

## Research Article

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# Countering Acts of Dispossession through Alberto Blest Gana's *Mariluán*

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**Abstract:** In the scant scholarship relative to Alberto Blest Gana's *Mariluán*, several critics have underscored the unfeasibility or superfluidity of the protagonist's aspired project for restitution, indigenous assimilation, and fraternity in the Araucanía during the novel's context of enunciation. Under the theoretical framework of Athena Athanasiou and Judith Butler on dispossession, and in dialogue with the concept of "sediments of time" by Reinhart Koselleck, this study argues that an analysis of the overlapping chronologies in "play" in *Mariluán* serves to revise the statements seemingly offered for advancement nearly 160 years ago. *Mariluán*'s pseudo-revival of a Lautaro and the manner in which he makes himself "present" or "becoming," and remains "present" after his beheading, can be re-signified as a means to challenge the terms imposed from structures that inhibit, subjugate, and seek to fully exterminate or nullify the "other" – insomuch in the 1860s, as in future temporalities involving repetitions of historical events and their related, yet distinguishable, singularities. Through a reconsideration of the protagonist's aims that refute his call for cultural assimilation as a necessary means of integration, today's status quo on indigenous issues can be re-problematized, to contest the pervasive logic of dispossession and advocate for more practical and politically inclusive structures that celebrate Chile's plurality.

**Keywords:** Blest Gana, *Mariluán*, Mapuche, constitution, dispossession

## Introduction: An "Elevated Mission"

In a discourse offered in 1861 from his newly acquired position among the University of Chile's faculty, Alberto Blest Gana took a page from José Victorino Lastarria's address pronounced before the Literary Society in Santiago nearly 20 years earlier. He explained that letters – constituting national literature – were to serve as didactic contributions for Chile's continual advancement. They bore a civilising task to illuminate lessons for the benefit of humanity in a motion towards progress. With this "elevada misión" [elevated mission] and positioning of literature underscored, he indicated that novels depicting customs or scenes from ordinary life may be steeped in incontestable utility for a nation still in development as a republic, given their ability to incorporate matters of social interest, scathingly critique vices, and prodigiously praise exemplary virtues (Blest Gana, "Literatura" 86, 88–91).<sup>1</sup>

Around this time, studies splashed through *El Mercurio*, disparaging the Mapuche in southern Chile as an inferior race that had rejected civilisation. They described their land as underdeveloped areas of economic promise that should be owned by the government to remedy the problem of territorial disunion

<sup>1</sup> Translation is mine, as are all others from Spanish to English. Quotations of Blest Gana are provided in both languages.

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(Pinto Rodríguez, “Del antiindigenismo” 87–91; *La formación* 153). Similar positions continued to be espoused during the second half of the century. Like Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, who had labelled the indigenous as savage and perverse during the parliamentary debate on military operations in the Araucanía in 1868, Diego Barros Arana sustained the portrayal of “bad Indians on good land” years later in the first volume of his *Historia General de Chile* [General History of Chile] (1884) (Casanueva 298). Although he suggested indigenous contact with “more advanced” civilisations could lead to an amelioration that could not evolve endogenously, Barros Arana justified military incursions due to the general nature of the indigenous as barbarous, primitive, indolent, incompetent, lacking favourable character, and under a social organisation that impeded industrial progress. As Barros Arana wrote, “all of those tasks [to reap benefits from the land] require certain foresight and an intellectual development that the savage man lacks, and that the oldest inhabitants of Chile, of which there is an historical account, have not possessed” (36).

This was not, however, a homogenous position of the elite. Polish-born Ignacio Domeyko and Francisco Bilbao had offered other perspectives on the matter. In *Araucanía i sus habitantes* [Araucanía and its Inhabitants] (1845), Domeyko provided a contradictory account of the indigenous but illustrated their positive demeanour in times of peace to conclude that they “seem born to be good citizens” (75). For their general temperament, they did not respond to the use of force, which he viewed as a criminal procedure: “men of this fortitude are not convinced with arms: By arms they are only exterminated or degraded. In both cases the reduction would be a crime, committed at the expense of the most precious Chilean blood” (75). A resolution could stem from “a system of reduction” founded on religious and intellectual education – for how could there be a durable bond, understanding, fraternity, and shared interests among Chile’s people if the same God was not adored? (78–79). To reform indigenous ideas, customs, and inclinations, missions and moral behaviour should be supported. Nearby land could be populated with numerous hardworking Christian people, and those in the military could be rewarded with parcels of land purchased from the “Araucanians” for their good behaviour and dedicated service (79–80, 95–96).<sup>2</sup> In short, general land acquisition or purchase was to be rendered in the fairest way possible and under the guarantee of certain laws and measures, since those lands had proprietors. These were “children of the owners that possessed them from time immemorial” (92).<sup>3</sup>

In “Los araucanos” [The Araucanians] (1847), Francisco Bilbao deduced that the Chilean Republic followed the faulty Spanish system with “inhumane measures” (340). As a result, Chileans along the frontier found themselves reciprocally corrupted. Under the ignorance of the government, Chileans burned fields and killed the indigenous in a desire for their annihilation. He questioned if that was a means to procure civilisation (340, 345). Like Domeyko, Bilbao thus openly opposed the destruction of the indigenous, who he viewed as in an “intermediary state between civilisation and barbarism” (319, 343). Criticising previous hypocritical evangelising efforts for their failure to attain colonial civilisation in the region, he similarly emphasised Catholic instruction, modelled virtuous behaviour, and the development of communication and trade as integral to the process of “regeneration” (343–348).

More in-line with Domeyko and Bilbao’s positions, in 1860, the *Revista del Pacífico* recognised the abuses committed against the “barbarous” indigenous through unjust land acquisitions that warranted their “subversive” conduct. It likewise proposed their integration into the national fabric through peaceful designs (Pinto Rodríguez, “Del antiindigenismo” 93–95; *La formación* 162–163). In the *Revista del Pacífico* and in Valparaíso’s *El Mercurio* appeared the work of Aquinas Reid, who promoted an iteration of colonisation that would “respect indigenous rights and compensate those who decided to sell their land” (Casanueva 307; Pinto Rodríguez, “Del antiindigenismo” 93). For its part, the *Revista Católica* fiercely condemned *El Mercurio*’s advocacy of war or extermination motivated by land interests in the name of civilisation. Employing a more promising image of the indigenous, it too continued to support “civilising” or evangelising efforts in the south that would not jeopardise Mapuche independence and their unalienable rights (Casanueva 307–308; Pinto Rodríguez, “Del antiindigenismo” 95–98; *La formación* 163–166).

<sup>2</sup> The term, *araucano*, is now conceived by many as pejorative.

<sup>3</sup> Unlike Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Domeyko did not support European colonisation (95–97).

