

BECOMING THE BOOK

No se trata de crear una estructura, un aparato, sino un espacio horizontal e igualitario, una suerte de plaza pública . . . donde fluya la palabra y la comunicación entre sujetos iguales.

It's not about creating a structure, an apparatus, but rather a horizontal and equal space, a kind of public plaza . . . where there is a flow of words and communication between equal subjects.

—RAÚL ZIBECHI, *LA MIRADA HORIZONTAL*

AN EARLY December stroll through the improvised stands that crowd Avenida República in central Santiago de Chile, with less than the equivalent of twenty dollars in my hand, yielded me a hefty stack of small books. Books with distinct textures and densities. With their colorful, dynamic designs, the covers of these inexpensive books share more aesthetically with the political graffiti that adorns the city than with the classic tomes that fill the stacks of the library at the national university. Less than a mile away from this popular Latin American book fair, the halls of the University of Chile seemed to mirror what these books describe. Plastered with wheatpasted posters and spray-painted slogans, the formality of the university as the authoritative site of institutional knowledge had been radically disrupted by the nationwide rebellion underway. The six-month occupation of the schools and universities of the country in 2011 transformed these formal institutions into temporary autonomous zones (Bey 1991) where students, teachers, and their families were building alternative spaces of education and community organizing. These zones are the most visible manifestation of this *sociedad en movimiento* (society in movement; Zibechi 2008b). Those occupying the universities connected with others outside the educational system who are similarly engaged in a reimagining of their work, education, healthcare, neighborhoods,

and cities after decades of economic and political violence brought on by the Pinochet dictatorship. Back at the fair, a kind of palimpsest of revolutionary imaginaries emerged, with independently produced books lining the very block that housed three torture and detention centers during the dictatorship. The books tell stories of articulated resistance: stories of alternative political projects in Chile along with their counterparts across the continent that are also creating permanent experiments of imagining and creating another sociability against and beyond capitalism and its especially invasive form, neoliberalism.

Among the objects on display was an early book written by an invited speaker at the fair: Raúl Zibechi. *Dispersar el poder* (*Dispersing Power*) is a study of the historical events in El Alto that shook Bolivia in the first five years of the twenty-first century.¹ Yet it is not only a book concerning Bolivia: a scan of the short table of contents reveals that the book is made of other relations that connect Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay. The book—like any book—is in movement as the reader flips through it: the cover and the pages turn, held together by the binding. But there are other kinds of movement that converge and interlock in everything that makes this object, politically and materially. This small book has had a large life since it was first published in 2006 by the Bolivian press Textos Rebeldes. It has been remade again and again, with each edition generating and being generated by different arrangements of relations and practices, as this chapter begins to describe. With its multiple editions and geographies, *Dispersar el poder* is an exercise in how to produce an object that is organic to the politics it describes. And as the single book that has been reedited in not only all four of my research sites but also my former home city of Oakland, it holds a unique and symbolic place in this project, and as such it appears and reappears in this and all of the following chapters.

This chapter closely examines the relations that make organic books through analysis of *Dispersar el poder* alongside two other books. *Pensar las autonomías: Alternativas de emancipación al capital y el estado* (*Thinking Autonomies: Alternatives for Emancipation from Capital and the State*) is a collection of original essays from across the continent, edited by Jóvenes en Resistencia Alternativa (“Youth in Alternative Resistance”) and represents more than a decade of their work with movements and militant intellectuals. *Caleidoscopio de rebeldías* (*Kaleidoscope of rebellions*), written by Buenos Aires-based popular education practitioner Claudia Korol, explores and moves through the myriad spaces of collective thought and popular education in radical movements in Argentina and beyond.



FIGURE 1.1. Feria del libro popular latinoamericano, Santiago, 2011.

RELATIONAL SPACES OF THE BOOK

In *Dispersar el poder*, Zibechi (2006, 87–88) identifies one of the most crippling tendencies of “old” movements (which also exist today): “Durante más de un siglo los movimientos antisistémicos han forjado sus estructuras organizativas de forma simétrica al capital, a los estados, los ejércitos, y otras instituciones hegemónicas en el sistema que combaten” (For over a century, antisystemic movements have developed their organizational structures in parallel to capital, the state, the military, and other institutions of the system they fight; Zibechi 2010, 45). He asserts that in doing so, these movements effectively “assume the state form,” even as they purport to struggle against “the state” and capital. In the first sentence of *Dispersar el poder*, Zibechi (2006, 25) establishes the historical-political perspective of the book, signaling a rupture with that “old” tendency: “El ciclo de luchas e insurrecciones que los pueblos que habitan Bolivia protagonizan desde el año 2000, es quizá la más profunda ‘revolución en la revolución’ desde el levantamiento zapatista de 1994” (The cycle of struggles and insurrections instigated by the Bolivian people in the year 2000 is the most profound “revolution within the revolution” since the Zapatista uprising of 1994; Zibechi 2010, 1). Why does Zibechi open by con-

necting these two distant movements, one in Mexico and the other in Bolivia? Zibeche is certainly not the first to make this connection. John Holloway, Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar, and Gustavo Esteva are among the many militant intellectuals who have analyzed the connection between Chiapas and El Alto, noting the resonances between the Zapatista experiment with indigenous self-governance and the urban Aymara process of communitarian organization and rebellion. In both contexts, autonomy is the common horizon for the popular struggles premised on a rejection of the form of the racist, colonial, capitalist state and the relations it reproduces.

Autonomy (which may or may not be defined in relation to the state) takes many forms as it is enacted, and in this sense is more a practice than an ideology. As Colectivo Situaciones (2006, 227) writes: “La autonomía, entonces, más que doctrina, está viva cuando aparece como tendencia práctica, inscripta en la pluralidad, como orientación a desarrollos concretos que parten de las propias potencias, y de la decisión fundamental de no dejarse arrastrar por las exigencias mediadoras-expropiadoras del estado y del capital” (More than being a doctrine, autonomy is alive when it appears as a practical course of action, inscribed in plurality, as the orientation of concrete developments that emerge from particular forces, and the fundamental decision to refuse to be dragged along by the mediating-expropriating demands of the state and of capital). I highlight this definition, written by an Argentine militant research collective that has accompanied the Zapatistas and the Bolivian movements, because it defines “autonomy” as a situated concept-practice that can only be understood in terms of *doing* (as in collective action), rather than as an idea or theory to be applied. This emphasis on doing underscores the contingent and processual nature of autonomy as a political and social aspiration that is never complete. In this sense, it is more a “horizon of desire” (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008b)—a becoming, and an “organizing of hope” (Dinerstein 2015)—rather than a fixed state.

A bit further into the introduction, Zibeche specifies that the significant connection between the Aymara process and Zapatismo is not only the shared desire for autonomy but specifically the construction of a different kind of power—which is not a static *poder-sobre* (power-over) but a dynamic *poder-hacer* (power-to).² This Zibeche calls “anti-state power,” naming an alternative collective sociability that rejects the hierarchical and authoritarian relational dynamics generated by capitalism and neoliberalism. “Antistate” is just one expression of this alternative power-to—and that is the one Zibeche identifies in El Alto at the turn of the twenty-first century. While neoliberalism also could be said to wield a kind of antistate power in its attacks on the state and its consolidation of nonstate power, it is important to note that neoliberal attacks on the state are ones that simply target its redistributive dimension,

and in that sense they do not seek the elimination of the state. As the darling economist of neoliberal doctrine, Friederich Hayek (1976), has written, the state is essential to liberal economic policy as an arbiter in transactions among private individuals. Indeed, he says that this juridico-legal role of the state could even be seen as a means of production, providing the legal framework for capital accumulation. In this sense, neoliberal discourse that presents itself as antistate is anything but that: it is a reform of state institutions to inhibit any redistribution that would counter a market fundamentalism that uses the state to engineer the market as social regulator and produce an order of unfettered capital accumulation. In the opening chapter of *Política Salvaje*, “Una deconstrucción punk del neoliberalismo” (A punk deconstruction of neoliberalism), Luis Tapia (2006, 22) notes the necessity of the state for neoliberal policy when he writes:

El neoliberalismo es un discurso y una práctica de disciplinamiento. En la medida en que se reduce o deja de existir el espacio político de ejercicio positivo de las libertades, y se nos obliga a actuar en el mercado, la tendencia a la subordinación a los poderes económicos es inevitable. En el mercado capitalista no se delibera porque en él no somos iguales. La política de ampliación del mercado como regulador social es una eliminación de sujetos políticos.

