

From *Manchay Tiempo* to 'Truth':  
Cultural Trauma and Resilience in Contemporary Peruvian Narrative

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**Abstract**

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Clashes between the Shining Path and counterinsurgency during Peru’s internal conflict left the scars of symbolic, physical, and sexual violence on civil society. Peruvian cultural production has since engaged the memory, trauma, and lasting effects of this violence. The old paradigm of reading such productions through the framework of regional allegiances—*criollo* and Andean—is monological and inadequate for interpreting novels and films composed in the postconflict period of the 1990s and 2000s. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2003 also altered significantly the predominant narrative of cultural trauma by shifting the focus from the Shining Path to government abuses. The first chapter of this dissertation studies precommission representations of the armed conflict in the *criollo* text *Lituma en los Andes* by Mario Vargas Llosa and the Andean text *Rosa Cuchillo* by Oscar Colchado. Despite supposed differences in ideology and representations of *lo andino*, both construct a space of death that communicates a pessimistic moral imagination because they cannot conceive of a nonviolent Peru. The second chapter shines a light on a shift in the cultural trauma discourse: detective fiction exposes the government as the main perpetrators of the internal conflict. I examine *Abril rojo* by Santiago Roncagliolo and *Mientras huya el cuerpo* by Ricardo Sumalavia as exemplary ruptures with the discourses of *lo andino* that instead focus on the trauma of the armed conflict and its legacy. Alberto Durant’s film *Cuchillos en el cielo* and Ulises Gutiérrez Llantoy’s novel *Ojos de pez abisal*—the foci of the third chapter—depict the challenges of transitional justice in the face of diaspora, impunity, and stigmatization. Both texts present a need for two kinds of justice models, recovery and restorative, to deal with the needs of victims, survivors, and ex-offenders. The final chapter engages Claudia Llosa’s *La teta asustada* for a discussion on

postmemory and the traumatic effects of the armed conflict on the postgeneration, which is made up of subjects attempting to overcome the blows of memory and cultivate resilience. In the face of injustice, impunity, and the impossibility of closure, these texts either scrutinize problems in postconflict Peru or present the resilience of the human spirit and alternative paradigms for moving forward after a turbulent historical period. Such explorations propose a dialogical, reconciliatory criticism that focuses not on outdated nineteenth- and twentieth-century dichotomies but on how race, gender, and class intersect with trauma and resilience as a part of the reformulation of identity and relationships after violent conflict.

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## Introduction

In May 2009, I arrived to Lima, Peru, to work as an instructor and administrator for the University of Virginia's Peru Program. I was still becoming accustomed to life in the bustling metropolis when I was assigned to take a group of students to an adaptation of *Antigone* by the Peruvian poet José Watanabe at the Centro Cultural PUCP.<sup>1</sup> Teresa Ralli, a member of the Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani, put on a stellar solo performance of Sophocles's tragedy. After the performance, I had many questions regarding the choice to cast one actor—a woman—to play the roles of many. But my main question was, why return to the figure of Antigone in 2009?

Thus began my interest in Peru and I immersed myself in Peruvian cultural production. Partly because of my Andean Ecuadorian heritage, I also became interested in the academic discussion on *lo andino*, a topic that earns my full analysis in this dissertation. The tendency to essentialize the Andean subject in cultural production or criticism bothered me because I could never seem to locate or confirm a stable or "correct" definition of *lo andino* on my travels throughout the Ecuadorian and Peruvian Andes. Paradoxically, I have encountered a plethora of identities in the Andes, yet never met anyone who referred to him- or herself as an *andino*. In Peru, I met communities that looked confused when I asked about the *ayllu*, a traditional form of community that has existed since Inca times. On a hike near Tarma, I traded granola bars for bananas with shepherds. In Picoy, I met the last Quechua speaker of the community, who nervously giggled when I showed off the few words of the language I knew. My trek guide taught me to give offerings of coca to the mountains we crossed and blessed me with rose water and medicinal herbs so that I would continue to have the strength to climb mountains. I ate *cuy* and alpaca—surprisingly expensive and hard-to-come-by delicacies. In Puno, I met children who insisted that they were not Quechua or Aymara like their parents but *hispanos* instead. I met

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<sup>1</sup> Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.

Quechua and Aymara parents who wore the traditional garments of their respective communities, spoke their languages with pride, and invited tourists to glimpse their everyday lives. In Villa El Salvador,<sup>2</sup> a place that began as a *pueblo joven* (shantytown) and today is a lively city, I met with migrants, mainly from the Andes, who had a community-centered sense of social responsibility and whose slogan is *Porque no tenemos nada, lo haremos todo*.<sup>3</sup> While these encounters may sound inconsequential, they form the basis for the dissertation—or, rather, they underlie my decision not to take *lo andino* as an object of study. Instead, interfacing with people from the Andes themselves led me to focus on what really impressed about the people of Peru: their adaptability, their diversity, their networks, their resilience, and their complicated relationship to the nation after the internal conflict, a period defined by a cry for reconciliation.

### ***Manchay Tiempo: The Peruvian Internal Conflict, 1980–2000***

The period of 1980 to 2000 was known to many Peruvians as *manchay tiempo*, meaning “time of fear” in a hybrid of Quechua and Spanish.<sup>4</sup> Communities in the Andes refer to it as *Sasachakuy tiempo* (“difficult time”). About 70,000 people died at the hands of the Shining Path and government counterinsurgency during these decades. Ironically, the peasantry that the Shining Path and authoritarian government sought to defend became the victims of the conflict.

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<sup>2</sup> The history of VES begins in 1971 when migrants from the nearby districts of Surquillo settled on privately owned land in the district of San Juan de Miraflores (Blondet 272). Dubbed as “invaders” by the press and owners of the property, they protested the squalid conditions of the slums and the lack of access to basic social services. After negotiations moderated by a Catholic priest, the settlers were relocated eighteen miles further south to government property. The land was only several miles from Lima but there were no utilities or roads. On a blank, desert canvas, the settlers wrote themselves into the national narrative and economy by creating a communal society inclusive of all who were willing to take part in VES’s new social contract. Today it is one of the most important industrial hubs of Peru.

<sup>3</sup> “Because we have nothing, we will do everything.”

<sup>4</sup> Nelson Manrique coins the term in 1989 and uses it to refer to the decade of the 1980s. He defines it as “[u]na palabra quechua ayacuchana describe fielmente la época que vivimos: manchay tiempo, el tiempo del miedo” which refers both to “la violencia y el autoritarismo que hoy amenazan devorar la sociedad peruana” (n. pag). Orin Starn, Carlos Iván Degregori, and Robin Kirk apply the term to 1983 to 1989 when civil society became aware of the escalating conflict. I, however, use Manrique’s term in the dissertation to refer to the period 1980 to 2000 because it captures and unites experiences in the Highlands and coast and refers to abuses committed by both the Shining Path and the authoritarian government.