Lastarria also echoed portions of Bilbao's position in 1868. He blamed Chileans for indigenous rebellions due to their use of troops to pursue them, scorch their homes, and abduct women and children. Opposed to military occupation and in favour of more gradual incorporation, he believed faithful and amiable communication was a means to carry the indigenous to civilisation (Bengoa 180–181).<sup>4</sup> That year, in *Los araucanos i sus costumbres* [The Araucanians and their Customs] (1868), Pedro Ruiz Aldea emphasised that the indigenous people were often blamed for robberies and assaults driven by outlaws or other Chileans who lived among them. He pointed out that the indigenous did not actively threaten the property or lives of others without provocation, and were themselves victims of incursions (Casanueva 315; Ruiz Aldea 18, 56). Different from Vicuña Mackenna's assessment of the indigenous, Ruiz Aldea sought to more accurately portray the race that he considered to have been slandered. He highlighted their more positive and often ignored characteristics. Akin to Bilbao, among others, Ruiz Aldea affirmed that education, evangelisation, continued trade, modelled behaviour, and honourable and intelligent governing leaders would help usher the indigenous to civilisation. Since war in the region would only serve to slow advancement and plunge the indigenous into misery, he correspondingly supported a "plan of reduction," through which land should be fairly demarcated and colonised by industrious people (Casanueva 315–316; Ruiz Aldea 15, 18, 20, 22–23, 32, 80–84).<sup>5</sup>

The theme of colonisation can also be found in Miguel Luis Amunátegui's discourses pronounced in the Chamber of Deputies a few years earlier in 1864. He had advocated for land expropriation for "the utility of the state"/"public utility," particularly among white or Spanish settlers. For that reason, order and security were required in Arauco in order to draw well-needed national and foreign immigrants to the area that would civilise it (Amunátegui, *Obras* 32). However, for Amunátegui, an extensive expropriation of indigenous lands would be considered a violent plunder driven by the State. It would undoubtedly irritate the indigenous, since "the Indians in no way find themselves in a situation to be able to understand what a declaration of public utility is" (24).<sup>6</sup>

Imbued with a previous career tied to the military, and in accordance with his aforementioned literary vision, Blest Gana exercised his "tarea civilizadora" [civilising task] and engaged the question of the Araucanía that had been captivating the press and occupying the minds of some of the most notable literary and political figures of the era (Blest Gana, "Literatura" 86).<sup>7</sup> From the columns of the *La Voz de Chile* between 20 April and 7 December 1862, he drafted lessons for national progress to the reading public through portrayals of the conflicting ideological discourses in the serial *Marilúán* – a rather "forgotten" novel, as John S. Ballard has categorised it.

<sup>4</sup> Nearly 25 years earlier, Lastarria called for an eradication of persisting colonial residues under the Portalian regime. He asserted that independence efforts among the patriots were borne from a will of emancipation that stemmed from the ongoing indigenous resistance against colonial Spain (Lastarria 22–23). The *pueblo*, particularly the mestizos that would form *lo criollo*, continued to bear characteristics of the indigenous in their own more contemporary bid for emancipation from an authoritarianism tied to Spanish legacy (Kaempfer, "Lastarria, Bello y Sarmiento" 12–14). In his response to Lastarria, Andrés Bello prioritised the importance of the *criollo* archive in historiography and cautioned against interpretative leaps that veered from a more "factual" concentration on documents. He refuted indigenous involvement in national projects, remarking that they would disappear and be essentially lost throughout the transatlantic colonies as a result of the conquest and colonial system (Bello 168). Domingo Faustino Sarmiento likewise critiqued Lastarria, accusing him of re-appropriating "an alleged fraternity with the Indians" that had been in vogue during the revolution (213). For Sarmiento, there was no possible amalgam between a "savage *pueblo*" and a civilised one (215). For more information, see Troncoso Araos, "El retrato sospechoso," pp. 157–166, and Kaempfer, "Lastarria, Bello y Sarmiento."

<sup>5</sup> Like Domeyko, he did not support the formation of large haciendas.

<sup>6</sup> To close his *Descubrimiento i conquista de Chile* [Discovery and Conquest of Chile] (1862), Amunátegui had petitioned God for a swift resolution for the "untamed" Arauco: "God, allow civilisation to spread its benefits as soon as possible over this beautiful region, *patria* of a barbarous but heroic *pueblo*, with the least amount of blood and adversity possible!" (526).

<sup>7</sup> Blest Gana had been offered a civilian position by the Chilean Ministry of War, was promoted to the rank of *teniente de ingenieros* [lieutenant of engineers], named a professor at the Chilean Military School, recognised as an *agrimensor* [surveyor] by the University of Chile, and had studied at the Escuela del Estado Mayor [General Staff College] (working also in topography) in France, the Chilean Escuela Militar [Military School], and the Instituto Nacional [National Institute] in Chile (Silva Castro 29–46).

## The Lens of Dis/possession and “Sediments of Time”

Under the theoretical framework of Athena Athanasiou and Judith Butler on dispossession, and in dialogue with the concept of “sediments of time” by Reinhart Koselleck, this study argues that overlapping chronologies in “play” in *Mariluán* revise the statements for advancement that, for some, are seemingly imparted at the novel’s launch in 1862.<sup>8</sup> Paraphrasing Amado J. Láscar, for example, the novel’s message rests on the failure of education, the failure of integration, the failure of exogenous love, and the triumph of barbarism in the Mapuche subject which suggests a need for the dissolution of the separatist cause for independent indigenous lands (141, 147). For Ariel Antillanca and César Loncón, the scaled portrayals of Mariluán (as the most civilised), Antonio Caleu (emblematic of the semicivilised), and Peuquilen (encompassing the most savage) indicate that the existence of an autonomous territory within the nation is not plausible when there is a lack of firm adaptation among its inhabitants to “Chilean society” (93). Ximena Troncoso Araos argues that the novel questions if a “civilising” project for the indigenous with uncertain results is worth the investment, or if the integration of the Mapuche constitutes a requirement for national consolidation (“*Mariluán*” 70). Regardless of Mariluán’s failures in the 1830s – which can clearly point to the unfeasibility of a project for restitution, assimilation, and fraternity in the Araucanía during its context of enunciation – Mariluán’s pseudo-revival of a Lautaro and the manner in which he makes himself “present” or “becoming,” and remains “present” after his beheading, can be re-signified (that is, with “Mariluán” understood as a signifier) as a means to challenge the terms imposed from structures that inhibit, subjugate, and seek to fully exterminate or nullify the “other” – insomuch in the 1860s, as in future temporalities involving repetitions of historical events and their related, yet distinguishable, singularities. In this, I am rejecting a sense of fatalism, and am straying from Láscar, who emphasises that “Mariluán’s failure is comprehensive” (Láscar 145), to rather agree with Gilberto Triviños, who concludes that “*Mariluán* is and is not a tale of pure failure” (Triviños 41). Peuquilen kills and decapitates Mariluán and parades his severed head through Los Ángeles on a pike. Mariluán’s brother, Cayo, avenges his death, plunging a dagger into Peuquilen’s heart. Mariluán’s love-interest, the *criolla* Rosa Tudela, laments her loss and remains a maddened living corpse until her foreseeable death. Mariluán’s comrade and former second lieutenant from the Chilean army, Juan Valero, provides a letter to a friend in the capital, one that unravels and preserves Mariluán’s “crónica” [chronicle] (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 117). In all cases, the residues of Mariluán’s body (in both a physical and abstract sense) and the sustained call for change after he perishes (what Triviños re-labels his “productive sacrifice”) continue to haunt, as meaningful spectres, present absences, prompting variable significations for “Mariluán” (41). These can signal the need to reconsider the imposed delineations of one’s “proper place,” and how to best navigate the relationality that dis/possession inherently involves. In this way, re-reading Blest Gana’s text through the lens of dis/possession and diverse interconnected “sediments of time” nearly 100 years after the author’s death, when the Mapuche continue to be persecuted and territory issues in Chile’s south remain unresolved, today’s status quo can be re-problematized through Mariluán’s example, in the still incomplete quest for ethical justice within a relational world marked by intersubjectivities and interdependencies.