Neoliberalism is a disciplinary discourse and practice to the extent that the political space of a positive exercise of freedoms is reduced or ceases to exist. We are obligated to conduct ourselves in the market, and the tendency toward a subordination to the economically powerful is inevitable. In the capitalist market there is no deliberation because in it we are not equals. The politics of expanding the market as social regulator is an elimination of the political subject.

What Zibechi identifies as “anti-state” must also be understood as anticapitalist (in the sense of rejecting the market as the most appropriate social regulator) and anticolonial. The state in Bolivia (and elsewhere, of course) as a product of colonialism is an inherently racist, capitalist, and patriarchal structure and has been used to establish a social, economic, and political order that reflects and reproduces this.

If the “new” movements, these “societies in movement” (such as Zapatismo and the Bolivian cycles of popular mobilization), effectively reject the form of the state and capitalism, it is worth examining how the production of what we might call “knowledge”—that is, ideas, thought, theories, or narratives—related to these movements is part of this political, economic, and epistemic transformation. But the concept of knowledge is problematic in this context, precisely because it presumes that something is “known” and that the possessor of said “knowledge,” the author, has the authority to do so.

As Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Roger Chartier, and others have reminded us, the role of the author is a modern invention which emerges in the seventeenth century and is directly tied to forms of proprietorship that accompanied the growing commodification of literature (M. Rose 1993, 1). While anonymity became attached to the objective truth of scientific discourses, literary discourses “came to be accepted only when endowed with the author function” (Foucault 1998, 213), which is about ownership of the discourse but also legal responsibility for it, drawing the act of penning ideas into the juridical realm. Relatedly, the author function also acts as a basis for identifying motivation and intent and in this sense imposes an idea of unity which Foucault and others rightly argue is problematic. The modern author that emerges in the seventeenth century has been the subject of significant critique, including from postcolonial theorists who have noted the difficulty of delinking the idea of authorship from the dynamics of power and colonization. The organic book is a contemporary expression of a similar complication of the role of the author, through practices that productively question the capitalist, colonial, and patriarchal dynamics that undergird modern authorship. This has to do not only with the attempts to recognize collective and dispersed modes of knowledge production but also those efforts related to the relinking of intellectual and technical labor—what Walter Benjamin identifies in “The Author as Producer.”

In this address to the Institute for the Study of Fascism, Benjamin (1998, 95) calls for a reorientation of the political utility of intellectual production by connecting the actors and roles separated under capitalist production: “By experiencing his solidarity with the proletariat, the author as producer experiences, directly and simultaneously, his solidarity with certain other producers who, until then, meant little to him.” In what amounts to a call to action, Benjamin identifies the problematic division of labor in intellectual production and insists that the “revolutionary struggle” requires that the author ally with the proletariat by intervening in production through a combination of technique and solidarity. This is precisely what the organic book materializes as object and practice. It can be said, then, since the very role of author is remobilized as a kind of “producer” in the spirit of Benjamin’s proposal, with the organic book, authorial intent transgresses the division between manual and intellectual labor, as the authors (collective or individual) position themselves purposefully within the broader relations of production. The relational spaces and practices that constitute the organic book reconfigure this dynamic of authorial intent in the sense that the figure of the author is constituted by its relations to other actors in the process, thereby dispersing authorial intent from the single individual mind to the collective of actors who make up the organic book. Authorial intent becomes dispersed, similar to the way that an-

thropologist Edwin Hutchins (1995) has argued that cognition or thought has been mistakenly located in the brain and should be better conceptualized as deeply social: it is physically distributed through artifacts and people as they interact in a task that has been undertaken. Hutchins (1995) calls this “distributed cognition.” What we think of as knowledge is not to be found in deep structures in the mind but is rather situated in a complex network of relations composing the world of cultural production.

Much as with the notion of the author, there is a fixity assumed in the category of knowledge, which is not necessarily attached to parallel concepts like thought or idea, which have a relational, provisional quality. And so, in this chapter, I use the term “knowledge” but recognize that it is an inadequate name for the diverse forms of thought, analysis, theorization, and narration that the various Spanish terms *pensamiento*, *conocimiento*, and *saberes* convey. While *pensamiento* refers to “thought,” *conocimiento* and *saberes* translate as “knowledge,” with the latter often equated with *sabiduría* or “wisdom.” All of these terms are used in the books I examine here, though there is little consistency in how or where they appear as descriptors of such practices. But what is most significant for my analysis in this chapter is not the name we give to the ideas, stories, and theories that are collectively produced but rather the practices through which they become visible and shareable in the tools and objects of their expression—in this case, the heterogeneous materials of the organic book.

This chapter explores these central questions: What are the relations and practices that become the organic book? How does a focus on collectivity, dialogism, and horizontality reorient practices of thinking and communicating as relational and active rather than authoritative and fixed? I interrogate how the practices that make organic books similarly—or in parallel—disrupt or break with the colonial and capitalist relations that are endemic to state, academic, and otherwise insitutional knowledge production. As Ramón Grosfoguel (2013), following Enrique Dussel, has argued, colonial expansion generated particular forms of epistemic exclusion and destruction. These, in turn, were enforced through the mechanisms and relations of the lettered city. The practices of the organic book represent the struggle against the power of the lettered city, through the construction of other modes of knowledge. I explore the potential ruptures made visible by the organic book as moments of what John Holloway (2010a) calls “negation and other-doing.” An Irish transplant to Mexico who has accompanied the Zapatista movement over the past twenty years, Holloway is one of the writers whose work circulates through organic books. “Negation and other-doing,” he argues, involves a simultaneous rejection of one way of being or doing and the creation of another, and as such these processes are productive (Holloway 2010a).

In what follows, I examine the collective practices at play in three books, to see the movement and fluidity of *knowledge-as-doing* that become organic books. Much of the trouble with the concept of knowledge stems from its ties to the binary of thought and action. Many attempts have been made to overcome this binary opposition between thought and action, and they have their own extensive genealogy: Marx's philosophy of praxis, Foucault's notion of discourse, Bourdieu's habitus, Haraway's situated knowledges, among others. I do not recite the entire genealogy here, but I think it is important to recognize that there is a long and complex one and to illustrate that this binary of thought-action is a perennial problem in the social sciences and humanities.

Rather than invoke any one of these particular solutions to the problem of the thought-action binary, I follow recent scholarship in science and technology studies (STS) that starts from an understanding that "like other human activities, knowing is embedded in practices" (Law 2016, 19). Instead of seeking an abstract theoretical solution to the thought-action binary, I follow work in STS that focuses on knowledge practices. This is a shift in which "knowledge is not understood as a matter of reference, but as one of manipulation" (Mol 2002, 5). My concept of knowledge-as-doing focuses on the ethnographic specificity of knowledge practices distributed and enacted in the organic book. In the field of science and technology studies of medicine, "the knowledge incorporated in practices does not reside in subjects alone, but also in buildings, knives, dyes, desks . . . and in technologies like patient records" (Mol 2002, 48). Similarly, ethnographic focus on the knowledge incorporated in the practices related to the organic book uses knowledge-as-doing as a way of attending to knowledge embedded in practices and distributed through heterogeneous materials.