Countless citizens were detained, tortured, or disappeared. In 1982, the military assassinated the mythologized “tragic figure in this rebellion,” militant, Edith Lagos, and it is said that 30,000 people attended her funeral in Ayacucho (Gorriti 240–41). In 1992, the Shining Path used dynamite to assassinate an activist from Villa El Salvador, Maria Elena Moyano, who openly marched for peace, “to inculcate fear and inhibit any further efforts at resistance” (Burt, “Decisive Battle” 291–92). Aberrant phenomena, assassinations, power outages, propaganda, and dogs hanged on street lamps, characterize the movement of terror from the Andes to the coast.

Even though Orin Starn and Carlos Iván Degregori have accused anthropologists of missing the revolution brewing in the Andes,<sup>5</sup> Peruvians did not realize the threat that the Shining Path posed until 1983, when the villagers of Uchuraccay murdered eight journalists. Philologist Lucero de Vivanco reminds us of the events that shook the nation: “los periodistas que pretendían reportear estos acontecimientos sufrieron una suerte trágica cuando fueron confundidos con senderistas por los comuneros de Uchuraccay, quienes los asesinaron con piedras, palos y hachas” (21). The president of Peru, Fernando Belaúnde Terry (1980–85), set up a task force presided over by Vargas Llosa, Abraham Guzmán Figueroa, and journalist Mario Castro Arenas as well as three anthropologists, two linguists, a lawyer, and a psychoanalyst to investigate the murders (21). While critics such as de Vivanco deem the Vargas Llosa report to be an Andeanist view of the events, Degregori expresses the contrary: that it did “a credible job in describing the context in which the massacre took place: the tension and the generalized political violence in the zone resulting from the open conflict between the communities and Sendero militants” (53). Despite the fact that the villagers were blamed for the violence, the

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<sup>5</sup> See, for a detailed explanation on Andeanism, Orin Starn, “Missing the Revolution: Anthropologists and the War in Peru,” (*Cultural Anthropology* 6.1, 1991): 63–91.

Vargas Llosa report did note that the Sinchis, a counterterrorist police trained by the United States, encouraged the peasants to use violence against anyone they suspected of being militants (54). Nevertheless, what remained in the collective memory was the report's emphasis on cultural difference and a preconquest history of violence. What else could have motivated the villagers to brutally murder the journalists? Fear, terrorism, and their repercussions circulated in the highlands and in the media, making the Shining Path an incomprehensible threat.

The Communist Party of Peru–Shining Path (PCP-SL) was formed by Abimael Guzmán (alias Presidente Gonzalo) in the 1970s. Guzmán invoked *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* by José Mariátegui and the philosophy of the Chinese leader Mao Zedong. Mariátegui critiqued the feudal system in the Andes that oppressed the peasantry and predicted that there would be a struggle for social change, while Mao's thought reflects the need to break from imperialism and capitalism by empowering the proletariat. The need for social justice in the Andes and the guerilla tactics of Mao were wedded to clean-slate the country of all revisionists, imperialists, bourgeoisie, and capitalists in order to rebuild a communist state from the bottom up. Lewis Taylor notes that this adoption of ideas from Mariátegui “lacked inquisitiveness and imagination” and that “[t]hey were plagiarists rather than innovators” (21). Despite their one-dimensionality, some students and highlanders sympathized with their purported mission for an equal and just society and joined in the terroristic, genocidal violence.

The election of Alberto Fujimori (1990–2000) marked the promise to bring an end to the decade of terrorism and a change in the failing counterinsurgency policy of former president Alan García (1985–90). Jo-Marie Burt notes that under *fujimorismo*, violence became privatized (*Political Violence* 47) and its tactics become increasingly draconian: “Civil and political rights were sharply curtailed, and freedom of the press was threatened, particularly as opposition

groups became emboldened to challenge some of the regime's worst abuses" (181). Fujimori organized and funded Civil Defenses in the Andean Highlands modeled off of the *rondas* that "first developed in northern Peru in the 1970s to protect peasant property and livestock from bandits" (49). The Grupo Colina, infamously known as a death squad, was responsible for massacring university students and villagers in the Andes (183). Two years after Fujimori's election, however, military forces located and captured Guzmán in Lima, thereby validating the president's tactics. Yet despite this victory, authoritarian rule intensified and Congress changed the constitution, in what was called an *autogolpe*, to allow Fujimori to run for reelection in 2000 (183–84). However, during the 2000 election, the press released the *vladivideos*, which implicated the head of Peru's intelligence service, Vladimiro Montesinos—among numerous politicians, lawyers, media representatives, and countless others—in a tangled web of corruption, bribery, and murder. This revelation on national television dethroned the administration, caused Fujimori to retire police and military officers, and led him to flee to Japan. The appellation *manchay tiempo* captures the Peruvian experience during these decades because that fear (*manchay*) instilled by the Shining Path and the authoritarian regime spread to populations in the highlands and other cities in Peru—essentially, to all of civil society.

### **A New Frame to Unite the Peruvian Experience: Cultural Trauma**

The dissertation explores the aftereffects of the Peruvian internal conflict as translated and recreated into several novels and films. I draw on critics from various fields that view the psychological, the political, the imaginative, and the social dimensions of memory: Sigmund Freud, Cathy Caruth, Kai Erikson, Jeffrey Alexander, Pierre Nora, Michael Taussig, Dan-Bar-On, Marianne Hirsch, Gabrielle Schwab, Dominique LaCapra, Jacques Derrida, Jeffrey Olick, Kimberly Theidon, and John Paul Lederach—to name just a few. I treat their theories as tools to

examine narratives of trauma and resilience in post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission cultural production. The texts I have selected may engage and challenge these theories, and I hope to contribute to their refinement.

Narratives and discourses of trauma are topics central to many disciplines and have developed over decades. Trauma is a wound inflicted on the mind of an individual. The term originates from the Greek word for wound, *traumat* or *trōma*, which derives from the verb *titrōskein*, meaning “to wound” or “to pierce” (“trauma, n.”). Freud links “traumatic neurosis” to an event such as a “sever shock of mechanical nature, railway collision or other accident in which danger to life is involved” and adds that the World War I was “responsible for an immense number of such maladies” (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 8). He asserts that in traumatic neuroses, “the chief causal factor seemed to lie in the element of surprise, in the fright” (9). In modern psychoanalysis and psychiatry, trauma is a “psychic injury, esp. one caused by emotional shock the memory of which is repressed and remains unhealed; an internal injury, esp. to the brain, which may result in a behavioural disorder of organic origin” (“trauma, n.”).

