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The Chilean Constitutional Process Narrated Through a Spiral

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ABSTRACT *Building on an intertwined spatiotemporal weaving of reckoning-repairing-reworlding, this article analyses the constitutional process experienced in Chile between 2019-2023. Inspired by the sociology of image as a methodological tool and following a narrative that takes the shape of a spiral, we examine a series of photographs representing different layers in this ongoing process. In October 2019, the largest demonstrations in Chile's history sparked long-brewing demands for social and ecological transformation. The unsustainable pressure pushed political parties to call for a constitutional referendum where the population overwhelmingly voted to overturn the charter inherited from Augusto Pinochet's regime, and so the process of drafting a new text began. Following the rejection of two drafts, the constitutional process is, for now, closed. Yet, we claim that embracing a failure narrative is not only futile, but misleading, and we propose to see these events in terms of their potential for conceptualising and enacting transformative futures. Drawing on decolonial, anti-colonial, and Indigenous scholarship, this essay focuses mainly on 2019's uprising and the first constitutional process (2021-2022) examining demands for Indigenous transformation – and the possibilities this case offers resistance movements elsewhere and "elsewhen."*

KEYWORDS Indigenous peoples; decoloniality; Chilean constitutional process; social and environmental justice

Introduction

This Special Issue, "Reckoning, Repairing, Reworlding," understands reckoning as a demand to dispense with a placatory rhetoric of reconciliation and good will "while leaving the present structure of colonial rule largely

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unscathed" (Coulthard & Alfred, 2014, p. 35). This article's invitation is to explore reckoning with the present toward decolonial *reworlding*. We focus on Chile, our home country, where demands for equal access to social rights resulted in a democratic and participatory process that aimed to replace the 1980 constitution enacted during Pinochet's civic-military dictatorship (1973-1990) with a new one.

Drawing on the sociology of image (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2015), we use a selection of photographs as entry points and the shape of a spiral to help us in narrating this process which we see as an iterative attempt at *reworlding* the neoliberal state and mindsets into more democratic, caring, ecological, and inclusive alternatives. Although we start with reckoning, we read the three Rs – reckoning-repairing-reworlding – simultaneously as a hopeful meandering path from a colonial militarised order towards an emancipatory horizon. Nonetheless, this horizon seems elusive when understood in accordance with dominant spatiotemporal logics of linear transition narratives. Our invitation is to rely on the shape of the spiral when revisiting efforts to replace the 1980s constitution (and the referendum results) as we believe this reading allows another narrative to emerge, expanding our understanding of the 2019 social uprising and its ripple effects, which may be felt elsewhere and "elsewhen."[1] This narrative does not see failure in the rejection of the constitutional draft precisely because it resists a single story that prioritises success in absolute terms. The spiral gently trains us to read these efforts as deep and gradual layers building up across time and space. Since emancipation involves placing people's lived conditions and their knowledge at the forefront instead of disregarding them as folklore (Dussel, 2007), we return to these conditions intermingling them with photographs showing that something else opens up when taking the spiral seriously.

Drawing on decolonial (Dussel, 2007, 2008; Grosfoguel, 2007; Mignolo, 2011; Quijano, 2000) and Indigenous scholarship (Hernández, 2022; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010, 2012, 2015; Yunkaporta, 2020), we look at the first constitutional process (2019-2022) as well as the ensuing resistance to transformation through discourses that mobilise fear. Our contribution re-reads the process through a spiral lens which allows us to tell a more fluid story to that which has been portrayed as a failed attempt for change (Figueroa Rubio, 2023; Fuentes, 2020). We see the rejection of the draft as shaped by tensions between western scientific accounts of the planetary crisis, democracy, and the state and non-hegemonic conceptions of the world such as *buen vivir* and plurinationality. Binaries falsely obscure ambiguities hardening them into rigid polarizations. The spiral lens enables us to linger over ambiguity rather than rushing towards strict diagnoses.

[1] Dorothy Smith uses this term when referring to the ways in which different forms of power penetrate times and places in complex ways: "The ethnographic problematic recognizes the real interpenetration of the present and immediate with the unknown elsewhere and elsewhen and the strange forms of power that are at once present and absent in the everyday" (Smith, 2005, p. 41).

Context

In October 2019, a protest sparked by an underground fare hike exploded into a movement demanding reforms on wealth inequality, education, women's and Indigenous rights, and environmental governance. Despite experiencing economic growth Chile exposes stark income inequalities (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022), particularly affecting Indigenous peoples (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Familia, 2022) who account for 12.4% of the total population (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Familia, 2017, p. 14). The Mapuche are the largest Indigenous group accounting for 84.8% of the total Indigenous population (p. 11).

