*Kristina Lyons**

Emergent forms of death warning: highly toxic experiments

ABSTRACT

This paper examines how liberal discourses and moral sensibilities concerning the management of life turn into a war against life in the name of life itself. In particular it asks, under what conditions is the right to make killable, to allow to live, or to expose to death exercised in relation to rural landscapes and populations in southern Colombia. This paper is interested in thinking-with and living-with those landscapes whose human and non-human populations find themselves the object of, as well as inadvertently confronted by and entangled with, emergent forms of death. It also poses questions about what modes of resilience, embedded in struggle rather than transcendence, may be emerging out of 'wounded spaces' that have been fractured by violence, and that are pitted with sites where life (in its largest sense) has been irretrievably torn.

Key words: emergent forms of death, ecologies of place, politics of hope, making killable

RESUMEN

Este ensayo examina cómo discursos y sensibilidades liberales en relación con el manejo de la vida, pueden tornarse en guerra contra la vida a nombre de la vida misma. En particular, se pregunta bajo cuáles condiciones el derecho de 'volver asesinable', de dejar vivir, o de exponer a la muerte es ejercido en relación con los paisajes y poblaciones rurales en el sur de Colombia. Este artículo intenta 'pensar-con' y 'vivir-con' aquellos paisajes cuyas poblaciones humanas y no humanas son objeto de, así como inadvertidamente confrontadas por y enredadas con, formas de muerte emergentes. También sugiere preguntas acerca de qué modos de resiliencia, envueltos en la lucha más que en prácticas de transcendencia, pueden surgir desde los 'espacios lacerados' que han sido fracturados por la violencia, y que han sido impactados por aquellos sitios donde la vida (en su sentido más amplio) ha sido irreversiblemente fragmentada.

Palabras claves: formas de muerte emergentes, ecologías del lugar, política de la esperanza, 'volver asesinable'.

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More Reports from Putumayo

Twenty years from now you might
wonder how they turned the butterflies against us,
how the graceful flight of such creatures
came to circle overhead
like a flock of angry birds.
Their wings grinding together,
the screech of metal contraptions,
these moving metal contraptions sucking
the life out of everything.
The leaves of banana trees,
hen feathers,
scraps of human hair,
even the mushroom caps that crept across our rooftops
(this so-called second experiment).

I cannot tell you
how we scuttled out of sight,
beyond the scope of satellite maps
mesmerized by dark swarming clouds
and the trails of half-eaten foliage.
We crept beneath the not so distant sound of helicopter blades,
and the buzz buzzing of low flying planes.
This when it became clear.
The only solution is to arm yourself,
leave, die, or figure something out.
Said the general at the market,
said the experts through a bullhorn,
said the biologist to her butterflies
just before they took flight.

KRISTINA LYONS

*The previously implemented policies that were imposed
talked of zero coca. Zero coca is like talking zero Quechuas,
Aymaras, Mojenos, Chiquitanos in my country. This is a
green coca leaf. It is not the white of cocaine. This coca leaf
represents Andean culture. It is a leaf that represents the
environment and the hope for our people. It is very lamentable
that due to bad customs the coca leaf is derailed into an illegal
problem. We are conscious of this and that is why we say
as producers of the coca leaf that there will not be free coca
cultivation, but nor will there be zero coca.*

Bolivian President Evo Morales,
Address to the United Nations (Sept. 22, 2006).

In Bolivia, Colombia and Perú coca has been cultivated since prehispanic times not only for chewing, but also for its sacred and medicinal powers. Coca leaves can be boiled, ground, toasted or used dried; they can be consumed alone or mixed with other substances; they can be made into tea or used as ointment, placed in bathwater or in massages to cure dozens of popular illnesses. Coca has been recognized as a traditional and legal crop of indigenous peoples by all three countries. However, in contrast to Bolivia and Perú, where coca tea has been used widely and the commercialization of other products derived from the plant is commonly found, only certain Andean and Amazonian indigenous groups in Colombia - the nasas, arhuacos, huitotos and tukanos- have traditionally chewed coca and used it medicinally. In part, this difference explains why the penalization of coca cultivation is much stronger in Colombia where its history has not been linked to national identity and local economies in the same way as its Bolivian and Peruvian neighbors.

1. A SEA OF GREEN

Commercial coca cultivation began in the eastern region of Colombia around 1975, and was promoted by emerald traders who had established links with the burgeoning coca business in Perú and Bolivia even before Colombia's marijuana boom ended (1960-1980). For more than two decades, chemical eradication of illegal crops was not a priority for the Colombian government. Aerial fumigation began as a "secret" experiment during Julio César Turbay's government (1978-1982) to attack the increase in marijuana plantations in the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, but it was Belisario Bentancur (1982-1986) who officially sanctioned the use of the herbicide glyphosate in aerial spraying. The protests of campesinos *colonos* and indigenous (arhuacos and kogis) pueblos, and Washington's decision not to insist on the strategy, led to the temporary suspension of aerial fumigation operations and a return to the

military's forced manual eradication of marijuana fields (Puyana: 1999). Due to their previous marketing experience, Colombian emerald traders knew the commercial routes that would be successful for the exportation of cocaine. Initially, the center of coca production was in Inquitos (Perú) where coca paste was exported to the eastern planes of Colombia (around 50-60 planes a month each carrying 500 kilos), transformed into cocaine, and commercialized for United States and European consumers. At the end of the 1970s, Colombian traffickers began to cultivate their own coca, knowing that it would adapt well to humid jungle climates where indigenous peoples were familiar with the plant and had grown it for hundreds of years. However, it was really only at the beginning of the 1990s with the increase in forced eradication campaigns and the repression of the transport routes of raw materials to Colombia's rural cocaine laboratories that traffickers sought to become totally self-sufficient in their production of coca leaves (Fajardo: 2005). The country's continuing agrarian crisis would lead to the sowing of poppy flowers around 1986, and its expansion to 19 of Colombia's more mountainous departments during the following decade (Ruiz: 2004).

The first variety of coca planted near the Caquetá, San Miguel, Guamuéz and Putumayo rivers in 1978 was the Caucana. During the next five years production expanded rapidly; at this time most parcels of coca were found in isolated jungle zones, especially in the areas of Putumayo where there were no state colonization programs. These territories were part of the Amazonian forest reserves and could not legally be owned by the *colonos*. Subsequently, they were unable to obtain bank loans and they became indebted to narcotraffickers in the region who managed the sale of coca seeds and the chemicals used to transform the leaves into basic paste. The traffickers bought the pasta básica from the *colonos* using food and clothing as their primary base of exchange (Ramírez: 2001). Small farmers- indigenous, mestizo and Afro-descendents-argue that the concentration of land in the hands of large owners, the historical lack of agrarian reform, massive displacement of peasants to urban centers and frontier zones that can not compete with the agricultural demands of the world market, and the aggressive implementation of structural adjustment policies have forced them to attempt to solve their socioeconomic problems through "illicit" crop cultivation[1].

2. LOCAL LABORATORIES

Laboratories for the production of cocaine are run by local residents, referred to as *patrones*, who are paid by the traffickers. It is said that to establish a laboratory, local businessmen must pay the FARC guerrillas or paramilitary

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[1]   For a deeper historical analysis please see Palacios and Safford: 2002 and Bushnell: 1994.

KRISTINA LYONS

entities one million pesos. The FARC do not protect the lab, but they do regulate the local market. Cocaine kitchens (*combo, cocinas, chongos*) are divided into five sections and are mobile or permanent bases (meaning that they can be stationed up three or four months in the same location). Workers inside the kitchens include stirrers, pourers, packers, filterers, pressers, driers, recyclers, watchmen, chemists, branders, connectors of electricity, local shopkeepers who replenish supplies, the official cook, and of course, the *patrón* who yells and yells and keeps his eye on the merchandise. There are cots for sleeping, but no one sleeps. At any moment the army could arrive and helicopters can be heard circling overhead. Workers have to take off running; thus, their job must be done with speed and accuracy. Generally, the kitchen staff works for twenty days non-stop before they are allowed to return to their homes.

3. INTRODUCTION

In this essay I am interested in thinking-with and living-with those landscapes whose populations find themselves the object of, as well as inadvertently confronted by and entangled with, emergent forms of death[2]. With this notion I refer to particular politics of destruction that are emerging out of: 1) the increased global intervention of liberal moralities in local contexts, what Subcomandante Marcos (Marcos: 2002) has called the new wars waged by those who see themselves as part of the "empire of good", and 2) a shift away from extractive practices towards the purposeful and absolute destruction of ecologies of place. This idea overlaps with Raymond Williams's notion of emergence in that "new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and new kinds of relationships are continually being created" (Williams: 1997, 123); in particular, I am interested in the new pedagogies of "life" that are being produced through death. Thus, in contrast to one aspect of Michel Fischer's (Fischer: 2003; Fischer: 2005) notion of emergence in which he places emphasis on the heterogeneous manifestations of new life yielding phenomenon that are occurring during the twenty-first century, I want to focus on the work of "making killable" (Haraway: 2007) that, despite seeming contradictions, emerges out of globalized liberal moral imperatives and sensibilities[3].

