‘Pando/Pando’ Across the Americas: Transnational Settler Territorialities and Decolonial Pluralities

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On September 11, 2008, in the Bolivian department of Pando during political unrest in the region, armed men ambush a group of Indigenous men and women, local peasants, as well as students from the local college, who are marching in support of Evo Morales and his “Movement for Socialism”-led government, killing between eleven and thirteen (accounts vary) and wounding many more. In “Bolivia 9/11: Bodies and Power on a Feudal Frontier,” anthropologist Bret Gustafson’s comments on the attack clarify how this act of political violence constitutes an act of terror embedded in ongoing colonial and racist histories. In Gustafson’s account, the men attack the bodies and the humanity of the Morales supporters in order to reassert a ruling order based on the exploitative and colonial principles of the non-Indigenous elite, one that was threatened by the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) government: “The farmers bore the brunt of the attack, fleeing helter-skelter into the jungle, jumping into a nearby river, and falling under the attack. Wounded peasants transported to hospitals for treatment were reportedly dragged from ambulances and beaten. Others were seized and taken to the main plaza of Cobija. There they were beaten and whipped with barbed wire in an exercise of plantation-style punishment inherited from an earlier colonial order.”[1]

The massacre is one reference point for the title of “Pando/Pando,” a poem by Allison Hedge Coke (Huron/Métis/Cherokee descent) from her 2014 collection, *Streaming*, which provides the textual nexus through which I want to examine the main concerns of this essay.[2] With the other reference point of “Pando” in the poem being a giant aspen tree in Utah, I want to show in my reading how Hedge Coke’s poem turns the massacre into a site in which transnational settler logics as well as Indigenous and decolonial articulations of the transnational intersect and stand in contested relation to each other. By linking Pando both to the massacre and to the tree that claims land

in a way unintelligible to settler state legal geography, Hedge Coke's poem indicates how land also centrally figures within the conflict that led to the massacre of Morales supporters.

A 2017 court ruling establishes that the then conservative governor of the province, Leopoldo Fernández Ferreira, "a wealthy land owner," who was shortly arrested after the attack, organized and funded the mercenaries who carried it out. Fernández is sentenced to fifteen years in prison as an "indirect author of homicide."[3] In an article on the third anniversary of the massacre, Emily Achtenberg elaborates on the context of the massacre:

> The massacre took place at the height of a 2008 revolt against President Evo Morales' MAS government by conservative elites and their allied "prefects" (governors) in Bolivia's four lowlands "*media luna*" departments, that brought the country to the brink of a "civil coup." [In fact, it was called a "civic coup" in reference to it being orchestrated by the departments' Civic committees]. Under the banner of regional autonomy—in reality, a demand by local elites to *retain control of land and hydrocarbons resources*—the anti-MAS power bloc seized public buildings and airports, attacked MAS government officials, and blocked the transport of goods to western highlands regions in a massive effort to destabilize the government.[4]

The highlighted formulation ("retain control of land and hydrocarbons resources") already makes clear that the objectives of the coup are rooted in securing access to territory and resources. These are endemic to, or in Patrick Wolfe's words, an "irreducible element" of, any settler colonial project, as I will outline in more detail below. [5] Landed elites, or as Richard Gott put it, "prosperous and outspokenly racist white settlers" that also after Morales's election still control the departments of Eastern Bolivia in the service of neoliberal capitalist and extractivist interests, lead the effort in 2008 to destabilize the government—even after Morales has received major support in a recall referendum in August of the same year. [6] Unsurprisingly, the actions of the "white settlers" against Morales receive support by the US. After meeting regularly with Morales's opposition and surveilling the government's operations under the pretext of security concerns about interacting with a nation with high drug-trafficking, the United States, as Roger Burbach states, "was openly involved in orchestrating this rebellion. Ambassador Goldberg flew to Santa Cruz on August 25 to meet with Ruben Costas, Morales's main antagonist and the prefect of Santa Cruz, who became the de facto leader of the rebellious prefects and the autonomy movement in general."[7]

On September 10, Morales bans Goldberg from Bolivia because of this meeting and declares him persona non grata. September 11 is the date of the massacre. Apart from the obvious association with the US's 9/11, the more significant anniversary to keep in mind is the US-orchestrated overthrow of the democratically elected Chilean president Salvador Allende in 1973, thus thirty-five years prior to the Pando massacre, which then led to the murderous Pinochet regime. In the case of Bolivia, however, the overt display of violence in the massacre has the effect of rallying international support for Morales and leads to the government's retaking control of the region and, ultimately, to the failure of the coup.

The connection to the overthrow of Allende already makes clear how the US backing of the conservative opposition to Morales is in line with a longstanding history of the US imperially exerting influence and force against any Latin American Marxist, socialist, or otherwise left-leaning government in order to protect its own material interests in the region. However, I want to argue that one should not disconnect these interventions from the current debates on settler colonialism in Latin America.[8] The upholding of settler colonial structures in this region also relates directly to US interests. At the same time it helps to extend forms of territorial control through which the US settler state constructs its "domestic realm" beyond its assumed borders imperially across the Americas—and, in the case of the 2008 coup, to Bolivia.

In Bolivia, the rights of the Indigenous majority are historically subordinated to a wealthy non-Indigenous landholding class. In 2006, the nation elects the first Indigenous president of a Latin American country, Aymara Juan Evo Morales Ayma, who then advocates for a constitutional reform that should declare Bolivia a plurinational state and give "explicit support for robust indigenous rights and forms of indigenous self-determination or 'autonomy.'"[9] The forces that seek to destabilize Morales's government lead what one might call with Manu Karuka a "counter-sovereignty" movement waged against Indigenous bodies, lives, and control over land.[10] I thus want to consider the US supporting the anti-Morales coup not only within the history of US interventions abroad but, related to that, within the even longer history of a US settler imperialism that projects its particular modes of making and controlling state territory outside its own sphere. Doing so, it extends US influence beyond the borders defining the territory constructed as "domestic" and reinforces its mode of making state territoriality the unmarked status quo of political relations to land.

