a place where "to be" means taking care of each other and the earth, in which we collectively seek to transform our conditions and create a way of being that strives towards *tekojoja* – "justice," or "the state in which things are equal / reciprocal." It is time to make way for new ontologies – for futures and becomings that have always been there and that challenge the Euro-colonial capitalist model that we are captives of today.

Concepts matter because our philosophies shape the world. It is our philosophies that make the lives of some people unlivable, that make the lives of our non-human relations unlivable, that render our future an unlivable place. How we collectively conceive of something—even something as seemingly simple as a tree—is of incredible consequence. We must make space for other philosophies and concepts that can bring into being new intensities that challenge oppressive power and its manifestation in our social constructions and our material practices. How different might our architecture and urban design, our solutions to questions of resource extraction and distribution, or our approach to everyday life be if we rooted our actions in philosophies that valued our relationship

for big profit monoculture cultivation projects, cattle ranching, and housing developments. And the Paraguayan wilderness is being cleared at an alarming rate for these projects. Yet, the apparent incongruity between Indigenous and mestiz@ identities has the potential to become a positive tension—one that creates (rather than negates) Guaraní futurity. *Teko'a* is resistance to the present in service of the future, which, if embraced by Indigenous and mestiz@ people alike in the Guaraní world, and allowed to exist and to flourish, would radically transform the landscape of people's everyday lives, as anarchists like to say, in ways that reflect the world they would actually like to live in.

Memory of our future

> We lack creation. We lack resistance to the present. The creation of concepts in itself calls for a future form, for a new earth and a people that do not yet exist. Europeanization does not constitute a becoming but merely the history of capitalism, which prevents the becoming of subjected peoples.
>
> Gillles Deleuze, Félix Guattari
> *What is Philosophy?*[15]

> The Indigenous Peoples and Nations of the Americas are the memory of our future, if they did not exist, we would have to invent them, as we find that we are also in the process of inventing ourselves anew.
>
> Bartomeu Melià
> *El buenvivir Guaraní: tekóporã*[16]

[15] Deleuze & Guattari (1994: 108).

[16] Melià, *El buenvivir Guaraní: tekóporã* http://servicioskoinonia.org/agenda/archivo/obra.php?ncodigo=762 (accessed August 30, 2017).

as singular identifiable entity that is limited by its structure, but rather as something whose existence radiates outward to encompass concepts beyond its form and which is conceived as a process of transformation. Both the tree and the earth are in a perpetual process of becoming; they exist while simultaneously coming into being. They are alive, they have their own integrity and their own trajectory—the concept of the future exists within their physical frame—they are here now and they will be here later.

Understanding that trees have a future, and that this future is to become the earth, has important temporal significances. Both the tree and the earth that it becomes are a way of seeing time laid bare before you. They co-exist in the same moment, and they come from and to each other, and in this way, time is understood as a cycle of which we too are a part. By destroying a tree, we prevent the future earth from coming into existence. How much of this preventing of the future earth can we bear? If the forest is the place from which the earth is made, then what does its destruction mean? Does the future earth have a right to exist?

The history of colonization in Paraguay is too long to properly cover in this short essay, but I would like to point to a specific moment where the Guaraní language was attacked: in 1870, it was prohibited to use the Guaraní language in Paraguayan schools. In his essay "The Bicentenary of Paraguayan Independence and the Guaraní Language," Miguel Ángel Verón Gómez notes that "corporal and psychological punishments inflicted on the children for speaking in school the only language they knew included, among other things, slaps on the mouth, detention during recess, canings, insults, and name-calling" (Gómez, 2013: 407–408). Verón Gómez further elucidates that the punishments doled out for speaking Guaraní had caused a "genuine social mutism, with serious effects on the collective self-confidence of the Paraguayan people" (*ibid.*).

