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Countercolonial movements in Latin America: Land, Territory, and the New Meanings of Politics

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ABSTRACT

This essay is the first of a three-part series on countercolonial movements in Latin America. It lays out the conceptual ground — the entanglement of neo-extractivism, the Anthropocene, and the decolonial and ontological "turns" — and shows how the Earth and its beings enter politics through the Indigenous Spring. The companion pieces develop the concept of the "countercolonial" and the question of scale (Part 2), and the politics of alliance and cosmopolitics (Part 3).

TAGS:

Latin America, Neo-Extractivism, Anthropocene, Indigenous Spring

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1. Neo-extractivism and the Anthropocene in Latin America: Between the Decolonial and Ontological Turns

"Lo que ustedes llaman el mundo y que nosotros llamamos la tormenta"
Capitán Insurgente Marcos, 2026

This article is situated at the crossroads of two overlapping processes of tension. On the one hand, reconfigurations of the global geopolitical landscape are underway, driven primarily by the race for leadership in the exploitation of both traditional energy sources (such as oil, coal, and natural gas, including unconventional forms of extraction) and so-called "clean energy," as well as the strategic minerals required for many of these production technologies.

Scenario analyses differ on whether the geopolitical shifts driven by the energy transition will mirror historical rivalries over fossil fuels (Hira 2025) or whether, on the contrary, the risks and dynamics inherent in the increased demand for critical minerals are fundamentally different from those for fossil fuels (Irena 2023). Even so, the Global South in general and Latin America in particular are seen as territories of crucial interest for military occupation and resource exploitation (Zibechi 2021). The recent interventionist moves by the United States (US) in the region are proof of this.

From this perspective, as argued by Backhouse et al. 2025 and Fernandes 2024, even the so-called "green transformation"—despite all the promises of socio-environmental justice attached to it—represents a continuation of the historical processes that, for centuries, have imposed on Latin America the role of supplier of raw materials to the world. It's a supply that comes at the cost of the ecological devastation of territories and the destruction of ways of life. Even in the policies pursued by progressive governments in the region, as critically argued by Svampa 2011, Acosta 2011, and many others, criticism of neoliberalism and the consequent call to confront major economic powers coexists with practices that consolidate what we might call a "neocolonial model" that perpetuates inequalities and dependency. It's a model based on the appropriation and destruction of ecosystems and non-hegemonic forms of social organization for the export of commodities and the implementation of large-scale development projects. This is the defining feature of what Eduardo Gudynas characterized as "neo-extractivism." (Gudynas 2009)[1]

The inextricable connection between modernization projects and the exploitation of extra-modern peoples and territories lies at the heart of the analysis developed by scholars of the Modernity/Coloniality (M/C) Group formed in the late 1990s. In these studies, "coloniality" referred to the continuation of colonial forms of domination even after the end of colonial administrations, made possible by the way the "modern/colonial world-system" is structured, through the articulation of "peripheral sites of the international division of labor with the global ethno-racial hierarchy and with the incorporation of Third World migrants into the ethno-racial hierarchy of global metropolitan cities" (Grosfoguel, 2008:126).[2]

As the M/C group dispersed into heterogeneous approaches and interests, its legacy has been updated and expanded in Latin America by authors such as María Lugones (2008), Alberto Acosta (2011), Héctor Alimonda (2011), Edgardo Lander (2013), Horacio Machado Aráoz (2014), Maristella Svampa (2019), Breno Bringel (2025), and Lang et al. (2024).[3] What they have in common is the diagnosis that current policies aimed at reconciling social justice with addressing the global ecological crisis threaten to

[1] By this term, Eduardo Gudynas refers to the prevailing model of economic development in Latin America, based on the massive extraction and export of natural resources through activities such as mining, oil exploration, and agribusiness, which has been adopted by so-called progressive governments to finance social programs.

[2] See also Quijano 1992, 1997, 2000; Dussel 2000; Escobar 2003; Maldonado-Torres 2007; and Gudynas 2009.