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[2]   Many thanks to Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (forthcoming) for her reflections on Donna's Haraway practice of "thinking-with care" which she conceives as an effort to cultivate significant relatedness in collective and accountable knowledge construction with worlds populated by many people and many beings. For Haraway and Puig these worlds are not only encountered for the purpose of thinking with, but also in an attempt to live with (1997).

[3]   Fischer (Fischer: 2005) is literally referring to the emergence of new forms of life that had no prior existence and that were never before experienced by any human or in vivo body before the application of molecular engineering. He also uses the notion of 'emergence' as an organizational concept to refer to the evolution of new forms (levels of organization, social forms) that emerge out of interactions between people, disciplines, and cultural processes over time.

Where I do see my interest in emergent practices and phenomena overlapping with Fischer and Maurer (Fischer and Mauer: 2005) is in their concern with emergence as a contested terrain always already a complex hybrid of naturescultures, and one in which historical and emergent modalities of ethical and political reason are continually renegotiated (and often times imposed). Second, as Williams argues, in discussions of the emergent it is extremely difficult to distinguish between those which are really elements of some new phase of dominant culture, and those which are substantially alternative or oppositional to it since we are always considering relations within a cultural process.

In my project, I refer to emergent forms of death related to politics and science (i.e. emergent chemistries of destruction connected to scientific, social, political, economic, and ecological realms) that are always genealogically connected to earlier forms of death and destruction that, for example, were historically sanctioned by 'God' and 'Nature'. In the latter part of this essay, I will pose questions about what modes of resilience, embedded in struggle rather than transcendence, may be emerging out of 'wounded spaces' that have been torn and fractured by violence and exile, and that are pitted with sites where life has been irretrievably torn (Rose: 2004).

Like Mbembé (Mbembé: 2003), I am interested in how we are to account for contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death by a whole array of actors whose sovereignty is not only located within the boundaries of the nation-state, but within paralegal entities, as well as transnational institutions and networks. However, unlike Mbembé, my preoccupation extends beyond human actors and the forces they exert to include actors and forces within the broader worlds of which humans form a part. The notion of ecologies, which in my project includes soil, plants, animals (such as the butterflies enrolled by biological weaponry mentioned in the opening poem), water, the dead, rumors, fear, humans, herbicides and other technologies, is inspired by my readings of a wide range of authors including Latour, Haraway, Tsing, and Escobar, and the conversations that I have had with Marisol de la Cadena and Maria Puig de la Bellacasa. I will use the notion of ecologies of place throughout this essay to refer to the densely and uniquely woven threads of home, livelihood, landscape, ecosystems, body, community, memories, expectations and desires that weave together biophysical, cultural and technoeconomic practices and histories (Escobar: 1999; Blaser: 2004; Grueso and Arroyo: 2005; Harcourt and Escobar: 2005). This idea overlaps with Latour's (Latour: 2004) concept of collectivities-or the assembling of associations of human and nonhuman actors in which the previous distribution of powers between 'nature' and 'society' are accumulated in a singular controversial, conversational, and cohabitational enclosure.

Ecologies of place, then, refers to the collectives of human and non-human actors that occupy those landscapes which most concern me; landscapes that

are rich for livelihood and rich in species diversity, and where naturescultures are subject to historical changes as they struggle to survive in the midst of destructive impositions and occupations. In particular, I am interested in landscapes of coca and poppy production and the many possibilities and surprises they may offer us.

4. LIFE FOR WHOM AND WHAT?

This paper asks how moral discourses concerning the management of life turn into a war against life in the name of life. Under what conditions is the right to make killable, to allow to live, or to expose to death exercised? When and how does eradication of local practices become the main mechanism for dealing with diverse ecologies and their respective life-worlds rather than policies of permanent occupation or incorporation? Here I do not mean to imply that inclusion can not also occur through death itself- one only needs to think about the posthumous granting of citizenship to soldiers, the appropriation of the dead for nationalist narratives and public memorials (Benjamin: 1969; Anderson: 1991; Taussig: 1992), the use of marginal and diseased groups as pedagogical tools (Biehl: 2005a), and posthumous justifications for why certain populations had to be used up in pursuit of the 'common good', to observe that death is at the heart of the formation and maintenance of the nation.

There is, I believe, a distinction to be made between those dead (human and non- human) that are members of a community (and thus whose deaths are made visible and matter), and the dead that are outside the community and whose deaths matter to the extent that they can be excluded. The first is social and commemorative, the second harkens back to the relationship between violence and progress. If progress emerges from violence, then deaths that are treated as if they do not matter actually do matter in that they are markers of progress. I am referring to the latter; particularly projects of zero-tolerance that, from their inception, explicitly aim at 'clearing away' entire populations. In Colombia this kind of collective massacre is referred to as a *limpieza* - "cleansing"- which now means to wipe out and kill people much the same as a "purge" of the unclean (a kind moral eugenics); however, it is also used and has a far older history in healing a person or home from malignity due to spirit attack or sorcery (Taussig: 2003). As anthropologist María Victoria Uribe (Uribe: 2004) has argued, in Colombia it is the slightest disparity between persons that acquires the greatest importance, particularly those that transform human beings into inhuman creatures.

If moralizing discourses position humans closer to nature so that they can be killed, what happens to all other forms of non-human life encapsulated by zones of war? How do histories of violence in rural landscapes of Colombia intersect with emergent forms of death that continue to mobilize local human

and non-human populations?[4] Taking up Rose's proposal to think seriously about 'tracks', I want to explore the idea that the ground itself- the earth and its living beings- holds traces not only of the damage we have committed, but also of our alternatives for a different 'ecologies of place'.

5. LAYERED TRACKS: HISTORIES OF VIOLENCE IN THE PUTUMAYO

"Frontier' zones, like the Putumayo Amazonia, have inherited histories of violence connected to cycles of colonization and extractive economic practices that have long transformed local ecologies. Beginning in the 1900s, the search for quinine, and subsequently, rubber, gold, animal skins, timber, oil, and more recently, coca, have brought many species into contact for the sole purpose of exploiting their collective energies. In 1887, early national efforts to colonize the region and strengthen Colombia's southern border were led by Catholic missionaries who set out to both evangelize local indigenous groups and to keep watch over the territory. In the 1930s, several highways were constructed to transport the military during the Peruvian-Colombian border conflict, and ten years later, the breakup of indigenous reservations in neighboring Nariño forced many groups to migrate to the jungles of Putumayo.

More recently, the department has been a destination for people violently displaced from other rural areas of the country seeking to relocate and develop agriculture in more remote zones, as well as migratory populations following the boom and bust cycles of the cocaine industry and the balloon effects of aerial fumigation policies (Ramírez: 2001; Albán: 2005). State, paralegal, and humanitarian actors fixate their attention on rural territories in the totality of their human and non-human occupants, at times rendering them immobile (like in the case of the '*comunidades confinadas*'), and at other times forcibly extracting them or unleashing them to scatter over broad areas no longer contained by the boundaries of the territorial state (as in the case of the growing number of refugees in neighboring Ecuador, and the displacement of coca cultivation back and forth across Andean landscapes). Collective life projects begin to shut down, re-appear in new areas, and become disaggregated into distinct categories that come under attack (again): *delincuentes, narcotraficantes*, subversives, sympathizers, *cocaleros, raspachines*, terrorists, *paracos*, activists. What distinguishes 19th century 'spaces of death' produced through colonial-capitalist enterprising (Taussig: 1987) from the early twenty-first century creation of new resource frontiers and special law enforcement zones? What shifts in the histories of travel and trade, including, as Taussig so well documented, the trade in terrifying mythologies and fictional realities, have accompanied shifts from extraction and local commercial activities to

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[4]   I thank my good friend Roosbelinda Cárdenas for helpful conversations around these questions.

a free for all politics of destruction? While Wade (Wade: 1993) and Ramírez (Ramírez: 2001) have argued that civilizing discourses legitimize state and non-state interventions in rural regions of Colombia, I do not think that this explanation sufficiently addresses the primitive eradication of life and emergent politics of chemical destruction at work in the southern departments of the country since 2001.

Some theorists, like Rose (Rose: 2004) and Casid (Casid: 2005), argue that all settler societies are built on a dual war against nature that aims to either tame or exterminate both unruly subjects and unruly landscapes. I agree and I would also argue that this is still the case today for those populations and places imagined as closer to 'nature' and irreverent to liberal, democratic norms, property rights, and capitalist expansion. Ana Tsing (Tsing: 2005) also adds that the late twentieth century saw the global creation of new "resource frontiers" made possible by Cold War militarization of the 'third world' and the growing power of corporate transnationalism through which entrepreneurs and armies were able to disengage nature from local ecologies and livelihoods. In her analysis of the Meratus Mountains of Indonesia, Tsing finds that the alliances between these actors replaced local systems of access to resources and ecological dynamics of replacement and replenishment with the cultural apparatus of proliferation- out of control interstitial capitalist expansion.