During the period of Spanish colonization between 1532 and 1810, a series of international agreements took place between the Spanish crown and the Mapuche, with the 1641 "Parliament of Quilín" defining the territory where the Mapuche would enjoy autonomy and sovereignty (Bengoa 2007; Cayuqueo 2018). In 1810, the new and independent state of Chile disregarded previous agreements and declared Chile as one nation, one state. In 1989, the *Acuerdo de Nueva Imperial* was an agreement signed between Indigenous representatives and Patricio Aylwin, the leader of the Coalition of Parties for Democracy who replaced Pinochet after mounting international pressure forced him to call elections (Aylwin 1989; Pinto Rodríguez 2018). The Coalition committed to granting Indigenous Peoples constitutional recognition once in power, but the Coalition did not keep this promise, and Indigenous recognition was replaced by the enactment of Law 19253, which recognises the right for Indigenous peoples to maintain their culture provided they do not contravene morality, good customs, or public order (Ministerio de Planificación y Cooperación 1993; Donoso & Palacios 2018; Huenchumil 2022). Currently, and in contrast to other Latin American countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia, Chile's constitution does not mention Indigenous Peoples, and regards all citizens as "Chilean" (Donoso & Palacios 2018).

The political pressure stemming from the 2019 uprising resulted in a cross-party agreement for a referendum and in November 2020 nearly 80% of the electorate voted in favour of a new constitution (Suárez Cao, 2021). A Constitutional Convention was formed by 155 democratically elected citizens – a third of whom had no affiliation to political parties (Vergara, 2022). The Convention included 17 reserved seats for Indigenous representatives in an unprecedent turn of events in Chile's history. The Convention had 12 months to write a new charter. Elisa Loncón, Mapuche academic and activist, was elected the first Convention President. In September 2022, the final draft of the constitution, regarded as one of the most progressive in the world (Carballo & Fitz-Henry, 2022), was rejected by 62% of the population. Although our analysis focuses on this first process, we also explore, through the spiral, subsequent events that keep updating the October 2019 demands and which move in as-yet unknown directions, albeit perhaps not within possibilities for constitutional change.

The Spiral: A Way of Telling an Unfinished Story through Photographs

Changes, some of them profound, continue to take place in the national agenda, and although the September 2022 referendum results could be seen as a failed attempt to change the 1980 constitution, we argue that this is still an open process. We believe this collective writing offers an opportunity for unearthing, reflecting upon, and dusting off colonial ideas of success that come with linear accounts. The spiral shows time and again that we are not in the same place as we were prior to the 2019 social uprising. Demands for change and discussions of how to go about it did occur, despite attempts to install a different narrative. Moreover, we believe the process is ongoing in ways that keep updating past struggles. We, the authors, are two Chilean women with a stake in this topic, who saw the process with hope as well as disappointment. We were both born and raised during the Pinochet dictatorship, and we have directly experienced in our bodies and minds the violence of patriarchy and of neoliberal policies. Part of Adriana's ancestry is unknown to her while another part is from Italian ancestors arriving after WWII. As la paperson (2017) asserts, settler is not an identity but a set of technologies of exceptional rights granted to settler citizens, and it is the way in which the state exerts sovereignty. Being a settler is part of how privilege for some was and continues to be built on processes of land dispossession and the impoverishment of Indigenous peoples. Adriana is a settler born in Santiago, now living in Wallmapu where she works as an academic on intercultural land planning, which involves building relationships with Indigenous communities on whose lands she "reside[s] … as an unwelcome guest" (Hernández, 2022, p. 36). Wallmapu is the Mapuche ancestral territory extending between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans in South America, and which now includes Chile (Ngulumpau) and Argentina (Puelmapu) (Aigo et al., 2022). Victoria grew up in a working-class neighbourhood in Santiago and now lives in the United Kingdom. Part of her family originates from northern Chile, previously Perú, and inhabited by Aymara people, while another part of her ancestry is Mapuche and Chilean. She identifies as *champurria*. This Mapuche concept, akin to the notion of *ch'ixi* (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010) or "motley," is associated with *mestizo* (Rojas Neculhual, 2022): a person simultaneously embodying multiple worlds. This understanding embraces the contradictory identities formed by processes of colonisation and assimilation (Moraga García, 2021).

Our work is motivated by a commitment to unveil intersectional oppressions of class, gender, and race, and to look at how colonial processes keep reproducing themselves, as well as revisiting and learning from historical moments with transformative potential. Lugones (2010) proposes the modern colonial gender system as a lens to understand colonial modernity and its hierarchical dichotomies. It is through the colonial imposition of gender – which relates to "questions of ecology, economics, government, relations with the spirit world, and knowledge" (Lugones, 2010, p. 742) – that we learn to either care for or destroy the world. Moreover, Lugones posits that coloniality