[3] It is important to note, however, that criticism of colonial incursions and their contemporary manifestations is not limited to this genealogy. It must also be traced back to the so-called postcolonial movement, to the Afro-Caribbean legacy in the Americas, and, as we shall see, to the struggles and demands of the region's indigenous and traditional peoples. Specifically in Latin America, anti-colonial thought and practice are influenced by the radical anti-oligarchic democratic tradition of the turn of the century, the Latin American socialist tradition from Mariátegui to Guevara, Liberation Theology, the revival of indigenous knowledge, and various variants of the alter-globalization movement in the South Atlantic (Alimonda 2016).

reproduce the very same inequalities and devastation that have brought us to this point, causing the promise to fail from the outset.

Thus, first and foremost, our article is situated within the critical space opened up by these works, which highlight the incompatibility between mainstream strategies for addressing the global ecological crisis—which characterizes the era that many insist on calling the Anthropocene—and the reconfigurations of the modus operandi of coloniality that such strategies entail, particularly in Latin America and other territories of the Global South.

On the other hand, and in parallel with the debates that led to the formation of the M/C group, work in the fields of anthropology and the so-called social studies of science and technology (STS) had been pointing to another mode of operation of coloniality. Although it may have already been alluded to by some authors associated with the M/C group (such as Dussel 1985 and Maldonado-Torres 2007), it has not yet garnered significant attention. In these currents now associated with the so-called "ontological turn," ontology ceases to concern itself with a supposed "univocity of being" and instead becomes the recognition of distinct ways of inhabiting and conceiving reality. The works of authors such as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Bruno Latour, and Philippe Descola are indispensable in this regard, having paved the way for contemporary developments in the most diverse fields.[4]

In these studies, the differences between the modern and the extramodern (or colonizers and the colonized) are no longer conceived in sociocultural terms—a conception that implies a certain epistemological relativism, as is the case with the discourse of multiculturalism. Instead, they come to be treated as ontological differences, that is, differences pertaining to the very constitution of the world. This characterizes what Viveiros de Castro (2004) termed, based on an analysis of Amerindian thought, "multinaturalism": no longer a multiplicity of representations of the same world, but rather the existence of different worlds conceived and inhabited in diverse ways.[5] The metaphysical consequences of such a proposition are numerous.

[4] Among the most relevant developments for our purposes here are the field of political ontology (cf. Blaser 2009a, 2009b; Blaser and Jensen 2023; de la Cadena 2014, 2015; de la Cadena and Blaser 2018; Holbraad, Pedersen and Viveiros de Castro 2014), the "practical ontologies" of Casper Brunn Jensen (2017, 2021), and the concept of "ontological pluralism" as addressed in the work of Patrice Maniglier (2020, 2021).

[5] The difference from certain approaches by authors in the M/C group who employ the term "ontology" is that the works of the ontological turn do not focus on individual, subjective, or even human experience, as is the case with the phenomenological approach that informs, for example, the concept of "analetics," which Enrique Dussel (1985) classifies as "transontological." Although similarities can be pointed out (cf. Savransky 2017; Fúnez-Flores 2022), insofar as both projects provincialize the universality assumed and imposed by European modernity, in the ontological turn "ontology" refers to specific worlds investigated through an ethnographic lens and, therefore, described based on their equally specific human and non-human agents. This understanding differs considerably from analyses where "ontology" is necessarily associated with modernity, with the "transontological" serving to make palpable the

But one of the most important concerns the willingness to embrace ontological pluralism—whether regarding the diversity of world-makers (not just human beings) or the acknowledgment of different realities that emerge through different compositional practices and according to parameters other than those presupposed by Western cosmology. Such practices and worlds coexist without any one having greater legitimacy than the others.