As the political operation of a settler state seeking to reempower forces of settlement in Bolivia, the actions by the Bush administration did not just project imperial power elsewhere. This US intervention against Morales's MAS government also moved across related sites of settler colonialism to reaffirm in Bolivia the structures of racialized hierarchization, Indigenous dispossession, and production of state territoriality for the purposes of non-Native settlement and extraction as the very grounds of

sociopolitical legitimacy and normativity through which the US itself is founded and continues to function. In this light, the self-interest guiding US intervention in Bolivia might not be reducible to the economic but be better understood in the context of how the US employs imperialist techniques across the Americas to also (re)produce territorializing structures of settler colonialism transnationally. As ways of making and consolidating empire, such techniques both obscure and legitimize US structures of Indigenous dispossession, non-Native placemaking, and forms of extractivism as the always desired political status quo in the Americas, North and South. As both a violent fulcrum to the US-backed opposition *and* the turning point of the "civic coup" leading to a significant weakening of the conservative agents of settlement, the Pando massacre becomes a site at which one can observe oppositional forces: the dynamics of transnationally coconstituting settlement and what J. Kēhaulani Kauauni has recently analyzed as the "enduring Indigeneity" that persists and possibly resurges precisely at those moments and in these spaces in which Native people are subjected to settler violence.[11]

In this essay, then, I want to think through the possibility of viewing "Pando" as a decolonial crossing, a site through which related Indigeneities and Indigenous relations cross and move beyond settler state lines, creating and making visible transnational connections and dynamics beyond settlement and empire. Specifically, I want to do so via a reading of Allison Hedge Coke's poem "Pando/Pando," as I have mentioned above. In the poem she offers an opportunity to think through these questions of both transnational settler territorial logics and decolonial contestation and crossing, as well as the political possibilities such a rethinking of transnational, "transindigenous," and "transhemispheric Indigenous" connections and relations might open up.[12]

In order to consider this more fully, however, it is necessary to probe in more depth into what is at stake in the imaginaries of a decolonial crossing by looking more closely at the settler state territorialities to which such imaginaries stand in critical relation. In the following, I want to ask, then, how the form of settler nation-state territoriality is produced, what kinds of disavowal it implicates, what modes of relation to land are eclipsed through its production, and how it becomes normalized as the geo/biopolitical making of territory that guides both the right-wing opposition to MAS in Bolivia and the US support of it. In light of this, how does an attention to forms of Indigenous literary production such as Hedge Coke's "Pando/Pando" make it possible to connect these various national sites of imperial settler territorialization and at the same time articulate trans/Indigenous-centered and decolonially oriented contestations toward them?

Settler Territorializing in the Americas, and the Geo/Biopolitics of Land

In the following, I want to investigate the close and complex relations between bio- and geopolitical modes of settler governance. Alternatively, I seek to outline conceptions of land as a form of (political) life which challenge conventionally received understandings of settler territoriality that the US claims for itself and that it also uses to legitimize its imperial reach across the Americas. Notably, this imperial reach extends to Indigenous lands beyond what the US has claimed as its "domestic" territory. Drawing on the work of Native studies scholars such as Mishuana Goeman, Mark Rifkin, Jodi Byrd, and others, I argue that the production of Indigenous lands as settler state territory is synchronic with the settler state's attempt to depoliticize Indigenous peoples by constructing them as population groups under its management.

Even if we take into account that historically these processes of conquest and incorporation were highly variable (both within the geopolitical body that is now the US and even more widely so in differently nationally bounded bodies of land), and rarely the linear, consistent, and logical project they were later made out to be, it is exactly this retrospective construction of a logical and linear process that has continuously served to normalize and naturalize settlement as the making of nation-state territory and the ascription of Indigenous polities within the bounds of the settler nation state. The translation of how, on the one hand, land and, on the other hand, the peoples inhabiting it signify politically through the prism of settler colonialism relies on and reinforces the other in a process of simultaneity. This process makes the settler territorialization of Indigenous lands and the depoliticization of Indigenous peoples appear as if one is the natural effect of the other, so that neither appears as manifesting a settler colonial rule that violates Indigenous peoples' rights as independent polities.

Accordingly, Mark Rifkin argues in his essay on "Indigenizing Agamben" "that the biopolitical project of defining the proper 'body' of the people is subtended by the geopolitical project of defining the territoriality of the nation, displacing competing claims by older/other political formations."[13] Mishuana Goeman, however, also reminds us that these projects remain complexly intertwined, particularly at the site of Indigenous women's bodies and gendered power relations. She writes: "Colonialism is not just about conquering Native lands through mapping new ownerships, but it is also about the conquest of bodies, particularly women's bodies through sexual violence, and about recreating gendered relationships."[14] She further contends, "the making of Indian land into territory required a colonial restructuring of spaces at a variety of scales," in which she includes the nation, a sacred site, or the body.[15] On the same account, it is also "important not to be coerced by the power of abstracting land and bodies into territories and citizens."[16] Just as space needs to be engaged on these varieties of scales in order to account for the "spatial violence" of settler colonialism and

the possibility of a form of "spatial decolonization," so it is vital to keep in mind how the "geopolitical project of defining the territoriality of the nation" is also a project of at first defining land as primarily signifying nation-state territory.[17]