For Rose and Tsing, and Colombian intellectuals and activists, such as Grueso and Arroyo (Grueso and Arroyo: 2005), new forms of capitalist destruction resonate with longer histories of extractive practices; however, these new forms are more extreme and more rampant due to the technological power and the calculus of progress that together promote the loss of ecological sustainability and ongoing social violence in rapidly amplified ways. In his political essay, "The Fourth World Was Has Begun", Subcomandante Marcos draws attention to the voracious and warlike neo-imperial logic of contemporary capitalism that has emerged in the post Cold War period. He argues that the financial bombs of neoliberalism serve to attack territories (national states) by the destruction of the material bases of their sovereignty and by producing a qualitative depopulation of those territories. This depopulation involves the exclusion of all persons who are of no use to the new economy while at the same time states, territories, and populations reorganized within a new logic: one in which the state, subordinated to the demands of transnational (often speculative) capitalist accumulation, has been reduced to securing markets through oppressive means. Just as Sander Rajan (Rajan: 2006) argues that "biocapital" is a form of enterprise inextricable from contemporary systems of capitalism and emergent scientific and technological horizon in the life sciences, I think we must take seriously a notion of 'thanatocapital' as the new face of black market capitalism- aggressive markets of death that destroy rather than produce primitive accumulation, and that under neoliberalism, not only penetrate deeply into the political and economic systems of nation states, but

also join together transnationally in the conquest of new illegal black markets that render more and more human and non-human life killable.

In the case of the southern region of Colombia, I argue that there has been shift from earlier extractive practices to a distinct transnational liberal morality that permits the total destruction of place through chemical warfare, and that this shift is directly linked to the growth of voracious black market capitalist enterprises. First, Putumayo has gone from being a region almost wholly abandoned by the state to become the center of military operations (Plan Condor, Plan Colombia, and Plan Patriota) that use destructive measures and the exercise of state and paralegal violence to "pacify" or eradicate *colonos* along with their wild relationships to crops and soils in order to "save lives". An emergency zone has become almost the sole temporal modality of the new social contract between rural residents and the state, and armed agents of *limpieza* (state, transnational, and paralegal) arrive by air, land, and water much like Benjamin's 'Destructive Character(s) (Benjamin: 1978a)[5]. If one thinks back to Taussig's analysis of Roger Casement's reports on the debt-peonage system of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Putumayo rubber boom, the 'culture of terror' at work in this period provoked horror in the liberal sensibilities of Europeans, but judgments were made from afar and did not lead to local interventions.

Extractive economies never completely occupied or materially 'possessed' the territories upon which they imposed, leaving room for negotiation with local forms of life and their continuation despite shifting subjectivities and regimes of rule. However, in an era when older structures of colonialism are no longer accepted, liberal moralities not only judge from afar, but they also occupy locales through logics of domination based on "war". Struggles are engaged over the destruction of place and populations deemed potentially dangerous in order to prevent the exportation of harm to streets, homes, and communities abroad.

The "apparatuses of capture" (Deleuze and Guatarri: 1987) now at work in Putumayo under the U.S.-Colombia "war on narcoterror" have deemed life-from poppy flowers to peace activists, from genetically modified seeds to the 'natural' fauna of national parks, from rural folk to foreign aid workers, from oil pipelines to fungi- suspect, under siege, and potentially enrollable as both ally and enemy[6]. Certainly both Bush and Colombian president Uribe's

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[5]   "The destructive character knows only one watchword: make room; only one activity: clearing away… But for this very reason he sees a way everywhere… Not always by brute force; sometimes by the most refined…he always positions himself at crossroads. No moment can know what the next will bring" (Benjamin: 1978b, 302-303).

[6]   Proposals to move from chemical weaponry to biological weaponry in the war on drugs include discussions and experiments with the use of fusarium spores.

most recent political campaigns made special kinds of promises- namely further upheaval and war- which has been productive in its own way, gaining and losing ground, shifting judicial norms, moving bodies, stimulating and displacing economies, seizing life and generating new experiments. *Peace through War says the government. El Gobierno nos saca a balas say the people. And look how the land suffers.* While Melinda Cooper's proposal to think carefully about the recent biological turn in the U.S. war on terror focuses on the strategic indifference between warfare and public health (microbial life and bioterrorism) that has emerged under the Bush administration's national defense strategy, her analysis is also helpful for thinking about aerial fumigation operations in the context of the terrorism turn in the "war on drugs".

In particular, Cooper argues that a profoundly new strategic agenda is being articulated where war is no longer waged in the defense of the state (the Schmittian philosophy of sovereign war) or even human life (humanitarian warfare; the human as bare life, according to Agamben), but "in the name of life in its biospheric dimension, incorporating meteorology, epidemiology and the evolution of all forms of life, from the microbe upwards" (Agamben: 2006, 129)[7]. Cooper poses questions about what the possibilities for antiwar politics might look like under these conditions. She also draws attention to how the extension of pre-emptive warfare to include the sphere of the environmental and the biopolitical conflates the externalization of war with the evolution of life on earth- as if permanent war were simply a fact of life, with no other end than its own crisis-driven perpetuation. This negative notion of life generates a seemingly inexhaustible demand for all kinds of security services and the promotion of the life sciences in order to produce a state of alertness that will be able to identify emergent risks, those viewed as current threats as well as potential future risks to global public health, national security, territorial integrity, private property, and economic investment. Within this framework, the whole of life must be secured and this securitization becomes both an antiwar stance and the rhetorical justification for pre-emptive military intervention, bioweapons research, and clandestine field experiments[8]. Thus, I ask what happens to the politics of life when life, in all its dimensions, is enrolled in a preemptive struggle, both under threat and potentially threatening? What are we to make of the Pentagon's proposals to develop new non lethal weapons, such as chemicals that render 'enemies of the state' sensitive to sunlight? Or that would make bees 'extra aggressive'? Or

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[7] For example, the tenets of U.S. military strategy are mobilizing in defense of emerging infectious disease related to climate change, new drug-resistant bacterial strains related to interactions with 'transgenic' life forms, and bioterrorist attacks at national catastrophic levels in ways that treat these threats as identical, in the absence of any sure means of distinguishing them.

[8] For further reflection on these issues please see Margaret Atwood's novel *Oryx and Crake* (Atwood: 2003).

that would provoke 'homosexual behavior' in soldiers in order 'to diminish their spirit and discipline'? (Periodico *El Tiempo*: 15 june 2007).

What kind of war machines does this biopolitical capture of life unleash?....'Gay bombs', butterfly raids, and a blanket of fusarium spores over the countryside, not to mention private contracting companies, civilian informant networks, and the institutionalization of paramilitary forces. How does life (and love) itself become flexible labor for emergent military complexes? While the emergent forms of death in Colombia are not as sophisticated as the military complexes that Cooper discusses, both are based on the eradication of life deemed dangerous, both include chemical weaponry, and both are fought against "enemies" that do not possess weapons of a similar magnitude.

Taking up Cooper's suggestion to analyze the nexus between military security, politics of life, and new forms of speculative capitalism (including the freeing of aggressive global black markets), one can interpret U.S.-Colombian antinarcotics policies, particularly aerial fumigation operations, as a preemptive strike against those worlds- plants, human actors, synthetic chemicals, river systems, and Amazonian landscapes- that are co-implicated in each other's ability to simultaneously save us and destroy us. "When we fight against drugs, we fight for the souls of our fellow Americans", said Bush in his 2002 National Drug Control Strategy briefing (quoted in McCoy: 2003). However, the Amazon region is also imagined as the 'lungs of the planet', home of vital water sources, untapped oil reserves, diverse local peoples, a veritable library of genetic information, and a potential source of wonder drugs and biodiversity. Simultaneous interest in preserving, transforming and eradicating particular relationships between humans and nature in the Amazon are being pursued in the name of life, capitalist growth, and biotechnological advancement (Escobar: 1997).

In discourse and practice, aerial fumigation policies do not clearly demarcate communities of plants from people as do many conservation and development projects. Humans as well as coca plants and poppy flowers are treated as weeds (or *gusanos* as local people often say) that need to be destroyed because they are undermining the project of law and order, of agriculture, of conservation, of legal economies[9]. In the rural landscapes targeted by aerial

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[9] This short conceptual leap from battling people to battling weeds and back again seems to date back to the1920s, when interest in chemical "weed control" shifted to the control of perennial weeds and various methods of soil sterilization or the complete and permanent killing of vegetation. In the 1940s herbicide weapons were developed to destroy the "enemy's" crop plants, which in times of war were undesirable and threatening precisely because of their use as sustenance. Herbicides also became an arsenal in the U.S. in a rapid transfer of military technology to civilian production and consumption that enabled the destruction of those plants understood to be a threat to national agricultural productivity (Knobloch: 1996).