In this sense, the growing participation of indigenous and Black intellectuals and leaders in contemporary debates on the Anthropocene—contrary, to certain narratives that portray them as "primitive" and doomed to disappear —highlights the insoluble tension between the apparent unicity of the ecological threat and the multiplicity of ways to conceive of its cause and possible ramifications. Take, for example, the book The Falling Sky (2013), written by the Yanomami shaman Davi Kopenawa in collaboration with the anthropologist Bruce Albert, characterized by the latter as a "shamanic translation [of the theory] of greenhouse gases" (2002:252). Or even the equivocation[6] surrounding the idea of "nature" that lies at the heart of anthropologist Marisol de la Cadena's work (2010, 2015). Her Indigenous interlocutors attribute to Ausangate —an entity (or earth-being) that our modern-based cosmological repertoire allows us to conceive of only as a "mountain"—the power to intervene in political and environmental struggles, destabilizing and provincializing the supposedly universal partition between nature and culture by situating it "in political symmetry with that which is neither culture nor nature" (2015:279).

This irruption of extra-modern worlds into politics brings to light dimensions of reality that tend to remain invisible within the framework of conventional politics (De la Cadena 2010). The shift to the ontological register enriches the analysis of the modus operandi of coloniality, insofar as, rather than merely drawing attention to the presence of these "Others" who constitute modernity (as various authors of the M/C Group postulate), we are urged to pay attention to what these Others claim as vital to their existence—which often includes forces, agencies, and practices radically different from those considered "reasonable" within the horizon of European modernity. In this other register, there is greater clarity regarding what is effectively at risk of annihilation in the current neocolonial context of domination, exploitation, and ecological destruction: namely, the very plurality of ways of existing and of expressing belonging to the world.

In other words, openness to pluralism seems to have gained even greater relevance in the Anthropocene. Just as we are called upon, in the face of the global ecological crisis,

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experience of a non-specific human subject (insofar as it can be embodied by any individual or social group victimized by colonial violence) taken as a "historical other."

[6] "Controlled equivocation" is Viveiros de Castro's term for a method that consists of recognizing in the relationship between different ontologies possible alterities camouflaged under homonyms and, conversely, different terms referring to the same meaning or relationship. Equivocation is not the same as imprecision or mistake. It is, rather, that which enables comparison between cultures: "the incommensurability between conflicting 'notions', far from preventing comparison, is precisely what allows and justifies it" (Viveiros de Castro 2004:10–11).

to respond collectively as the anthropos that gives its name to the new geological epoch, research and narratives are proliferating that not only tell other stories about how we came to be here, offering alternative names and agents to the Anthropocene,[7] and demand that this anthropos take seriously the diverse ways of being "people" that extra-modern cosmologies reveal..

In this sense, propositions such as cosmophobia—a term coined by Antônio Bispo dos Santos or Nêgo Bispo (2023a, 2023b), a quilombola leader[8] and one of Brazil's leading contemporary thinkers, to refer to the fear of the cosmos (here understood as the plurality of agents that constitute reality) propagated by the civilization he characterizes as Euro-Christian— allow us to glimpse other dimensions of existence threatened by the advance of what, in the Western discourse, we call 'neocolonialism' and diagnose as the 'worsening of the global ecological crisis.' Terricide, in turn—through which Mapuche activist Moira Millán (2024) names the destruction not only of tangible ecosystems, but also of the forces that sustain life and the ancestral traditions that historically knew how to cultivate them—offers a further glimpse into those same threatened dimensions. From this perspective, ecological collapse reveals itself as an offensive against the heterogeneous ways of inhabiting and caring for the Earth, or even against the many worlds that make up the Earth (Maniglier 2020).This outlines the other axis of tension within which this article is situated: the response to the global ecological catastrophe must be carried out in accordance with and in support of the autonomy of extra-modern peoples to define the contours of their own worlds and to determine the means to ensure their existence. The urgency of ecological action must not serve as a pretext for asserting a "one-world world" (Law 2015). On the contrary, it must be guided by a commitment to fight for "a world where many worlds fit," to paraphrase the famous Zapatista slogan (EZLN 1996). The effort—ecological and political par excellence—must be to weave together coalitions to confront the multiple crises and varied fronts of attacks on peoples and territories, without thereby presuming ontological unity or a shared political agenda.