As such, land becomes not only available but solely defined in its availability for non-Native settlement, extraction, and exploitation. The insistence on a rightful claim to all of these forms of territorialization animates all efforts to achieve settler control over Indigenous lands, violently and spectacularly in the US-backed coup of the prefects against Morales's MAS-led government in Bolivia,[18] as well as more habitually in state-sanctioned practices of non-Native placemaking in settler states such as the US. This is not to say that the US settler practices that enact these norms are any less violent. Rather, the overt and lethal violence leveled against the supporters of Morales showcases the moment at which this ever-present structural violence becomes visibly amplified, i.e., when the exploitative structures it supports face a challenge or threat, in this case by a government led by an Indigenous president that sought to curtail the normalized privileges of white settlers and strengthen Indigenous rights in the reconceptualization of Bolivia as a "plurinational state."[19] The same mechanism—of an ever-present violence that becomes visible in the moment of threat—can be seen within the US in the armed response of the state and corporate forces against the nonviolent activism of the water protectors at Standing Rock eight years later.

Within the logic that these moments of overt settler violence demonstrate, land is reduced to a surface on which to anchor and map nation-state sovereignty at the expense of disregarding or disavowing any other epistemological frameworks through which land is conceived of within a "variety of scales," including forms of social, political, and cultural relationships. From this perspective, "imposing colonial geographies must be understood *as yet another method to eliminate or eradicate or absorb that which is Native*," i.e., Indigenous ways of mapping space, of relating to space, of configuring land in ways that are not reducible to the claim laid on it as settler territory.[20] In this sense, the conceptualization of land as solely national territory already works to discredit and disavow practices that conceive of land otherwise, particularly as a form of political life in itself within webs of kinship networks. This disavowal mostly occurs by limiting the valency of these practices to, as Elizabeth Povinelli has recently put it, a form of "cultural belief" of Indigenous peoples instead of acknowledging them as being based in "an analytics of their existence" that is intricately tied to the configuration of the political sphere.[21] Compartmentalizing Indigenous forms of sociality into the "cultural" or "spiritual" fails to take into account how such a perception of land as a form of life is based on and enacts principles of relationality among all forms of life which signifies as one of the normative bases on which Indigenous sociopolitical formations constitute themselves.[22]

Significantly, then, Glen Coulthard writes in his widely received *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* of a "grounded normativity" for Indigenous peoples in Canada, the US, and other places governed through settler colonial structures. [23] Such a grounded normativity, for Coulthard, is characterized by "living our lives in relation to one another and our surroundings in a respectful, non-dominating, and nonexploitative way."[24] He further elaborates: "within this system of relations human beings are not the only constituent believed to embody spirit or agency. Ethically, this means that humans held certain obligations to the land, animals, plants, and lakes in much the same way that we hold obligations to other people."[25] Thinking such an ethics further, this indicates specific ways of organizing and constituting the realms of the social and the political that fundamentally posit a nonhierarchical place-based relationality of all forms of life, including the land as a form of life, within extended kinship networks which then make up, in their relationality, societies and polities.

It is in this way, then, that geo- and biopolitical modes of settler governance further overlap. As outlined above, the geopolitical redefinition of Indigenous lands as settler nation-state territory is closely aligned with the biopolitical production of Indigenous peoples as a population within the settler-nation state that is subjected to settler nation-state laws. Furthermore, however, a governing of land in the terms of nation-state territory and property is also—to use Foucault's definition of biopower—"a power centered on life itself" once one extends the limited definition of "life" prevalent in biopolitical thought as only referring to the "human" (particular *bios* as politically qualified life in Agamben's thought via Aristotle)[26] to a more decolonial understanding of how all forms of life including the land signify the political.[27]

Following from that, an Indigenous-centered analysis of the geopolitical almost inevitably implies the biopolitical insofar as land, within widely shared Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, is not seen as reducible to an alienable, commodifiable object existing for the purposes of proper cultivation, industrialization, or extraction, but as a form of life and life-giving force in itself.[28] In this way, it does not signify as property (either in regard to private citizens, corporations, or as space that is exclusive to the nation-state) but as an integral form of a *lived relation* to Indigenous people. Likewise, the projects of large-scale urbanization, cultivation, and extraction in the contexts of surplus economies, or initiatives of preserving pristine, pure nature and wilderness for recreation and as a space apart from modern society, need to be addressed as structures and practices of not only geopolitical domination but also biopolitical regularization that, in Foucauldian terms, "makes" the land "live" in ways that conform to, reinforce, and naturalize settler state interests and modes of life.[29] In this sense, the US backing of the opposition against the Bolivian government under Morales in 2008 also oscillates between exerting US imperial power to undermine the

political and territorial control of another geopolitical body and projecting the territorial logics through which the US creates its own normalized settler colonial biopolitical domesticity onto another space and population in the support of allied agents of settlement.

Such enmeshments of geo- and biopolitical settler colonial rule thus work to disavow and preclude through pervasive discourses of normalization any alternative formulation of land as constitutive for Indigenous political life. Such alternative political formulation of land both exceeds ascription as reserved territory within the settler nation-state or as "homeland" romanticized as an originary site of an alleged pure Indigeneity that has been lamentably yet irreversibly contaminated and thus cannot hold the same claim to the land anymore. However, such a condition of disavowal and invisibilizing alternative ways of being in and relating to the world does not erase their presence in the wider frameworks of Indigenous social, political, and cultural discourse as sites of contestation, disruption, and potential resurgence.