## The Indomitable Energy of Mariluán

*Mariluán* begins with the narrator’s immediate articulation of “la indómita, energía de la raza immortalizada por los cantos de Ercilla” [the indomitable energy of the race immortalised by Ercilla’s verses] that shone in

<sup>8</sup> Utilising a geological analogy, Koselleck denotes “sediments of time” as the “results of experience,” where multiple layers of historical time can refer to each other and yet remain independent from one another (4). The overlapping chronologies arguably engaged in *Mariluán* include that tied to (Ercilla’s) Lautaro, the (historical) context of the 1830s when *Mariluán* primarily takes place, and the publication year of the novel.

the eyes of Fermín Mariluán (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 5). Significantly born in, or around, 1810, which was the year commemorating Chile's independence from Spain, he was cast as a member of a prominent indigenous family of the upper frontier, as his father, cacique Francisco Mariluán, figured among the most daunting adversaries of the Chileans along the divisory line between 1820 and 1825 (Ballard 3; Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 6; Crow 292).<sup>9</sup> Eventually entrusted to Chilean authorities, Fermín Mariluán submits to the norms in place in the novel, “en prenda de fidelidad [de un parlamento]” [as a pledge of fidelity (for a *parlamento*)] (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 6).<sup>10</sup> He follows the trajectory laid before him under the existing power structures, while he internalises that which has been lost (Butler and Athanasiou 1–2).<sup>11</sup> Following his education in the Liceo de Chile (founded and directed by the liberal José Joaquín de Mora), he received an appointment as a second lieutenant in the cavalry in the General Staff of the Army of the South in 1827. Several years later, he fought against the *pipiolo*s [liberals] in the battle of Lircay (1830), which notably squashed the federalist project under the conservative order solidified by Diego Portales (Ballard 9; Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 5–6; Herr 23, 35–39).

Despite such integration into state forces, the narrator is quick to mention that neither Mariluán's educational nor sociocultural experiences with “civilised” citizens in the capital firmly eradicated his instinctive love for the homeland of the Araucanian race (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 6). In this, there is “play” for Mariluán in his “becoming,” between the seemingly dichotomous poles (the inside-outside, above-below, included-excluded, etc.) that participate in the processes of relative deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation involving relationalities and interdependencies. To be sure, from the onset, his sociopolitical and military objectives during the Portalian era were clearly expressed. As an indigenous member of the armed forces and a bicultural subject in flux between two worlds, Mariluán finds himself inspired by Ercilla's rendition of the “Estado indómito” [unconquered State]. This contemplation and resulting postulate of an unknown future built from expectations and recorded past experiences point to the potential recurrence of structural possibilities of history (Koselleck 91, 98–99). Engaging the sedimentation related to re-written history/histories bound to specific spaces that duly have their own histories, his reflection on the (poeticised) past and his hypothesised future prompt a cross-section of chronologies comprising repetitions that would allow for, and serve as, preconditions for successions of singularities that could lead to “displacements, breaks, ruptures, eruptions, and revolutions” (170). Mariluán seeks to desert his military position, foster cohesion among the disseminated tribes of the Araucanía, spur their desire for independence, impart “civilised” war tactics among them, and lead them to a victory resulting in more favourable treaties with the Chilean government (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 7–8, 49–50). The terms of this polemical scheme with deep historical roots entailing recurrent issues of land penetration and occupation would have arguably borne particular significance at the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth

<sup>9</sup> Mariluán is described as 24 years old, while Rosa was 17 towards mid-1833 (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 8). This would mark Mariluán's birthdate around 1810, as stated.

<sup>10</sup> Derived from the Mapudungun concept of *coyag* [*hacer conferencia*; to hold a meeting] or *coyagtun* [*conferencia*; meeting] and from the European model, the Castilian word, *parlamento*, came to refer to assemblies and deliberations aimed at negotiations between the Spanish and Mapuche during the colonial era in Chile. The Castilian word was not adopted by the Mapuche, nor was the Mapudungun term incorporated into the Spanish lexicon, with the distinct cohorts maintaining a certain conceptualisation of their term's meaning for frontier relations. In the nineteenth century, the meetings between Chilean and Mapuche authorities continued to be called *parlamentos* in Spanish, yet these were no longer recognised as exemplary of, or equivalent to, a *coyag* by the Mapuche. As Gertrudis Payàs Puigarnau, José Manuel Zavala Cepeda, and Ramón Curivil Paillavil have indicated, the employment of the Castilian term in the latter era strategically feigned a desired collaboration and genuine will to establish agreements in the era of “pacification,” to cast an attractive image of the Araucanía amid efforts for colonisation and European investment in the republic. In short, “the liquidation of Mapuche sovereignty was disguised [through these ‘pseudoparlamentos’]” (361).

<sup>11</sup> In the 1825-(pseudo)*parlamento* historically held in Tapihue between the Mapuche cacique (who represented merely 14 of the hundreds of indigenous communities on Mapuche land) and the Chilean military commander of the frontier and delegate of Los Ángeles, Pedro Barnechea, Francisco Mariluán recognised, at first, the transition to the new Chilean government, only to temporarily rebel against the republic later on. For more information, see Bengoa 146; Crow 289–291; Herr 92–93; Pinto Rodríguez, *La formación* 73–74; Portales 83; Téllez et al. 175–186, 187–189.



century, when, as noted, there was sustained interest among many members of the ruling class in Santiago to incorporate the Araucanía into the nation-building project. Perhaps for this ideological tendency, some critics have read the intertextualisation of *La Araucana* found in *Mariluán* as a reference to the corresponding perils for national development that could result from an indigenous re-interpretation of the sixteenth-century text. As Láscaz reckons, while the Mapuche still held land, *La Araucana* could not function as a didactic tool for unification (144–145).