The modes of knowledge-as-doing that I explore in this chapter might be called *autonomous knowledge practices*. The French activist group Bureau d'études/Université Tangente describes the process of autonomous knowledge in the following terms: "Autonomous knowledge can be constituted through the analysis of the way that complex machines function. . . . The deconstruction of complex machines and their 'decolonized' reconstruction can be carried out on all kinds of objects. . . . In the same way as you deconstruct a program, you can also deconstruct the internal functioning of a government or an administration, a firm or an industrial or financial group. On the basis of such a deconstruction, involving a precise identification of the operating principles of a given administration, or the links or networks between administrations, lobbies, businesses etc., you can define modes of action or intervention" (quoted in Casas-Cortés and Cobarrubias 2007, 119). The process of deconstruction can be seen in the production of organic books precisely through the tense, if not paradoxical, relation of many of the participants to the institutional spaces

and practices their projects seek to “negate,” in Holloway’s (2010a) terms, as they create other modes of thinking, writing, and publishing but also more broadly of relating. The writers and editors whose books this chapter examines all have varying degrees of proximity to the spaces and structures of institutional knowledge production that their books seek to challenge. This proximity is what facilitates the explicit or implicit deconstruction of the dominant machines as part of the process of creating autonomous machines.

If we conceptualize the book not as an object that exists as a mere conduit of ideas but as a thing that makes and remakes relations and has material effects, then the book comes into view as “a little machine” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). A “machinic assemblage,” the book brings together the various elements that make it (materials, objects, actors, dynamics, ideas) into a fluid, ongoing process that is neither fixed nor predictable. It exists and functions in relation to other machines: the state machine, the capitalist machine, and the “communitarian social machine” (Zibechi 2006)—which disperses power and generates antistate relations. Zibechi (2006) defines antistate relations by describing their effects. In this sense, a key question his book poses is how movement (as an action) and movements (as collective actors) dismantle institutions—both state structures and modes of populist politics that reproduce dynamics of domination.

Interdisciplinary scholarship in book studies emphasizes the importance of examining the nexus of relations that compose a book or, as Johns (1998) puts it, how the book is a process that connects “a wide range of worlds of work” and cannot be thought of as simply a medium for the transmission of some discretely produced meaning. I am interested in the questions that are raised by an exploration of books as practices and relations rather than as static artifacts. When the book as an object is produced through the very political and material practices that its content describes, emergent social, economic, and political relations not only make the object but are also produced in the process as enactments of those very relations. In this chapter, I examine a defining characteristic of the organic book—its connection to autonomous knowledge practices which are horizontal, dialogical, and, above all, collective. Focusing on the processes through which ideas become books, I explore how the content of the text is produced and the project of making a book emerges.

This chapter follows the stories of how three organic books came into being: *Pensar las autonomías*, *Dispersar el poder*, and *Caleidoscopio de rebeldías*. All three books explore the question of how to engage ideas and practices that break with the colonial and capitalist dynamics of the state and its extension into everyday life. They each propose distinct concept-practices that are significant dimensions of the organic book: dispersion of power, autonomous praxis, and popular pedagogy. The processes and products of these three or-

ganic books are in many ways worlds apart, yet they reflect a sense of plurality and connectedness that is at the foundation of the well-known Zapatista ethos “a world where many worlds fit.”

THINKING, WRITING, PRINTING AUTONOMIES

“El debate sobre la autonomía ha abierto un campo fértil de discusión sobre las alternativas sociales, políticas y productivas al capitalismo desde innumerables experiencias locales surgidas desde abajo” (the debate about autonomy has opened a fecund field of discussion about social, political, and productive alternatives to capitalism from countless local experiences that emerge from below; JRA 2011, 9). The introduction to *Pensar las autonomías* begins with this description of the space from which this book grows: “un campo fértil” (a fecund field) populated with “innumerables experiencias locales” (countless local experiences; JRA 2011, 9). This description is mirrored visually on the book’s cover. The bold, stark black, white, and red design is softened by the hundreds of tiny words of varying sizes that are clustered together to form the delicately outlined letters: a-u-t-o-n-o-m-i-a-s. There are dozens of different words, they appear repeatedly, and some jump out to catch my eye more than others: *subversión* (subversion), *emancipación* (emancipation), *ética* (ethic), *poder* (power), *lucha* (struggle), *consejo* (council), *libertad* (freedom), *resistencia* (resistance), *clase* (class), *trabajo* (work). The layering of letters and words conveys a sense of interconnectedness and diversity—a disordered web of concepts and practices. Directly below the title, the names of the fourteen authors appear above the logos of the three groups responsible for the publication: Sísifo Ediciones, the printer; Bajo Tierra Ediciones, the publisher; and JRA, the editor.

Bajo Tierra began as the publishing project of JRA, a youth collective based in Mexico City, best described by their slogan: “¡autonomía! ¡autogestión! ¡horizontalidad!” (autonomy! autogestion! horizontality!).³ When I first met them in 2009, the twenty or so members of the collective ranged from fifteen to forty-five years old, and though they joked that after nearly a decade of organizing, “algunos ya no somos tan jóvenes” (some aren’t so young anymore; interview, Mexico City, 2010)⁴ the name of the group suggests an understanding of “youth” as a relational category grounded in both a rebellious sensibility and a socially or economically marginalized position. And while the founders of the collective, who began organizing as university students, are now in their thirties, one of the organizing principles that guided the collective was the regular, open invitation to new members via social media, their word-of-mouth networks, and public events. JRA’s work as a collective became most widely known in the mid-2000s through the massive music festivals they organized, as fundraisers for various autonomous projects, including the Zapatista au-

tonomous communities. These annual events were the result of long-standing relationships between JRA and politically engaged musicians, including Panteón Rococó, La Maldita Vecindad, Los de Abajo, Salario Mínimo, and Bocaflora. The concerts connected them to a wide audience of youth across Mexico City, young people drawn by the musical acts performing as well as the political impulse behind the festivals—a generation of young people interpellated by the Zapatista struggle and attracted by the opportunity to show solidarity from their urban location. The concerts also connected JRA with a web of alternative cultural spaces across the city that became points of sale for tickets for the events: skate shops, punk shops, bookstores, cafés, social centers, infoshops, and so on. This same network of independent businesses and organizations would later serve as the blueprint for the local distribution strategy of Bajo Tierra's publications.

Another fundamental axis of JRA's public work as a collective is rooted in its ties to the public universities across Mexico City, where it has organized a series of initiatives since the mid-2000s, including Zapatista solidarity campaigns, conferences, fundraising efforts for mobilizations and protests (against the COP-16 UN Climate Change Conference, for example), anticapitalist and autonomous youth camps, and publication presentations. The connection between Bajo Tierra Ediciones and the universities is multifaceted: these institutions are obvious sites for promoting and distributing books, as students are a prime audience for the political texts being produced by Bajo Tierra. But the contacts that JRA developed in the universities also directly influenced the shape of its catalog of publications, as many of the same intellectuals and scholars who supported its initiatives on campus turned to Bajo Tierra to edit and publish their works. Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar and John Holloway of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla both published books with Bajo Tierra, and others have participated in Bajo Tierra's book presentations as panelists.

Pensar las autonomías represents a kind of culmination of these more isolated expressions of the political-intellectual relationships JRA has built over the past decade. Both internally as well as in its public initiatives, JRA has built a working bibliography of texts and materials that it draws on in their ongoing theorization and practice of autonomy. And JRA has sought to connect its work as a youth collective with the writers whose works have the most resonance with its praxis. The project of *Pensar las autonomías* is the materialization of the conversations and exchanges that those relations have generated and reflects an autonomous knowledge practice. Over the course of about two years, JRA extended invitations to more than a dozen writers to contribute essays to what would become its first original anthology. All of Bajo Tierra's earlier books were either single-authored books or texts that had

been previously published by other presses. With *Pensar las autonomías* JRA made public a less visible facet of its work—the internal collective processes of research, theorization, and writing. While no doubt connected to work that happens within the state institutions of the public universities, this is a book that connects intellectual “worlds of work” (Johns 1998) that find neither their point of origin nor conclusion in the academy. The volume articulates processes of political organization, collective theorization, militant research, and nonprofit-oriented or *autogestivo* production in a concrete object.