Recently there has been interest in how traumatic events, like wars, diasporas, genocide, or natural disasters, leave long-lasting wounds on groups of people, not just individuals. *Cultural trauma* is a relatively new term that chiefly draws upon literatures of psychology and sociology. Its development began in the 1970s, thanks to the work of sociologist Kai Erikson. Erikson uses the term *collective trauma* to conceptualize how a traumatic event can redefine social bonds in communities. The event alters the mood in the community and, in response, its members can come together, be torn apart, or identify with one another as fellow victims or survivors. In *A New Species of Trouble*, Erikson describes experiences in 1973 in Buffalo Creek, Appalachia, that allowed him to observe the effects of trauma on group identity. After meeting with survivors

of a mudslide, he explains: “I was in the company of people so wounded in spirit that they almost constituted a different culture, as though the language we shared in common was simply not sufficient to overcome the enormous gap in experience that separated us” (13). As a researcher and interloper, he was merely witness to a communal wounded spirit. The traumatic event had dramatically altered the community’s sense of self and redefined the social bonds among its members, leaving Erikson an outsider.

Erikson makes the distinction between individual trauma and collective trauma. He defines the former as “a blow to the psyche that breaks through one’s defenses so suddenly and with such brutal force that one cannot react to it effectively” (*A New Species* 233). This definition emphasizes the fight or flight response to traumatic stimuli. In contrast, collective trauma is “a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality” (233). An immediate collective response to a catastrophe could be violent or nonviolent conflict and might include diasporic movement. With regards the peculiarities of collective trauma, Erikson states:

Sometimes the tissues of community can be damaged in much the same way as the tissues of mind and body, as I shall suggest shortly, but even when that does not happen, traumatic wounds inflicted on individuals can combine to create a mood, an ethos—a group culture, almost—that is different from (and more than) the sum of the private wounds that make it up. Trauma, that is, has a social dimension. (230–31)

Brain and muscle tissues may be damaged after its members suffer a traumatic event. The use of these mind and body metaphors demonstrates how a community can take responsibility, sympathize, and worsen or heal the wounds of its group. In contrast to individual trauma, the

bonds among members can be pierced or wounded and create a different group culture. The wounded coalesce and may enter a period of mourning.

The research and analysis conducted by Cathy Caruth also focuses on the movement from individual to collective trauma. Although she does not use the adjectives *collective* or *cultural*, she is more or less the lead psychoanalytic critic bridging the gap between individual and collective trauma. In *Unclaimed Experience*, she eloquently describes trauma as “the moving and sorrowful *voice* that cries out, a voice that is paradoxically released *through the wound*” (2). She places emphasis on literature as a means to understanding the silence and complexity of traumatic experiences of groups such as the Jews as well as fictional representations of trauma victims. Her interdisciplinary approach allows the field of literary studies to join sociology and political science by introducing new way of thinking about and responding to trauma. In literature and film, she explores the manner in which narratives “speak about and speak through the profound story of traumatic experience” by exploring “the complex ways that knowing and not knowing are entangled in the language of trauma” (4). For Caruth, literature of trauma is a cathartic expression that allows another to empathize with the sufferer. Narrative form therefore becomes a step and means to understanding, forming a collective memory, repressing certain memories, perhaps sharing trauma, and possibly healing from traumatic experiences.

Among the literature that most influenced this project’s theoretical grounding is *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* by the five sociologists Jeffery C. Alexander, Neil J. Smelser, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, and Piotr Sztompka. Together, they add to and refine Erikson’s conceptualization of collective trauma and Caruth’s psychoanalytic approach. They develop a theoretical framework for what they refer to as cultural trauma: instead of assuming that identity has essential attributes, their approach focuses on how groups construct social reality through



language. They examine how social groupings create narratives of trauma and how group identity changes as a result of a catastrophic collective experience. In contrast to Erikson's model, they emphasize *how* groups remember a disastrous event and its enduring effects.

According to Alexander,

Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways. (1)

Implicit in constructing a narrative of cultural trauma is the idea that group members identify a collective wound, share it or adopt it, voice it (through a group member), and accept responsibility for it. Similarly, Jeffrey Olick, using the Vietnam War as an example, explains that trauma is a rupture with "the legitimating narrative that we as individuals produce for us as a collectivity" (345). This understanding emphasizes trauma as a prenarrative state that disrupts established cultural narratives, and a horrendous event, such as Auschwitz, "remains a trauma for the narratives of modernity and morality, among others" (345). A grave community wound may pose a problem to collective or national identity, and narrative can help reformulate a future identity as well as present claims to those responsible for the egregious offense.

Cultural trauma, therefore, is not just a discourse but communicates a social project or criticism. According to Alexander, a successful narrative identifies and describes the nature of the pain and victim, the relation of the victim to the audience, and the attribution of responsibility. A trauma narrative answers the following basic questions: What happened? To whom did this happen? What does it have to do with me? Who committed the offense?

Alexander and colleagues tie traumatic experience to collective identity and social activism. For

victims, survivors, and witnesses, social pain becomes “a fundamental threat to their sense of who they are, where they come from, and where they want to go” (10), and from this quandary arises the need to develop a narrative to voice the group’s injury in hopes of actual social change. If the needs of the group are met, the narrative may shift from emphasizing the traumatic event to how the group overcame the blow to their collective conscious.<sup>6</sup>

Cultural trauma is a narrative about a catastrophic event that creates tension between collective memory and identity. Smelser also recognizes how a traumatic event “may qualify as a trauma at one moment in a society’s history but not in another” (“Psychological” 36). Eyerman contributes his research on the trauma of US slavery. He argues that the trauma is not about the institution but rather about “collective memory, a form of remembrance that grounded the identity-formation of people” (Eyerman 60). Smelser further stresses that cultural trauma can take years, decades, or centuries to develop: “cultural traumas are a complex process of selective remembering and unremembering, social interaction and influence, symbolic contestation, and successful assertions of power” (“Epilogue” 279). Studies of cultural trauma focus on how, for how long, and when a group chooses to remember an event and their changing group identity in relation to the trauma and need for retribution.

As Caruth, Gabrielle Schwab, and Marianne Hirsch, among others, have noted, traumatic memory can be passed on from one generation to the next generation. Caruth notes “that history, like trauma is never simply one’s own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s trauma” (24). Schwab observes how trauma is an intergenerationally shared experience:

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<sup>6</sup> Alexander also calls attention to exterior forces that can mediate a trauma narrative by noting the power the government and mass media can have over a trauma narrative and mourning process. Eventually, he points out, the trauma process leads to a “calming down” as groups revise collective identity, objectify lessons, detach affect from meaning, and form a new collective identity (12–15).

The transmission of violent legacies by far exceeds the passing on of historical knowledge or even of stories with thick descriptions of personal involvement. What I call “haunting legacies” are things hard to recount or even to remember, the results of a violence that holds and unrelenting grip on memory yet is deemed unspeakable. (1)

Schwab illustrates how collective trauma haunts, and although silenced, can reemerge and leaves lasting effects on future generations. Hirsch uses the term *postmemory* to describe the effects of cultural trauma on the “generation after” (*Writing and Visual Culture*), which she calls the *postgeneration* (“Generation” 125). Traumatic memory, therefore, can (un)consciously mold the identity of a people and their descendants.