## Border Issues

Given the novel's gestures towards "reality"/"realities" in its inclusion of that which is extrinsic (historical markers, for example), it is important to mention that Chile's creation of the Province of Arauco in 1852 spurred theoretical reconceptualisations of the territory south of the Bío-Bío as land eligible for sale and acquisition with proper authorisation from local state authorities (Crow and Stebbins 19; Hachim Lara and Hurtado Ruiz 67).<sup>12</sup> The nation's crisis in the economic export model in 1857 caused many to vie for "untapped land" in the south for purchase, oftentimes through fraudulent means, while the civil war of 1859 (that followed the failed revolution of 1851) aligned many lineages of the Mapuche with general José María de la Cruz against then-president, Manuel Montt, who had become representative of Portalian authoritarianism (Mallon 289; Pinto Rodríguez, "Del antiindigenismo" 85–86, 106; *La formación* 131–132, 152; Portales 89).<sup>13</sup> The ill-fated rebellion of 1859 impelled a general Mapuche insurrection, with the exception of those along the coast in the south linked to Valdivia and those of Chol Chol and Purén. It was goaded by the perceived advancement of the frontier beyond the Bío-Bío, the growing presence of German colonists further south (that numbered some 3000 by 1860), and interest in federalist projects that could conceivably afford the Mapuche more favourable opportunities (Bengoa 165–170; Collier and Sater 95–96).<sup>14</sup> Such activity, in turn, urged Cornelio Saavedra, acting intendant of the Arauco province, to lead a series of incursions into Mapuche territory and hold several (*pseudo*)*parlamentos* to quell the revolt that decimated the southern cities. He sought to build new ones in a push for state or republican colonisation – this, as the discourse of indigenous "barbarism" gained traction among some intellectuals particularly attracted to positivism (Bengoa 170–171, 185; Collier and Sater 96; Pinto Rodríguez, "Del antiindigenismo" 87; Pinto Rodríguez, *La formación* 132, 144–145, 152–153).<sup>15</sup>

To further complicate matters, de la Cruz secretly informed José Joaquín Pérez, the newly elected Liberal Party president, of potential conspiracies between Argentine federalists and the Mapuche that could result in the usurpation of their territory by European countries. The revealed admonition did not seem outlandish, since French Orélie-Antoine de Tounens had arrived to Chile, declared himself "Rey de la Araucanía y la Patagonia" [King of the Araucanía and Patagonia] in 1860 and created "royal decrees" in support of a constitutional and hereditary monarchy, before being captured and imprisoned by Saavedra in

<sup>12</sup> Although some Chilean military chiefs, like Manuel Bulnes, had suggested that the frontier line along the Bío-Bío should be pushed further south, the venture was not formally advanced at the time Blest Gana's novel took place (Pinto Rodríguez 79–81). For further information on the history of border issues between the Mapuche and the *criollos*, see Herr 76, Pinto Rodríguez 87, 152, and Richards 61.

<sup>13</sup> Their allegiance stemmed, in part, from the persuasive efforts of liberal merchant, Bernardino Pradel.

<sup>14</sup> The most active Mapuche factions during the uprising of 1859 were those in close proximity to the Bío-Bío, as they were profoundly impacted by the penetration of Chileans into their territory (Pinto Rodríguez, *La formación* 148). In this regard, the protagonist's defence of the *pelucones* [conservatives] in the battle of Lircay that helps to establish Portales's control is interesting, as it appears to highlight the perceived contradictions in *Mariluán* in the text.

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of converse representations that recuperated the Mapuche as a national symbol in an idealisation of the past during the later period that overlapped the War of the Pacific against Bolivia and Peru (1879–1884), or for others that illustrated "loyal" or more "civilised" Mapuche, see Joanna Crow and Robert C. Stebbins's *The Mapuche in Modern Chile* (41–46).

1862, and eventually returned to France (Bengoa 186–189; Collier and Sater 96; Mallon 290).<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, in 1861, Saavedra presented a plan to Congress that clamoured for a shift in the frontier line further south from the Bío-Bío to the Malleco in preparation for expansion, while in 1862 a delegation of 13 Mapuche caciques (encouraged by de la Cruz and led by Pradel as a mediator) visited Pérez in Santiago to request that the borders arranged by previous *parlamentos* be maintained and their lands safeguarded (Bengoa 174, 185, 197; Mallon 290; Pinto Rodríguez, *La formación* 148).<sup>17</sup> The terms of Saavedra's design were heavily debated, as colonel Pedro Godoy created an alternative project that proposed to leave the frontier of the Central Valley intact, and erect cities along the coast in anticipation of the gradual colonisation of the interior. The petition of the Mapuche leaders, who had represented 3 territorial divisions and 56 lineages, was largely dismissed, and by December 1862, Saavedra was sent to rebuild the colonial fort at Angol. Occupation efforts continued to evolve until January 1883, when the Chilean army finally took control of Villarrica (Bengoa 176–178, 197; Mallon 291; Pinto Rodríguez, “Del antiindigenismo” 106).

The Mapuche struggle that transcends Blest Gana's narrative appears to reverberate through Mariluán's fictionalised strata of the previous decades. Antonio Caleu was abducted from his family at a young age and relegated to the military during one of the recurrent raids conducted by the frontier army. Damián Ramillo (Rosa's maternal uncle), along with Mariano Tudela (Rosa's brother), repeated the actions of Damián's father in their role as traffickers that deceived the Mapuche in duplicitous land sales in their pursuit of becoming capitalists. Mariluán hoped to improve onerous peace conditions reached between the Mapuche and the government during his final detention, to restore appropriated lands, and, importantly, to secure a guarantee of equitable rights through legal revisions of greater social implications (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 10, 13, 112). The latter highlights the responsibility of the subjugated to dispute both property and sovereignty exploitations that frequently dispossessed the personal and singular historical identities of the Mapuche in the name of “modernity” (Butler and Athanasiou ix). It indicates that dispossession cannot be merely satisfied by acts of re-appropriation, because, in addition to property matters, it bears ethical, political, and theoretical ramifications that must also be addressed (6–7).