Autonomy is a concept that defies clear and simple definition—hence the impulse to dedicate an entire volume to “thinking” about it. It is precisely this quality that makes it such an apt descriptor for the “countless local experiences” that are at once dispersed and connected by their shared repudiation of the social and economic ordering of capitalism. In this sense, autonomy is understood as an oppositional practice that breaks with not only the logic of “the state” (as autonomy is often conceived)—and especially the “hegemonic dogma” of “liberal democracy” (JRA 2011, 9)—but also of capitalism, a more far-reaching system that cuts across territories and borders. In the introduction to *Pensar las autonomías*, JRA (JRA 2011, 9) describes autonomy as “an experiment of social reorganization,” drawing from the ways the term is used by different collective actors: “quienes luchan, se organizan, resisten, crean y construyen estos experimentos de reorganización social desde abajo, aluden a la palabra autonomía para nombrar estas prácticas” (those who struggle, organize themselves, resist, create and construct those experiments of social reorganization from below, allude to the word autonomy to name those practices). The emphasis is on the *practices* of autonomy, rather than an *ideology*, and the essays compiled in this volume theorize this concept through the on-the-ground practices of *los de abajo* (those from below). As Claudio Albertani (2011, 54) writes in his contribution, “La autonomía no es una secta, una ideología o una agrupación política, sino un camino de lucha” (Autonomy is not a sect, an ideology or a political group, but a path of struggle). Albertani (2011, 54) goes on to identify what he considers the three major veins that historically anchor the “principio de autonomía” (principle of autonomy): (1) the anarchist tradition; (2) libertarian marxism; and (3) indigenous civilizations around the world. In Mexico the process that most obviously makes visible the intersection of these three, but which Albertani scarcely mentions, is Zapatismo.

The Zapatista experience is the thread that articulates the wide range of writers and perspectives that appear in *Pensar las autonomías*. Only half of the texts name Zapatismo, and the editors make no mention of it. Nevertheless, in Latin America and especially in Mexico, Zapatismo’s conceptual and practical contributions have been so widespread and so profound that today they are a

referent that can go unnamed and still be present. Zapatismo merges a concern with autonomy as a principle of governance with autonomy as a relational political position in all aspects of life, including collective knowledge practices. This expression of autonomy becomes articulated most overtly through a language of alterity—*la otra educación* (the other education), *los otros medios* (the other media), *la otra economía* (the other economy), *la otra geografía* (the other geography), and so on⁵—that, rather than attempt to clearly define the character or scope, simply marks a non-institutional (autonomous) position, leaving open the possibilities for what that can include. The otherness that is used to describe Zapatista autonomy is effective in the way it simultaneously defines and blurs—this multiple movement signals a break from something, a rupture or flight whose end is unknown.

The fifth essay in the book was written not in Mexico City but in the capital of the nearby state of Oaxaca, a prominent yet peripheral point on the political-intellectual map of Mexico. Gustavo Esteva, described in his biographical note as “an activist and deprofessionalized public intellectual,” is one of the founders of the Universidad de la Tierra–Oaxaca, an autonomous learning center.⁶ In the 1990s he served as an “advisor” to the Zapatistas in their negotiations with the federal government and was an active participant in the popular rebellion of 2006, which he and others have called the Oaxaca Commune (Esteva 2010). He opens his essay “Otra autonomía, otra democracia” (Other autonomy, other democracy) with a scene from the 1996 meeting of more than one hundred advisors invited to the Selva Lacandona to meet with Subcomandante Marcos and other Zapatista leaders. The debate about how to define autonomy was an obsession in the early years of the Zapatista rebellion because part of what was at stake at that moment was the consolidation of a legal framework for recognizing indigenous autonomy. Though at the time it felt like a betrayal, the 2001 gutting of the law meant to institutionalize the San Andrés Accords was in fact the catalyst for the profound reimagining of autonomy that ensued following the Zapatistas’ retreat from any engagement with the government. Rather than continuing to look to the legal framework of the constitution and Congress for legally afforded autonomy, the Zapatistas turned their gaze inward—and radically outward⁷—and focused on building autonomy in practice. Esteva (2011, 122) writes: “De esa autonomía tratan estas notas, de la autonomía como proyecto político que da continuidad histórica a la antigua resistencia de los pueblos indios y la transforma en un empeño de liberación compartido con muchos otros grupos sociales” (These notes are about that autonomy—the autonomy that as a political project creates historic continuity with the earlier resistance of indigenous people and transforms it into a collective determination for liberation shared with many other social groups).

The writers whose texts are compiled in *Pensar las autonomías* represent a range of relationships to the institutional site of knowledge production of the university and academia. The book itself is partially a product of academia, in the sense that JRA's work in the universities helped them build their networks. Similarly, the writers who contributed texts are (to varying degrees) at least partially connected to academic institutions. Many of them earn their living as professors and researchers for major universities, others work in "alternative" education projects that rely on funding from various NGOs or foundations. They were all trained in formal universities, but their trajectories reflect moments of rupture with the strictures of those institutions and with the conventions of knowledge production that are endemic to state and academic institutions. As researchers, professors, and theorists they deterritorialize their practices as they engage in intellectual work that seeks to build horizontal and dialogical relations. Many are academics who seek to primarily form relations and networks outside the academy and in doing so aspire to make research a militant practice.⁸ The texts they produce, in many cases, appear to be no different from any other academic publication: saddled with citation after citation, using often dense and inaccessible language and prose. But while the texts do not necessarily radically transform the form of academic writing, the relations that bring their ideas to the page are not confined to the space or dynamics of academic institutions—namely, the hierarchical construction of a class of authorities, experts, and theorists. These relations certainly include the movements—whose experiences are recounted in the essays—with whom the writers engage as interlocutors and participants, but they also include the alternative projects the writers choose to disseminate their work, like Bajo Tierra Ediciones. These writers all certainly have access to the commercial and academic publication circuits (which would likely produce bigger runs and broader distribution), but they often make the political decision to publish their works through other means, understanding this to be an important part of their process as militant or activist writers and intellectuals.

A unique book in the Bajo Tierra catalog, *Pensar las autonomías* is the first original publication that JRA composed as a collective. Unlike the single-authored books that it was the first to publish, for which Bajo Tierra/JRA was responsible for editing, design, printing, and distribution, with *Pensar las autonomías* JRA took on a more authorial role as the editor of the work. The collective was the architect of the book, deciding which writers to invite to participate, selecting the topics for their original contributions, organizing the essays, and composing a more extensive introduction than the brief prefaces it prepares for every one of its publications. In this book, the process of thinking autonomy through the analysis of concrete experiences of social movements becomes part of a more extensive practice of autonomy through alternative

approaches to writing and publishing. As the collective makes evident in the introduction, *Pensar las autonomías* is conceived of as a space for collective “reflexión sobre la emancipación” (reflection about emancipation; JRA 2011, 12), and “la intención de este debate no es crear un nuevo paradigma, dogma o plan sobre el cambio social, sino abrir el pensamiento a numerosas posibilidades y potencias del camino de las autonomías, pero también de sus peligros, riesgos, contradicciones, incertidumbres y dudas” (the intention of this debate is not to create a new paradigm, dogma or plan of social change, but to open our thinking to numerous possibilities and forces of the path of autonomies, but also its dangers, risks, contradictions, uncertainties and doubts; JRA 2011, 12). The debate, as they call it, does not seek to define but rather to “open thinking” relationally in an ongoing process of “contestar y reformular” (questioning and reformulating; 12). *Pensar las autonomías* is an organic experiment of collective theorization about autonomy, one that is open-ended, processual, and incomplete.