We argue, therefore, that when considering the distinct modes of existence and resistance of Latin American collectives and movements in struggle—whether indigenous, quilombola, peasant, or otherwise—we observe crucial shifts regarding the scales, formats, and actors involved in politics, as it is conceived and practiced in the International Relations field. This is held within the framework of dominant

[7] Among the alternative names for the Anthropocene are the Capitalocene (Moore 2015, 2016), Anglocene, Thanatocene (Bonneuil and Fressoz 2013), Plantationocene (Haraway 2015, Haraway et al. 2015), Anthropo-Not-Seen (Cadena 2019), Antrobscene (Parikka 2014), Technocene (Hornborg 2015), and Chthulucene (Haraway 2016), to name just a few. The mapping undertaken by Franciszek Chwałczyk (2020) identified approximately 90 alternative terms to the Anthropocene.

[8] Derived from quilombo, a term used in Brazil to refer to communities formed by fugitives from slavery, whose forms of social organization contrasted with the colonial and slave-based system. The word quilombola today refers to traditional, rural, and urban communities formed by the descendants of those fugitives. For further clarification on the re-semantization of the category "quilombo" in Brazil, see Fagundes 2022.

contemporary thought. Instead of considering the state, classical sovereignty, or institutional power as the privileged axes of social transformation, these movements affirm the land, the territory, and the interdependent relationships that sustain life as the foundations of the political (or cosmopolitical).[9]

Engaging with concepts forged by thinkers from Latin America's Afro-indigenous peoples themselves and with the so-called ontological turn in the social sciences, this series of essays analyze the new meanings of "politics" that emerge from these practices—which, following Nêgo Bispo (2023a, 2023b), we characterize as "countercolonial". These are practices of active resistance to colonial domination, which occur not through a categorical rejection of the political and ontological categories imposed upon them, but through a creative reinterpretation of those very categories to safeguard their ontological specificity. They thus reinvent their existence, not from a blank slate, but by allowing it to emerge from the very movements of refusal and appropriation of the presumed colonial singularity.[10] In sum, this article proposes a twofold analytical move. First, we articulate the diagnosis of neo-extractivism with contributions from the ontological turn and the critique of coloniality to show that hegemonic strategies for addressing the ecological crisis operate as an offensive against the very plurality of worlds that constitute the Earth. Second, we mobilize concepts forged by Latin American countercolonial movements and thinkers to reconfigure what we understand by "politics": displacing it from the state and formal institutions toward territory, the interdependent relationships that sustain life, and the other-than-human beings that participate in them. In doing so, our central argument is that these movements do not merely denounce ecological collapse or demand multicultural representation; rather, they produce a reinvention of politics that challenges the ontological assumptions of conventional politics and theories of political organization, offering substantive contributions to the construction of alliances that do not require the dissolution of differences.

2. Engaging in Politics with the E/earth and Its Beings

At the end of the 20th century, Latin America underwent a period of decline in collective resistance, caused by the expansion of neoliberalism, the global reconfiguration of markets, and the insidious spread of the "end of history" narrative (Escobar 2020). These were some of the components of the prevailing political and theoretical landscape at the time, characterized by Wendy Brown (1999) as "left-wing melancholy." In this context, numerous social movements faced simultaneous processes of internal

[9] See section 4.

[10] In this article, we will use the term "anticolonial" when referring more generally to historical and political struggles against colonization and coloniality. In turn, the term "contracolonial" will denote the specificity we identify in certain ways of asserting ontological autonomy and acknowledging non-human entities in politics.

fragmentation and repression, accompanied by a sense that their horizons for transformation were being eroded (Escobar 2020). However, beginning in the late 1990s, and most evidently in the first decades of the 21st century, this picture began to change. Although this was also a period of significant intensification of neo-extractivism—or perhaps precisely because of it—a relative rearticulation of social struggles on the continent can be observed.