In *ava ñe'e,* words and combination of words function as profound concepts that teach one how to be in the world. The language

is passed down from one generation to the next. It is free, and it belongs to everyone. And yet, whenever I am in Paraguay, I hear people deride the Guaraní language. In 2015, while in Asunción, I spoke to an upper-class, university educated man who works with livestock for a living. He expressed frustration in his field because, despite the fact that he tried to bring scientific advances into animal husbandry in Paraguay, he was never able to go as far as he wanted to because he could not properly train people. He explained, "The problem with Paraguay is the Guaraní language. We will never advance until we stop speaking Guaraní because Guaraní is a limited language." For this man, Guaraní is an obstacle that the Paraguayan people must overcome. This is not a rare sentiment amongst upper-class mestiz@s and whites. Yet Paraguayan identity is defined by its Guaraní roots—so much so that calling someone "*Paraguayo*" or "*Paraguaya*" can function as a racial slur in the countries that border Paraguay. Similarly to how Colombian identity is linked to the drug trade in the international imagination, Paraguayan identity is stigmatized by its Guaraní characteristics, and is seen as inherently backwards or primitive. These learned values are the continued expression of colonial violence in the ways that we conceive of ourselves and others of Indigenous descent as somehow less than the European invaders.

Mestiz@ identity, in the end, has little to do with biology or blood and more to do with a proximity to certain concepts. Mestiz@ identity, in the Paraguayan context, relates to the subject's capacity to fit into the logic of colonization, the state, and capitalism—and thus ensure their ability to act in service of, and be governed by that logic (Cadena de la, *op. cit.*: 60). Mestiz@, then, is a political formulation born out of the centralized power's need to categorize people in order to be able to rule over them. The concept of the mestiz@ as an identity that is separate from one's Indigenous roots is one of the triumphs of colonization in Latin America. The success of the "*mestizaje*" as a somehow singular identity that has deeper connections to its European roots is the crown jewel of colonial

Anders Burman, in *Indigeneity and Decolonization in the Bolivian Andes*, writes, "Ontological dimensions of human existence are at the center of struggles over resources and power since these are simultaneously struggles over meaning, struggles over reality, over 'what there is.'"(Burman, 2016: 12) The conflicting ontologies of "what there is" is really what it comes down to. If when we look at a place and see that "what there is" as a forest filled with raw materials to process and sell as fuel, as opposed to a multitude of individual beings in the process of becoming the earth, then the harsh dichotomy of these opposing ways of seeing and being in the world becomes overwhelmingly evident. Being from a community whose philosophies are marginalized through the processes of colonization means that your communities—your people—are marginal too, and the marginalization of a people, the assigning of people and the places where those people live as not valuable, comes with devastating consequences.

The contemporary Guaraní practice of *teko'a* is engaged with Guaraní futurity, as opposed to any conceptualizations of the practice that would align it with a desire to replicate a pre-colonial Guaraní existence. The act of bringing into being *teko'a* by a people still experiencing colonization is a practice of prefigurative politics—of living in the world in the manner in which one actually chooses and is in line with one's ethics, as opposed to living in the world as it is prescribed by coercive state and capitalist-based power structures, that, in the case of Indigenous Peoples, outwardly deny the possibility of their existence by seeking their extermination. The concept of *teko'a* centers important questions about identity, the right to practice one's culture, and the often violent clashes over rights to the land. The subject of land in Paraguay is one marked by turmoil and bloodshed. The sixteenth-century colonial policies of Indigenous dispossession continue, under a different guise, to this day. Indigenous Peoples and mestiz@ campesin@ communities in rural Paraguay have been forcibly displaced by large landowners who use their lands

‘*a* means “here/this place.” *Teko’a* is colloquially translated as “village,” but the deeper meaning is “the place where we can be who we are as a people,” or “the place where we (the Guaraní) can practice our cultural ways.” Thus, embedded within the concept of *teko’a* is the idea that to be a person or community requires a sovereign place where one can practice what it means to be Guaraní. Without land there is no *teko* (Melià, 2016: 45). For the Guaraní, the act of being and becoming requires a relationship to the land; without this bond, there is no way to be Guaraní. As Bartomeu Melià points out, “spatiality is fundamental to Guaraní culture [because] it assures their freedom and their ability to maintain their ethnic identity.”[14] Simply put: to be Guaraní, you need other Guaraní people, your language, freedom to practice your culture, and a place to exist that supports and nourishes your way of life. Within *teko’a,* the concept of selfhood is intimately dependent on the presence of your relations and a relationship to the land—one cannot be whole and be alone without community or land.