DISPERSING POWER/DISPERSING AUTHORITY

In the prologue to the most recent edition of *Dispersar el poder*, Zibechi (2011b, 8) names the intervention he aspires to carry out with his writing: “la necesaria descolonización del pensamiento crítico, para liberarlo de su carga eurocéntrica, masculina, blanca, cientificista y con pretensiones de objetividad” (the necessary decolonization of critical thought, to free it of its Eurocentric, masculine, white, scientific, and objectivist charge). This statement resonates quite directly with what he describes in the first edition as an “epistemological earthquake” (Zibechi 2010, 83) produced by the emergence of new political subjects previously obscured by the subject-object relations of the colonial state. The dominance of statist relations and discourse is interrupted first by the movements the book describes and again in the composition of the book itself. Referring to the process of conceptualizing the text, Zibechi (2011b) notes that his challenge in El Alto—the site of Bolivia’s most tumultuous and widespread popular mobilizations—was to “despejarme de lo que yo sabía” (estrangle myself from what I knew). Noting the Eurocentrism that permeates political theory in Latin America, he makes a distinction between theory that emerges from philosophical concepts, “from books,” and theory that emerges from “reality,” from “the people that are doing things.” Zibechi certainly develops his analysis in part through his readings of people far removed from the realities he describes—he cites Pierre Clastres, Gilles Deleuze, and Toni Negri, and many other influences go unnamed. But he doesn’t give the theories he borrows “from books” more weight than the ideas he finds “on the ground,” and in this sense he attempts to bring a wide range of thinkers into a more symmetrical conversation.⁹ His suggestion is that theory that only exists in

books is static and abstract; theory that comes from collective action is dynamic and grounded. I take Zibechi's distinction a step further to distinguish books from organic books, which are those objects that are made of the relations and antagonisms of the autonomous politics they describe.

Zibechi's analysis of the spatial construction of El Alto runs throughout *Dispersar el poder*, with one chapter exclusively dedicated to this theme: "La ciudad autoconstruida: dispersión y diferencia" (The self-constructed city: Dispersion and difference). El Alto, interestingly, does not adhere to the classic checkerboard grid-form of colonial cities in Latin America. The rectilinear pattern, which Ángel Rama (1984, 6) notes is a mechanism of colonial hierarchy and social order, is notably absent here, reflecting a city built by its inhabitants, rather than by some model imposed by an external force. In an inversion of the usual transfer of symbolic power into material forms, in El Alto the materiality of the urban landscape reflects the unique communitarian dynamics of a city that was born from a crisis in neocolonial rule—the rapid, mass migration of indigenous peasants caused by the violent imposition of neoliberal policy resulted in the sudden sprouting of an improvised city built and ordered by the very people who were populating it. El Alto, as it exists today, is the product of a relatively recent wave of mass migration. However, it is worth noting the historical significance of this city, as the site from which anti-colonial rebel leaders Túpaj Katari and Bartolina Sisa maintained their siege of the city of La Paz for more than six months in 1781. Zibechi maintains that El Alto is a spatial reflection of the dispersion of power emblematic of the waves of mobilization across Latin America at the turn of the century. In his assessment, El Alto is unique because it is a dense and territorially bounded site of anti-neoliberal political practice. At once chaotic and ordered, leaderless and organized, spontaneous and routine: El Alto manifests the qualities that the networked form of recent movements—and, as I argue, their communication and knowledge practices—takes.

Dispersar el poder, as a material object, intriguingly becomes a space where other relations (nonstate, antistate, autonomous) are made and reproduced in the telling of the story and the composing of the book-object. The narrative structure, and the composition of the text itself, echoes the relations described in it: both the communitarian relations that bind the movements and the antagonistic relations that mobilize them. But these relations, significantly, are not simply the object of Zibechi's analysis—they are also the relations that are made in, around, and by his book. In the chapter on the urban spatiality of El Alto, for example, Zibechi's close reading of a report prepared by Rafael Undaburu for the United States Agency for International Development, "Evaluación de la ciudad de El Alto" (Evaluation of the city of El Alto; 2004), serves several functions in terms of visibilizing the antagonisms. First,

it makes evident the contrast between the state's conception of power and organization and that of the communities that populate El Alto. He explains:

Todo el estudio encargado por USAID está teñido por un fuerte ataque a la dispersión porque dificulta el control social, impide la creación de un panóptico urbano—político pero también social, cultural, y organizacional—que sea capaz de englobar amplias poblaciones bajo la misma mirada-mando. Dicho de otro modo, la fragmentación-dispersión implica relaciones cara a cara en las villas, que se articulan entre sí y con otras urbanizaciones en base a modos sumergidos en la cotidianeidad. (Zibechi 2006, 75–76)

The entire study commissioned by USAID is tainted by the attack on dispersion because dispersion makes it hard to exert social control. It impedes the creation of an urban-political panoptic—political but also social, cultural, and organizational—that could encapsulate broad populations under the same umbrella of control. In other words, fragmentation or dispersion implies face-to-face relations in the villas, articulated among the people themselves and with other urbanizations based on forms developed in everyday life. (Zibechi 2010, 36)

As he states, what the USAID study identifies as the “fragmented” form of neighborhood organization in El Alto—and defines as an obstacle to development—is in fact a spatial dynamic that actively resists absorption or management by the state and that generates a different kind of community relations (Zibechi 2006, 74).

Second, Zibechi's reading of the USAID report underscores one of the central critiques he presents throughout the book regarding the methodologies and politics of Eurocentric knowledge production, which maintain and reproduce the subject-object dichotomy that endows the subject the power to speak, think, theorize, and know. Referring to the methodology of the USAID study, he writes, “los ‘objetos,’ o sea la población alteña, nunca tienen la palabra; mientras, los ‘sujetos’ de la investigación sólo consultaron una serie limitada de ‘informantes clave’ que nunca son mencionados por sus nombres ni citados directamente” (Zibechi 2006, 7; the “objects”—the population of El Alto—never get to speak, while the “subjects” of the investigation are limited to a group of “key informants” who are never mentioned by name or cited directly [Zibechi 2010, 33]). Certainly, a USAID report is a very specific kind of text, nothing like the kind of analysis Zibechi strives to produce. But his inclusion of this kind of state knowledge production demonstrates the complete disjuncture not only between the “subjects” and “objects” connected in the study but also between the very concepts of power and organization that each “side” of this relation employs.

The communitarian relations, what Zibechi describes as the “máquina

social comunitaria” (communitarian social machine), appear in his descriptions of El Alto but also in the form of the narrative he produces. In the prologue, Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar and the editor, Luis Gómez, write: “No intenta establecer definiciones, ni quiere estipular principios generales. Más bien, pregunta y duda mirando hacia lo nuevo, hacia la creatividad humana que desborda los conceptos previos vaciándolos y exhibiéndolos como límites del pensamiento. En ese movimiento, convierte al conocimiento en potencia de la propia lucha social” (He doesn’t attempt to establish definitions, nor does he want to stipulate general principles. Rather, he asks questions and doubts looking toward the new, toward that human creativity that exceeds the prior concepts, emptying them and exposing them as limits of our thought. In that movement, he converts the knowledge into the strength of the social struggle itself; Gómez and Gutiérrez Aguilar 2006, 17). What they allude to here is the way that the arguments presented are not structured through the pairing of “real” events with theoretical concepts extracted from some other external source, meant to essentially confirm what we think we already know. Zibechi repeatedly refers to the protagonists of the stories told in the book in an effort to authorize his claims through the actors’ own analysis. The final page of the introduction articulates the contributions of the many whose voices come through on every page, though this is not the usual acknowledgments section common to most books. In its form it might seem to be, but when read alongside the footnotes, prologues, epilogues, quotations, and references that give the book its unique texture, the names that fill this cluster of brief paragraphs call out to the reader, making her complicit in the collective process of imagining that the book makes visible. Accessibility, then, becomes a question not only related to consumption of the book but also to its composition as the plurality of actor-authors participate in its making.