A considerable part of this rearticulation[11] is situated in the wake of the so-called "indigenous spring" in Latin America (Le Bot, 2013), an expression that seeks to name the political emergence of indigenous peoples on the continent at the end of the 20th century. During this period, indigenous peoples began to take a more prominent role on the continental public stage, introducing aspects of their cosmopolitics into the prevailing debates on democracy, citizenship, territory, and political action—aspects that challenge the very understandings of those terms. The Zapatista uprising in 1994 in Mexico, the cycles of indigenous mobilization in Ecuador and Bolivia, and the territorial struggles in various countries across the continent are some examples of this spring.

In Brazil, this process gained momentum with the 1988 Federal Constitution, which, following intense indigenous mobilizations, recognized indigenous land rights and the right to difference—rights previously explicitly suppressed by assimilationist policies. Since then, there has been an intensification of processes of ethnic reemergence,[12] whether through territorial reclaiming, language revitalization efforts, the strengthening of collective identities, and the growing indigenous and Afro-indigenous presence in urban contexts and universities as well. This mobilization is directly reflected in environmental indicators: indigenous lands stand out as the best-preserved in the country, accounting for less than 1% of the loss of native vegetation between 1985 and 2023, while private areas lost 28% during the same period.[13]

In this context, concepts such as buen vivir have emerged. Drawing on Andean cosmopolitics, they shift the focus away from economic growth and accumulation toward collective well-being in harmony with the land, guided by principles such as reciprocity and complementarity with the cosmos, which inform community decisions. There's also, the notion of communalism in Oaxaca, a Mexican state, which affirms collective forms of governance and territorial belonging by making community

[11] Various social forces contributed to this rearticulation, notably the popular education movements which, inspired by Paulo Freire and other educators, played a fundamental role in the resistance against civil-military dictatorships on the continent, leaving legacies and discontinuities that persist in contemporary struggles. Although these movements engage with the Indigenous Springs (Morel, 2023), without claiming to exhaust the complexity of these processes, the emphasis we seek to place in this article falls specifically on the so-called "Indigenous Spring."

[12] According to the 2022 Demographic Census (IBGE 2023), the Indigenous population in Brazil totaled 1,693,535 people, representing an 88.82% increase compared to the 2010 Census (896,917 Indigenous people). This significant increase is attributed to both demographic factors and processes of ethnic reemergence, such as greater self-identification, territorial reclamations, and linguistic revitalization.

[13] MapBiomas. Collection 9 of the Annual Land Cover and Land Use Maps of Brazil (1985-2023). MapBiomas Data, 2024. Available at: https://mapbiomas.org/. Accessed: 04/09/2026. The data indicate that Indigenous Lands lost less than 1% of their native vegetation between 1985 and 2023, while private areas lost 28% in the same period.

assemblies the highest decision-making body, the system of honorary offices the mechanism for exercising power, and tequio (unpaid community labor) the basis of collective territorial management. We can also cite the notion of corpo-territorio [body-territory], formulated by community feminisms in Guatemala (Cabnal, 2022), which points to the inseparability between extractive violence against women's bodies and that exercised against the land. The concept "de-liberalizes" the body as individual property, affirming a political and epistemic continuity between body and territory, and points to a collective process of healing for women victimized by extractivism through the conscious recovery of this relationship.