Teko’a is place defined by ways of being—by relationships, and not by territorial borders. This is a radically different conception of place than is held in Western society. This concept of place is alive, and not easily mappable or fixed. The Guaraní concept of place is bound by relationships between people and their spiritual and cultural practices in relation to other living things on an animate Earth.

The belief in an active constructing of a world in which *teko’a* can exist is, at its core, about resistance: resistance to alienation, colonial suffering, loss of culture, and death – and resistance is what makes the world anew. Resistance has a spatial dimension (a territory in which one can be free) and a temporal dimension (the future, in which one is free). To resist is to believe in the existence of a future – to resist is to become.

[14] Melià (1981: 1–24).

logic, as it does the work of separating “mixed race” people from their relations, their territory, and the responsibilities that link people to the land and to each other. And, it is these learned values that manifest themselves as the denial of the material expression of Indigenous philosophies in our shared world.

All the other things / memory

> In a society, which is hierarchical, held up by armies, police, punitive deterrents and authoritarian-based respectability, the human as variable does not need to be considered.
>
> Lee Maracle, *Memory Serves*[5]

My great-grandmother’s house was built directly on top of the hard red earth.[6] There were walls, a roof, doors, windows, a stove, a large clay jug filled with well water, places to eat, sit, and sleep, along with all the other things that make a house—except for a floor; there was no floor. I remember watching her sweep the top layer of red earth out the front door every evening, making the surface smooth again, erasing the scars of the day.

[5] Maracle (2015: 1).

[6] My great-grandmother was a *campesina* midwife from the interior of the country. Guaraní was her primary language, although she also spoke Spanish.

Che py'aho is how you say "I remember" in *ava ñe'e*.[7] A literal translation would be, "it goes to my heart / soul."[8] In Guaraní, then, to remember is to engage with the things that have gone to your soul. It is not that simple, of course, but it is a good place to begin. For Indigenous and mestiz@ peoples, to remember is an act of resistance to colonization. To resist is to act in opposition to that which oppresses you. There is movement in memory—it creates as it resists. To remember is not simply an individual, internal process, but a way for a people to return to a place of being, of having been, and to become again. By engaging with memory and trying to regain what they have lost through the violence of colonization, Indigenous and mestiz@ peoples build their world anew by relying on their own concepts and ways of being in the world, while actively rejecting the violently imposed narratives of colonization.[9]

Within the power dynamics of colonizing empires and settler-colonial states, the memories of the colonized, the enslaved, and those who were somehow othered are held captive by the official, sanctioned memories of the empire and settler-colonial powers. By its very nature, the nation-state is a centralizing force and thus aims to control and shape the narrative of its own genesis and continuation, which requires the snuffing out of counternarra-

[7] There is disagreement about this. One of my informants, Arnulfo Fretes, a forestal engineer in San Cosme and San Damian, agrees that it is a way to say "I remember," but that the more nuanced meaning is "the things that go to my soul / heart." He disagrees with my alternative interpretation of the phrase (see below). In the *Diccionario Castellano – Guaraní / Guaraní – Castellano* compiled by Antonio Guasch, 1961 – *chepy'aho* is defined in many ways including – that which goes to your heart, to remember, what comes to mind, and to sigh over.

[8] *Che* means "I" or "me." *Py'a* means "belly, heart, soul, innards, spirit, consciousness." *Ho* means "to go." I sometimes wonder if a better understanding for *chepy'aho* is: "I walk to my heart / soul / consciousness."

[9] I first encountered this process of memory as an act of resistance within Indigenous communities at the Intertribal Friendship House in Oakland, California, through that urban Indigenous community's traditional plant medicine garden, which they used to reconnect to their ancestral knowledge about plants and their role in ceremonial practices.