KRISTINA LYONS

spraying, herbicides themselves make no distinction between the "civilized" and the "wild". "People" are neither properly domesticated and cultivated nor is "nature" entirely independent from human intervention and propagation. Both require "weed control": techniques of expertise to expel, dispossess, and remove. What is remarkable about weeds- both humans and plants alike- is their persistence in the face of colonization, mechanical and chemical wars, and systematic politics of eradication (Tsing: 2005). This is the case in southern Colombia; a region alleged to be necessary for the survival of the *bios* yet potentially dangerous and capable of reinventing itself to human cures. Potential for counter-resistance is evident in rumors about the emergence of a new wonder coca in the Andes known as *supercoca, la millionaria*, and *boliviana negra*[10]. Speculation abounds: Have scientists from one of the biotechnology companies developed a genetically modified strain of coca? Is nature taking its revenge against Roundup? Have peasant farmers been able to produce seeds from chance mutations? Will the world soon be overrun by the emergence of super-weeds? What life forms will be converted into our new allies and enemies in order to purge this uncontainable growth? Other anecdotes mention how small farmers use plastic bags and honey to protect their coca plants, or rearrange their crops so that the large leaves of banana trees hang down and act like a natural umbrella over the more vulnerable plants below. Coca leaves and poppy flowers are both weakening and strengthening, both sacred and irreverent, both "cultivated" and "wild". They make certain worlds stronger- symbolically, economically, spiritually-while others are weakened[11].

Critiques of interdiction, criminalization and repressive anti-narcotics policies propose different "solutions" to the U.S.-Colombian "drug problem"; however, to a great extent they continue to uphold the pretext that: 1) U.S. involvement in the Andes is limited to only those areas of policy-making concerned with the 'war on drugs', a pretext no longer necessary post 9/11 with the nation's second declaration of the global 'war on terror'[12]; and 2) Colombia's internal conflict will be exhausted if coca and poppy crops are eradicated. Exactly how many hectares would need to be eradicated for these wars to end, or at least to end in their current form, is never articulated. Perhaps more telling

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[10] For more about this please see O'Shaughnessy, Hugh and Sue Branford: 2005.

[11] Unfortunately, due to space constraints, this paper does not deal with the multiple lives of coca leaves, but rather only talks about coca and poppy flowers in the context of how they enter into human plans. In the future I would like to think about coca and amapola in terms of their multi-species landscapes.

[12] For a historical reading of the US "war on drugs" from Nixon's 1970s war against Asian heroin traffic, to Reagan's redirection of the war towards domestic enforcement and coca eradication in the Andes, to Clinton and Bush's expansion with Plan Colombia phase one and two, as well CIA complicity in the global drug trade in Afghanistan, Southeast Asia, Central and South America, please see McCoy: 2003. Also for a recent update on the U.S.'s open declaration of the 'war on drugs' in Afghanistan, please refer to Resin: 2007 and El Tiempo: 30 January 2007.

would be to ask: How many hectares of land need to be disciplined by export oriented crops, such as African Palm plantations and shrimp farms? How many oil reserves need to be tapped? How many more military bases, highways, international bridges, interoceanic canals, and border control centers need to constructed?[13]. How many free trade agreements signed? How many pharmaceutical companies, arms dealers and private security companies need to renew their contracts? Over the last decades the 'drug war' has permitted a parallel cleansing of 'superfluous' populations and landscapes in the U.S. vis-à-vis the massive increase in incarcerations for victimless crimes. This results in the social death of individuals, the rupturing of family relations and the shutting down of community life systems. Ecologies across the Americas are dying due to liberal moralities regarding life, health, and security. A similar question remains: What counts as loss of life?

La hoja de coca tiene venas. Tiene ramitas. Tiene caminos. Trace the veins of the leaf as they splay outward. Think about where these tiny pathways take you. To the mouth of a mambeador, steamed in cups of tea, passed around an Andean bus, in facial cream smeared across a woman's face, stuffed in Baggies in someone's stomach, sliding down the intravenous drip of a terminally ill patient, cartoon characters on a T-shirt: COCA is not COCAINE! The yellowed leaves crunch beneath your feet as you cross a defoliated field, they are in a sack in the back of a pick-up truck, sold on a street corner in La Paz, peeking out of a pouch hanging from a man's neck, in Coca Cola advertisements and wonder drug elixirs. Children draw pictures.. pure green…then yellow..then black. My neighbor knows it well. This powder pays the rent. So does the man with a knife in his left hand, crack happy every Saturday afternoon. He careens in front of my house and asks to use the phone.

6. 'MAKING KILLABLE'

Menos mal que están cuidándonos
si estuvieran atacándonos estaríamos peor[14].

Both Foucault (1978, 1984, 1994a, 1994b, 1997, 2007) and Agamben (1998, 2000, 2002) appear to be equally concerned with the terrifying contradictions

[13] Plan Colombia alone has funded the construction of four US military bases in (Manta) Ecuador, (Compalapa) El Salvador and (Aruba and Curaçao) two Dutch territories off the coast of Venezuela, 17 radar sites, mostly in Peru and Colombia, as well as a Joint Intelligence Center in Caquetá to compliment two more bases in the north of Colombia (in Guajira and on the island of San Andrés), forming part of the US Air Force's Caribbean Basin Radar Network, GIS satellite mapping systems, assault helicopters, crop dusters and SATLOC computer sensory programs (O'Shaughnessy and Branford: 2005). Layers of war on top of war, layers of panoptical regimes on top of regime.
[14] Bellavista Social Club- Medellín, Colombia.

KRISTINA LYONS

of twentieth-century state regimes- namely, how a biopolitical state committed to managing life can transform entire categories of people into killable bodies. Both have argued in different ways that the modern state is constituted through the inclusion of natural life into the mechanisms and calculations of power; however, there are profound differences in the ways they conceive of the relationship between biopolitics and thanatopolitics. In his understanding of biopolitics, Agamben claims that alongside the production and management of populations through expert knowledge and disciplinary apparatuses and techniques of control, there is yet a powerful connection between the sovereign and its subjects emerging around the state of exception. The negative referent of biopolitical sovereignty for Agamben is the figure of archaic Roman law- *homo sacer*- that is the embodiment of "bare life" because it can be taken by anyone without any mediation from law and without incurring the guilt of homicide. Neither *bios (*political life) nor *zoç* (biological life), bare life emerges through the irreparable exposure of life to death in the sovereign 'ban'[15]. Thus, Agamben presents the figure of homo sacer as being produced through a complex legal process that renders it a killable body[16]. Indeed, we can assure ourselves that there is nothing entirely new about the massive and permissible extermination of entire populations. Agamben's modern example of the concentration camp can be supplemented by earlier experiences outside the borders of Europe; in particular, the darker side of the Renaissance, as Mignolo (Mignolo: 2005) and Quijano (Quijano: 2000) write, where millions of worlds were eradicated under the exception of the Enlightenment project. Regimes of legitimation may produce a turn towards new politics of destruction (i.e. Cooper's analysis of the growing indifference between bioterrorism and public health), but they are always genealogically connected to longer standing politics of death.

Agamben's understanding of sovereignty, law, and violence provides provocative insight on humanitarian and human rights operations, which I will address later in this essay. Furthermore, he poses interesting questions as to what happens to particular economic and political regimes when security becomes the sole criterion of political legitimacy and populations and states

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[15] Agamben claims that the originary relation of the law to life is not application, but rather abandonment, and this allows him to argue that bare life is not a modern invention but, instead, stands in an originary relation with Western politics: "in Western politics, bare life has the peculiar privilege of being that whose exclusion founds the city of men" (Agamben: 1998, 7).

[16] According to Das and Poole (Das and Poole: 2004), one can detect two different modalities of rule in Agamben's conception of bare life: 1) he assigns it to specific spaces (the concentration camp) and figures of modern life (war refugees, asylum seekers, undocumented workers), as instantiations of how bare life is embodied and acted upon in modern forms of statehood; and 2) he seems to see bare life as a threat held in abeyance and a state into which any citizen can fall if he or she is exposed to the force of death that characterizes the sovereign power of exception. As Judith Butler (Butler: 2004) has effectively shown, in the detainee at Guantánamo, bare life reaches its maximum indeterminacy in the experience of "indefinite detention".

accept (or are forced to accept) exceptional powers as an indefinite mode of governance (Poole and Rénique: 2003)[17]. With this in mind, Agamben argues that the biopolitical regime of power operative in modernity is not so much distinguished by incorporating life into politics as Foucault claimed, but by the fact that the "state of exception comes more and more into the foreground as the fundamental political structure of our times and ultimately begins to become the rule" (Agamben: 1998:20). Thus, the realm of bare life- which he argues is "originally situated at the margins of the political order- gradually begins to coincide with the political realm, and exclusion and inclusion, *bios* and *zoes*, enter into a zone of irreducible indistinction" (Agamben: 1998:9). In Colombia, multiple sovereignties are at work precisely because the state as a singular universal entity can not be localized, and the monopoly over legitimate violence is held by an array of actors. These multiple sovereignties crisscross terrains and rule over the organization of local life creating spaces where life is at the mercy of state(s) of exception.