coexists with everyday practices and efforts to resist it. This aligns with the spatiotemporal symbol of the spiral where the Chilean constitutional process is iterative and where reckoning, repairing, and reworlding unfold simultaneously. Seen in this way, emancipation recognises a broader range of possibilities than those afforded by an understanding of linear historical processes. Linear readings of events tend to narrate them in absolute terms such as those suggested by referendum results: constitution adopted or rejected. The values of *buen vivir* and *Küme Mongen* discussed in the Constitutional Convention are still open conversations, ways of living that will not end with this referendum's results. *Buen Vivir* from Aymara *suma qamaña* (Aymara) or *sumak kawsay* (Quechua) translates as "life in plenitude," which can be understood as a mandate to think well, feel good to do well with the aim of achieving harmony with the community, the family, nature, and the cosmos (Huanacuni Mamani, 2010). The multiple dimensions of *Küme Mongen* in Mapuche culture can also be understood within this communitarian culture of a life lived well. A life lived well is quite different to the one portrayed in the 1980s and current constitution based on principles that consolidate the privileges of dominant classes and provide incentives for extractive industries and water privatisation, among other neoliberal strategies (Fundación Sol, 2015).

Figure 1 illustrates the three Rs which we imagine as layers weaving together. Although number 4 may be interpreted as if we are back to a moment prior to October 2019, we contend that this is not the case.

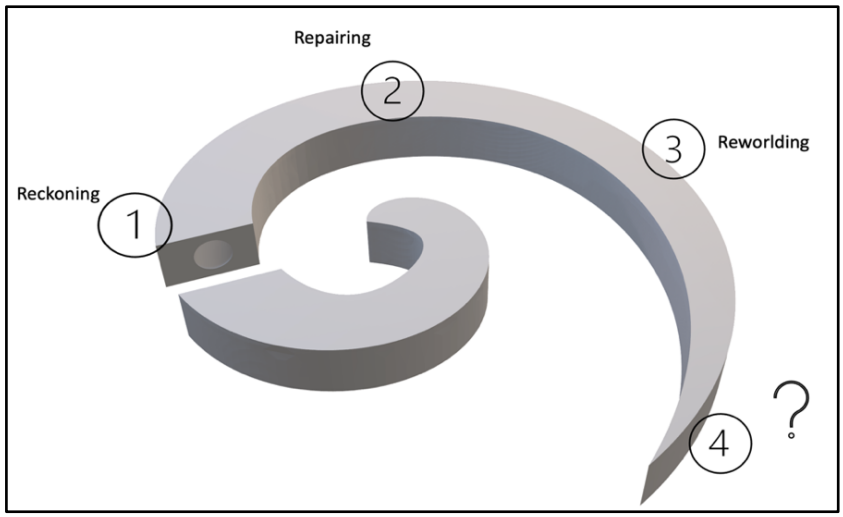

Figure 1. The Spiral of Transformation.

The idea of time as a spiral is common to several non-Western cultures and illustrates time and space as different from the linear timeline of modernity.

Yunkaporta (2020) argues that "explaining Aboriginal notions of time is an exercise in futility as you can only describe it as 'non-linear' in English … there is no word in Aboriginal Australian languages for 'non-linear' since all trajectories are winding" (Yunkaporta, 2020, p. 21). Bolivian Aymara sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2012) states that the Indigenous vision of history is not linear, and past and future co-exist in the present:

> The regression or progression, the repetition or overcoming of the past is at play in each conjuncture and is dependent more on our acts than on our words. The project of Indigenous modernity can emerge from the present in a spiral whose movement is a continuous feedback from the past to the future – a "principle of hope" or "anticipatory consciousness" – that both discerns and realizes decolonization at the same time. (p. 96)

Inspired by the principle of hope, we see anticipation emerging in the possibilities from an ongoing conversation across spatiotemporal imaginaries. The spiral constantly reminds us that the referendum results are not final as there are "infinite and regenerative connections between systems [which] regenerates creation in endless cycles" (Yunkaporta, 2020, pp. 51-52) and here we are unlearning dominant modern ways of reading these events. Machado de Oliveira (2021) highlights that modernity has a bookshelf of expired or expiring stories that need to be placed on palliative care because they are no longer useful. We need other stories, those which are waiting to "dance with us" (p. 190). The dominant reading of the referendum results and the failed attempt at a world otherwise, is one of those expiring stories that are depleting the capacity and creativity required to see the world in a different light. The story we tell through the spiral is not new but stems from, and amplifies, various moments of anti-colonial, anti-dictatorship struggles. These stories are alive, which is why we hear their echoes and see their visual traces in posters, graffiti, and the photographs we use here.

Inspired by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's (2015) sociology of image, we use photographs as tools to illustrate the simultaneous layers of the spiral which allow us to unearth a process that is otherwise described as a "circus," one which should be relegated to oblivion. The sociology of image, rooted in oral history workshops led by Rivera Cusicanqui (2015, p. 14) in rural *quechumara* areas, emphasises image observation and interpretation. Images are representations of collective behaviours, revealing societal nuances and cultural silences that use of academic and colonial language conceal. The photographs we use are catalysts for our own reflections and helped us shape the spiral analysis of reckoning-repairing-reworlding; they bleed past into present struggles in processes of resistance.