> sell things in their language means to seek vengeance. When you sell something you are taking vengeance on someone, instead of giving it to them you are being vengeful. Of course, once vengeance begins the other has the right to be vengeful against you. For them, we are a society of vengefulness… all the world is being vengeful to someone. We are a society of repeating successive vengeances.[13]

The taking away of a People's autonomy to relate to the each other and to the earth as dictated by their cultural practices is a defining component of colonization and an absolute necessity for the perpetuation of state power and capitalism. In this case, the imposition of an economic system based on monetary exchange in the service of a centralized power served as a way to delegitimize Guaraní concepts of exchange that were deeply rooted in the philosophies that, for them, came into being at the time of creation and define their very existence on this earth. It is deeply important that the first two creations in the Guaraní cosmogony are language and solidarity. Both of these are communal practices, and their primacy serves to reveal the centrality of community for the Guaraní. Language and solidarity are integral to the survival of a People as an independent culture that stands in resistance to genocide and assimilation.

Sovereignty requires more than language and love—it also necessitates land. Land or territory—a place to be in community and practice one's culture—is of critical importance to Indigenous Peoples, and the removal from one's place of being has been a weapon of genocide that settler-colonial governments have used against Indigenous Peoples since first contact. The Guaraní notion of spatiality and territoriality is expressed in the concept of *teko'a*. *Teko* means "way of being," "state of existence," or "culture," and *ha* or

[13] *Ibid.*

elucidates that, "if, consequently, *mborayhu* was able to mean love one another, it is because the word already expressed the idea of tribal solidarity" (*ibid.*: 35).

In *The Land-Without-Evil*, Hélène Clastres makes the point that the imposition of capitalism upon the Guaraní made it impossible for them to continue practicing their traditional spirituality because the dynamic forced upon them by capitalism is diametrically opposed to the principles of *mborayhu*. The remunerative nature of capitalism—in which one sells one's labor (literally, the moments one's life is made of) for the ability to purchase material goods necessary for survival, such as food, housing, and medicine—created an ontological rift between the old ways and the settler-colonial way of life, which is structured around the maintaining of the nation-state by funneling resources to a central power. She writes, "This new system demands that each individual work for himself. In other terms, the whole ethic of *mborayhu* is being questioned. Not only has the leisure to sing been lost with economic autarchy, but also the entire system of exchange that exactly defined society."(Clastres, 1995: 97). In a videotaped interview for Casa de América, Bartomeu Melià, a philosopher and longtime student of Guaraní epistemologies, identifies the three primary defining qualities of Guaraní culture as its language, its spirituality (which is based on the Guaraní language), and its economic system (which conceives of selling things as a form of vengeance).[12] Melià further illuminates the economic system of the Guaraní by clarifying:

> They still maintain it, though it is somewhat hidden—their reciprocal economic system in which there is no proper buying and selling of things. To buy and

[12] Melià B., "Bartomeu Melià: 'Para los guaraníes vender and vengarse, somos vengadores,'" YouTube video, interview for Casa de América, posted by "Casa de América," September 7, 2011 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qhnOClbDY0

tives. The need for a total, linear, hierarchical narrative is indicative of the broader machinations of nation-states: coercive control obtained and maintained through brutal violence or the constant threat of violence.

Also necessary for state power are subjects—more commonly euphemized as "citizens"—for subjugation. In order for citizens to be useful to the State apparatus, they must be as homogenous as possible, as homogeneity is a prerequisite for control. To accumulate power, one must to do away with difference – different people, different ways of thinking, different ways of being – because they challenge power's fundamental need to be monolithic and centralized. While there are always characteristics that make citizens different from each other, at their core, they must *believe* themselves to be a single entity in order to function as a "majority," and thus be governable. It is for this reason that Indigenous Peoples, by their very existence, are in opposition to the nation-state; they will never be citizens of and for a settler-colonial power. The naming of them as Indigenous Peoples alone puts them in opposition to state power: first, by recalling a moment before the existence of the nation-state, and second, by aligning them with an exceptional tribal sovereignty that is inevitably multiple and decentralized and thus inherently resistant to the fixity required in order to be governed. Mestiz@ identity, I would argue, is a collapsing of identities and concepts in the hopes of creating the conditions for a people to identify as citizens of a nation state and consent to be being governed.