Furthermore, as Mbembé (Mbembé: 2003) reminds us, biopolitical sovereignty may be a historically and geographically specific fiction. While Foucault was concerned with the discursive and ideal notions and practices associated with the formation of the liberal European state, Mbembé addresses the present-day prevalence of systematic acts of spectacular death (*economies of massacre, management of the multitudes, bulldozing, infrastructural warfare, splintering occupation*) that call into question normative theories of democracy, sovereignty, and politics read as central projects of reason. Specifically, he asks if the notion of biopolitics is sufficient to account for the contemporary ways in which the political under the guise of war, security, or the fight against terrorism, makes the murder of the "enemy" its primary and absolute objective[18]. While the absolute destruction of the enemy may

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[17] On the one hand, Agamben works between Schmitt's theorization of sovereignty as the decision over the exception and on the other, Benjamin's critique of Schmitt in his eight thesis on the philosophy of history, where he claims that the exception has increasingly become the rule (Benjamin: 1969). For all three theorists, the state of exception operates both as a condition of law's operation and an effect of the sovereign decision, such that the exception is not simply outside the realm of the law, but is in fact created through its suspension. Furthermore, Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" (Benjamin: 1978b) insists on the precariousness of a life so bound to law which reproduces the very violence it claims to separate itself from, and exerts power over life for the sake of law itself, not the protection or defense of life (Taussig: 1997).

[18] As is well known, Foucault is generally concerned with power in the routine of the ordinary and thus, the production of the "normal". His work on biopower shifts away from the privilege of law and prohibition, and places emphasis on tactical efficacy within a multiple and mobile field of forces that are far reaching but never stable. For Foucault, the negative referent of biopolitics is the point at which a distinction is made between those whose lives are managed and enhanced, and those whose lives are judged as not worth living and are thus "let die". He locates the great transformation of the political right of the sovereign away from the *right to kill* (and the concomitant *letting live*) in his meticulous description of the impact of statistics and the invention of population as an object of knowledge and regulation in the nineteenth century. This shift focuses on the heterogeneous ways in which the sovereign is engaged in the *right to make live* (and of course, *let die*). As has

not be new (González: 2004), Mbembé's notion of necropolitics forces us to: 1) reexamine the passivity imbued in theoretical notions of "letting die" in order to recognize that, in practical terms, biopolitics are still very much engaged in "making die"; 2) address death when the right to kill is no longer the sovereign's last option in the management of life; 3) concern ourselves with the production of death in contexts of "war" where there is no end in sight (no clearly defined markers of "victory", hence no ability to recognize defeat); 4) and think carefully about the different treatments of space exerted by a concatenation of biopower, sovereignties, states of exception, and disciplinary mechanisms that are produced by 'states of disorder'. In many ways then, necropower resonates with Agamben's return to a focus on violence as the essential tie that unites the sovereign and the life of its subjects; however, unlike Agamben, necropolitical control over death rests on more generalized and heterogeneous apparatuses of violence that may be part of the state apparatus and yet exceed the state. The notion of necropolitics requires us to begin to think of violence not only as a symptom of something, but as an actor in itself (Feldman: 1991).

As an analytical tool, then, necropolitics pushes us to think beyond the production of death in defense of liberal notions of the "common good". I agree that we can not only attribute politics of death to the failure of regulatory mechanisms to produce desired subjects or to states' claim that a certain number of civilian casualties are inevitable when combating the growing criminal spaces of the "enemy" (both internal and external). In this moment of global mobility, there has been a shift in the political economy of statehood. If we examine the vast number of militarized and enclave economies, and the privatization of violence, justice, security and the cleaning up of "collateral damage", we can identify an economics to massacre. Military manpower is bought and sold on the market, arms are leased to guerrilla groups or neighboring states in exchange for the extraction of natural resources and labor, and war is waged in order to create the conditions for favorable trade agreements and foreign investments. Worlds continue to be destroyed not only in 'defense of society,' but also for the accumulation of wealth, and in order for states and other actors to internationally demonstrate their ability to govern and secure order over populations and territories.

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been noted by many scholars, however (Aretxaga 1997; Mbembe 2003; Petryna 2005), Foucault's description of the biopolitical workings of power almost paradoxically projects a positivism into the workings of scientific facts and state apparatuses. Statistics are said to seize the individual body in its actions and self-understandings, thus increasing the state's knowledge of the population. This picture portrays the state as a kind of efficient machine for the production of knowledge-power. While the overall aim of biopolitical interventions (on the part of state and non-state actors) is to establish a sort of homeostasis that regularizes biological processes and simultaneously inculcates the "population" in the pursuit of this state of equilibrium, this homeostasis is fragile. At any given moment its impossibility is revealed precisely because of the violence implicated in its production.

If we avoid, on the one hand, reducing violence to rational economic explanation and, on the other hand, dismissing it as irrational and incoherent, we may be able to locate a different set of dynamics outside liberal understandings of the "common good" or even our normative ways of speaking about violence and 'exception' (Taussig: 1987; Riaño-Alcalá: 2006). What unique mental maps can help us navigate the normative 'order of things' -or perhaps more importantly what Ferme (Ferme: 2001) refers to as 'the underneath of things'- in these necropolitical spaces? While Mbembé addresses the obliteration of infrastructure, the looting of subsoil resources, and the occupying of air space, as well as more visceral and phenomenological experiences of violence, humans are still the primary actors and objects of concern in his analysis. This is one of the limits that I locate in both Mbembé's notion of necropolitics and in Agamben's concern with the production of *homo sacer*. How can we open up the idea of *homo sacer* to talk about the destruction of ecologies of place? Can we begin to imagine a kind of "ecology" sacer that will help us think about the "ecological attachments" of the biopolitical and the necropolitical?

Foucault seems to point in this direction with his notion of milieu (Foucault: 2007) -or the active relationships between what he calls "a set of *natural givens* -rivers, marshes, hills- and a set of *artificial givens*- an agglomeration of individuals, houses, roads, markets etc." In his essay entitled 11 January 1978, Foucault argues that the circulation and relatedness between these two fields comes to be targeted by political technique precisely because the sovereign has to intervene in the milieu- that point of connection where nature, in the sense of physical elements, interfaces with nature in the sense of human species- if he/she wants to change the latter. In other words, the politics of milieu become a matter of organizing circulation, eliminating its dangerous elements, making a division between good and bad circulation, and maximizing the good by diminishing the bad (Foucault: 2007, 18). Both projects of security and planned development work on what Foucault refers to as the material (natural) givens of a site (flows of water, islands, air etc.) in order to minimize those agents considered to be risky and inconvenient, like theft and disease. He emphasizes that this work is not over a static perception of the present, but also attempts to anticipate future conditions in all their immeasurability and uncontrollability. As such, interventions in milieu function as a grid of intelligibility enabling both the power over life, the improvement of social conditions that strengthen both individual and social bodies, and the right to death, as in the elimination of undesired relations and circulations between populations in place. However, if we keep in mind that milieu refers to that which is in between, for example the moving internal frontier between individual and social bodies, life and death, human and non human actors and the larger worlds they inhabit etc., how can a notion of milieu help us to think in ways that may lend vitality to a politics of hope and activism in the defense of life (Nelson: 2005)? If apparatuses of security try to reach a milieu

through the conjunction of human and nonhuman actors, how do organisms residing in these landscapes surprise us and create unexpected relations? In what ways are they unpredictable in their resilience? How do they veer off course to create new naturescultures?

For me, a more inspiring way to think about these questions is in terms of Donna Haraway' recent work (Haraway: 2007) in which she argues that it is not killing or dying, or even labor and instrumental relations that turns living beings into dead things, but rather the processes of making beings killable. Haraway begins by arguing that relations of instrumentality are not only and necessarily oppressive or objectifying; they are part of labor, of working together, of seeking and enrolling allies (and not just victims) in order to get things done and go on living. For Haraway, relations of 'use' are exactly what multispecies relations are about; however, it is the always pressing question of non-symmetrical (equal or calculable) suffering and death in instrumental relations that concerns her. She draws on Kant and Derrida, among others, to think about how all non-human living things (and those humans emplaced closer to 'nature') have been positioned on the other side of an unbridgeable gap; a gap that reassures that only 'humans' can respond and other life forms must react because they do not know their own conditions and do not live for their own ends. Haraway says: "Sacrifice works; there is a whole world of those who can be killed because finally they are only something not somebody, close enough to "being" in order to be a model, substitute, sufficiently self-similar, but not close enough to compel a response. Not the same, but Different; not One, but Other" (Haraway: 2007, 3-13).

The problem, as presented, is not that human beings deny something to other life worlds, whether that be language, affect, or knowledge of death, but rather the death-defying arrogance that humans ascribe to themselves. For Haraway, inequality is in precise and changeable labor practices, in the work relations between organisims (such as unidirectional relations of 'use') and not in some transcended excellence of the Human over the Animal-Human, which then can be turned into bare life. The trap of this sacrificial logic, with all the technical power of destruction it gives rise to, must avoid being naturalized. Since 'shared conditions of work' are almost never symmetrical, and there will never be transcendence of all suffering and death, we must think in terms of the instrumental relations we want to end, and those we want to nurture. However, all require response. According to Haraway, one never has *sufficient reason* to kill, only the risk of doing something wicked that may or may not also be good in the context of *mundane reasons*- felt reason that is affective, cognitive and open to reconsideration with care. Thus, our problem is not deciding who or what can be killed, so that killing can go on as usual and reach unprecedented historical proportions. "The problem is to learn to live responsibly within the multiplicitous necessity and labor of killing, so as to be in the open, in quest of the capacity to respond in relentless historical,

non-teleological, multispecies contingency" (Haraway: 2007, 3-14). With this in mind I am able to ask: How might we learn to live responsibly with poppy flowers? How might we learn to respect different modes of living with coca plants that includes their relations with communities, economies and surrounding ecologies? How can we learn to slow down and think about the implications of enrolling insects, spores, and chemical cocktails in an attack against life? When is it worth the risk of killing whole ecologies? Would we have to question our 'sufficient' reason for engaging in chemical warfare against people-weeds? I believe that we do.