Alexander differentiates between lay trauma, which tends to find the discourse of trauma in any narrative, and a concept of cultural trauma by emphasizing how “[e]vents do not, in and of themselves, create collective trauma. Events are not inherently traumatic. Trauma is a socially mediated attribution” (8). Even though wars, diasporas, and other elements of drastic social change or violence can be considered traumatic, Smelser further outlines three criteria for an event to qualify as a cultural trauma:

It must be remembered, or made to be remembered. Furthermore, the memory must be made culturally relevant, that is, represented as obliterating, damaging, or rendering problematic something sacred—usually a value or outlook felt to be essential for the integrity of the affected society. Finally, the memory must be associated with a strong negative affect, usually disgust, shame, or guilt. (“Psychological” 36)

Cultural production such as stories, films, songs, memorials, museums and literature all play an important role in emphasizing that a traumatic memory must be remembered. These media can symbolize the traumatic events by representing the “sacred” subject or object that the offenders

violated. This violation can produce secondary traumatization, as the audience empathizes with the collective memory of the event.

Caruth underscores the importance of cultural production and trauma “because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing”

(3). Caruth builds upon Freud’s understanding of trauma:

Trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that address us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and language. (4)

She relates trauma directly to the narrative produced *after* the catastrophic event. Relating a traumatic experience is about a need to voice an incomprehensible past event and discover the heart of its truth. Noting the incomprehensible and repetitive nature of trauma, Caruth notes that language forms a bridge between the traumatic event and the individual who suffered the event.

The focus on narrative and imaginative processes is ideal for examining cultural production about trauma. A person that takes on another’s trauma or is a member of a traumatized group to create symbolic representation to voice a claim to the institution or body involved in the “profanation of some sacred value” (Alexander 11). According to Alexander, the imagination—which I interpret as a set of discourses within a narrative—is crucial: “Imagination is intrinsic to the very process of representation. It seizes upon an inchoate experience from life, and forms it, through association, condensation, and aesthetic creation, into some specific shape,” (9) and he adds, “It is only through the imaginative process of representation that actors have the sense of experience” (9). There is no such thing as a traumatic event without the effort

to understand it, and a cultural product is in itself a creative effort to shape the event and readers to have a sensory experience. Trauma narrative has a social function that may even be a warning sign of potential upheaval. It may also seek to inform or present a claim for the purpose of healing the wound inflicted on a group's cultural identity.

*Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* proposes a comprehensive theoretical model for cultural trauma that purports to have “no geographical or cultural limitation” (Alexander 10). However, their research is limited in several ways: first, geographically, because there are two chapters on the Holocaust, one on postcommunist societies, and one on American slavery. (The editors mention in passing other traumatic circumstances such the dictatorships in Argentina and Chile and the events of September 11, 2001.) Second, their approach takes into account mainly Western constructions of trauma, and does not take into account how ethnic minorities in non-Western nations construct or voice trauma. One might even argue that cultural trauma not only produces cognitive responses to catastrophic events but also has a physiological reactions, even generations later. Third, given the emphasis placed on the imagination in the construction of trauma, one source of collective trauma narrative that Alexander and coeditors do not engage fully is literature and film. Last, they claim cultural trauma to be “an empirical, scientific concept” (1). But how does one measure cultural trauma?

Furthermore, Olick and Wulf Kansteiner raise concerns about trauma studies that I take into account in selecting and analyzing texts. Olick notes the general tendency in trauma studies to aggregate individual traumatic experiences: “collected diagnoses” often become “collective diagnoses” (345). Kansteiner further discloses the conceptual limitations of trauma and its dubious use in cultural studies: “writings on cultural trauma display a disconcerting lack of historical and moral precision, which aestheticizes violence and conflates the experiences of

victims, perpetrators and spectators of traumatic events” (193). According to Kansteiner, cultural critics have overused the trauma metaphor, leading to reductive critical thinking:

Considering our culture exclusively under the sign of trauma leaves us with two options: either we pursue a process of cultural working through (for instance, through our own contributions to Holocaust education and trauma studies), or we watch our societies suffer from the adverse consequences that the denial of cultural trauma allegedly entails (for instance, our continued self-destruction as a result of the eternal return of the repressed). (215)

Despite noticing the limitations of trauma studies, Kansteiner reminds us of the rarity of traumatic events and “that most representations of trauma, including mass media products and the writings of cultural critics, have domesticating and utterly untraumatic effects that are nevertheless worth studying” (216). All in all, he suggests responsible scholarship and careful use or avoidance of the trauma trope.

In the dissertation I hope to contribute to the field by examining Peruvian cultural production about urban and rural populations. Mark R. Cox, Juan Carlos Ubilluz, Alexandra Hibbet, and Víctor Vich provide panoramic views on narratives about the violence of 1980s and 1990s from the perspectives of Andean writers and academics. Anne Lambright focuses on the trauma of the armed conflict and *lo andino* in postconflict cultural production, and she intuits the emergence of postconflict identity politics. I evade dichotomized identities and argue that the Peruvian internal armed conflict is a cultural trauma that affects all Peruvians. The armed conflict was a response to insidious trauma, which Laura Brown defines as the cumulative effect of everyday racism, sexism, displacement, and other forms of oppression (107). She notes that insidious trauma is not outside the normal range of experience for most people (107). In the

Peruvian case, I would agree that oppression and racism are commonplace in Peru and had been well documented by writers like Mariátegui and José María Arguedas and well known, but mainstream society accepted these social hierarchies and their inequalities as the norm.

Unrest in the Andes went unheeded, and grievances went unaddressed, making the step toward a violent revolution something of a final resort. The symbolic, physical, and institutional violence—at the hands of both the insurgency and the state—that took place from 1980 to 2000 marked the lives of all Peruvians and future generations. The act of creating national narrative through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, memory projects, museums, and other cultural production emphasizes the need for this to be remembered so that it would not happen again. Also, this history should be classified as a cultural trauma because, while in the 1980s and 1990s narratives identified the Shining Path as the primary offender, in recent cultural production that movement is relegated to but a mere shadow as the authoritarian state comes under scrutiny. The texts I analyze present claims such as the need to restore trust and foment reconciliation among Peru's diverse citizenry.

The problems with cultural trauma presented by Olick and Kansteiner also raise questions: How are we to interpret the role of authors and cinematographers that try to piece together individual or collective experiences after a destructive experience? Do these artists argue for the emphasis on individual trauma as a representation of collective trauma? What if artists openly use the trope of trauma in their cultural production? How should cultural critics responsibly examine a trauma that disrupts socially or culturally established narratives or identities? In response to Olick's and Kansteiner's warnings, I turn in the next sections to a discussion of resilience, which I have found to be essential when interrogating trauma.