Anarchist anthropologists Pierre Clastres, David Graeber, Andrej Grubačić, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, James C. Scott, and Raúl Zibechi, amongst others, have written extensively about societies of people who, throughout the world and human history, have imagined and manifested power in ways that actively reject hierarchy and centralization. Through their writings, these anthropologists have challenged the notion that centralized power is necessary for societies to function, along with the idea that the manifes-

tation of the state is somehow a part of an evolutionary trajectory of human organization, implying that the societies that actively reject a state formation are somehow primitive compared to societies that have states. Colonization and the subsequent formation of settler-colonial states has punished (and continues to punish) the Guaraní and other Indigenous Peoples through a process of violent dispossession of their cultures, languages, epistemologies, land, and lives by cloaking unmatched brutality in a false logic of cultural dominance and systemic criminalization—often couched as Christian benevolence—which has created the nation-state dominated world that we live in now.

It feels important to state that anarchism is not a Eurocentric idea, but rather is the name given to a tendency that has manifested itself throughout time and throughout the world and has been called by many other names. What these anarchist anthropologists examine are social organizations that escape/refuse the logic of colonization, the state, and capitalism, and that, through that refusal, create possibilities for people to reimagine and reinvent the ways that they relate to each other, other living things, the land, and their collective futures.

For Guaraní speakers, the Guaraní language holds an active possibility for this sort of collective reinvention, and this tension is ever-present as the language is spoken. The purpose of this anarcho-anticolonial project, that seeks to problematize mestiz@ Paraguayan identity in relation to the Guaraní language, is not for a total or comprehensive recovery of ancestral Guaraní traditions, understandings, or way of life, but rather a process of possible reinvention that would stand in opposition to the oppressive manifestations of the Paraguayan state, along with challenging the incongruences of mestiz@ Paraguayan identity that I perceive to function in service of the colonial process.

The memory of Guaraní epistemologies lives hidden in its language. *Ava ñe'e* is the manifested counterpower of the Paraguayan/Guaraní people, not only because it continues to be spoken, despite

of hundreds years of colonization, but also because it retains within it ancestral philosophical concepts that teach of ways to resist domination while revealing alternative ways of being in the world. To remember is to resist subjugation, erasure, and genocide through a process of collective enunciations and becomings. For one to be able to become through memory, one must return to the minor, fluid, and shifting. To borrow an image from Deleuze and Guattari, memory is like grass:[10] to kill it, you have to kill all the animals that ate its seeds or carry it in their coats, pulverize every node of its rhizomatic roots, sterilize the soil and make it inert, because everything remembers. The organ of memory lives outside the body in the mind of the collective. Memory is a communal energy that is powerful because it is ever-shifting, contradictory, incoherent, and free.

The second creation / No people without land

After creating what would become human language amidst the primordial fog, in the darkness before the earth, the next thing the First One created was *mborayhu,* the foundation of love, which was love for one another, or solidarity. In retellings and translations of the story of creation, *mborayhu* is translated as "*amor al prójimo*" ("love thy neighbor"), which points to a Christian concept.[11] The early texts from the era of first contact between the Guaraní and the European invaders inevitably have a religious overtone because conversion to Christianity was an integral part of colonization. Yet, as Pierre Clastres points out in *La Palabra Luminosa,* "the missionaries adopted the word mborayhu to express the Christian idea of 'love thy neighbor', just as they took the name of Tupan, the elemental of tempest and thunder, to stand in for the name of God" (Clastres, 1993: 35). Clastres further

[10] Deleuze & Guattari (1987: 15).

[11] I am using the León Cadogan translation (Cadogan, *op. cit.*: 13–16).