7. HUMANITARIANISM: 'EXCEPTION' AS PEDAGOGY

In the Origins of Totalitarianism (Arendt: 1948), Hannah Arendt argues that the stateless inhabit a constitutive outside for which no law is available to them. Their condition is marked by a 'calamity of experience', by a nation-state that works like a fiction precisely because the loss of national rights in all instances also entails the loss of human rights. Arendt shows how, in attempting to regain a legal identity and a social tie, even if through criminality, the actions of the stateless are capitalized upon by state and transnational entities in terms of fortifying their own bureaucratic and legal mechanisms[19]. Certainly this coincides with much analysis of transnational humanitarian networks, non-governmental organizations, and multi- and bilateral institutions whose explosive growth since 1945 has been fueled by the connected development of the U.N. system, and more particularly, by the increasing global circulation and legitimization of discourses and politics of human rights. Ethnographic work has focused on the ways that 'suspension, exception and crisis' allow for both humanitarian and military assemblages to crisscross certain territories and impose new institutions and techniques of governmentality on local political practices (de Waal: 1997) - a process referred to by Pandolfi (Pandolfi: 2003) as "mobile sovereignty". In particular, Pandolfi's work in southeastern Europe demonstrates that the true agents of military-economic-humanitarian action are the various international organizations, agencies, foundations and NGOs whose operations, like the military, are shaped by a temporality of emergency and the right to interfere vis-à-vis Western liberal rhetoric: institution building, conflict resolution, and the forced democratization of regions. Furthermore, Hoffman's (Hoffman: 2004) work in Sierra Leone traces the connections between new military logics and humanitarian intervention; in particular, the increase in attacks against civilian targets by combatants who, due to local understandings of political power, equate excess violence against civilians

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[19] Here it might be interesting to also think about the figure of the outlaw as one that forges new forms of economic integration, expropriation, and redistribution out of earlier 'legal' economic activities. Could this lead to a pluralization of regulatory authority and shifting ethics of what constitutes licit wealth accumulation and notions of work (Roitman: 2005)?

with greater international assistance and benefits in post conflict settings. Analysts not only argue that humanitarian intervention merely provides for a minimalist biopolitics (Redfield: 2005) -the bare minimum of assistance for the physical survival of 'at risk' populations- but that it can only grasp human life in the figure of bare life, and therefore, despite good intentions, maintains a secret solidarity with the very powers it is out to fight (Arendt: 1948; Agamben: 1998; Pandolfi: 2003).

These critiques of humanitarian modes of domination have focused on the depoliticization of the political and the economic foundations of displacement (Malkki: 1995, 1996), the collusion of humanitarian work with neoliberal agendas[20], the recreation of social divisions between elite aid workers and 'grassroots' activists' (Englund: 2006), and specific humanitarian modes of governance that force people to 'materialize their bare life' in identity cards, medical exams, death certificates, police reports, 'reconciliatory storytelling', and in never ending labyrinth of office hallways, file cabinets, and archives (Colvin: 2004; Lyons: 2004; Fassin: 2005; Fassin and Estelle d'Halluin: 2005; Ticktin: 2006). Other scholars, of course, refute this vision and claim that even though human rights and humanitarian discourses are problematic- for example, they are deeply embedded in liberal notions of private property and have often provoked even more violent forms of racism and discrimination, among other concerns- they will inevitably incorporate and give leverage to the plight of social movements and marginalized communities (Hunt: 2007). Rather than enter into this debate, what interests me is the narrative of inevitability that underscores the dialectic between humanism and dehumanization, and its ultimate incorporation of more and more groups into one political project, that of modern politics and the expansion of 'reason'. In this classic understanding of humanism, the political situates itself as the sole civilizing force and has difficulty imagining a life (or life forms) that it can not civilize or alter according to its ethical-political sensibilities.

This seems crucial when thinking about how the language of international intervention into political, social and demographic crisis zones draws heavily on medical metaphor, commonly constructing the eruptions of violence or 'failure' of state institutions that elicit outside attention and intervention in terms of pathology; particularly, that of a "sick society" in need of technical solutions to solve social disease. The apparent moral underpinnings of medicine's biopolitical commitment to human life and healthy environments helps to conceal the political stakes of intervention which always embody an arbitrary politics of life that imposes its own values and visions, producing what McFalls (McFalls: 2005) refers to as "iatrogenic violence"- literally physician-

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[20] For example, the actual disempowerment produced by responsibilizing discourses of participation, empowerment, decentralization, and community control.

induced morbidity. While the most blatant contemporary example of iatrogenic violence is the aftermath of the U.S. invasion and on-going occupation of Iraq, I believe that the impacts of U.S. interventions in Colombia are similar in nature, mainly in that prescribed treatments have become the cause of the illnesses they purport to be curing. Although, according to the logic of the Bush and Uribe administrations, the violence and displacement caused by aerial fumigation and forced manual eradication campaigns is indeed proof that the treatment is working- one more dose and the patients will recover from their chronic coca growing habit. What McFalls underscores is the legacy and practice of liberalism as medicine, which dates back to the medical perspective that Locke brought to his consideration of the social contract; a perspective in which a therapeutic requirement was meant to preserve the community against external and internal threat. For Locke, the responsible magistrate must make laws and their corresponding penalties in the name of public health, "cutting off those Parts, and those only, which are so corrupt that they threaten the sound and healthy, without which no severity is lawful" (quoted in Nelson: 1989).

Medicine was promised not only to provide a culture-neutral test of the competent mind and body, but also as a means to cure the unfit and misfit and thus, create liberty where there had been bondage. Drawing so fundamentally on the ancient metaphor of the health of the "body politic" while linking it to Enlightenment faith in progress, Lockean toleration ended when the reasoning process was supposed untrustworthy due to the influences of a 'damaging environment' (for example, in the case of paupers, poor children, or revolutionary groups, Catholics, and atheists among others)[21]. Thus, politics as medicine was and still is proposed to relieve social pain, not just in terms of science and medicine, but political disagreement, alternative moral and ethical behaviors, and different "inefficient" ways of constructing life in place. It serves as a potential social control in which 'toleration' is promoted when it is convenient for power, and depravity of reason is declared when the search for particular truths is destabilized. Of course, according to this logic, only those who are passive aggressive, often self-destructive, and occasionally prone to irrational outbursts will reject the "care-giver's care". This hypothesis of modernity is all "too rational" and paternalistic; not all life is governed by "reason" and not all reasons coincide. Other hybrid naturescultures may emerge and move between "modern" and "non-modern" ways of knowing and being in the world.

What may this mean for contemporary liberal ethics and humanitarian intervention? While new forms of governmentality, essential for the deployment of humanitarian operations, are constituted through sporadic,

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[21] This seems to connect with Foucault's notion of the politics of milieu (Foucault: 2007).

KRISTINA LYONS

intermittent contact, liberalism as medicine also acts as a pedagogical tool and permanent, effective system of surveillance. McFalls reminds us that intervention is not only legitimated through exception, but also occurs in the name of overarching normative principles (health, security, "freedom") that deny the formal instrumental rationality of state sovereignty only to better apply its own technical rationality. He argues that we can characterize this mode of violence as a "therapeutic structure of domination" because, ostensibly, it pursues a value emanating from the object of intervention (a population "in need"), but its actual end is the proficient application of a treatment protocol[22]. The idea of liberalism as medicine also poses interesting questions about the ethical charges of truth and reconciliation models, and how they mesh with post-Cold War political liberalism. In their analysis of the Chilean, Guatemalan, South African, and Argentine truth commissions, a group of scholars (Colvin: 2004; Grandin: 2005; Grandin and Klubock: 2007; Castillejo-Cuéllar: 2007; Loveman and Lira: 2007; Oglesby: 2007) have argued that: 1) in order to avoid discursive conclusions, truth commissions, for the most part, present history not as a conflict of interests and ideas within a context of unequal power relations, but as a parable of illiberal intolerance, distilling a nation's recently ideological feverish past into a useful moral. This moral is one that portrays terror as an inversion of a democratic society, a nightmarish alternative of what lies ahead if a nation does not abide by constitutional rules; and 2) truth commissions have tended to disaggregate the collective nature of social justice struggles, in many instances forcing victims to submit their experiences to the procedural and doctrinal compartmentalization of liberal jurisprudence, so as not to validate collective forms of social organization that would not only reproduce the conflict but would also open a possibility for its justification (Grandin and Klubock: 2007, 3-4). Mignolo (Mignolo: 2005) suggests that this was an attempt to curtail the explosion, literally and metaphorically of hundreds of diverse political projects out of the previously neatly packaged block of communist "enemies"; political projects that could propose the surprising co-existence of worlds and ways of being and knowing that would destabilize modern epistemologies and the parameters of modern politics itself. What are the consequences of prioritizing catharsis and forgiveness, impunity and de facto amnesties over punishment or a 'victim centered' politics (in whatever way, shape or form this could be organized)?