## The Spectre of Lautaro

In pursuit of this amelioration, through his geo-/“historical” association, related sociopolitical roles, and shared ethnic heritage, Mariluán re-encompasses the myth of an unyielding Lautaro. That is, the spectre from another (fictionalised) strata involving an overlapping of (pseudo)experiences is conjured, as Lászar and others have suggested (145). The symmetry and sense of recurrence is reinforced by the mention of Lautaro's blood revived in Mariluán's veins, the intermittent inclusion of “españoles” [Spaniards] among the portrayed abusers, the use of the Spanish-invented term, “araucanos” [Araucanians], to refer to the indigenous, and Mariluán's birthdate that celebrates Chile's independence from Spain (Blest Gana,

<sup>16</sup> After returning to France following a subsequent failed venture to Chile in 1869, Orélie continued to spread his monarchical ideas and seek support for his “negocio cómico-serio” [comical-serious endeavour] in Europe (Blest Gana, *Epistolario* 523). In 1873, he had planned a third expedition to Chile with the assistance of Englishman Jacob Michaels. The British expedition, aimed at the solidification of his envisioned “New France,” could have cast doubt on Chile's territorial rights. From his diplomatic position as Chilean minister in England and France, Blest Gana tracked and sought to frustrate the efforts of “este imaginario monarca y verdadero truhán” [this imaginary monarch and true rogue], “[el] tunante Orélie” [the scoundrel Orélie], “el loco de Tounens” [the crazy de Tounens], “este farsante” [this fraud], as Blest Gana has denominated him (516, 519, 522, 527). Blest Gana's involvement is evidenced in a series of letters directed to Adolfo Ibáñez in 1873. Orélie's later attempt for a fourth expedition in 1876 failed to materialise.

<sup>17</sup> In a private meeting with Pérez, Pradel offered another plan for consideration. He proposed the establishment of a province in the Araucanía that was to be split into separate departments led by Mapuche caciques compensated by a salary from the government. A public security force was to fall under each cacique and would likewise be salaried. Under this administrative structure of “negotiated autonomy” that promoted a coalition instead of mere integration, land sales and commercial connections were to be regulated by specific laws to eliminate fraud and exploitation (Mallon 290). The plan was not accepted.

*Mariluán* 49, 72, 104, 112, 117). However, Mariluán is not a mere copy of his ancestor. On the contrary, as Troncoso Araos underscores, he is a “reinvented” and “reinterpreted” version of the prototype (“*Mariluán*” 60–61). With a concept of self that extends from his relationships with others (the “Chileans” and the indigenous), and his dependencies and/or recognition of the overarching powers that structure his unique context in the novel, Mariluán’s narrative is singularly built through the adaptation of Lautaro’s script, as “la crónica del generoso descendiente de los héroes immortalizados por la epopeya” [the chronicle of the generous descendent of the heroes immortalised by the epic] (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 117). It is projected as a precondition for subsequent singularities that work through the availed repetitions. In this sense, following Koselleck’s theorisations, “diachronicity [...] stagger[s] itself in overlapping sediments, which would then enable manifold associations that cut across the conventional historical epochs” (161). The historical-literary referent that is Lautaro/“Lautaro” is thus re-written in *Mariluán*, as it continues to change, rouse new questions, and invoke new expectations that are not exhausted by Mariluán/“Mariluán” (19). The spectre of this Lautaro/“Lautaro” is re-articulated within and through an associated but differentiated Mariluán with a distinct ideological base, to create new possibilities through the manipulated (historicised, poetised, or fictionalised) “factual.”

Divergent from Lautaro’s recorded position, Blest Gana’s protagonist sought to extirpate the savage and primitive characteristics from the indigenous through a “civilising,” seemingly unidirectional process of evolution, designed to adjust the Araucanía into a more cohesive part of the nation (Ballard 3; Troncoso Araos, “*Mariluán*” 62). Already somewhat outside of himself, dispossessed of his rights, land, and modes of belonging, yet meshing earlier–later, inside–outside, above–below relations, Mariluán essentially promotes the continuation of some degree of cultural dispossession through assimilation for other Mapuche, despite his simultaneous advocacy for improved property relations and a resistance to contrived boundaries that affect concepts of personhood, self-belonging, agency, and self-identity (Butler and Athanasiou ix–xi, 13). He explains that the defenders of his cause will be “los que van a pelear por sus hogares violados, por sus hijos arrebatados de los brazos de sus madres, para venir a ser esclavos de los que se llaman civilizados y que los regalan a un amigo como quien regala un animal” [those that will fight for their violated homes, for their children snatched from their mothers’ arms, to come to be slaves of those that call themselves civilised and that gift them to a friend, as someone gifts an animal]; nevertheless, he aspires to alter their character (“esperaba que modificando los hábitos domésticos de los indígenas les prepararía poco a poco a entrar en la vía de regeneración que ambicionaba abrirles”) [he was hoping that the modification of the domestic habits of the indigenous would prepare them, little by little, to enter into the path of regeneration that he aspired to open for them] (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 16, 55). As Cody C. Hanson puts it, “the scope of Mariluán’s progressive vision does not extend farther than converting the Indians into *criollos* that abandon the greater part of their culture to adopt the hegemonic one” (494). An acerbic comment uttered by Valero, coupled with dehumanised representations of the Mapuche, which involve the inside–outside, above–below, included–excluded constellations, questions this possibility. Debased as more primitive than birds, animalised as tigers, and degraded as “gente feroz y fea” [ferocious and ugly people], part of a “madriguera de salvajes” [den of savages], for Valero, the Mapuche cannot become civilised, despite Mariluán’s example and venture. He pessimistically concludes that, “mejor sería [...] que enseñases a hablar a los pájaros: estos indios no se civilizarán jamás” [it would be better to teach birds to speak: these Indians will never become civilised] (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 85, 87–88, 91). Such linguistic creations hulled from perceived sociopolitical pregivens feasibly contributed to the positing of the Mapuche as an enemy to be (temporarily) decimated (Koselleck 198).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Mariluán (despite being “civilised”) and Peuquilen (antithetically illustrated as the most “savage”) were also portrayed as lions and later foxes (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 47, 73, 115). The rhetoric of inferiority seen in *Mariluán* replicates that utilised in newspapers around the time of the novel’s publication. For *El Mercurio* in 1859, the occupation of the Araucanía was to constitute “the triumph of civilisation over barbarism, of humanity over *bestiality*, since their intelligence [that of the Mapuche] has remained on par with *animals of prey*” (my emphasis, qtd. in Pinto Rodríguez, *La formación* 154 and Nahuelpan Moreno and Antimil Caniupán 218). Again, their attributed animal-like characteristics that cast them as sub-human bolstered the need for the eradication of the threat to civilisation: “an association of barbarians as barbarous as the Araucanians, is nothing more than



It is not surprising that Mariluán's project of resistance that transposes that of his (fictionalised) ancestors and his pledge for regeneration fail against the colonality of power that had established the limitations for acceptability reinforced through land and property confiscations and redefined subjectivities.<sup>19</sup> Mariluán's mutilation that entailed the separation of his head from his trunk annuls his physical role as a leader (as the head) of the dispossessed and, interestingly, as a cultural dispossessor of those dispossessed. However, as Álvaro Kaempfer has rightfully indicated, Mariluán perishes not so much at the hands of his military adversaries, but by obstacles emerging from within the indigenous realm to include Mariluán's own "cultural fracture." He loses the practice of bareback horse riding and, with his subjectivity re-problematised, he is forced to travel on foot after fleeing his imprisonment in the military camp. This facilitates his betrayal and assassination by Peuquílén (who was to receive payment from Chilean authorities for realising the task) and appears to reaffirm Valero's estimation of Mariluán's designs (Kaempfer, "Alencar, Blest Gana y Galván" 101).