When the social uprising took place, we were both living in Bristol, and experienced it through traditional media – mainly television and newspapers – and social networks where artists expressed non-hegemonic voices on public walls, banners, and street protests. Our selection of photographs – defined by

their availability and free-use license – was guided by the overlapping three Rs which gave meaning to each concept forming the spiral of events.

Reckoning: From Barbarian to Valid Political Actor... and Back Again

We understand reckoning as a demand made by those excluded from colonialism's totalising systems, as they break into the political scene. What is demanded is the acknowledgement of the existence of other ways of knowing which are equally valid to those of the dominant world view. However, the chronological distinction between barbarism, which is understood to be surpassed by civilisation, surpassed again by modernity, marks the hegemony of one world over others. Consequently, knowledge is constructed, and the world is inhabited from a totalising, even totalitarian perspective in which only one world can exist (Dussel, 2008). Nonetheless, the totalised world refers to the hegemony of the coloniser's perspective, which according to Mignolo (2011), coexists in coevalness with otherness. Coloniality means that historical colonial relationships of domination based on race are still current, even after independence from former colonial powers (Grosfoguel, 2007; Mignolo, 2007b; Quijano, 2007) and even in democratic settings. From our perspective, this is the context in which reckoning is deployed, as the Other, formerly totalised under the dominant perspective, breaks into the political scene, altering the meaning of everyday life (Dussel, 2008).

Acuerpamiento and Institutional Channels for Change

During the social uprising there was an irruption of citizens who refused to be reduced to neoliberal rights to vote and consume, but who demanded a life worth living. This is the case portrayed by Collective *Las Tesis* and their street performance *A Rapist on Your Path* (*Un violador en tu camino*), a critique of patriarchal institutions and society's complicity in abusive practices against women (Tolokonnikova, 2020). Therefore, the first layer in our spiral, composed of two figures (2 and 3), illustrates how harm done for decades is reckoned with in 2019's social outburst. The next image shows a hooded young person, likely a *primera línea* (front-line) *combatiente* (fighter), on a wet street filled with smoke and puddles. Front-line fighters built barricades and used their bodies as a barrier to protect other protesters from police repression. Although the image can be read as barbarian (as protestors are usually portrayed in hegemonic media), the person is holding a banner with a demand for a new constitution to restore the civilising right afforded by a democratic establishment. By its looks, this photograph could be from the 1980s, a snapshot in a feedback loop or palimpsest. As explained by Nahuelpán Moreno (2013) for those "condemned by memory" to occupy a place in "the history" is not only to be positioned as subjects of the past, but also to reassert their

agency in present struggles (p. 23). The spiral expands the limits of linear thinking and enables us to imagine other struggles bleeding into present ones where we can heal our ancestors with their/our struggles and engage in alternatives regardless of their outcome in the present.

Figure 2. "New Constitution Now!!" (Source: Fernandez, 2019)

Although the social outburst represents an attempt to dismantle power asymmetries, the hegemonic media chose to focus on looting and destruction by using images where protesters are naturalised as violent and resentful. However, the environment inside protests was a safe space where people, especially women, felt in communion with others in the *"acuerpamiento"* (the making of a collective body) during protests (Cruzat, 2021). Cruzat (2021) refers to this collective body as "*la cuerpa"* breaking through from the margins with street performances working as affective references to channel, promote, and encourage social transformation during demonstrations between 2018 and 2020. The word for "body" in Spanish is "cuerpo," and the use of *cuerpa* has become a political statement in Chile's feminist movement.

Demonstrations had been taking place for years and with the social uprising a community dialogue took place in neighbourhoods across the country in self-organized informal assemblies (*cabildos*) where people discussed their needs and vision for the country (Zambrano Leiva & Huaiqui Hernández, 2020). The tipping point making this possible in an extreme neoliberal society was the increase of the metro fare by $30 Chilean pesos (US$ 0.031 as of November 2024). A phrase that went viral, and which indicates the fare hike was the tip of the iceberg is: "it's not thirty pesos, it's thirty years," referring to the three decades of democratic governments where the dictatorship, seemingly in the past, continues to manifest in the present through an elitist constitution and its following neoliberal policies. The photo reveals the collective realisation that deep transformation was impossible under the current constitution. This photograph (Figure 2) begs a question: who is the real barbarian? Is it the people on the streets throwing stones made of damaged public infrastructure, or is it the economic and political elite hiding behind brutal military repression, water cannons, and curfews and robbing people of their eyesight by shooting them with their ammunition?

Beyond reductive representations, following the spiral shape of historical events, Figure 3 highlights the colonial roots of the process, as reckoning is not limited to current times or even the last 30 years. The figure depicts *Wenufoye* flags – associated with Mapuche communities – flying on top of the statue, revealing the anticolonial way out of the crisis (Pairican & Porma, 2023). The protest is against the current order and its untrustworthy elite, but also against a deeper, longer process at the root of the crisis: the colonial practices that generated the conditions for its existence and reproduction. These processes include land dispossession, the exploitation of Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendants', and peasants' bodies, together with efforts to assimilate diversity and erase Indigenous cosmologies since the creation of the State.