In Colombia there is no officially established truth and reconciliation commission because the war(s) are not over; however, there is a National Commission of Victims of State Crimes organized, among other imperatives, to protest the most recent attempt at a national level reconciliation with paralegal

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[22] This notion has also been taken up by Vin-Kim Nguyen (Nguyen: 2005) in his exploration of the "AIDS industry" in Africa and the production of therapeutic citizenship; that is, claims made on a global social scale on the basis of a therapeutic predicament.

groups through the Ley de Justicia y Paz (Law of Justice and Peace). While the law has been largely criticized because its mechanisms of making peace include the general impunity and ultimate institutionalization of paramilitary configurations, others have congratulated President Uribe for negotiating the 'Colombian way' by forming a pact with the paralegal actors. Political theorists Gutiérrez and Jaramillo (Gutiérrez and Jaramillo: 2005) have raised serious questions about the strong pactist tradition in Colombia ('gentlemen's pacts' between paralegal groups and local communities, government pacts with coca farmers, peace community pacts, demilitarization pacts, reintegration pacts, pacts between the traditional political parties, ceasefire pacts, peace talk pacts between the guerrillas and the state etc.) in which every war generates agreements and each agreement generates further war[23]. They claim that this pattern creates a pendulum pact war which constitutes the "attractor" of the dynamics of Colombian conflicts -by attractor they mean that 1) the social conflict converges toward a certain configuration, and 2) it is essentially delimited by this configuration. Historically, the pactist tradition has generated one of the following three outcomes in Colombia: the physical destruction of the protagonists of the pact (as was the case in the politicides of the Unión Patriótica members and of Esperanza, Paz y Libertad), the rupture of the pact (as has happened many times in the negotiations between the FARC and the state), or the antidemocratic concentration of power in the hands of one or several of the protagonists of the pact- or even a combination of several of the previous outcomes (see Romero: 2005, on unionized workers in Urabá). According to Gutiérrez and Jaramillo, pacts also constitute, somewhat perversely, the mental and moral horizon of alternative options: strategy for emancipation is based on processes of peace in which the interlocutors and protagonists, as well as their opponents, are warlords[24]. If this description of the pendular movement that characterizes Colombian society is accurate, is it possible to imagine 'exits' or even 'new cycles' in a social world governed by an "attractor"? What statements of resistance and social protest can generate their own grammar outside this pendular language?

8. BEYOND THE RIGHT TO HAVE RIGHTS

In my own project I want to analyze humanitarian and rights operations in their specificity, in the effects they bring about, in the practices they entail

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[23] Of course the best references for understanding this phenomenon are still Gabriel García Márquez's work (1970, 1979, 1982, 1990, 1991, 1998).

[24] This idea is supported by Pecaut's (Pécaut: 1997) analysis that it is actually the lack of political polarization in Colombia that has lead to chronic violence (rather than the usual attribution of violence to political polarization) in which he argues how traditions of alliance building between opposing political actors, the historical lack of significant land reform due to agreements between regional and national elites, and violence itself have not allowed for a rupture with dominant macroeconomic and macrosocial dynamics and institutions, rather, they have historically served to uphold them.

and in the set of relations they produce: how do the institutions, knowledges and practices embedded in rights discourse and humanitarian prescriptions operate? What is the work they "do" on the ground? How are notions of rights translated and employed in diverse contexts in Colombia? For example, when I was interviewing workers in the Human Rights Watch office in Bogotá, they explained that aerial fumigation operations could not be considered a human rights violation. And yet other human rights agencies, such as Bogotá-based Witness for Peace, make the claim based on violations of rights to food sovereignty, health, and livelihood, as well as incorporating environmental discourses. Thus, how do rights oriented communities emerge? McLagan suggests that to answer this question we need to trace the production of publicness and the summoning of witnessing publics (McLagan: 2005). In general, I am interested in how a given subject matter gets (or does not get) turned into an object of politics. How do objects come into being as "issues"? What are the processes that mediate this reformulation? What kinds of specialization and professionalization of activism are at work? How are "politics" being consumed by media ecologies that bridge across commercial and non-commercial systems (such as Indymedia, world and regional social forums, youtube etc.)?

I am interested in the active construction of 'the human' in laboratory and clinical settings, as has been the tradition within science and technology studies, but I am also interested in the ways that the 'human' is produced in the field of tragedy, humanitarian operations, and the imaginings of post-conflict resolutions. In every situation, from individual to collective and national to international, ethical-political norms for (permissible) violence are regulated and notions of what constitutes a crime against humanity shift. When what constitutes humanity comes to be fixed, even if only temporarily, this is also implicitly a decision about who and what is not human, and what life can be taken, but not lost. As Haraway reminds us, we must also reject these practices of calculation and self-sure hierarchies in our working relations with the non-human beings with whom we live. Thus, I ask if people in fumigated zones desire to be recognized as 'human' in the Western liberal tradition (i.e. autonomous, secular, individuals free from pain and suffering). Maybe they do not, and therefore what other political projects and notions of selfhood and body are being articulated and practiced? (Mahmood: 2005) Clearly a plethora of scholars have critiqued notions of the human in global human rights discourses (Asad: 2003; Brown: 2004; Grewal: 2005; Cheah: 2006; Santos: 2007); particularly, specific notions of agency in regards to the politics of suffering and pain, the reduction of human rights to civil and political liberties rather than economic and social rights, and notions of the individual as an autonomous, secular subject much more attuned with rights to private property than social justice. I want to move beyond this critique to think about different notions that might not only rely on the expansion of

idioms of rights to settle the life and death relations between humans, but that might also begin to think about the mutually entangled relationships between human and non-human life in terms of shared suffering- what Donna Haraway calls "remaining at risk and in solidarity in the instrumental relations that characterize the encounters between species". For Haraway, minimizing cruelty, is necessary but not enough; responsibility demands that we (as anthropologists and cohabiting species) take into consideration the reactions, presence, the face of the other in order to mutually recognize, care and share pain across nature-culture divides and social hierachies. In what ways does a notion of shared suffering shift liberal inclinations and sensibilities in regards to pain to make visible the rights of 'ecologies' rather than only individual or collective human populations? Instead of basing rights claims on equivalents to private property, how might we train our vision to include overlapping socialities, overlapping and diverse claims through which landscapes are shared and maintained (Tsing: 2005)? Can the inclusion of diverse assemblages of human and non-human life do more than improve the social through reform and "better politics"? Do people truly conceive of themselves as separate and superior to the other actors with whom they cohabitate? I believe that a notion of share suffering can help us make vital theoretical and practical connections between the life conditions of Putumayo peasants and drug addicts in the U.S., between urban landscapes in northern cities and rural landscapes in the rest of the hemisphere, and between the social forces and structural inequalities that lead people and things to be pursued by repressive regimes.

For example, Deborah Rose's (Rose: 2004) work on decolonization ethics in Australia poses questions about what it would mean to think of ourselves as one species among many rather than as the highest species. How would we live, as persons and as a society, if we accept that we are in connection-relation and that we are not primary? In an important sense, this question is not answerable in the abstract. The answers, if they come at all, will be in practice as people seek to make the shifts towards connections with and commitment to the non-human world. Rose suggests though, that in thinking: 'we are not alone', we might shift concerns from units of survival in terms of the individual or the species, to organisms and -their- environment in relationship. In her case, thinking in terms of a new form of connectivity might lead us to give the land itself priority in all decision-making processes (for Haraway, this entails taking animals seriously as co-workers). Both Rose and Haraway leave behind the comforts of humanist frameworks. For them, one becomes a moral person and not a power instrument when they understand that their existence is entangled with other lives and is therefore responsible. Since being is inherently relational, what matters is always inside connections that demand and enable response, not bare calculation or ranking. For Haraway, response grows with the capacity to responde i.e. responsibility, and such a capacity can only be shaped in and for multidirectional relationships in which