Mariluán's yearning for Rosa and his aspiration to marry her within the Catholic Church per her request likewise impede the realisation of his political and personal ambitions, as his goals become entangled and compete with each other (Ballard 4).<sup>20</sup> As Mariluán declares to Rosa, "vivo pues para usted y para combatir por la regeneración de mi raza" [thus, I live for you, and to fight for the regeneration of my race] (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 56). His inability to wed, consummate his relationship, and procreate with Rosa negates the possibility for a mixed genealogy derived from a recognised sacramental union that could have perhaps helped to exonerate him as an "unbelieving enemy" or "heathen" (Koselleck 201–202). Toying with the missionising discourse for civilisation (embraced by some around the time of the novel's publication), his assassination thwarts those possibilities. At the same time, it appears to point to the impracticality of a defiance of social norms that privilege marriage between those of the same ethnicity, to thereby obliterate the allegory of a more integrated and homogeneous nation built from mestizaje [mixed blood lines between the indigenous and those of Spanish descent] (Barraza 117). This coincides with some of the elite's opposition to the absorption of the habits and ideas of mestizos by the civilised Mapuche, as well as their push for foreign immigration – such postures had been voiced, for example, by politician Antonio Varas at the end of the 1840s (Nahuelpan Moreno and Antimil Caniupán 226–227). While the inter-class, inter-regional union of Martín Rivas and Leonor in Blest Gana's *Martín Rivas* (also published in *La Voz* in 1862) may question the political promise for unconventional coalitions by its end, the dénouement of the impeded romance in *Mariluán* more forcefully denies a tidy resolution to satisfy an epistemological void inherited from the colonial past.<sup>21</sup>

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a *horde of beasts* that must be urgently enchained or destroyed in the interest of humanity and for the good of civilisation" (my emphasis, qtd. in Nahuelpan Moreno and Antimil Caniupán 218).

<sup>19</sup> Those that formed part of the state as "citizens" were Spanish-speaking *criollos*; that is, literate, heterosexual, male, landholders, entwined with the emerging local bourgeoisie, with an ability to vote. All others that failed to meet that criteria were to respect the parameters as paradigms (Herr 98; Láscar 131).

<sup>20</sup> Rosa insists on a sacramental union distinguished from typical Mapuche marriages. Matrimony could lead to an envisioned future, which was understood to be likely impossible: "Prestábase la noche el prestigio de su oscuridad y de su misterio, de manera que fácilmente pudieron olvidar el objeto de su viaje y acordarse solo del puro sentimiento que los unía y con el cual esperaban vencer los obstáculos que la familia de Rosa pudiese oponer a su unión ante la iglesia, que exigía la joven como el primer paso del venturoso porvenir que se fingían" [The night lent them the prestige of its darkness and mystery, in such a way that they could easily forget the purpose of their travels and only recall the pure sentiment that united them and with which they hoped to overcome the obstacles that Rosa's family could oppose their Church union, something the young woman required as the first step for the happy future they imagined] (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 92–93).

<sup>21</sup> Following Doris Sommer, this interpretation counters that of Jaime Concha, who has considered the union between Martín and Leonor an intra-class relationship (12–27). For Sommer, the famed "foundational fiction" of *Martín Rivas* allegorised a national project of consolidation through the successful marriage between the main characters: a liberal bourgeoisie, who may be symbolically merged with later dissident miners from the north, and an aristocrat. That is, their marriage can be understood as representative of a liberal-conservative fusion, a flexible "liberal gesture" that flouted class and regional differences in a bid for a new democracy. Láscar supports this reading, concluding that Martín and Leonor's union is double: it is social and of blood, "between the old landholding class of the central zone and the new mining/industrial class of the north" (134). As this social realignment could modernise the state through more liberal politics, the strength of the middle-class hegemony at the end of the novel renders Leonor's moral sense as "superfluous" and ultimately appears to question the degree of equal participation of those involved in such progressive political coalitions (Sommer 210–220).

However, after Valero recovers the majority of Mariluán's remains and reunites them with his crown in Los Ángeles, where he is then buried, "Mariluán" arguably becomes poised for subsequent transcendental "resurrections" or "spectralisations," to adopt Derrida's concept of "ontopology;" that is, the assigning of ontological value to those in a specific location or *topos*, in this case, southern Chile (Butler and Athanasiou 18; Derrida 82). The protagonist had previously pointed to such renewals or re-significations that counter his depiction as a politically sterilised, impotent victim. As he prepared to hand himself over to governmental authorities, he confided in his friend that, "si me fusilan [...] los pocos días que he permanecido entre mis hermanos no habrán sido del todo estériles, puesto que ahora conocen mejor sus derechos y lo que deben pedir al Gobierno para libertarse de las expoliaciones de que son víctimas" [if they execute me [...] the few days that I have remained among my brothers will not have been completely sterile, since now they better understand their rights and what they should ask from the Government to free themselves from the spoliations of which they are victims] (Blest Gana, *Mariluán* 97). He later reiterated the same idea: "Aun cuando muera sin realizar mis planes [...] no creo que mi sangre será estéril: ella fecundará una idea grande y yo habré cumplido con mi deber" [Even when I die without realising my plans [...] I do not believe that my blood will be sterile: it will make a great idea fertile and I will have fulfilled my duty] (112). Despite his advocacy for moral refinement and race regeneration, Mariluán's avowed resistance as he remained "in place" allows subsequent significations to be erected through his spectre, to displace Mariluán's "bodily" presence, distinguished from the normative constraints with which they maintain a relational dialogue, to possess another (Butler and Athanasiou 18; Derrida 126). In this sense, the spectre that is "Mariluán" is not purely affixed to fictionalised/historical pasts in dialogue with its context of enunciation; rather, semantically and ontologically it may be considered transitional towards an (extrinsic) future and available for possession and re-articulation. This is not an anachronistic leap. Resisting "interment," as seen metaphorically in Mariluán, similar spectres that "haunt" Chile in the latter half of the nineteenth century related to the indigenous question endure through the repetition of the ghostly entities of an "other"/"others" that recurrently emerge through structures, social relations, and historical accounts. These are pursued by frightened hunters that seek to instil fear and extinguish them, and are ultimately re-appropriated, linking the past to the future for the spectres' awaited redemption (Derrida 126).