Figure 3. Wenufoye Flag Flying on top of General Baquedano's Statue. (Source: Mendoza, 2019)

"We are Not at War"

The phrase on the T-shirt in Figure 4 reads "We are not at war," one of the mottoes together with "*Chile despertó"* ("Chile has woken up") made famous in the largest demonstration where more than a million people gathered in Santiago's "Plaza Dignidad." The message responds to President Sebastián Piñera's infamous phrase: "we are at war against a powerful enemy," which was rejected *en masse* and subverted in memes and demonstrations.

This phrase stigmatized protesters, simplified the complexity of their demands, and justified the use of police brutality to a degree not seen since the return to democracy (Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos, 2020). Among the people portrayed in the image, some are covering their faces, possibly to protect themselves from tear gas, commonly used to disperse demonstrations. The T-shirt in the photograph also reads "The TV lies" denouncing the role of mass media in reinforcing the President's message. Yet, through the *acuerpamiento* the oppressed breaks through as a political subject of social change, opposing their portrayal as criminals and terrorists. Not only those at the forefront of the protests against the colonial order were faced with physical and symbolic violence, but also people who engaged in the democratic 2022 Convention process such as Mapuche leader Elisa Loncón who presided over the Convention and was a target for alarming racial, class and gendered hatred

(Cooperativa, 2023). As we will now see, the spiral also allows us to bridge different geographies, as well as times.

Figure 4. Demonstration and Sign "We are Not at War." (Source**:** Slachevsky, 2019)

Meanwhile, in Bristol… and Other Parts of the World

We were part of spontaneous *cabildos* held in Bristol where Chileans like ourselves engaged with what was happening in our country and followed the process as it unfolded. We demonstrated on the streets of Bristol, sharing leaflets denouncing state repression while other Chileans did the same in other parts of the UK and around the world in solidarity with mobilisations in Chile. Participating in these self-organised *cabildos* was an experience we had never had before. Victoria was part of a group who organised, designed, and painted a mural in January 2020 in Bristol.

Figure 5. Mural painted by a group of people in Bristol, celebrating the Chilean social uprising, January 2020. **(**Photo: Martín Carmona, 2020)

The mural adds to this first layer of the spiral which we think of as reckoning across places and uniting struggles across the world. As part of the spatiotemporal spiralling process of reckoning, the performance *Un violador en tu camino* was enacted in Bristol and with it, Chile's struggles bled into the UK while the government was in negotiations to finalise Brexit. Months after the social uprising, and amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Bristol protesters de-plinthed a statue of slaveowner Edward Colston, condemning the honouring of the city's colonial history (Olusoga, 2020) in solidarity with the Black Lives Matters movement against the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis police. Four of the protesters taking down Colston's statue faced trial for criminal damage. In March 2021, further protests were organised nationwide in the "kill the bill riots" which opposed a law project that would give the police more power to prevent demonstrations and criminalise public protesters (The Big Issue, 2022). During 2022 and 2023, strikes from different sectors including the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers, nurses, teachers, and academics irrupted into daily life against the unbearable cost of living in one of the main economies in the world.

Back in Chile… From the Streets to Congress

People saw the need to represent themselves, firstly on the streets, and later in the polls by electing mostly non-partisan Constitutional Convention members excluding parliamentarians from this process. This relates to what Spivak (1998) calls the subaltern: a person whose identity is disavowed from the outside, not from within (Bidaseca in LasTesis, 2022, p. 65). With the irruption of the Other, only by speaking and reclaiming their place of enunciation can the subaltern subvert this condition. This is only possible by owning and intensifying their voice, and doing away with dominant systems of representation, which is what happened in Chile as people realised political parties and elected authorities did not understand their needs. We read this to say that the subaltern is telling the oppressor his knowledge of the world is not universal but rather a project "that has been imposed globally through explicit and subtle violence" (Machado de Oliveira, 2021, p. 17) and consists of one explanation of reality established as the norm (Spivak, 1998). There is a collective realisation where people enunciated together that the commodification of education, health, pensions, and water was not the only possible way of being, relating, and living. On 15 November 2019, a month after the social uprising, political parties from different sectors signed the Agreement for Social Peace and the New Constitution, also called N15 (Acuerdo Por la Paz Social y la Nueva Constitución, 2019). This agreement opened a legitimate process for drafting a new constitution that would replace the one left over from the dictatorship, opening up another event in our spatiotemporal spiral.