### **The Positive in Trauma Narrative: Resilience**

Trauma, ironically, can build community; as Erikson explains, “trauma shared can serve as a source of communality in the same way that common languages and common cultural backgrounds can. There is a spiritual kinship there, a sense of identity” (*A New Species* 230–31). Members marked by a catastrophic event can join together because of a common experience, from which they then emerge stronger. Caruth also hints at the role resilience plays in trauma narrative and explains that history is “not only the passing on of a crisis but also the passing on of a survival that can only be possessed within a history larger than any single individual or any single generation” (71). Inherent in traumatic experience is the need for a wounded community to pull together after a crisis to give voice to the damaging series of events and eventually move forward. In the study of trauma, there is little discussion of resilience, but it should be an imperative element of trauma studies because it is culturally relative and underscores hope after a harrowing experience. Like cultural trauma, “[r]esilience is only an abstraction and maybe only a metaphor,” yet theorists attempt to measure resilience (Norris et al. 146).

The term *resilience* is used in many fields: mathematics, psychology, anthropology, geography, environmental studies, and communications, for a start. Resilience is the power or ability to return to the original form after being compressed or stretched. Something resilient may bend but will not break. The American Psychological Association explains that resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. It means “bouncing back” from difficult experience [ . . . ] Being resilient does not mean that a person doesn’t experience difficulty or distress. Emotional pain and sadness are common in people who have



suffered major adversity or trauma in their lives. In fact, the road to resilience is likely to involve considerable emotional distress. (Comas-Diaz et al.)

The *DSM-V* further notes that “[c]ultural, ethnic, and racial identities can be sources of strength and group support that enhance resilience [ . . . ] resilience should be assessed in light of the individual’s cultural reference groups” (*American Psychiatric Association*). Resilience therefore varies from culture to culture. Current understandings on resilience accentuate the importance of the individual psyche in relation to his or her social group. Perhaps this is why individual trauma is difficult to separate from collective trauma. Trauma can damage the sense of self and relationship between the self and his or her group, but group culture plays an important role in the recovery of self and collective identity. The resilient individual can experience emotional distress from time to time but still manages to function in everyday life. In theory, one could bounce back after traumatic experience but perhaps may never fully recover from its deepest wounds.

Clinical psychologist George A. Bonanno introduced the controversial notion of resilience to the study of loss and trauma in *The Other Side of Sadness*. Bonanno criticizes trauma theorists who “have been less suspicious about the absence of PTSD but have often ignored and underestimated resilience” (“Loss” 22). Whereas trauma studies tend to focus on negative responses to trauma, Bonanno demonstrates “resilience is the norm rather than the exception” (*The Other Side* 67). Significantly, he addresses differences in Western and non-Western cultures: the former, he argues, places an emphasis on individual feelings and is skeptical about resilience, and the latter “care more about the interactions between people than about what is going on in any one person’s head” (67). He seems to suggest that rituals and personal interactions surrounding death and loss are cultural acts of resilience.

Social scientists have drawn from research in psychology and other fields to demonstrate how communities can be resilient. Social environmentalist W. Neil Adger explores the use of resilience in ecology and carefully explains how this concept can translate to social groups: “[t]he resilience of an ecological system relates to the functioning of the system, rather than the stability of its component populations, or even the ability to maintain a steady ecological state” (“Social and Ecological” 349). Using this model, he defines social resilience “as the ability of groups or communities to cope with external stresses and disturbances as a result of social, political and environmental change” (347). Like ecological resilience, Adger explains that “[s]ocial resilience has economic, spatial and social dimensions” (349) and is measurable through indicators like migration patterns, agricultural production, adaptability of social institutions. Fran H. Norris and coauthors measure a community’s adaptive capacities such as “resources with dynamic attributes” or “objects, conditions, characteristics, and energies that people value” (131). The key to resilience is adaptability, resourcefulness, and a value system. In a 2010 interview, Adger adds that “resilience is a relative concept. It’s not something you can observe directly but you can show that something can become more resilient over time or more or less resilient compared to other referent cases” (Adger, “Interview”). In the study of resilience, it is important to establish the referent and then measure the resilience of an individual and community.

Norris and coauthors begin their model of resilience with stressors “that threaten the well-being or functioning of the individual, organization, neighborhood, community, or society” (131). They understand that trauma affects not only the psychological wellness of individuals but also their community: “We recommend that community-level adaptation be understood as ‘population wellness,’ a high prevalence of wellness in the community, defined as high and non-

disparate levels of mental and behavioral health, role functioning, and quality of life” (133). Population wellness is dependent on individual wellness. For example, Norris and colleagues highlight that “[c]ommunities with high rates of posttraumatic stress disorder or substance abuse or domestic violence or child maltreatment cannot be said to be well” (146). After a disaster, the perceptions of community members about their surroundings can change and may result in challenges, such as the aforementioned, to “quality of life in the community for quite some time” (134). These negative outlooks or individual responses to stressors reveal a great deal about the health of a community. They may have changed as a result of the disaster but not been resilient if a large segment of the population suffers from psychopathology or unhealthy patterns of behavior such as alcoholism or self-harm.

In literary studies there has been little or no focus on resilience, yet I suspect that trauma narratives do contain discourses of resilience. Resilience may alter master narratives of trauma and provide hope. I find that Peruvian cultural production questions whether resilience after catastrophe is possible, and some texts reveal that because of a legacy of injustice, resilience is the only attribute the individual has left. In the event of the failure of states or offenders to make real or symbolic reconciliation, groups may demonstrate their resilience by creating new narratives with strategies to overcome the catastrophic event.

### **The Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

Above I have outlined concepts related to trauma and resilience and demonstrated how these are social constructions. The presentation of what the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) found took place on August 28, 2003, and functions as a metanarrative of the final report. The president of the organization, Salomón Lerner Febres, synthesized the narrative of cultural trauma addressing many of the points that Alexander and coeditors describe

in their theory of cultural trauma. Lerner Febres named the responsible parties for the armed conflict and the lasting effects on Peruvian identity; he then presented these claims to Peruvian citizens and, specifically, to President Alejandro Toledo (2001–06). The twentieth century was “una marca de horror y de deshonra para el Estado y la sociedad peruanos,” and Lerner Febres stressed that all citizens needed to confront this national shame by listening to the results of the 16,986 collected testimonies. All Peruvians, according to him, needed to assume responsibility even though it have been difficult to listen to the truth: “ella es una de las verdades con las que el Perú de hoy tiene que aprender a vivir si es que verdaderamente desea llegar a ser aquello que se propuso cuando nació como República.” He connected a series of traumatic events and the loss of about 69,000 Peruvians and as a mark on collective identity, “la identidad lesionada.” Lerner Febres’s speech contained a discourse of cultural trauma and the responsibility of reconciliation was said to fall squarely on the body politic.