If what gets to count as a political understanding of land is circumscribed by settler-state governance and administration of territory as a form of delegitimizing alternative conceptions of land, life, and politics in relation, the question also is what other avenues of thought and practice (that are not limited by the criteria applied to official political discourse in settler state contexts) are available to formulate such configurations, to activate the potential of conceiving of land as political life, including across and beyond the borders and conceptual limits created by the settler state? If the emphasis on land as central for Indigenous communities pervades multiple discursive and performative practices, in which way can such practices contribute to what Goeman has called the "(re)mapping of Native nations … that addresses the violent atrocities while defining Native futures"? [30] And how can they help to contest forms of settler territorialization at various sites in a transnational context by recharging land with a political significance on multiple levels that disrupts settler bio- and geopolitical logics in which land is merely "a dead quantum of space" usable for affirming nation-state sovereignty and private property? [31]

With these questions in mind, I turn to Allison Hedge Coke's poem "Pando/-Pando" as a text that moves across the Americas to address forms of colonial violence in the US and Bolivia but that also links the sites through an articulation of what Emil Keme has recently called a "transhemispheric Indigeneity."[32] Doing so, the poem creates perspectives on forms of Indigenous growth and thriving that contest the normalized paradigm of transnational settler territorialization. Rooted in and expanding from specific land-based relations, the forms of growth and endurance pictured by the text instead point towards a model of decolonial crossings of American territorialities.

The Expansive Relations beyond Settler Territorialities in "Pando/Pando"

Hedge Coke's poem "Pando/Pando" (2014) appears in *Streaming*, a poetry volume in which she creates an expansive network of relations that traverses multiple sites and national territories, the latter both understood in an Indigenous and non-Indigenous context. The volume's thematic foci furthermore encompass natural processes, celestial movements, scientific observation, Indigenous prophecies, and effects of climate change as well as histories such as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the war on Iraq or as seemingly more distant such as the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. All the while, Hedge Coke engages a transnational and hemispheric perspective on the Americas and beyond, which in the process turns US settler territoriality from the seemingly self-evident fixed point of political legibility and legitimacy into only *one* current among the multiple processes of *Streaming* through which land comes to signify politically.

"Pando/Pando" embodies this matrix of relationality by including movements that extend across nationally defined settler territories, situations of Indigeneity, and forms of life. All of these extended movements help to constitute and negotiate the realm of the sociopolitical as a space of fluidity not confined or defined by limits of settler nation-state territoriality. Starting with the title itself, Hedge Coke juxtaposes and links, even mirrors, with a dash, two "Pandos." In the subtitle she defines the first as "The Trembling Giant Aspen" and the second as "Bolivian massacre site." And in the notes to the poem, she elaborates on both:

> Pando, the Trembling Giant Aspen: A giant Indigenous North American clonal colony. At eighty thousand years old and weighing six million kilograms, it is the heaviest living organism (and among the oldest) on Earth and was once thought to be a whole forest of individual, separate growth (rather than a single living organism sharing a massive underground root system) in the Fishlake National Forest in Utah.
>
> Pando, massacre: Also known as El Porvenir Massacre. The deadly ambush occurring September 11, 2008, was on Indigenous community members (including students) who were supporters of President Evo Morales, the first Indigenous president—and an Indigenous giant—of Bolivia.[33]

As the reference in the notes to Morales as "an Indigenous giant" already indicates, both instances of "Pando" are charged with extra meaning through the other. Turning this into a principle of composition, Hedge Coke relates these two meanings throughout the poem, reads one through the other, and lets these two references illuminate

each other. As a result, the transnational settler relations between the US and the settler forces in Bolivia that are evoked through the Pando massacre are overlaid with frames of reference that highlight Indigenous life and growth at different localities of colonial violence, whose connections however ultimately point beyond settler designations.

At first glance, the tree "Pando" which claims space the size of a forest registers specific discourses of politics, history, ecology, and biology that are quite distinct from the discourses evoked by the Bolivian massacre site. However, the poem's very first lines indicate how the poem creates a close relationality between these two sites across the Americas:

> Trembling giant
> bulging under siege
> Pando
> /Pando [34]

Throughout the poem the non-indented lines refer most directly to the "Trembling Giant Aspen" and the indented ones to the "Bolivian Massacre Site." Upsetting such a clear structural divide through lines with more ambiguous associations from the start, however, the poem also relates the discourses to which each "Pando" appears to belong, which turn out to be much closer than one might initially assume. The first two lines refer to both sites of Pando, first the tree, then the massacre. As one phrase moving across the lines, though, the two sites of reference are pulled into one frame of imagery. Read through the site of Pando in Bolivia, "[t]he trembling giant / bulging under siege" obliquely evokes Morales as the political Indigenous giant of Bolivia, who is trembling in his position of power from the right-wing destabilization efforts (and might also evoke an immediate physical and emotional reaction to learning about the attack). More literally, the "siege" under which "Pando" is bulging attests to the siege of federal government buildings, and airports by regionalist-led forces, and more broadly how parts of Bolivia had been put under siege by reactionary settler powers.

When linking the same lines to the tree Pando as the "trembling giant," the Earth's "heaviest living organism" indigenous to North America can also be viewed as being "bulging under siege" in its growth on a site that is defined by settler territoriality as part of or "besieged" by the US. Located in the Fishlake National Forest in Utah, this living organism is exposed to settler-specific politics of regulating and compartmentalizing land and forms of life in the "natural world" that define "proper" use of land in terms of either extraction, cultivation, or recreation. Beyond that, "Pando" exists in what Kristen Simmons has recently called in another context, "settler atmospherics."[35] "Breathing in a settler atmosphere is taxing," Simmons

states, a fact that "Pando" might be well familiar with in his (the tree is genetically male) daily exposure to an increasingly toxic settler-produced atmosphere that affects his life and continued well-being.[36]

For while scientists are attempting to save him, "Pando" the Trembling Giant is thought to be currently dying. The reasons possibly include disease, droughts, fire suppression, and overgrazing by deer and elk, which all point to invasive settler institutions and practices of agrarianism, industrialization, and overhunting. The overgrazing as well can be traced back to disruptive settler practices that put Pando "under siege," since the intensive non-Native hunting of bear, wolf, and mountain lion in advance of settlement diminished the animals that traditionally reined in the deer and elk populations whose size now harms Pando. Ultimately, all of the harmful conditions Pando is subjected to speak to the way in which the capitalist and colonial relations structure engagements with the land, air, and water in ways that affect all life forms inevitably exposed to the conditions and effects they produce, including this massive vegetal life form.