The overwhelming majority of the theorists and thinkers cited are not external to the context and events the text describes. They are actors immediate and organic to the recent history that the text documents. Far from an essentializing gesture, this repertoire of action-thought corresponds to the approach Gómez and Gutiérrez Aguilar describe above: concepts are not applied, fixed, or defined—they emerge from and through the relations that make and tell the story. The militancy of the antistate movements that become the protagonists is also present in the research practices that compose the book. In resisting the conventions of research and writing, the book departs from the positivism and objectivity that stand as pillars of academia and journalism, respectively. The distinction between writer and press only became marked after the ideas were formed. Zibechi describes the weeks he spent in El Alto, accompanied by an editor from the *Textos Rebeldes* press, walking the streets of the city, talking with organizers, collectives, and intellectuals. While

in many ways Zibechi's research practice resembles ethnographic fieldwork, it has a much brisker pace. He is a journalist by training—he says he spent weeks in El Alto, not the customary years an anthropologist might dedicate. But his writing (in this book in particular) does not fall neatly into one category or another. And while his presence in El Alto is much like that of any journalist, the difference is in the ways his work there becomes articulated to other sites, other actors, other practices. It is his frequent and vast movement across the continent combined with his engagements with those making, printing, and distributing his writing that give his work the organic quality that *Dispersar* makes so apparent.¹⁰

What is at stake in *Dispersar* is not the production of the “real” or “true” history or the definitive analysis produced by an outside observer but rather an interrogation into what Gómez and Gutiérrez Aguilar (2006, 18) call “las posibilidades de estabilización y permanencia—no de institucionalización y congelamiento—de la energía social desplegada y hasta hoy, incontenible, que *al producir la historia reciente* de Bolivia, de los Andes, viene al mismo tiempo transformándola” (the possibilities of stabilization and permanence—not of institutionalization and freezing—of the social energy that is being deployed and until now has been uncontainable, and the process of *producing the recent history* of Bolivia, of the Andes, simultaneously transforms it). Understanding recent events, and engaging in the ongoing production of history, becomes a militant exercise in examining the potential for these antistate relations to become more permanent—if always provisional—as the process of thinking, analyzing, debating, and writing itself transforms the history in progress. This is a hallmark of militant research (Juris 2008; Colectivo Situaciones 2007) because, as John Holloway (2010b, 11) insists, “books [are] part of a historical moment, part of the flow of struggle.” The effects they have are not consistent, as books made in the usual manner are more likely to grate against the flow of struggle, rather than run with it and for it (the aspiration of organic books). *Dispersar el poder*, in the process and practice of its composition, clearly aims to run with the flow of struggle, acting as a tool for advancing that historical moment beyond the local experiences it describes.

As I explore in greater depth in chapter 3, this particular book has had many lives, touching many sites of struggle as presses have picked up the text, reprinting their own versions of it across Latin America, the United States, and Europe. Various elements of the book-object are, of course, transformed in the process: design, materials, value, copyright, language. Interestingly, in distinct editions, there is a variety of paratexts that provides a sort of political translation of the main text to the local context of each publication. The added texts include new introductions, forewords, prologues, epilogues, translator's notes, publisher's notes, back cover texts, and featured reviews. Some are car-

ried over from edition to edition, while others are unique to a single edition or disappear in others. The paratexts, which transform each edition of the book into both a local and translocal book, connect political conversations and practices across disperse sites.

The first edition, published in 2006 in La Paz, features a prologue written by Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar and Luis Gómez, who like his coauthor is also from Mexico and lived in Bolivia for many years. The prologue, which has been included in most editions other than the English translation, suggests the dynamic of the book's plurality in its title: "Los múltiples significados del libro de Zibechi" (The multiple meanings of Zibechi's book). As the book moves and is rethought, reprinted, reread, it becomes multiple—it is continually remade as it comes into contact with different arrangements of experiences, practices, and actors. The epilogue by Colectivo Situaciones (2006, 226) from Buenos Aires comments, "La comunidad, contra todo sentido común, produce dispersión . . . dispersión del poder, guerra al estado" (Community, against all common sense, produces dispersion . . . dispersion of power, war on the state). Dispersion, which Colectivo Situaciones defined as a transversal connection, is in a sense what the book as a multiple and dynamic object produces, particularly when generated through practices that explicitly and implicitly reject statist forms of relations and knowledge. This concept of the production of community as the dispersion of power is key to understanding the significance of autonomous knowledge. Zibechi argues that dispersion of power is precisely the opposite of what the state, as the institutionalized place of politics, creates. This particular book makes its argument explicit not just through Zibechi's political analysis and description—stories of the Aymara uprisings that shook, and continue to shake, Bolivia politically, socially, epistemically. The argument is also manifested in the relations that make the book (the movements and activists and thinkers Zibechi works with across the continent), as they are made visible through the book.

KALEIDOSCOPIC KNOWLEDGE PRACTICE

The book *Caleidoscopio de rebeldías* was born in Buenos Aires in 2006, yet the experiences that compose it span back over more than twenty years and stretch across the continent from Mexico to Chile. The link across these temporal and spatial boundaries is the writer of the book: Claudia Korol. A founder of the magazine turned press *América Libre* (Free America) and the popular education collective *Pañuelos en Rebeldía*, Korol grounds her work as an activist, a writer, and an educator in a practice of solidarity. If a single word could describe *Caleidoscopio de rebeldías* it would be, no doubt, "solidarity." For Korol, solidarity is not a radicalization of philanthropy in the typical North to South model; it is the ethical commitment to recreate and reimag-

ine social relations not mediated by the logic of the state and capital, which is to say, efficiency, profit, endless accumulation, and growth. The formation of new social relations is the practice of “vivir la solidaridad en lo cotidiano” (living solidarity in the everyday; Korol 2006, 19). What she calls “descolonización cultural” (cultural decolonization) is an ongoing process of “inventar[r] territorios de libertad y solidaridad sobre la base de la movilización político pedagógica de un pueblo que va sabiendo lo que sabe, y va aprendiendo a ser” (inventing territories of freedom and solidarity on the basis of political-pedagogical mobilization of a people who go on knowing what they know and learning how to be; 23). She defines “cultural decolonization” as processual, always incomplete, and aspiring toward collective liberation from “todas las formas de alienación” (all forms of alienation; 23). In other words, a struggle for autonomy through relations of solidarity. Solidarity, as a quotidian political practice that exceeds the designated spaces of politics (in the sense outlined by Tapia 2008), is the formation of fluid, shifting, multidimensional relations where resonances emerge—not taking the form of unconditional support, but rather as a commitment to encounter and dialogue, a *caminar preguntando* (walking while asking questions) together. *Caleidoscopio* is made of such resonances. It is a book made of the relations that connect disperse sites of popular struggles for autonomy.

The title of the book is a direct reference to how Korol sees and experiences movement in the continent: as ever-shifting and rearranging elements in motion together. The “kaleidoscope of rebellions” is another term for América Libre (Free America)—the name of the press. Like the artwork that adorns its cover, the book is composed like a kaleidoscope, moving in and out of different spaces, with connections across territories coming into focus and then fading back. As the narrative travels through her personal accounts and analysis, drifting from chronicles of specific movements into broader descriptions of the connections across the various movements, Korol juxtaposes her narration with that of her comrades in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Guatemala, and her voice becomes one among many. The book is divided into four sections: “Educación popular” (Popular education); “Crónicas de América Latina” (Chronicles of Latin America); “Guevariando la historia” (Guevarizing history); and “Crónicas breves” (Brief chronicles). The first section is a combination of brief essays and talks given by Korol at various *encuentros* and events in the early 2000s, including one presentation that consists entirely of questions which she posed as “provocaciones” (provocations) during the Foro Social de las Américas in Ecuador in 2004. Throughout the book, Korol’s attachments to a language of socialism and Marxism are present, in some ways identifying her with a certain generation of Latin American intellectuals, though these terms appear in constant and productive tension with

her feminist ethics, her commitments to autonomy, and her solidarity with indigenous struggles.

While her individual voice is centered throughout the book, her voice has no greater authority than the actors whose stories fill the pages, and she writes her own presence into the text alongside the protagonists of the movements, making visible the relations of solidarity that make up this book. Throughout, Korol (2006, 30) describes the movements, and in particular the unprecedented networks that connect them, as engaging in “resistencia al pensamiento único” (resistance to singular thought). This resistance to singular thought—evident in the diverse experiences that merge in the kaleidoscope—connects the political work of the movements with the question of how autonomous knowledge is produced, what form it takes, and for what purposes.