The TRC marks a shift in focus from the Shining Path to the authoritarian state and an emphasis on the impervious citizenry in denial. The initial rejection of memory projects and the need to build a collective memory prompted an investigation into disappearances, injustice, impunity, mass graves, rape, and torture. The report reveals not only violence committed by the Shining Path but also human rights violations committed by the counterinsurgency: “el del asesinato, la desaparición y la tortura en gran escala, y el de la indolencia, la ineptitud y la indiferencia de quienes pudieron impedir esta catástrofe humanitaria y no lo hicieron.” There was “un doble escándolo” that shifted attention from the Shining Path<sup>7</sup> to the authoritarian state and those bystanders who turned a blind eye to counterinsurgency tactics. Throughout his

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<sup>7</sup> Lerner Febres only mentions the Shining Path in one paragraph. The crimes associated with the Communist Party of Peru are different from the ones committed by the state above: “[e]l cautiverio de poblaciones indefensas, el maltrato sistemático, el asesinato cruel como forma de sentar ejemplos e infundir terror, conformaron para esta organización una metodología del terror puesta en práctica al servicio de un objetivo: la conquista del poder, considerado superior a la vida humana, mediante una revolución cruel.”

speech, Lerner Febres shamed the government, institutions, and members of society who allowed this mass violence to occur and who rejected or silenced testimonies of victims: “ya no será posible acallar los testimonios aquí recogidos y puestos a disposición de la Nación entera.”

Lerner Febres ended his presentation of the final report by explaining that the narrative contained both negative and positive elements:

Debo añadir, sin embargo, que en sus páginas se recoge también el testimonio de numerosos actos de coraje, gestos de desprendimiento, signos de dignidad intacta que nos demuestran que el ser humano es esencialmente digno y magnánimo [ . . . ] Así se encuentra quienes enfrentaron el desarraigo para defender la vida. Ahí se encuentran: en el centro de nuestro recuerdo.

He emphasized the positive in the narrative of trauma as the core of memory. Core is an appropriate word and image to describe the relationship between the negative and positive of trauma narrative. While most of the report’s substance concerns the horror and the atrocities, the core contains the seeds that hold the narrative together and keep it (and the readers) from falling apart. Readers of the report have to chew through the testimony of the victims and digest it, but at the same time they will encounter the resilience of the human spirit.

Lerner Febres called this a transformative period that would allow Peruvians to build an inclusive future. He used an illness metaphor to describe the contents of the TRC report: “éste es una enfermedad que acarrea daños tangibles e imperecederos,” and he implicitly communicated the need for the symptoms to be known. He posited that “la necesaria recuperación de la nación” was possible: from the national shame, a future could be built. He emphasized that the moment was one of “justicia: de reconocer y reparar en lo posible el sufrimiento de las víctimas, y de someter a derecho a los perpetradores [*sic*] de los actos de violencia, es, en fin, tiempo de

reconciliación nacional.” The TRC report is therefore crucial to addressing gaps in collective memory, the reformulation of identity, and moving forward after national trauma. It is a step that recognizes what is needed to heal even though justice in transitional societies may be difficult to attain.

The TRC has been crucial to creating a space to discuss the 1980s and 1990s as well as the effects of the violence in the present day, but the report still has its critics. Lambright argues that the TRC takes a paternalistic stance toward Andean populations (“Transitional Justice”). Journalist Angel Pez reveals that justice is slow to reach villages in the Andes, if it ever does (n.p.), and journalist Ramiro Escobar has argued that justice in Peru has been backward because military officers accused of violating human rights quickly sued Lerner Febres for “falsehood or ‘general misrepresentation’” (n.p.). While the TRC does deserve some criticism, Leslie Bayers observes that it succeeded in bringing “renewed optimism, increased social activism, and the rebuilding of communities” (159). I tend to agree with the latter sentiment, for several reasons. I do not find the testimonies of people afflicted by the conflict to be paternalistic, at least not like the ventriloquism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They are paternalistic chiefly in the sense that the writers of the report assume that all victims will want legal retribution. Second, postconflict issues do not have one remedy. This may mean that victims and offenders may need to transcend (and have transcended) through their own means the injustice they faced, which incidentally takes away the paternalistic tones of the TRC. I also believe that the TRC began a dialogue about postconflict Peru. It is no wonder that cultural production engages the TRC and brings its testimonies to life. Fiction makes the testimonies of Peruvians harmed by the conflict and issues of pending justice accessible. Contemporary Peruvian cultural production, acting as a barometer, engages and questions the themes put forth the final report and unresolved trauma or

pending issues in postconflict Peru.

### **Contemporary Peruvian Narrative**

Recent fiction in Peru draws upon figures and events during the internal conflict of the 1980s and 1990s and also after the TRC's publication—and most of these fiction authors and cinematographers focus on the relationship between Peruvian citizens, insurgent groups, and the authoritarian state. The traumatic effects of the armed conflict in cultural production are relatively unexplored in contemporary Peruvian narrative, so I am concerned with the ways in which different narratives of cultural trauma conceptualize the legacy of these events in Peruvian memory. This project encompasses a varied corpus of texts that deal with the Shining Path, the authoritarian government, and civil society. These selected works draw together narratives about the Peruvian cultural trauma by using fiction as the medium to deliver testimonies, court hearings, the TRC reports, and other evidence. These texts are representative of different groups that have either shared narratives of trauma from their regions or taken on the trauma of another group. I have chosen first to emphasize and demonstrate a shift in the discourse about the armed conflict in the 1980s and 1990s to the period after the fall of Fujimori in 2000 and the release of the TRC in 2003. I have also selected several narratives of cultural trauma that put forth both men's and women's perspectives from different regions in Peru about the role of the Shining Path and the physical, institutional, and sexual violence that permeated the Andean highlands, and in some cases, Lima. These texts do not alone encapsulate the past, but they do represent a history that is not over, that has repercussions, and whose traumatic consequences are evolving and being reconsidered now in the process of transitional justice. Through an understanding of the ways in which this corpus constructs Peruvian cultural trauma, I aspire to offer a more nuanced understanding of the wound inflicted on Peruvian identity and how these texts engage

discourses of distress and cultural resilience.

Philologists Antonio Cornejo Polar, Jorge Cornejo Polar, and Cox have been paramount in creating a literary history of Peruvian literature. Antonio Cornejo Polar early on observed in narrative silences about pivotal moments in Peru “no deja de ser curioso el silenciamiento casi total de los hechos históricos más concretos o importantes, como la reforma agraria de 1969 o la preparación e inicio de la ‘guerra popular’ que Sendero Luminoso declara en 1980” (18). He also predicts that “es posible que de esa hirviente y actualísima historia surja más tarde una nueva narrativa” (18). Jorge Cornejo Polar, who continues the work of Antonio Cornejo Polar, enumerates poetry, novels, and theater published mainly from 1970 to 1999. He points out the effects the period of terrorism had on Peruvian literature: “la abundancia de obras y la diversidad de discursos narrativos en una escala jamás vista en nuestra historia” (274). He also observes that literature in the 1980s, if it addresses the conflict, does so indirectly (266).<sup>8</sup> However, Jorge Cornejo Polar argues that narrative published in the 1990s, like the novels of Vargas Llosa and Oscar Colchado, tend to portray the breakdown of society:

Pero ahora tiene otro rostro en el cual la anomia, la informalidad (no como impulso imaginativo que ayuda a solucionar problemas sino como simple y agobiante desorden), el desencanto, el decaimiento de los patrones morales se combinan con la pobreza que no cede, la desocupación creciente. (274)

Jorge Cornejo Polar neatly outlines tendencies in Peruvian literature, but there is still much research to be done on what these texts and those produced in the 2000s mean.