## Repetitions of Dispossession

Residual issues, hauntings of history involving traces of the past, and repetitions of subjugating events rooted in the era of the "encounter" and post-independence period have relentlessly plagued the Mapuche into our more contemporary age. Some 6 years after the publication of *Mariluán*, Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna and representatives of a more "pro-indigenous stance" (specifically, Manuel Antonio Matta, Ángel Custodio Gallo, José Victorino Lastarria, and Justo Arteaga Alemparte) participated in discussions presided by Miguel Luis Amunátegui held in the Chamber of Deputies regarding the government's petition under Pérez that Congress support the continued usurpation of indigenous lands – a topic of dis/possession that clearly permeated through *Mariluán* (Casanueva 309; Pinto Rodríguez, "Del antiindigenismo" 98–99). For Vicuña Mackenna, as for many others of the leading class, conquering the Araucanía by force was the sole path towards civilisation and national progress, since "the Indian (not that of Ercilla [...]) is nothing more than an indomitable brute, an enemy of civilisation," as Blest Gana's Valero had also suggested (7). Dismissing the heroic image of the Mapuche captured by Ercilla, Vicuña Mackenna corrugated contexts again in his second discourse on the "Pacification" of Arauco through his control of the source material and reliance on one's prior knowledge of it. He urged a renewed conquest, a repetition of the past in his "sediment:"

There are timid souls that are scared to pronounce the true word that is the broad solution to this question [of Arauco]; the word *conquest!* But I [...] have said it aloud and I will repeat it again like an echo of my conscience as a citizen, as an inspiration of my patriotism. [...] No more Frontiers. No more question of Arauco. No more barbarism! (9, 10)

As Vicuña Mackenna could not recall any “heroes” of Arauco infused with the rays of civilisation, he emphasised that peaceful measures to reduce the Araucanía were not fruitful in that they often spawned deceit (12).<sup>22</sup> The financing of further military occupation of the Araucanía did move forward. It was supported by 48 votes against 3 (those of Lastarria, Matta, and Gallo) (Bengoa 181; Casanueva 309).

Corresponding to Mapuche rebellions and the response of state repression, the subsequent years between 1868 and 1871, and 1881 and 1883 were marked by extreme violence against resisting Mapuche. Their rebellion of 1881 has been considered by some as “the last cultural act, dramatic without a doubt, that closed a heroic stage in their history and opened a new one,” for those reigniting the spectre of Lautaro and Caupolicán in a “ritual of historical continuity” (Bengoa 285, 297; Crow and Stebbins 32). Following the “pacification” campaign, Mapuche survivors were further dispossessed of the sociopolitical and territorial organisation within their communities, their more transhumant culture, and their resources. They were relocated to *reducciones* [small, leftover plots, characteristic of colonial practice], which constituted a meagre 5% of their previously held territory. Meanwhile, Chileans and European immigrants settled and farmed the majority of the seized land that had been either awarded or sold to them (Crow and Stebbins 46; Gómez Michel 199; Nahuelpan Moreno and Antimil Caniupán 221; Richards 62).

Nearly 140 years later, as we commemorate the life and work of *Mariluán*'s author, conflict between the Mapuche and the Chilean State has undeniably persisted. As Gerardo Gómez Michel rationalises, there is an inheritance in neoliberalism “that maintains racial, cultural, and linguistic prejudices, fermented with the ideas of ethnic homogenisation under the signs of miscegenation and the (forced) integration to the Chilean national culture but, nevertheless, maintaining a structural exclusion” (196). Despite somewhat of a pause under reforms issued by Chilean presidents Jorge Alessandri, Eduardo Frei Montalva, and Salvador Allende between 1962 and 1973, Mapuche holdings continued to diminish under re-devised hierarchies reinforced through power relations, with some Mapuche opting to migrate to urban centres to possibly face exclusion or processes of “regeneration,” like *Mariluán* (Gómez Michel 197, 200–201, 206; Nahuelpan Moreno and Antimil Caniupán 229; Richards 64). Echoing land-loss portrayed in Blest Gana's novel, the Mapuche were deprived of approximately 84% of the land they had reacquired between 1962 and 1973 through the agrarian counter reform instituted under Augusto Pinochet's tenure (Richards 64).<sup>23</sup> These holdings fell into the lap

<sup>22</sup> Despite Francisco Mariluán's religious education, bravery, and zeal in combat, Vicuña Mackenna later insisted that he too was “savage and perverse” like all others of his race. For when he found himself defeated after waging a 10-year war, he handed over his son, Fermín Mariluán, to “give us a traitor” (11). In a similar vein, Vicuña Mackenna recalled the spy from Caupolicán's tribe that would sell him out. He remembered Lautaro, who had a hand in the demise of his own “master,” Pedro de Valdivia. He pointed out that it was one of Lautaro's confidants, who led Francisco de Villagra to Mataquito where Lautaro would perish (12). Years earlier, in his response to Lastarria, Sarmiento made forceful claims to the same respect: “for us Colocolo, Lautaro and Caupolicán, despite the civilised and noble robes with which Ercilla cloaked them, are nothing more than disgusting Indians that we would have hung and would hang now, if they reappeared in an Araucanian war against Chile, that has nothing to do with those rogues” (Sarmiento 216). In other works written by Vicuña Mackenna (*Historia de Santiago* [History of Santiago], *Historia de Valparaíso* [History of Valparaíso], and *Guerra a muerte* [War to Death]), the indigenous are largely forgotten, as they are also in those by Amunátegui (*Descubrimiento i la conquista de Chile* [Discovery and Conquest of Chile], *Los precursores de la independencia de Chile* [The Precursors of the Independence of Chile], *La crónica de 1810* [The Chronicle of 1810], and *La dictadura de O'Higgins* [The Dictatorship of O'Higgins]). In his corpus, Amunátegui dispelled the permeated idea of heroic indigenous resistance (Pinto Rodríguez, *Formación* 172–174).

<sup>23</sup> As shown, *Mariluán*, in part, engages the Portalian context. Interestingly, Pinochet had been strategically photographed alongside a portrait of Diego Portales in *Declaración de Principios del Gobierno de Chile* [Declaration of Principles of the Government of Chile] (1974). In a continued layering of “sediments,” he had also assumed, as the seat of his government, the building that had been initially constructed under Allende in preparation for the Third United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Under Allende, it was subsequently tied to the Ministry of Education, as the Centro Cultural Metropolitano Gabriela Mistral [Gabriela Mistral Metropolitan Cultural Centre]. After the coup, Pinochet repurposed the building and renamed it the Edificio Diego Portales [Diego Portales Building], in commemoration of the nineteenth-century authoritarian minister who was emblematic of a strong government aimed at maintaining public order. In 2010, the bicentennial of Chile's independence, the site was re-inaugurated as the Centro Cultural Gabriela Mistral [Gabriela Mistral Cultural Centre], following a fire in 2006 that had led to its renovation.

of more modern-day Damián Ramillos and Mariano Tudelas – local farming elites or corporations lured by logging prospects.