In further sections, the poem strengthens the connections and relations between the two references to "Pando":

hunger strike, assailants
lobbed a green grenade
forced to knees shirtless
peasantry
  tree
  Pando
   /Pando

Pando /
  Pando
aspen man spreads uprising
flowering, flower,
spreading root sprout
Pando
   ambush
   where Morales has stayed
biomass clone cross giant uprising
deeply rooted Indigenous growth
    prevent Bolivia from splintering apart
Pando / Pando[37]

While the poem remains formally stable in its indented/non-indented structure, the ascription of references to either one Pando or the other becomes increasingly unstable. One frame of reference for certain phrases—such as the "aspen man uprising," "spreading root," and "deeply rooted Indigenous growth," which all seemingly refer to the giant aspen male with a massive underground root system—appears to cross over the line dividing both reference frames, which could also be indicated through the slash between "Pando/Pando." The giant aspen would then be rendered to lend its qualities so as to describe the political Indigenous giant Morales. At the same time, the tree as represented by Hedge Coke captures something about the brutality of the massacre in contradistinction to the giant living organism as well as in relation to its name-giving quality of "trembling."

On one level the violence of the massacre ("forced to knees shirtless / peasantry," "shot, seven dead") is juxtaposed with the growing and life-giving processes of the giant tree, sometimes directly in the next line: ("shirtless / peasantry / tree," "basal shoot / shot, seven dead / shooting-genet / ramet / peasant farmers").[38] As Hedge Coke uses homonymy ("-try" / "tree") and polysemy ("shoot" / "shot") as means to join the two lines and the geopolitical localities they index, language itself seems to lead the way for Hedge Coke to cross over settler-defined lines and transit between the two sites of Indigenous growth and colonial violence (neither limited only to one place). At the same time, the growth of the tree signifies the growth of the socialist, Indigenous political movement in Bolivia led by Morales, embodying the principles of rootedness and "enduring Indigeneity."[39] Towards its end, the poem states: "aspen life in largest / singular germination."[40] Biologically, the singular germination refers to the aspen tree. Formally, as an indented line, it should signify the Pando of the Bolivian context and thus might evoke Morales as a political figure for the Indigenous Americas not only as a single, but as a *singular* germination, who, similar to the giant aspen also comes to represent political "life in largest."

The constant shifting back and forth between indented and non-indented lines, then, invites one to read the relation as metonymical rather than metaphorical, not as a unidirectional transference and translation of qualities from one site to another, but as an establishment of reciprocal relationality across a categorical and spatial divide in which one point of reference informs the other and vice versa. Through these processes, the seemingly commonsensical way of ascribing meaning to these sites, as "merely" a giant plant in the US, or as "merely" a local political conflict in Latin America, are shown instead as being severely limited in their perspective through their unmarked reference to settlement as horizon of understanding. Exposing and disrupting such a *settler* commonsensical perspective on what each Pando signifies, Hedge Coke's techniques transform the meaning of both sites into a poetic crossing with decolonial potential.[41] As such, the poem brings to the fore both the ongoing colonial

conflict between Indigenous political life and settler empire, as well as the forms of Indigenous endurance and resurgence traversing these sites that indifferently cross over settler lines and discursively cross them out in doing so.

Notably, the poem does so with a contestation of settler colonial models of territorialization. With reference to the massacre in the province of Pando, it marks how settlers insist on their form of territorialization predicated on large-scale cultivation and extraction to the point of exerting lethal violence against anyone challenging their privilege and profiting from it. Simultaneously, it contrasts such a territorialization premised on violence (against the land and those seeking to limit settler power over it) with a form of Indigenous growth in which the penetration of the Earth through the massive underground root system (also particularly gendered when considering the maleness of the giant aspen) does not extract or take life but rather makes its own existence within an interdependent, mutually sustaining relation to the land and other life forms possible since "time immemorial."[42]

In this sense, then, the ascriptions of meaning can be read as traveling back and forth metonymically, not only identifying Morales with "giant uprising" and "deeply rooted Indigenous growth," but also charging the image of the "aspen man spreads uprising" with political connotation. The poem not only suggests that Morales is an organic result, a "biomass" of ancient "Indigenous growth" lending it unique political force (that the massacre sought to suppress), but also that the "Indigenous growth" of the giant aspen needs to be considered in its dimension as a massive, ancient, and ongoing form of life with its own agency and resiliency that helps to constitute North American Indigenous lands as a lived form of relationality and sociospatiality. Furthermore, Pando continues to exist in a settler space marked by nineteenth-century massacres which to the aspen, one of the oldest living organisms on Earth, must register as part of the recent past with a bearing on the present as much as the Pando massacre of 2008.