there are more than one responsive entity present. Ethics is therefore not about rights response to a radically exterior/ized other, but about responsibility and accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming of which we are all a part. Violence then may not only be linked to 'making killable' and the production of bare life, but also in the refusal to allow another to be born, in the withholding of recognition that the world is not devoid of mind, that it does have a story of its own which is part of our shared community. For Haraway, for example, being in the co-presence of animals demands that instead of thinking of them as sacrificable, we recognize that they have face, that they are somebody as well as something, just as we humans are both subject and object at all times. Recognition of this 'significant otherness' (Haraway: 2003) entails: "Respect- looking back, holding in regard, getting it that meeting the look of the other is a condition of having face oneself" (Haraway: 2007, 3-25). Significant otherness does more than accommodate "difference": It is not the same thing to co-exist and tolerate each other than to actively co-habitate and, as a day to day concern, ask how do we want to live and think with others? (Puig de la Bellacasa: forthcoming). This question not only forces us to recognize that we are not alone, which obliges us to become aware of relationships, responsibility, and thus effectively recognize others, but it is also about acknowledging and actively sharing in another's suffering (Butler: 2004; Haraway: año; Rose: 2004; Das: 2007)[25]. In this light, Haraway poses questions about the potential of 'non-mimetic sharing' (not standing in as an experimental object or believing that all suffering and dying can be heroically transcended), but trying to understand the pain of the other, "even if that were only to be witness to the fact that something properly called forgiveness is needed even in the most thoroughly justified instances of causing suffering" (Haraway: 2007, 3-9). Beyond witnessing, obligations of care and of sharing pain also entail an active search to make multi-species labor practices and knowledge production less deadly, less painful, and freer for all 'workers': animals, plants and humans etc. Breaking the sacrificial logic that parses who is and is not killable might lead to changes that result in more than practices of analogy, rights extension, denunciation, and prohibition. Precisely because ways of living and dying matter, we must ask which historically situated practices of multi-species living and dying should flourish? What might responsible "shared suffering" look like in historically situated practices? How might this effect our work as anthropologists and ethnographers? Would this transform the working conditions of our books,

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[25]   Only Rose and Haraway are fully referring to human and non-human entanglements. Butler is solely concerned with human relations and Das, I would argue, is concerned with relationships between human communities and humans and nonhuman forces such as grief, terror, mourning, the dead etc. Das also poses questions about the production of anthropological knowledge in relation to suffering as that which is wakeful to violence wherever it occurs in the weave of life, as well as the body of the anthropological text as that which refuses complicity with violence by opening itself to the pain of the other.

our collaborations, and our interdisciplinary projects? As Haraway reminds us, there is no outside from which to answer these questions; we must give the best answers we come to know how to articulate, and take action, without the god trick of self-certainty. As I have hoped to underscore throughout this essay, these questions relate to two sets of stories- and neither is about total death and destruction- one is about loss in place, and the other about expressivity, connection and recuperative action in place, about fostering care under constraint and horribly compromised circumstances.

9. HOPE IN PLACE

9.1. Working[26]

I do not work for anyone now. There is nothing to lose. I do not work for anyone now. There is nothing to lose. This morning it is the bus driver who demands he get off. This morning it is the bus driver who beats him in the face. *To work is not criminal,* shouts a woman in the crowd. *To work is most dangerous,* says the man as he falls back onto a string of bodies in the street.

What modes of resilience are at work in ecologies of place in Colombia, where all politics are antagonistic? What attempts to resist the bare life of place emerge on the part of human and non-human groups? How do people pick up and go on living in the very landscapes of devastation (Klima: 2002; Das: 2007)? To think about these questions I turn to Das's notion of the 'descent into the ordinary' in which she argues that traditional ideas of agency often entail thinking in terms of escape and transcendence in the face of horror, terror and grief: getting over things or leaving them behind in a dramatic gesture of defiance or political action with a capital P rather than the patient work of living, of regrowth, of actively and quietly stitching together everyday lives and relationships from within wounded spaces. Das's argument resonates with Asad's notion of "agentive pain" (Das: 2003) which he contrasts with secular underpinnings of agency that assume agency to be about freedom from external control, and that in relation to pain always take on qualities of avoidance, since the experience of pain is so often associated with passivity (both in the sense that pain is something one experiences when one is a victim, as well as being a passive sensation, rather than one which is actively engaged)[27]. A particularly powerful image from Das's most recent ethnography

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[26] Thoughts after reading novels by Laura Restrepo (Restrepo: 2001) and Marisol Giraldo Gómez, "Los plantíos del banano, que él esperaba le perimitieran ganarse la vida, ahora le producían el terror de ganarse la muerte" (Giraldo Gómez: 2001, 22).

[27] In particular, Asad seeks to reveal the secular underpinnings of such assumptions (and in turn the ways that such understandings help to form the secular), by examining the active seeking out of suffering by Christian martyrs in late antiquity. He also points out that while modernity supposedly aims to eliminate pain and suffering, the pain and suffering it seeks to eliminate are only those it terms superfluous (for example, those forms attributed to religious violence or religion in general)

is of a group of widows who return to stand in front of the scorched walls of their homes each day, seeing and doing things that are invisible to the rest of the onlookers. This image leads me to think about ways of inhabiting the world or inhabiting it *again* and specific states of being, say in a gesture of mourning, that allude to fragments and the impossibility of fitting these fragments into an assemblage of a total world. Das[28], argues that even when it appears that some people were relatively lucky because they escaped direct bodily harm, the bodily memory of being-with-others makes violent pasts encircle the present as atmosphere, not necessarily as traumatic memory, but as 'poisonous knowledge' that must be actively lived with and worked with (Das: 2000). In this way, Das refers to the formation of the subject and the reformulation of life projects that are molded through complex transactions between violence in its originary moment and violence as it seeps into people's ongoing relationships and becomes a kind of atmosphere that cannot be expelled to an "outside".

When thinking about the endangered spaces that social movements and local ecologies occupy in Colombia one can imagine a multitude of responses to conditions of violence. For example, María Clemencia Ramírez (Ramírez: 2005) has argued that the 1996 cocalero movements in Putumayo and the Baja Bota of Cauca struggled for the 'rights to have rights' (Dagnino: 1998) and for recognition on the part of the state as citizens and not criminals. In this example the resulting clash between an inclusive national ideology and actual experiences of exclusion and disenfranchisement does not prevent the formation of expectations among residents that the state will deliver core social goods and services. The cocalero movement's strategy does not reject the project of social modernity; rather it works off of what Caldeira and Holston (Caldeira and Holston: 2005) have called a 'counter politics of sheer life'. This form of situated moral reasoning involves a claim to state resources that is articulated by individuals and collectivities in terms of their needs as living beings, precisely on the basis of demands for service delivery, infrastructure provision, and participation in planning decisions. Contexts in Putumayo are in many ways quite different than Caldeira and Holston's discussion of urban Brazil in that they involve "illicit economies", the criminalization of all local populations- both human and non-human- and paralegal state-like entities governing local territories. However, both examples tend to coincide with

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while other kinds of suffering (namely those that are considered necessary to realize one's humanity- i.e. colonialism and development) are tolerated or imposed. Asad argues that while modern secular attitudes towards certain kinds of physical suffering have shifted, this should not be seen as an overall reduction of suffering, but rather a shift in attitudes towards the body which views physical suffering as distinct from (and yet on some level able to stand in for) other kinds of suffering, such as confinement in prison.

[28] Like Feldman: 1991; Arextaga: 1997; Kleinman: 2000.

liberal expectations and sensibilities: communities demand state presence and that the state upholds its perceived obligations to citizens.

I think that it is equally important to consider other modes of resilience that do not abide by liberal moral norms, such as hope through suffering, struggle, escape, hiding, informing on one's neighbors in order to survive, and entering into "illegal" economies as a way of accessing "progress" and appropriating and redistributing wealth[29]. In general, I would like to think of resilience as a journey, just like the regrowth of ecosystems (Rose: 2004), one that includes all forms of life in the landscapes that I care about and that I am thinking-with. In this context then, the resilience of place is intended to convey the idea that what matters in relatedness is not just parts of a living system (here is where dying and killing can come in as I discussed earlier in the paper), but rather the capacity of a living system to be self-organizing and self-repairing. Rose argues that we must make a crucial set of distinctions between types of resilience; those that are engineered to force naturecultures to behave as humans would like, and those conditions that are facilitated after observing naturecultures' own processes of resilience. I conceive of resilience as working with connectivity and commitment; an ethics of connection rather than simply hope. Resilience in place acknowledges the force or desire of living things to flourish (and not only to survive), to be in connection, to find their mutually beneficial patterns and to restore the power of life in the world which is always in delicate relationship with the power and presence of death. What kinds of ecologies of life in place will it be possible to foster, protect and continuously re-negotiate? Will we be able to construct 'ecosophical' practices (Escobar: 1997) that do not deepen the colonization of natural and cultural landscapes so characteristic of modernity? At times this could mean leaving place alone, or it could also mean some form of active engagement in place. In the case of all organisms, there exists potential for self-repair, and at other times this possibility is curtailed depending on the nature of the destructive 'disturbance', and the room it leaves for resilient recovery. What seems important to ask is what kind of 'dwelling perspectives and practices' (Ingold: 1993) are being fostered by different life worlds in their defense of place and in the creation of futures, of hope and of continued existence in Colombia? What stories are serving to connect communities, and what proposals for alternative life projects look like through the lens of the political?

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[29] Throughout Colombian history informers have been known variously as "toads" (sapos), "turncoats" (volteados), "stool pigeons" (soplones), or "pointers" (señaladores) (Uribe: 2004).

KRISTINA LYONS

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133