Repairing

We now turn to analyse whether reckoning grants sufficient grounds for emancipation as posed by Dussel, and whether a new constitution is the most appropriate way to establish social peace as the N15 assumed. Slogans such as *"Hasta que valga la pena vivir"* ("until it's worth living"), were a call for transformation and a reconfiguration of power relationships. Reckoning comes with a demand for repairing. Following the spiral, if demands raised during reckoning were not addressed, those demands will resurface, irrupting again and again. When Rivera Cusicanqui (2010) revisits the uprising led by Tupac Katari during the 18th century, she asserts that time is not a line of facts, and what is left in the past will come back. According to her, these rebellions were motivated by the need to recognise difference as a response to the "upside-down world" left by the Spanish conquest and colonization (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012, p. 96). Katari, betrayed and dismembered by the colonisers, said before dying: "I will return and I will be millions" (Cuya Gavilano, 2023, p. 103). Rivera Cusicanqui (2010) interprets the cycle of uprisings irrupting during the independence bicentenary celebrations (2000-2005) as historical memory being "reactivated and at the same time reworked and re-signified in subsequent crises and cycles of rebellion" (p. 13). Beyond the specificities of the Bolivian history and context, the spiral sees rebellions happening in other times and places as rooted, to some extent, in decolonising movements from below that seek the recognition of difference. The next layer of the spiral we will delve into is an iterative process of repairing through law-making stemming from reckoning with an unfinished past that keeps haunting the present and the future.

Repairing (Within the Limits of the Existing Order)

The process emerging organically from the streets and demanding quality education, public pensions, free and quality health care, pointed to the need to transform the 1980s constitution, a legacy of Pinochet's neoliberal regime. The process here described is one where people sought to collectively articulate political avenues and conversations that differ from anything we had seen in the past. The N15 Agreement was a political decision triggered by mass protests and the result of the elite's realisation that the rage of the masses was uncontrollable. Since the 1990s, when Chile experienced a return to democracy, different movements used democratic avenues to demand what in 2019 was being demanded. The spiral reveals that October 2019 was reenacting the cleft between, on the one hand, the political and economic elite, and on the other, the experiences of citizens marginalised from decision-making. Similarly, the country's independence from the Spanish crown was a proposed emancipation from the oppressor, although only the elite were able to enjoy the fruits of independence by forging an internally colonised, unequal,

country. The N15 Agreement describing the process of constitution writing did not reserve seats for Indigenous representatives and subsequent congressional sessions were required to negotiate them. By November 2020, all political actors had accepted the idea that Indigenous peoples should be included in the Convention, something unthinkable a year before. We believe Figure 6 below illustrates repairing (the second turn of our spiral) through the historical election of two Mapuche women and Mapuzungun speakers in the Constitutional Convention, one of them a Traditional Authority: Machi Francisca Linconao.

Figure 6. Left: Elisa Loncón. Right: Machi Francisca Linconao. (Sources: Slachevsky, 2021; Mediabanco Agencia, 2021)

> With the conviction that "This is the beginning of a historical process that will aim at addressing the historical State debt towards Indigenous peoples" … the constitutional reform [which] aims to reserve 17 seats to Indigenous Peoples representatives within the constitutional body in charge of writing Chile's new Constitution. (Senado de la República Chile, 2020, para. 1)

Recognition discourses have been marked by an acceptance of some cultural traditions; however, right-wing parties have systematically rejected the notion of peoples and there has been no willingness to grant them a place in law-making. This was not only evident amongst right-wing politicians, but the left also showed a tenuous support for recognition, highlighting territorial indivisibility and the idea of a single Chilean nation. It is evident that positions moved only because of street manifestations and heightened social conflict (Fuentes, 2020). In fact, after the rejection of the first constitutional draft in September 2022, Indigenous demands were consistently denied from right-wing parties and rejection campaigners while moderate left supporters professing the motto "approve to reform" tried to water down Indigenous demands to reach more votes for the "approve" option.

The moment of reckoning demanded a transformation of the democratic structure of colonial rule. We could say the limited Indigenous representation achieved (17 seats), albeit insufficient, was a preliminary layer in the

redefinition of the terms of democracy, a turn in the spiral. However, this could also be seen as a conciliatory gesture, one without substance, since this inclusion does not imply a return of land to original custodians (Simpson, 2021). Demands for land are particularly important for the Mapuche, followed by demands for intercultural education and health (Quidel Lincoleo, 2023). This resonates with the existence of different approaches to transform the colonial state into a plurinational one, and the recognition of the right to self-determination (Pairican, 2022) which is necessarily linked to land claims. Following the logic described by Hale (2020), Indigenous leaders in Chile used both use-and-refuse strategies to counter the neoliberal multiculturalist recognition promoted from the State since the return to democracy. On the one hand, some leaders participated in the re-building of the state via a "gradual avenue for self-determination" (Pairican, 2022, p. 7), as was the case of those participating in the Constitutional Convention (the "use" alternative). On the other hand, for Indigenous leaders who refuse state-making processes and who are criminalised for obstructing a neoliberal multicultural democracy (Pairican, 2022, pp. 20-21), Sebastián Piñera (Chile's President during the social uprising, who represented the right end of the political spectrum) and Gabriel Boric (the current President representing the left) are the same as far as discussions about returning land go (Bauer, 2022). For this movement, sceptical of the institutional avenue to self-determination, repairing was a redress, a gesture without substance, and they refused to participate in the process.