The "clonal colony" of the giant aspen (juxtaposed in the poem with the "colonial massacre" at Pando) is "rooted eighty thousand years" (just as Morales has "fifty Indigenous mayors rooted") and thus speaks to the prior and ongoing claim of Indigenous life (in all of its forms, ways, and modes) to lands that are currently defined as the US or beyond that as North and South America.[43] Extending across "one hundred acres" and weighing approximately "fourteen million pounds," it is pictured as a force that redefines "a dead quantum of space"[44]—which is how it is legible within the political discourse of US settler territoriality—into a site of Indigenous life, growth, endurance, resilience, agency. [45] And by its form of metonymical relation, the poem suggests that this redefinition of territory through a massive ancient Indigenous form of growth can be meaningfully seen alongside how Morales's presidency signifies a form of Indigenous political thriving and resurgence. Additionally, it appears to show

how Morales has been able, despite violent US-backed opposition, to transform the terms of territorial politics in a nation-state in the Americas, even if only imperfectly so.[46] One instance of this can be seen in the constitutional reform in 2009: After quelling the conservative revolt and "civic coup" in the aftermath of the Pando massacre, Morales went on to pursue this reform that was ultimately approved by the Bolivian people with an overwhelming majority. In it, Bolivia was declared a "plurinational state," a term that complexly evokes the possibilities (and limits) of multiple, decentralized sovereignties under the ongoing umbrella of one state-defined government.

It is important to note, of course, that the land inhabited by the giant aspen tree does not gain added political significance through the incidental homonymous relation to the department of "Pando" and the massacre that occurred there. Instead, in linking these two sites the poem makes use of a literary strategy of relationality which enables the text to render visible how the occupation of land by the "Trembling Giant" and the *making* of the land by being structured through this organism "rooted eighty-thousand years" is already imbued with politics in an Indigenous sense.

The life of the "Trembling Giant" already signals a form of Indigenous politics in which the concept of US territoriality as a means to define the bounds and reach of the nation-state is unsettled. Land no longer signifies as the "quantum of space" securing the nation-state's territorial extension of sovereignty. Instead, it comes to be configured—particularly in this specific case—as one form of life that is integral to a network of relations, what Lenape scholar Joanne Barker has called the "(non)human relationships and responsibilities" that make up Indigenous sociopolitical formations, or to use Barker's term "the polity of the Indigenous."[47] These "relationships and responsibilities," as Glen Coulthard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson among others also remind us, include forms of diplomacy and trade across human and non-human nations (with the nonhuman including the categories of animal, plant, and mineral), all of which are defined by their own specifically configured relationship to land and a commitment to shared territories, which are not exclusively defined in proprietary terms.[48]

Throughout, the poem uses the interconnections of "Pando/Pando" to articulate an expansive notion of transindigenous and also transhemispheric Indigenous relationality that situates notions of the nation, land, and life in an extended network of the sociopolitical exceeding the terms of politics and political life legible under settler colonial rule. [49] This enables a thinking of land not just as life for Indigenous communities, but also as political life through a combined reframing of land and politics in relation. Such a form of relationality can thus be seen as a conceptualization of Indigenous lands, bodies, and lives that seeks to displace and disable the intertwinement of bio- and geopolitical modes and logics of settler governance. If we read "Pando" the tree as a form of political life in itself that is already integral to a larger

Indigenous-centered and multifaceted network of relations, this perspective on "Pando" ultimately poses the question of what it would mean to include this giant aspen as a vegetal polity[50] within a concept of plurinationalism as advocated by Morales for Bolivia.

Ultimately, the poem seems to suggest that a disruption to settler bio- and geopolitical modes of dominance must entail a challenge to settler-imposed definitions and assignations of land as nation-state territory available for purposes of cultivation, extraction, and large-scale construction, at the same time as it challenges settler-imposed definitions of *bios* as the politically qualifiable and qualified life limited to the human population. In the poem's vision, biological classification no longer qualifies as a defining category through which to ascribe the potential for political life, presence, or agency, just as imposed forms of settler-nationality and territoriality no longer figure as the only or premier site of political belonging. The Giant Aspen Pando figures then not only as a site in relation to the massacre at Pando in connection to Morales. In addition, the giant ancient tree, read through Hedge Coke's poem, offers a reconceptualization of Indigenous political life in relation to land that can serve as a corrective to the deadly and deadening forces of settler colonialism as they are practiced by and justified to each other transnationally through their local manifestations across the Americas. In contrast to these forces, the tree Pando, as read through Hedge Coke's poetry, signifies an alliance to a movement toward decolonization in that it indicates the potential of a relational and pluralizing normativity to that end.

Coda

Pando/Pando
Pando/Pando
Pando/Pando
Pando/Pando

As the poem ends on a repetition of "Pando/Pando" that approximates a chant and multiplies the doubling, or mirroring, of the title, it emphasizes finally how one Pando is not semantically absorbed by the other. Instead the poem continues to cross over the lines between both "Pandos" to the effect that neither nation-bound frame of reference determines the other. Instead, the relational itself emerges as the framework of reference through which "Pando/Pando"'s politics become legible as exceeding any settler definition. Ultimately, "Pando/Pando" envisions a multiscalar structure of relationships as the normative principle of sociopolitical formation. The US-backed opposition to Morales which led to the Pando massacre shows how transnational settler

colonial connections reify the violent insistence on the norm of settler-state territorializing. In the poem, however, the evocative connection between Pando the Giant Aspen, the Pando massacre, and Morales as the political force the attack sought to weaken redraws these connections as decolonial crossings of political land and life in relation.

The poem thus demonstrates the potential of Native writing as a "form of political theory" in practice.[51] As it poetically enacts how Indigenous political life can be conceived of in a way that moves across settler–nation state boundaries, forms of territorialization, and modes of being that emphasize and strengthen Indigenous-centered conceptions and relations, the poem also works to minimize and marginalize settler-imposed definitions of the nation, of territory, and of the political. In so doing, it does not deny the ongoing consequence for many Indigenous peoples struggling under ongoing conditions of settler colonialism in various states but rather indicates pathways to their dismantling. The poem does so by activating the semantic possibilities of juxtaposing and associating two seemingly nation state–bound references to "Pando," a word that in Latin stands for the phrase "I spread," a phrase from which the giant aspen derives its name.