De Vivanco affirms that discourses in fiction about the armed conflict become part of the “mapa epistemológico de la nación peruana, base de la distribución simbólica y efectiva del

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<sup>8</sup> Although Antonio Cornejo Polar does not mention film production, it is worthwhile to note that *La boca del lobo* (1988) by Francisco Lombardi engages the violence, insanity, and fear that dominated this time period.



valor y del poder” (7). She reminds us that all types of fiction are not solely an imaginative exercise for the sole purpose of pleasure and enjoyment:

la literatura se concibe no solo como un producto imaginario que representa el mundo y que contribuye a configurar, sino también como un ejercicio reflexivo y metarreflexivo, en tanto que posibilita el examen y el debate de los discursos sobre el Perú, los lugares ideológicos desde los que se enuncian dichos discursos y las consecuencias políticas de tales posicionamientos. (7)

De Vivanco affirms that fiction carries with it an ideology and allows for an examination of Peruvian society and politics. While I recognize the fact that fiction will shape readers by providing them space to engage in (meta)reflective exercises about Peru, I also caution assumptions made about an author’s ideology or geography. There seems to be tendency to label a text with an ideology and then work backward to find the evidence to support it. Instead I propose examining these texts as representations of complex networks of interactions in which hierarchies of race, gender, and ethnicity intersect. As an alternative, I examine that which paradoxically separates and unites Peruvians: traumatic experience and resilience. Nonetheless, I do agree with de Vivanco that contemporary Peruvian fiction about the armed conflict sparks a heated debate about what Peru is and what it means to be Peruvian.

Taking up these types of identity questions, Cox offers a detailed panorama of Peruvian narrative written during or after the conflict up until 2008:

Por lo tanto, al estudiar esta narrativa, es importante tener en cuenta que no se trata de obras aisladas de un contexto mayor, sino que son parte de un debate, a veces agudo, de diferentes individuos y grupos acerca de qué es el Perú, qué es la literatura, y qué significa ser escritor. (“Bibliografía” 228)

Cox accentuates the moral and ethical role of the writer in relation to identity in the postconflict period and the intense debate surrounding these issues. Furthermore, Cox divides Peruvian narrative into three periods: the first begins in the mid-1980s and ends with the capture of Guzmán in 1992. He also observes that most publishers do not publish many books related to the internal conflict until after the incarceration of the Shining Path leader (229). *Escritores* and *obras criollas* characterize the next period from 1993 to 1999 and include the work of Vargas Llosa and Alonso Cueto. Cox observes, “Desde el 2000, que inicia el tercer período, aparecen el 51 % de los cuentos y el 44% de las novelas, y hay una lucha más intensa por parte de individuos y grupos por definir la narrativa de la violencia política y quiénes son sus escritores principales” (229). Central to this timeline is the dearth of Andean authors published in the first and second period, although Cox notes that during the third period there are more publications by authors from the Andes (229).

It is important to note the ideological debate surrounding *lo andino* in Peruvian literature. *Lo andino* is an intellectual construct and a complex object of study. Assuming it exists, I understand it as a monologic construction rooted in the sixteenth century that continues to manifest itself in contemporary cultural production. It has been suitable for discussing texts that deal with the Andean, because it is a way of seeing, a mode of representation, and informs the construction of Andean imaginaries. *Lo andino* permits the exploration of the construction of stereotypes and prejudices and is a framework for appreciating how the Andes and Andean are appropriated to express personal, regional, or national tensions. The implications of said representations are manifold and critical. Although discussion on *lo andino* has helpful to some extent been in identifying problems in scholarship and cultural production on the Andes, I find most criticism on *lo andino* to be limiting, problematic, circuitous, and repetitive. It

unintentionally narrows and obfuscates our views on the Andes and cultural production because it foments difference and does not resolve intercultural conflict. Limiting criticism to *lo andino* negates human suffering and resilience in the face of that suffering, and it is unjust to bury these discourses in a dichotomous discussion about identity politics.

In the late eighties, Antonio Cornejo Polar and Luis Fernando Vidal identified two main ideological stances with respect to *lo andino*: “Parece haber, en este orden de cosas, dos ejes fundamentales: uno tiene que ver con la desestructuración del viejo orden social peruano y el otro con la construcción del nuevo orden” (15). The ideological conflict between so-called *criollo* and Andean writers can be summed up through the paternal metaphors: followers of Vargas Llosa are *criollo*, and followers of Arguedas are Andean. Writers like Dante Castro and Ricardo Virhuez Villafane and critics like Cox tend to refer to authors from Lima or coastal urban centers as *criollos*. Essentially, a *criollo* is an outsider to the Andes, has European tendencies, favors the urban over the rural, and may reside in Lima. Andean writers call Vargas Llosa a *criollo* or *limeño* writer, despite his being an *arequipeño*, because he lived in Lima and puts forth a pessimistic representation of *lo andino* in his publications. Vargas Llosa and his followers, it is argued, propose modernization as a solution to Andean “backwardness” and “Otherness” and thereby invalidate and reject the Andean way of life. In contrast to Vargas Llosa, followers of Arguedas intimately portray Andean indigenous, values, and traditions and use the Quechua language. Self-professed Andean authors, who live in the Highlands, feel that they value, respect, and understand indigenous cultures more than an author who resides in a coastal, urban space. Texts by Andeans criticize the feudal society that keeps indigenous peoples at the base of the socioeconomic hierarchy. Andean writers also claim that authors like Vargas Llosa, Roncagliolo, and Cueto allegedly present provincial views of the country, perpetuate stereotypes, and

emphasize the dichotomy of civilization and barbarism in their works. Virhuez Villafane explains that *criollos* “conocen muy poco el Perú, tiene una posición ideológica definitivamente de derecha y gozan del favor de los medios de comunicación y del éxito editorial” and adds that “[u]na característica adicional es que tratan común, caro para los peruanos, que presentan con irreverencia y profundo desconocimiento: el de la violencia política” (31). In contrast to *criollo* authors and more like Arguedas, Andean writers feel they know what Peru is really like and have more authority to represent Andean indigenous cultures and the armed conflict. Nonetheless, these reductive labels, *criollo* and *Andean*, appear to intensify ideological, personal, and regional differences.