In Korol’s experience, autonomous knowledge is the product of popular education and emancipatory pedagogy, which she describes as a process of “reflexión ‘desde los movimientos populares,’ desde su praxis, su memoria histórica, sus necesidades y los procesos en los que se va constituyendo un nuevo bloque histórico social que altera los lugares conocidos de los grupos sociales que los integran” (reflection “from the popular movements,” from their praxis, their historical memory, their needs, and the processes through which a new historical social force alters the known spaces of the social groups that compose them; Korol 2006, 37). Radical education and pedagogy are the foundation of many twenty-first century movements in Latin America, and anchor the prefigurative character of their praxis. One of the key material tools of popular education is the organic book. Korol notes that the pedagogical quality of the movements takes many forms, ranging from alternative schooling systems (as in the case of the autonomous education of the Zapatistas in Mexico or the Movimento Sem Terra in Brazil) to political education efforts within productive projects (workers cooperatives, alternative media initiatives, community food systems, etc.).

On a Friday evening in late winter 2011, I made my way to Industrias Metalúrgicas y Plásticas Argentina (IMPA, Plastic and Metallurgic Industries of Argentina), a factory where aluminum packaging of all kinds is manufactured, from spray cans to toothpaste tubes to candy wrappers. The factory fills a large block along the train tracks in what is now one of Buenos Aires’s most desirable areas. In May 1998 the workers of the factory organized themselves and occupied the factory, taking over its management. Since then, IMPA has thrived, like hundreds of other *empresas recuperadas* (recuperated companies) across Argentina, becoming much more than a factory.¹¹ In the twenty years it has been worker owned and operated, IMPA has expanded to include a community library, an autonomous school and university, a theater workshop, and a range of other spaces for the workers and others to come together. In addi-

tion to the projects officially housed in IMPA, dozens of other groups use the expansive space of the factory for their own autonomous projects.

I made my first trip to IMPA to participate in one of the weekly workshops coordinated by the Pañuelos en Rebeldía Popular Education Team. I learned about Pañuelos en Rebeldía—Claudia Korol's project—from a comrade of mine, a young political science professor at the University of Buenos Aires and teacher at one of the Movimiento Popular La Dignidad's *bachilleratos populares* (popular adult schools). My friend had studied in the Masters Program in Popular Education that Korol once coordinated at the Universidad de las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo and encouraged me to attend the workshop at IMPA to connect with the team members. As I recount the connections that led me to this workshop, what emerges is a map of precisely the kinds of relations between collectives and individuals that are made visible in Korol's book. The now institutionalized (and highly controversial, in part due to its implication in various corruption scandals) Fundación Madres de la Plaza de Mayo connects an older generation of activists with a worker-owned factory through a popular education project that has contributed to the formation of alternative schools like those of the Movimiento Popular La Dignidad. The relations that make up this map go on and on, extending far beyond the city limits of Buenos Aires or even the national borders of Argentina.

I entered IMPA through a massive steel sliding door, climbing a ramp next to a loading dock. Though my destination was a popular education workshop and I could hear the echoes of drums from the theater inside, it was immediately evident that I was entering a factory. Miscellaneous equipment was lined up against one wall, and at the end of the entrance I could see boxes of materials. Just past the ramp, I reached a large open space; in the center a small group of people was gathered in a circle of folding chairs, waiting for the workshop to begin. A young woman confirmed that I was in the right place and said that we'd be starting shortly. The workshop happens weekly, and while I had been concerned that I would be the only newcomer, it was obvious that this was not the case. In many ways, the physical space we occupied within IMPA reflected the relational dynamics of the group: open, unbounded, porous, contingent, shifting. When someone asked about Korol, we were told that she was out of town. It then seemed clear that even if she had been present, she wouldn't necessarily have been the leader of the workshop—despite being the group's most senior member and founder.

This particular session was focused on the experiences of members of Pañuelos en Rebeldía at the Florestán Fernández Popular Education Center: a school of the Movimiento Sem Terra (MST) in Brazil open to participants from across Latin America. Several of the facilitators had participated in a four-month cycle at the school, and after the screening of a documentary about it,

a conversation was opened about the process of living and attending the rural school, the pedagogical structure of the MST, and the relationship of Pañuelos en Rebeldía to the MST and other participants at the school. The comments shared by those who had attended the school were far from romantic—there was no idealizing the experience or the structure and logic of the MST school. They described a discomfort they felt with the disjuncture between the rhetoric of emancipatory pedagogy and the traditional vertical structure of many of the classes. Several participants confessed to feeling surprised at the degree of discomfort they felt—both politically in their reactions to the pedagogical orientation of the school and personally in their own difficulties of adjusting to a context so removed from their (relative) privilege as residents of a major cosmopolitan city. I found these moments of candid reflection surprising, and they gave the workshop—and my overall impression of Pañuelos en Rebeldía—a richness in terms of the expression of a complicated relationship to their counterparts in other parts of the continent. The MST center is not held up as a model but rather as a particular approach appropriate to the context and realities of that particular movement. The experiences of Pañuelos en Rebeldía with the MST are precisely the kinds of moments where concepts are tested and other ideas emerge.

Korol's book, published by América Libre—a radical press that operates alongside Pañuelos en Rebeldía—was printed at the print shop of the Fundación Madres de la Plaza de Mayo. The press, which is an extension of the magazine, later separated itself from Las Madres due to what members describe as a need for greater autonomy. These relations—between Pañuelos en Rebeldía and IMPA, the MST, Las Madres, and other organizations—are both the material basis of their knowledge practices and the process through which their political ideas emerge. This is to say that these relations with the organized, productive projects of various movements, including IMPA's factory space, MST's education center, Las Madres's university and print shop, are necessary to the material production of not only the tools (books) that Pañuelos produces but also to the very ideas that fill the pages of the books and are the product of the workshops. The resultant books are enactments of the complexity of the relations that make them and of a political meaning that exceeds what is contained in the words on the page.

What each of the projects that intersect in this book posit, in distinct terms, is a subversion of the division of political labor. At IMPA workers all earn equal wages, regardless of their specific job. In the MST, cooperativism aims to make all participants in the movement equal agents in political and productive labor. In the Universidad de Las Madres, alternative education is conceived of as a means to bridge generations in the production of counterhegemonic knowledge. Each of these experiences is wrought with contradictions, and these fis-

tures between rhetoric and reality are magnified as the movements come into contact with one another. The position of “intellectuals” and de facto leaders within these movements is a particularly salient site to interrogate these disjunctures, and Korol dedicates much of her analysis to this question.

Caleidoscopio de rebeldías is not the story of a single movement, nor is it the product of a single writer’s thought. Each chapter moves us from one site to another, through different moments and spaces of struggles for emancipation. The words that fill the pages are, in many instances, Korol’s. In other instances the words are explicitly attributed to other participants in the movements. But regardless of whose voice the ideas are expressed through, Korol makes explicit efforts to qualify everything in the book as the product of a collective process. She, and others she cites, may be seen or identified as “intellectuals” in their respective movements, but what they communicate are “saberes construidos en la resistencia” (knowledges produced in the resistance; Korol 2006, 15). Emancipatory pedagogy and popular education are the tools Korol promotes for collective, autonomous knowledge practices. Ideas and concepts formulated in this way are necessarily infused with the complexity of that collective practice: “La labor pedagógica de los oprimidos obliga a interpretar al mundo tal cual es, en sus dimensiones macro y micro, objetivas y subjetivas, en sus interrelaciones. Toda tentativa de simplificación otorga ventajas a quienes han hecho del conocimiento una de las armas poderosas en las que sostienen y reproducen su poder” (The pedagogic labor of the oppressed forces us to interpret the world as it is, in its macro and micro, objective and subjective dimensions, in its interrelations. All attempts to simplify it grants an advantage to those who have made knowledge one of the most powerful weapons in their maintenance and reproduction of power; Korol 2006, 28). This is to say that the process of rendering the tangled nature of reality—and better yet, of politics—simple, tidy, and familiar only serves to reproduce the “common sense” through which the state and other institutions of power maintain their dominance. For Korol the subversion of this “bourgeois common sense” is the subversion of what Zibechi calls “state relations” and what we might think of more broadly as institutional or static relations. Collective knowledge practices emerge from a commitment to engaging with the complexities, contradictions, and difficulties of everyday praxis. Conceived of in this way, the relations that are both the medium for and the subject of these knowledge practices are dynamic relations. The isolated intellectual is incapable of enacting autonomous knowledge because autonomous knowledge *is* the enactment of autonomous relations. Key to this idea is the fact that autonomous knowledge here is always collective. Drawing on Gramsci, Korol signals the dangers of the intellectuals of any movement becoming separated from the day-to-day practices and existence of the movements. The usual sites