Reworlding

We refer to reworlding as the emergence of a new social order, always contingent and provisional, committed to dismantling the colonial matrix of power ruling social relationships. Reworlding was happening during reckoning and repairing as these layers occur simultaneously. An order that centres peoples' lives and experiences, particularly of those historically at the margins, is always reactivating itself in a spiralling process that constantly reflects on its legitimacy. Yet, it is still too soon to know what will remain from this process. What we can try to understand, though, is the shift, albeit temporary, in power relations. The Chilean experiment in democratic text writing radically gestured towards an otherwise of living and being, especially with its sustained attention to *buen vivir* and plurinationality. Perhaps it was this radicalism that generated fear, which brought about the rejection of the first draft.

Küme mongen, Buen Vivir

Aspects of Indigenous knowledges inspired a re-definition of the social order. Despite the rejection of the first text, the constitutional process that gave shape

to it contributed to a reworlding in terms of the content of the proposal. For instance, the concept of *buen vivir* was included in the draft: "the State recognises and promotes "*buen vivir"* as a relationship of harmonious balance between humans, nature, and the organisation of society" (Convención Constitucional, 2022, p. 6).

The content also included the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' existence, previously only contemplated in some laws. Therefore, the constitution guaranteed the right to live well, while recognition with self-determination could be considered a step towards reworlding as an emancipatory project (Dussel, 2007; Mignolo, 2007a). *Buen vivir* makes sense to Indigenous communities but it also resonates with regional and global agendas highlighting environmental care. For instance, Article 1 of the 2022 draft claims that Chile "is plurinational, intercultural, regional, and ecological" (Convención Constitucional, 2022, p. 5), while Article 190 adds:

> Territorial entities and their governing bodies must act in coordination and compliance with the principles of plurinationality and interculturality; respect and protect the different ways of conceiving and organising the world, of relating to nature; and guarantee the rights to self-determination and autonomy of Indigenous peoples and nations. (Convención Constitucional, 2022, p. 65)

Likewise, the decolonial turn addresses the plurality of cultures and celebrates difference, which constitutes an alternative to a homogeneous equality upon which the liberal project relies (Dussel, 2007).

The inclusion of such concepts and wording can be seen as the result not only of the efforts of Indigenous representatives in Chile, but also Indigenous organisations across the continent who saw the need to establish plurinational states to replace mestizo and exclusionary states. Plurinationality does not imply the hegemony of one culture over another but rather, and as a new turn in the spiral, it promotes coexistence in difference. In this sense, the draft resulting from the first process incorporated a kind of knowledge that is, at the same time, ancestral and new. In the second constitutional process however, after the September 2022 referendum, conservative groups got an overwhelming majority and Indigenous representation was even more limited than in the Convention (see Figure 7).

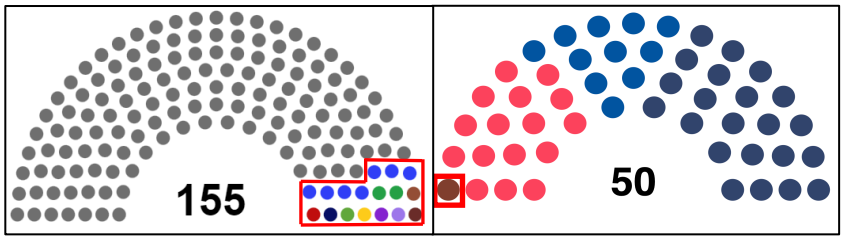

Figure 7. Left: Indigenous Peoples representation within Constitutional Convention in 2019. Right: Indigenous Peoples representation within Constitutional Council in 2023 (Sources: Authors, based on Wikimedia Commons, 2020, & Wikimedia Commons, 2023).

Following the narrative of the spiral, this event can be read as a reminder that we might need to conceive reworlding as always in motion and never fully accomplished as stated earlier, in a process that needs to keep updating itself. The examples of Bolivia and Ecuador show us that rhetoric is not sufficient for social transformation, as the outcomes of those reworlding efforts face a powerful elite who resist transformation. In these countries, the concept of *buen vivir*, although acknowledged in their constitutions, has been "difficult to fully integrate [in] all of its aspects because of elite internal and external economic interests and Bolivia's post-colonial context" (Bell, 2017, p. 20). Likewise, Millaleo (2021) warns against the use of plurinationality and *buen vivir'* as vacant concepts that attempt to tame Indigenous movements through rhetorical rights discourses impossible to achieve by strengthening and centralising state powers.