By way of conclusion, I want to suggest "Pando/Pando" in the title and in its multiplied reiteration at the end of the poem can also be read as a means to signal the spreading, extending, and continual thriving of Indigenous normative presences. This notion of spreading points beyond survival and remaining to a dynamic of growth, mobility, and far-reaching interconnection. Through the deaths of the farmers and the possible dying of Pando the Giant Aspen, Hedge Coke makes clear that these forms of Indigenous presence continue to be met with different manifestations of ongoing colonial violence and remain exposed to conditions of everyday "settler atmospherics."[52] At the same time, however, her poem develops an expansive vision of interrelated dynamics in which multiple forms of Indigenous life continually find ways of being on, in, and with the land that exceed, disrupt, and potentially dismantle territorial modes of trans/national colonial settlement, thus enabling a decolonial vision of territoriality not only in and of the US, but crossing over what is currently known as the Americas.

Notes

[1] Bret Gustafson, "Bolivia 9/11: Bodies and Power on a Feudal Frontier," *Upside Down World,* July 14, 2009, http://upsidedownworld.org/news-briefs/news-briefs-news-briefs/bolivia-911-bodies-and-power-on-a-feudal-frontier/. Originally published in *Caterwaul Quarterly* 3 (Summer/Spring 2009): 20–24. For a Bolivian perspective on the massacre that also delivers an artistic and cultural critique of the politics surrounding it, see the documentary *Resisting: Voices of the Victims of the Pando Massacre in Bolivia*,

directed by Maria Sol Wasylyk Fedyszak and produced by Alejandro Parellada (2009). From the voices recorded in it, it is notable how some express discontent about the government not responding to the community's need after the massacre. Also, one witness places the massacre in a longer history of colonial violence against Native peoples, commenting [as translated in the subtitles] that "they weren't called massacres, it was called 'killing a few Indians,' or as they put it, 'disobedient and bad-mannered Cambas'" (*Resisting*, 35 min.). Due to a number of constraints, many of them connected to the limited positionality of myself as a scholar of mainly North American literatures and cultures, this essay relies strongly on scholarship, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, that originates from a North American background. While this is also due to the thematic and analytical focus I have chosen for this essay, I want to show how in the voices from the documentary, indicative of many more diverse Bolivian voices, lies the possibility for an alternative, Bolivian-centered perspective on the events and its underlying politics, that might possibly be explored more fully in future work, and that would help to develop further the notion of a transhemispheric Indigeneity I am exploring here.

[2] Allison Hedge Coke, "Pando/Pando," in *Streaming* (New York: Coffee House Press, 2014).

[3] Gustafson, "Bolivia 9/11."

[4] Emily Achtenberg, "Bolivia's 9/11: The Pando Massacre and the TIPNIS Conflict," *North American Congress on Latin America*, Sept 18, 2011, https://nacla.org/blog/2011/9/18/bolivia%25E2%2580%2599s-911-pando-massacre-and-tipnis-conflict, emphasis added.

[5] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 388.

[6] Richard Gott, "Latin America as a White Settler Society," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 26, no. 2 (2007): 274.

[7] Roger Burbach, "Orchestrating a Civic Coup in Bolivia," *Counterpunch*, Nov 18, 2008, https://www.counterpunch.org/2008/11/18/orchestrating-a-civic-coup-in-bolivia/.

[8] See for instance the contributions and introduction to the special forum of *American Quarterly* on "Settler Colonialism in Latin America," ed. by M. Bianet Castellanos, *American Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (2017), especially Shannon Speed's "Structures of Settler Capitalism in Abya Yala," 783–90; Jorge Cuéllar, "Elimination/Deracination: Colonial Terror, La Matanza, and the 1930s Race Laws in El Salvador," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 42, no. 2 (2018): 39–56; Richard Gott, "White Settler Society."

[9] Bret Gustafson and Nicole Fabricant, "Introduction: New Cartographies of Knowledge and Struggle," in *Remapping Bolivia: Resources, Territory and Indigeneity in a Plurinational*

State, ed. Nicole Fabricant and Bret Gustafson (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011), 2. For a comprehensive and critical account of a "Plurinational Bolivia" under Morales, arguing that Indigeneity has been transformed from "a site of emancipation" into "a site of liberal nation-state building" (5), see Nancy Postero's *The Indigenous State: Race, Politics, and Performance in Plurinational Bolivia* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.31.

[10] Manu Karuka (Vimalassery), "The Prose of Counter-Sovereignty," in *Formations of United States Colonialism*, ed. Alyosha Goldstein (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 87.

[11] J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, "'A Structure, Not an Event': Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity," *Lateral: Journal of the Cultural Studies Association* 5, no. 1 (2016), https://doi.org/10.25158/L5.1.7.

[12] For transindigenous, see Chadwick Allen, *Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012) and "A Transnational Native American Studies? Why Not Studies that are Trans-*Indigenous*?" *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 4, no. 1 (2012): 1–22. For transhemispheric Indigenous, see Emil Keeme and Adam Coon, "For Abiayala to Live, the Americas Must Die: Toward a Transhemispheric Indigeneity," *Journal of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association* 5, no. 1 (2018): 42–68. This refers to the English-language version of the article; for the K'iche'-language version, see the issue of the same journal, p. 1–20, by Emil Keme and José Yac Noj, and for the Spanish-language version p. 21–41, by Emil Keme.