Perhaps the most emblematic struggle in this regard is the Zapatistas' own demand for autonomy and the defense of the commons in a "land without papers" (EZLN 2023). This manifests itself in the rejection of land ownership and the nation-state's exclusive role in administering justice, the economy, education, and other areas of collective life, replacing it with their own structures such as the Caracoles, which operate based on "leading by obeying" and "politics from below." It is also worth highlighting the Aymara ch'ixi union mobilizations in the urban peripheries of Bolivia (Cusicanqui 2021). In Aymara, ch'ixi refers to a color that, from a distance, appears "gray," but which, up close, can be discerned as white and black spots. Drawing on the metaphor of the coexistence of opposites that do not merge, in the 1970s, trade union organizations began to blend indigenous and non-indigenous elements into their repertoires of struggle, from community customs and practices to strikes, straining dualisms between tradition and modernity, countryside and city, through political compositions that we might characterize as "counter-mestizaje" (Goldman 2015). Still in Bolivia, it is worth mentioning the mobilization of indigenous women, known as cholas, who, in the face of government efforts to criminalize the use and cultivation of the coca leaf in the 1990s, took over municipal markets to organize community kitchens. Through them, they provided food for the thousands of peasants taking part in the great coca growers' marches (Cusicanqui 2021).

Other strategies of resistance involve updates to historical practices of escape, understood here not as passivity or a lack of political agency, but as an active refusal of colonial subjugation, as exemplified both by marronage (Bona, 2025) and by the continued existence of more than 100 indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation in Brazil. By way of example, we can cite the Korubo and the isolated peoples of the Javari Valley (an indigenous territory located in the far west of the state of Amazonas), who maintain their autonomy through the systematic refusal of contact with national society, actively working to protect their lands.

More recently, we have witnessed alliances between indigenous movements and climate activists, such as those that took place during the side events at COP-30 in Pará, as well as the emergence of collectives and collaborative efforts linking different indigenous, Black, and Afro-indigenous peoples. This linkage in particular is focused on reforestation, agroecology, networks for the exchange of native seeds, and the daily

construction of food sovereignty (Caldeira 2026; Ferreira and Felício 2021). It is the case, for example, with Teia dos Povos [Web of the Peoples] in Brazil, which places cooperation, alliances among peoples, and care for the land at the center of political action.

Faced with such a profusion and diversity of political participation, whether by engaging with or rejecting conventional political channels — in both cases, producing tensions and shifts in what we tend to consider "reasonable" in politics —, we might, at first glance, attribute the countless achievements of these mobilizations to the greater presence and prominence of Indigenous representatives, who would have succeeded in opening the Western world to the "presence of the Others" (Wallerstein 1996). However, in doing so, we would be reproducing the paradigm of multiculturalist representation, whose fundamental premise is the idea that only human subjects equipped with their cultural baggage take part in politics, and that this baggage must be relativized and negotiated to produce consensus. "Humanity" and "nature," in this context, consist of fixed points around which disputes pivot regarding how much is reasonable to concede in the face of the demands of the "Others," regarded as beliefs, symbols, and cultural representations.

However, following De la Cadena's call (2010:336), we wish to explore the theoretical and political consequences of considering that, rather than indigenous human representatives, it is E/earth itself[14] and the entities characterized as earth-beings (2015) that burst onto the political scene through such mobilizations. Here it is important to highlight the shifts that are taking place in the concept of "representation": Indigenous peoples are no longer conceived as representatives of a culture, just as the agency of earth-beings can no longer be considered a "cultural representation." Nor should the intrusion of earth-beings into politics be understood as a withdrawal of human agency: on the contrary, it involves extending to other-than-humans capacities that, in the Western framework, we attribute exclusively to humans. The very distinction between human and non-human does not accurately express the status of "person" (understood here as being capable of intentionality and agency) that earth-beings enjoy. In these mobilizations, these beings do not emerge as an issue of common interest; they appear as non-human persons to whom one must know how to respond, lest one provoke their wrath or abandonment if the response is absent or inadequate. Entities such as Ausangate (De la Cadena 2010, 2015), Watu (Krenak 2022), Në roperi (Kopenawa; Albert 2013), Yajval (Morel, 2023), or Dariba Nungalinya (Povinelli 1995)