In using the spiral, we see transformation in non-linear ways and attempt to move away from a singular description of reality where the rejection of the constitution may be seen as a fiasco. Telling the story through a spiral embraces these results as openings and paradoxes and not as the culmination of coherent progress (Hernández, 2022). The transformative potential of these ideas has not disappeared, since the "new inclusionary turn" (Roberts, 2021, p. 518) experienced in Bolivia and Ecuador inspired the constitutional process experienced in Chile a decade later. What may happen in one place might have ripple effects somewhere else and in ways that are neither predictable nor explicable through a Euclidean spatiotemporal configuration where each entity (photograph, story) occupies a unique place and is positioned at distinct points in a clear temporal line. This mode of reflecting on situations allows for different feelings, thoughts, and relationships to co-exist – perhaps even more so when contradictory.

Ripple Effects as a Mode of Conclusion

In September 2022, Chileans rejected the first and most progressive attempt at a new constitution. There were efforts to undermine the text particularly from those who hold corporative powers (López, 2022), and who also own the media which was used to mobilise fear and hate (Bauer, 2022). The 2023 constitutional process was highly dominated by the far-right Republicanos, a party founded in 2019, and which gained prominence just after the uprising. This time, the process did not include reserved seats for Indigenous representatives and was based on an extremely exclusionary election system where some non-Indigenous candidates got elected with 30,000 votes, while 160,716 votes from Indigenous communities were only able to secure one seat (Alvarado Lincopi & Llancaman, 2023), as shown in Figure 7. In this vein, we wonder whether the efforts and accomplishments of 2019 and 2020 have been scrapped. Clearly, the Council composition redefined expectations and the agenda for Indigenous People, replacing the idea of plurinationality (Suárez Delucchi, 2024) by a limited set of demands, including the constitutional recognition of Indigenous Peoples, the negotiation of some collective rights (languages, history, and cultures), the incorporation of an intercultural lens within public policies, reserved seats in Congress and land restitution (La Tercera, 2023). None of these efforts came to fruition and the text resulted in an even more conservative draft than the 1980s constitution. The second draft was rejected in December 2023 and, as this article goes to press, the country is still ruled by the 1980s charter.

We could infer that the necessary institutional changes that *frame* social relations remain intact and that a colonial totalitarian text is still shaping the state, leaving the colonial matrix of power intact. Following a linear conception of time, this could be seen as another *Pachakuti* (upside-down world) where colonial power is re-imposed. Still, our spiral of time and space (Figure 1) shows another moment: number 4, with a question mark reminding us that there are still possibilities for something else to emerge, as this is not the end.

Officially, Chile remains under the mandate of the 1980's charter, which to us, is still illegitimate. With no widely accepted alternative, uncertainty about the legitimacy of the regime imposed in the past continues. For instance, there have been new attempts to rekindle demonstrations, such as the call made by *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores* (Unitary Workers Central) considered as a hopeful sign of social movements' reactivation after the 2022 defeat (Pérez Ahumada, 2024). Another example has been the reactivation of feminist movements following Senator Macaya's sentence for child sexual abuse, and against Minister Monsalve's charges for sexual abuse. Additionally, independent media has recently criticised the criminalisation of the 2019 social upheaval emphasizing that portraying their claims as violent hides genuine social demands (Matamala, 2024).

After the dictatorship, a new democratic order was installed and validated for 30 years. As a result of the spiral cycle restarted by the social uprising in

2019, that social order is no longer valid and demands the construction of a new order (Figure 2). Over the past five years, political representatives have been unable to respond to this challenge. Therefore, we claim the reworlding attempted by the social uprising is still in the making, particularly when, considering what was at stake, a progressive constitutional draft was accepted by 38% of the voting population (Hiner, 2022, p. 416).

The second constitutional attempt (Figure 7) proposed an even more regressive constitution than the one from 1980 – and denied the existence of worlds otherwise reinforcing a resistance that will resurge with the next turn of the spiral. Resistance, we believe, should be understood not as the goal of political struggle but its possibility, even if in the shape of "a minimal sense of agency" (Lugones, 2010, p. 746). As long as there are worlds with different ontological presuppositions, which modernity attempts to control through its linear processes and by denying their existence, there will be colonial modernity. And as Lugones (2010) teaches us, with colonial modernity comes resistance, which happens in the liminal space of colonial difference. We thus interpret phase 4 in our spiral as a "yet-unspecified radically distinct political horizon" (Hale, 2020, p. 619) where those choosing to use institutional tools can navigate that liminal space/time while simultaneously practicing resistance.

Our reading of the Chilean process through the spiral could be taken up and inspire another reading of related events elsewhere, for example recent developments in Australia where plans to give greater political rights to Indigenous peoples were rejected (Ritchie, 2023). Perhaps what comes next in the ongoing spatiotemporal spiral is a rearticulation of demands whereby, although hegemonic dichotomies of modernity seem to be renewed, so are historical struggles which spread worldwide and across times. That in-betweenness of moments is where diverse narratives about what happened and what is said to have happened emerge together with hope and the possibility of what may still come.

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