[13] Mark Rifkin, "Indigenizing Agamben: Rethinking Sovereignty in Light of the 'Peculiar' Status of Native Peoples," *Cultural Critique* 73 (2009): 94.

[14] Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*, First Peoples: New Directions in Indigenous Studies (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 33.

[15] Goeman, *Mark My Words*, 33.

[16] Goeman, *Mark My Words*, 32.

[17] Rifkin, "Indigenizing Agamben," 94.

[18] One can see anti-Indigenous violence on multiple levels here, both in the resistance against a government led by an Indigenous president, as well as the killing of Morales supporters who were also largely Indigenous farmers and students.

[19] Fabricant and Gustafson, *Remapping Bolivia*, 1.

[20] Goeman, *Mark My Words*, 30 (emphasis in original).

[21] Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 46.

[22] I elaborate on these questions in more detail in "The Bio/Geopolitics of Settler States and Indigenous Normativities," the introduction to *Biopolitics, Geopolitics, Life: Settler States and Indigenous Presence*, ed. René Dietrich and Kerstin Knopf, forthcoming with Duke University Press.

[23] Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 60. See also Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*, Indigenous Americas (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

[24] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 60.

[25] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 61.

[26] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, volume 1: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 144. See Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford University Press, 1998 [1995]).

[27] I have argued this in greater detail in "The Biopolitical Logics of Settler Colonialism and Disruptive Relationality," *Cultural Studies—Critical Methodologies* 17, no. 1 (2017): 67–77, https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708616638696.

[28] In addition to the work of numerous Indigenous Studies scholars, this principle might have been most forcefully formulated by the rallying cry "mni wiconi," water is life, by the water protectors resisting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock. For a deeper exploration of these questions, see also the special issue on "Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Water," ed. Cutcha Risling Baldy and Melanie K. Yazzie, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 7, no. 1 (2018).

[29] See also Robert Nichols, "Theft is Property! The Recursive Logic of Dispossession," *Political Theory* 46, no. 1 (2017): 3–28, https://doi.org//10.1177/0090591717701709.

[30] Goeman, *Mark My Words*, 13. In relation to this quote, I should note that the term of "Native nations" which Goeman uses here is rooted in a specific history of Native sovereignty and self-determination and thus has no direct equivalent within Latin American contexts. At the same time, as the decision to refer to Bolivia as a "plurinational state" is meant to indicate political autonomy of Indigenous communities within the state, one can also see how the term "nation" as referring to the political collectivity of an Indigenous community also has some bearing and noted significance in these contexts.

[31] Mark Rifkin, *The Erotics of Sovereignty: Queer Native Writing in the Era of Self-Determination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 2012), 73.

[32] Keme, "Towards a Transhemispheric Indigeneity," 42.

[33] Hedge Coke, notes on "Pando/Pando", in *Streaming*, 140.

[34] Hedge Coke, "Pando/Pando," ll. 1–4.

[35] Kristen Simmons, "Settler Atmospherics," *Cultural Anthropology*, Dispatches, November 20, 2017, https://culanth.org/fieldsights/1221-settler-atmospherics.

[36] Simmons, "Settler Atmospherics."

[37] Hedge Coke, "Pando/Pando," ll. 17–35.

[38] Hedge Coke, "Pando/Pando," ll. 65, 68.

[39] Kauanui, "Enduring Indigeneity."

[40] Hedge Coke, "Pando/Pando," ll. 74, 75.

[41] See Mark Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

[42] For a wider discussion of these interdependent relationships and their targeting by extractive industries, see also Macarena Goméz-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives*, Dissident Acts (Durham, NC/London: Duke University Press, 2017).

[43] Hedge Coke, "Pando/Pando," ll. 48–49; l. 43.

[44] Hedge Coke, "Pando/Pando," ll. 37, 39; Rifkin, *The Erotics of Sovereignty*, 73.

[45] Hedge Coke, note to "Pando/Pando," in *Streaming*, 140.

[46] The tensions inherent to and limits of this reconception are probably nowhere as evident as in the TIPNIS conflict in 2011, three years after the massacre, which ultimately led to a scattering of the political opposition. As Emily Achtenberg notes: "Today the MAS government faces a substantial challenge from social movement sectors formerly allied with it, especially lowlands indigenous groups whose interests appear to stand in the way of a strong developmentalist agenda. At the epicenter of this conflict, some 1,700 indigenous residents of the TIPNIS (Isiboro-Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory) and their supporters are in the 35th day of a 300+ mile march from the Amazonian department of Beni to La Paz, to protest a proposed highway that will bifurcate their ancestral lands." When this march was "brutally repressed by police at Chaparina, leaving at least 70 wounded," Morales abandoned the plans only to revive them six years later in 2017, again meeting resistance. See Achtenberg, "Why is Evo

Morales Reviving Bolivia's Controversial TIPNIS Road?" *North American Congress on Latin America*, 21 Aug 2017, https://nacla.org/blog/2017/08/22/why-evo-morales-reviving-bolivia%E2%80%99s-controversial-tipnis-road.

[47] Joanne Barker, "Introduction: Critically Sovereign," in *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies*, ed. Joanne Barker (Durham, NC/London: Duke University Press, 2017), 7.

[48] In addition to the works already cited, see also Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Looking after Gdoo-Naaganinaa: Precolonial Nishnaabeg Diplomatic and Treaty Relationships," *Wicazo Sa Review* 23, no. 2 (2008): 29–42.

[49] See Chadwick Allen und Emil Keme for the uses of the terms transindigneous and transhemispheric Indigeneity, as cited above.

[50] I am indebted to Catriona Sandilands for the coinage of this term.

[51] Rifkin, *Erotics of Sovereignty*, 2.

[52] Simmons, "Settler Atmospherics."

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