It is true that Chile's return to democracy ushered in new intercultural policies and developments for indigenous rights, despite the preservation of the Constitution inherited from the dictatorial era that failed to recognise indigenous communities. These included: Law 19, 253 [the “Indigenous Law” of 1993], the Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena [National Indigenous Development Corporation, CONADI (1993)], the Indigenous Lands and Waters Fund, the Orígenes [Origins] programme (2001), and the Comisión de Verdad Histórica y Nuevo Trato [Historical Truth and New Deal Commission] (2001). In 2007, Chile passed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; in the following year, it adopted the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169; in 2013, the PACI (Patrullas de Acercamiento a Comunidades Indígenas [Indigenous Community Outreach Patrols]) programme piloted; and in 2018, the Ministry for Cultures, Arts, and Patrimony was created (Gómez Michel 201–202; Richards 68–71; Risør and Jacob 241–242, 248). However, these endeavours, like the results of so many (*pseudo*) *parlamentos* before them, have not been deemed adequate, as the neoliberal system continues to dictate land use, with little thought as to how adopted measures might affect indigenous communities and their connection to the land. It is enough to recall that in 1996 over 10% of mining concessions granted to national and foreign companies were located on Mapuche territory; ENDESA-Spain was awarded the Ralco hydroelectric project in the Alto Bío-Bío and flooded the land where Pehuenche communities were located; by 2010, national and foreign timber companies owned triple the amount of land as compared to the Mapuche in their ancestral territory, while in 2019, just two companies controlled what had become Chile's second largest industry (Arauco Timber and Empresa CMPC); and corporate fisheries, airport and highway construction, refuse dump projects, and pine and eucalyptus plantations remain points of contention for their denaturalisation of the pre-given spaces (Gómez Michel 202–204; Koselleck 37; Mansilla Quiñones and Melin Pehuen 44–45; Richards 68).

What is more, state response to protests or demands for the restitution of ancestral lands, that, to a certain level, mirror the aspirations of Mariluán, has been one of incarceration and repression. The anti-terrorist law originally installed by Pinochet in 1984 to control leftists has been repeatedly implemented to facilitate detentions in a further collapse of time “sediments” and reflections of the novelistic context. This act has enabled the bodies of the Mapuche to be “sacrificed without legal consequences,” as Gómez Michel decries (195–198, 202, 204, 207). Marginalised and criminalised in the periphery, hundreds of Mapuche activists have remained in prison, while others like Alex Lemun (2002), Matías Catrileo (2008), Jaime Mendoza Collio (2009), and Camilo Catrillanca (2018) have lost their lives to police forces accused of human rights abuses (Crow 287; Mansilla Quiñones and Melin Pehuen 46–48; Richards 74). They have become new, re-conjured poster faces or additional spectres re-possessing other ones for a common cause.<sup>24</sup>

As Chile neared the late-October 2020 plebiscite, hunger strikes (like that of Celestino Córdova), acts of arson, occupations, and forceful clashes between government authorities and the Mapuche continued to abound. The plebiscite was to determine the fate of the construction of a new Constitution that could alter the legal standing of the indigenous and meet some of their main concerns for cultural preservation, against dispossession: the need for a plurinational state, the recognition of their cosmovision, language, culture, territories, ancestral medicine, and reserved seats in Congress and regional boards (Bartlett; Rojas et al.). In the end, nearly 80% of voters approved of its drafting. An overwhelming majority also backed the formation of a constitutional convention, allowing architects to be selected by popular vote in April 2021. However, the process thus far has not been without its hurdles. At the time of this writing, there has been much debate and contention regarding requests for the number of special seats allocated for indigenous and afro-

<sup>24</sup> With the *wenufoye* Mapuche [the flag of the Chilean Mapuche] likewise embraced during demonstrations in the repeated call for resistance and decolonisation, Temuco protesters reviving spectres of Lautaro or Caupolicán toppled a bust of Valdivia in 2019. After decapitating a statue of Dagoberto Godoy, the “bloodied” head was markedly strung and dangled from the hand of a statue of Caupolicán, across whose base was scrawled, “NUEVA CONSTITUCIÓN O NADA” [NEW CONSTITUTION OR NOTHING] (Romero; Watson).

descendent representatives in the constitutional convention, and whether or not those seats would be included as part of the stipulated 155 that would comprise it. The refusal to meet the opposition's petition for at least 24 seats for aboriginal communities based on census figures, the creation of alternative proposals for their reduction, and the official motion to set aside 17 designated seats for the indigenous among the mixed commission has left some to question the degree of their involvement, the strength of their representation in the drafting, and whether this is yet another failed attempt for redemption – a repetition of frustrated efforts in the contemporary “sediment” (Delbene P.; Franco and Rojas).<sup>25</sup>

## Conclusion

Athanasίου has stated that “there is nothing merely economic about economics” (Butler and Athanasίου 39). Informed by a logic of appropriation for accumulation and dis/possession that endures through violence connected to subjectivities, neoliberalism is not simply an economic model. Rather, it typically involves the fabrication of disposable entities in a practice interwoven with threads of social, historical, and cultural issues, to include racism, that have been traditionally discarded from conceptualisations of “‘real’ politics” (40–41). Despite the perceived failure of Blest Gana's novel to unequivocally promote an impetus for unification through acculturation and miscegenation that could jeopardise an imagined homogenous, Europeanised national unity in the nineteenth century, “Mariluán,” now freshly conjured through the acknowledgement of various “sediments” in “play,” can invite the re-examination of the protagonist's expressed conditions for a reassessment of one's placement and role alongside more contemporary normative codes that help determine relationality.

From reconceptualised positionalities prompted from a re-possession of spectres, modified narratives and campaigns for change can be re-formulated and exercised to contest the logic of dispossession mapped onto one's body. These, in turn, can continue to encourage dialogue and debate for a just existence and progress for “civilisation” under more practical and politically inclusive structures that celebrate Chile's plurality. Such gestures for the erasure of apparent demarcations and semantics of enmity would defy the current constitutionally feigned homogenisation based on exclusions, in a motion to put forth and attain a stronger sense of “progress” through newly emerged singularities. Alongside the accelerations of our time that consolidate our world, these would fashion new historical spaces and relations with geographical pregivens, that would ultimately open themselves up to new repetitions, spectral re-possession, revisions, re-writings, and re-readings. Mariluán had explicitly stated his objectives in Blest Gana's novel: that the Chilean government would regulate the admission of others in Mapuche territory; that the authorities would lend their assistance in the protection of their land; that their brothers be returned to their homes; and that the complaints against those that had taken their land be heard (*Mariluán* 50). Considering the engaged “sediments” that *Mariluán* fosters, we will see if these repeated lacunas will be remedied in the singularity of our own era, mediated, perhaps, through constitutional reform, without adhering to a call for cultural dispossession, as Blest Gana's *Mariluán* had.

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<sup>25</sup> Seats will be provided for representatives of the Mapuche, Aimara, Atacameño, Colla, Quechua, Rapanuí, Yagán, Kawésqar, Diaguita, and Chango. Afro-descendants were denied a seat.



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