

Self Immolation and the Deactivation of State Necropower

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Abstract : This paper is an attempt to theoretically reframe the act of self-immolation beyond violence/non-violence discourse, to differentiate it from other paradigmatic examples of necropolitical activism like suicide bombing, in order to highlight its particular ontopolitical statement in relation to life and death and to re-energize its deactivating power. In this paper, the writer seeks to focus on self-immolation by Tibetan monks and other activists against Chinese imperialism, its continuing ethnic cleansing of the Tibetan people, forced assimilation, and territorial occupation. Here, the main driving force is this question: what does self-immolation mean to a people who are forced to live in deathspace? In other words, if one is reduced to nothingness that their deaths (as is their lives) become insignificant, in what ways does the reclamation of death/dying become a “way out” of this state-imposed enclave of death? To answer these questions, the writer engages with and put in conversation the works of Achille Mbembe, Elias Cannetti, and Giorgio Agamben.

Keywords : necropolitics, self immolation, tibetan people, chinese imperialism

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