of intellectual labor—NGOs, the academy, and other state institutions—are intentionally divorced from the everyday, and their hierarchical and static order depends on this separation for legitimacy. But as Korol (2006, 36) notes, citing Gramsci, “El error del intelectual consiste en creer que se puede saber sin comprender y especialmente sin sentir y ser apasionado” (the error of the intellectual consists in thinking that one can know and comprehend without feeling and being passionate). An intellectual with concrete experience, collective commitments, and passion is a different kind of intellectual—potentially an organic intellectual.

But my interest here lies not in outlining the conditions for the emergence of organic intellectuals but rather in exploring the autonomous knowledge practices at work—the stuff of organic books. And I argue that the only way to see autonomous knowledge is through objects and the relations that produce them. For Korol (2006, 53) autonomous popular education is “acción cultural por la libertad.” The making of books is a process that brings together many of the elements that she outlines as fundamental to popular education as the praxis of liberation, including a transformation of the relationship between practice and theory; a reclaiming of the quotidian as the site of popular struggle; and the recuperation of a communal sociability (Korol 2006, 38–40). The book, as the concrete tool through which experience is compiled and theorized, has multiple functions: on the one hand it’s the medium for the broader circulation of ideas, and on the other hand its very production is itself a process for collective reflection and theorization of political praxis.

So, why a book? Why not a magazine? An article? A website? Books, by their very nature, require a conjunction of different kinds of work for their production. While one of the key ideas that Korol emphasizes is the importance of translating face-to-face experiences and oral culture into written language, she also argues that a book is the most useful form this written material can take. This has to do, of course, with the greater durability and permanence of the book-object versus other print forms and the commitment that both publishers and readers invest in this particular form. Perhaps more significantly, for Korol the actual process of composing a book is a process of theoretical production. Making a book is another instance of a collective knowledge practice, in the sense that the collective work of producing this object is a process of meaning-making—the political and theoretical ideas contained in the book do not end with the writing of the text. The text is the collection of words that can be contained in a notebook, a computer file, a stack of sheets of paper, or—potentially—a book. But a text has no essential material form. And we can only interact with a text through the form it takes as some kind of document—some of which require more or less labor to produce. In connecting many kinds of work, the bookmaking process is collective, and the book-

object itself is steeped with political meaning as a result of all the relations involved in its production.

BECOMING BOOK: MOVEMENTS, WRITERS, PRESSES

The details of the three books examined in this chapter are vastly different, and this particularity of knowledge practices—all examples of knowledge-as-doing—is precisely what makes them organic books. I have not attempted to trace constant elements to compare three cases side by side; rather, I have looked at the particular processes that each book and its stories manifest. In doing so, my interest lies in elucidating how the organic book—in the ways it is conceived—contributes theoretically and politically to the broader practice of autonomous politics. The movements depart from dogmatic and vanguardist approaches to politics, wherein certain subjects propose answers and programs for transforming society. The new movements, and especially the autonomous movements that are the subjects of these books, emerge through doing “wild politics” (Tapia 2008)—a politics uncontained by either institutions or existing concepts, a politics only made visible by the relations that are formed in the process of doing. Organic books—as the objects organic to these politics—are best understood through the relations that make up, and are made by, these practices. What defines an organic book is not a set of consistent criteria. Rather, an organic book can only be defined by its practices: how it is made, what it does, and how it works. The three stories explored in this chapter express distinct yet overlapping collective knowledge practices and follow how these practices become books. The titles alone express the different contents: *Pensar las autonomías* is about the process of disrupting dominant thought through the praxis of autonomy; *Dispersar el poder* is about the formation of antistate power; and *Caleidoscopio de rebeldías* is about connections forged across diverse territories in pedagogical experiments.

Pensar las autonomías bears the names of more than a dozen writers on its cover, alongside dozens of concepts that are explored in the essays: struggle, ethics, antagonism, emancipation, class, work, capital, power, disobedience, rebellion, movement, community, collectivity, resistance, and others. This edited volume is literally made of the relations that articulate the collective editor—Jóvenes en Resistencia Alternativa—with autonomous and anticapitalist politics and struggles across the continent. That an urban youth collective is the editor and compiler of this volume is significant—urban youth certainly are not the typical authority of knowledge (more commonly the university professor, state intellectual, or NGO researcher) that assumes this kind of networking role. Autonomy, defined by the editors as the disordering and continual reorganizing of the social from below, is the construction of collective forces and of possibilities. This provisional concept stands in contrast to the

logic of the state—and this book stands in contrast to the logic of dominant knowledge production.

For *Dispersar el poder*, I examined how the composition of the text itself mirrors the spatial dynamics that gave way to the unique reorganization of power in the popular mobilizations in El Alto. We saw the operations of the *máquina comunitaria dispersadora* (communitarian dispersion machine) in the unique urban terrain of El Alto and in the production of knowledge about and from it. In understanding the practice of community to be the production of dispersion, antistate knowledge emerges as the product of the fluid, nonhierarchical, contingent relations. The “decolonization of thought” that Zibechi references is exposed in concrete terms through the production of knowledge (and the tools of the circulation of knowledge—books) that does not rely on authoritative institutions or concepts.

Caleidoscopio de rebeldías takes the metaphor of its title as the organizing mechanism for its contents: movements come in and out of focus, change shape, and become fragmented and reconstituted as they interact with one another. The kaleidoscope becomes the symbol for solidarity—the definition of radical relations Korol proposes. Resonances emerge, not repetition nor reproduction, and this occurs as much in the analysis and the chronicles Korol compiles as in the spaces of popular education and anticapitalist praxis where she and her books move. The kaleidoscope of knowledge practices is the embodiment of the resistance to singular thought that popular education and emancipatory pedagogy posit as their guiding principle. And when those knowledge practices take the form of specific tools—books—a second process of collective theorization and political work emerges. As a member of one press commented, “estar en una editorial es una posibilidad de militar” (being part of a press is one possibility for militant activity; interview, Buenos Aires, 2011). The collective processes through which organic books emerge are spaces where “words and communication flow” dialogically, recalling Zibechi’s (2000) description of the *mirada horizontal* (horizontal gaze) of Zapatismo in the epigraph that opens this chapter. This dialogism and horizontality are what make the organic book possible, what allow it to come into being.

I have explored the idea of knowledge-as-doing in the mode of autonomous knowledge practices, asking how they are enacted and what kinds of relations, materials, and actions both compose them and which they articulate. Arguing that autonomous knowledge (the stuff of organic books) is better seen through relations and practices than in terms of the referents of knowledge, I have examined specific moments in the initial composition of these organic books and the formation of the political ideas that fill them. By describing the overlap between the relations through which ideas are generated and the relations through which they become books, I have endeavored to show some of

the material and political effects of these knowledge practices, which are characteristic of the organic book. While subsequent chapters specifically address the material labors of crafting, reediting, and distributing organic books, this chapter has considered how such books come to be—through what kinds of relations and practices. In the next chapter, I move my analysis into a crucial space of book production—the printing workshop—to focus on the economic and technical practices which connect the site of book printing and assembly to the autonomous politics of the movements that produce them. In doing so, I explore how the political commitment to producing low-cost books generates experimental practices.