[14] The spelling expresses a speculative and political commitment to rejecting what we might call the "trick of scales": even the Earth conceived as a planet—an image that reinforces the notion of the "global"—must be grounded in situated processes (whether scientific, political, or of any other order) that allow us to trace how such globality was constructed and at what cost or to whom. Similarly, "earth" designates territory or a patch of ground, the environment where all action inexorably takes place and where its effects are felt. Thus, both with regard to political ecology and the ontological pluralism through which we attempt to conceive it, "E/earth" highlights the connections/mediations/translations between worlds and concepts that enable the transition between the local and the global, the individual and the collective, singularity and multiplicity.

evoke in their interlocutors a sense of obligation, even fear, due to their power to intervene in events and influence, positively or negatively, the maintenance of social and cosmological order. Our modernizing heritage, however, is unable to recognize their personhood, leaving us to refer to them through categorical classifications such as 'mountain,' 'river,' 'forest,' 'land,' or 'rock,' respectively. It is precisely this mismatch that makes their agency so striking: beings that our categories reduce to inert matter are, in their own cosmologies, active participants in the ordering of the world."It is in the emergence of these earth-beings into politics that the power of the Indigenous Spring lies. And the possibility of taking such a presence seriously disrupts our "intellectual comfort zones," indicating that we are entering the "uncommon" terrain of ontological speculations (Blaser and De la Cadena 2017)[15]. More than that: it proves capable not only of disrupting the current meaning of "politics," but also of challenging the development paradigm and the linear conception of progress.

One movement that has influenced debates on "ontological pluralism" and expanded diagnoses of the contemporary crisis, precisely by drawing attention to the need to articulate different political strategies and ways of life, is the Zapatista movement. Forged by the creative interaction between urban activists and Mayan peoples of southeastern Mexico (Baschet 2004, Morel 2023), the movement has managed to build an extensive transnational network (Leyva Solano 2021), building, throughout its various phases, collective responses to the multiple "heads" and dimensions of the "capitalist hydra."Among them is the ecological crisis, understood as an offensive against Mother Earth that has intensified in the present time, which they call "the storm." Capitalism appears as a force of deregulation and "de-placization" of the world, which enrages the yajval (owners and guardians of the earth's important places), by breaking the bonds of mutual respect among beings; it stands in contrast to the possibility of being a true man or woman (bats'i ants vinik) belonging to a land (Morel 2023).

Among the paths identified is the construction of the commons: not as a common good administered by nation-states, but as autonomy grounded in the end of private land ownership and in the peoples' claim to "land without papers." Such a "commons," thus, already expresses a creative appropriation of the Western imagination, insofar as it calls

[15] Blaser and De la Cadena (2017) coined the concept of "the uncommon" to address the singularity of existences that, while forced to fit into the humanity/nature division presupposed by European modernity, manage to transcend it. Often such framing occurs through the vocabulary of religion and/or culture: for example, Ausangate is frequently characterized as a "sacred mountain," a characterization justified in light of a set of so-called "traditional" "beliefs." Without ever endorsing such a characterization, its own interlocutors make political use of this misrepresentation, an attitude that confounds readings grounded in the authenticity/acculturation opposition. The unusual, therefore, designate "this tangled excess" that persists in every effort to construct a common cause. More than the abandonment of differences in favor of a minimal shared ground upon which consensus is hoped to be founded, the "uncommon" indicate that the minimal shared ground is ontological divergence, and that the common, when achieved, results from the always precarious and unstable production of a certain commensurability between worlds, via translations. Specifically regarding the modes of creative appropriation of the category "indigenous land" inherited from Brazilian law in the context of the contemporary Amazon, see Albert 2002.

upon agents (such as Mother Earth, ancestors, and the dead) for alliances and struggles that traditional political movements would be unable to embrace, except as mere beliefs. In this sense, the Zapatista commons both engages with the expected repertoire of “reasonable politics” (Blaser 2016) and manages to destabilize it, keeping alive the tensions inherent in the coexistence of worlds and opening up, from them, new possibilities for political composition.

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