In *Sasachakuy Tiempo: Memoria y Pervivencia* and *Pachaticray*, Cox presents a series of essays by Andean writers, ex-insurgents, and academics reflecting on the literature about the armed conflict. In the introduction, Cox expresses his reasons for *Sasachakuy Tiempo*: “Lamentablemente, hay poca crítica literaria acerca de estas obras y algunos estudios deficientes, revelando una falta de investigación y conocimiento del material” (60). He provides a general overview about the ethics of representing violence and indigenous peoples and their beliefs as well as rivalries between *criollo* and Andean writers. Even though it does not focus on any close readings, it is a step toward understanding the representation of the internal conflict and how *criollo* and Andean writers represent the internal conflict.

*Criollo* and Andean narratives written during the 1980s and 1990s tend to focus on the Shining Path in the Andes and use an Andeanist lens. De Vivanco observes the tendency to orientalize the conflict in Peruvian narrative:

El hecho de que el conflicto surgiera y se desarrollara principalmente en la zona andina hizo que ciertos sectores de la sociedad peruana (ligados fundamentalmente a una

tradicón conservadora, autoritaria y/o privilegiada económicamente), se negaran a indagar en las razones históricas o políticas del conflicto, adhiriendo más bien a la tesis del irracionalismo de Sendero (locura, mal absoluto, fanatismo, deshumanización) o al esencialismo cultural de los Andes (primitivismo, telurismo, naturaleza violenta de los indios). Las novelas de Vargas Llosa, como mostraré a continuación, caen exactamente en este lado del campo de batalla, enajenando un “efecto-valor” que generó, y sigue haciéndolo, rechazo en amplios sectores de la opinión pública y de la elite intelectual de la sociedad peruana. (11)

Narrative in the 1980s and 1990s tends to focus on or include a trip to the Andean Highlands. These primarily *criollo* works engage the actual conflict or its aftereffects, and some create types (indigenous victims, violent patriotic soldiers, remorseful insurgents, deflowered maidens) that speak to the chaotic and confusing nature of the armed conflict. Two examples of this tendency are *Lituma en los Andes* (1993) by Vargas Llosa and *La hora azul* (2005) by Cueto. The former has been read as a text that orientalizes the conflict and put at odds the “civilized” capital and “barbaric” highlands. The Civil Guardsmen, Lituma and Tomasito, are at the “end of the world” and awaiting their imminent death by the hands of insurgents or the mysterious villagers of Naccos. The latter includes the protagonist, Adrián, traveling from Lima to Ayacucho to learn about the violence that began in and consumed the province. The motive for his trip is to find the woman, Miriam, whom his father raped. *La hora azul* romanticizes the rape narrative, like the foundational romances of the nineteenth century, as the protagonist tries to reconcile with—and eventually falls in love with—the woman his father held captive and impregnated, and who had given birth to a son, Miguel. Although *La hora azul* represents the Andes as a space where “strange things happen,” the novel pairs reconciliation and social responsibility—after Miriam’s

suicide, Adrián takes care of his half-brother, Miguel—as a symbolic atonement for the effects of physical and institutional violence on Andean populations. In 1997, Andean writer Colchado—from Huallanca in the region of Ancash—published *Rosa Cuchillo*, a novel that would later become a popular drama in Peru. In *Rosa Cuchillo*, he focuses on the cultural essentialism of the Andes in a more thorough and positive light than Vargas Llosa or Cueto. The novel is set during the internal conflict in an Andean cosmos, where the dead must atone for their sins in order to reach Janaq Pacha, the Andean paradise. Colchado presents an apocalyptic and millenarian understanding of the conflict between the Shining Path and Peruvian military, which suggests that a *pachakuti* is necessary to invert the feudal order in place since the colonial period in the Andean highlands.

I am skeptical of these “stable” categories, *criollo* and Andean, because their assumptions form the basis of so much criticism. If anything, these categories are highly problematic—not stable at all. The term *criollo* is used loosely to describe anyone not from the Andes; the term *Andean* encompasses mostly the upper-class Andeans who have had university educations and whose primary language is Spanish. Indigenous production, on the other hand, is not widely circulated or available to mass audiences. This binary, furthermore, does not allow one to examine points of contacts between authors of both categories, and it assumes that their texts are naturally polarized. All writers have a place, and (since they are precisely that—perspectives, not definitive statements) all perspectives on the conflict should be valid for publication. Polarized allegiances foment antagonism between diverse cultural groups in Peru and result in an unproductive dialogue about the internal conflict. Instead of focusing on what the conflict meant to different sectors of society or to the whole of Peruvian identity, critics and authors alike bicker about editorial success, the politics of representation, and the ethics of appropriation. In the

postconflict period, the question that I believe they should be engaging is, how will narrative help shape the collective memory of all Peruvians and move the country from *manchay tiempo* to a period of dealing with the “truth”?

In some types of narrative, authors address the internal conflict obliquely and do not engage *lo andino* like the authors above. A good example of literature that addresses the conflict indirectly is the extensive literary production of Patricia de Souza, an author from Ayacucho who has been largely critically overlooked and whose contributions are crucial to understanding how authors construct memory and individual identity during and after conflict. She explains that in her novels, “el contexto histórico está, en varias novellas [ . . . ] yo creo que me interesaron las patologías que esto producía en el lenguaje, una incapacidad a decir y pensar ese tiempo” (Souza, “Mail?”). Her first short novel, *Cuando llegue noche* (1994), explores the tumultuous love affair of a young woman with a young man involved in the drug trade and everyday life during a period of national unrest. In *La mentira de un fauno* (1998), she uses the postconflict period as a background to explore the pursuit of defective identities and the violence of memory. The story features a dialogue between a writer, Sofián, and a former insurgent who takes on the identity of an Italian-Peruvian doctor, Manuel. De Souza does not identify herself as an Andean author and, perhaps because she has not entered the ideological debate, her corpus of work remains relatively unknown.

In the author’s note to *La mentira de un fauno*, de Souza explains her role as an author and the effects the internal conflict has had on her and Peru:

Este año, en que he trabajado en mi novela, ha sido difícil para mí y para los que han estado cerca durante todo este tiempo. Trabajar en ella fue también revivir ciertos acontecimientos dolorosos para mi historia individual y de mi país. La violencia, la crisis

económica e institucional, así como la falta de un sistema de valores que permita llevar a cuentas todo aquello era y sigue siendo una de mis preocupaciones mayores. Hay un capítulo que se ha cerrado en la historia de este país. Una historia que ha lacerado nuestra sensibilidad, que no se mueve a la misma velocidad de nuestra memoria y nos deja regazados, lejanos, con el amargo sabor en la boca de no saber si hemos comprendido para poder seguir adelante sin la sensación de convertirnos en seres invisibles, castrados o simplemente intemporales. (249)

In this statement from 1997, de Souza keenly observes the closing of one chapter in Peruvian history and the opening of another that deals with the metaphorical lacerations inflicted upon collective society. She emphasizes the violence of memory for the individual and the nation, and the need for someone to bear the responsibility for this turbulent historical period. De Souza prefigures the literature to come in the 2000s—including her own allegories of the internal conflict *El último cuerpo de Ursula* (2009) and *Vergüenza* (2014). Contemporary cultural production, as de Souza had anticipated, identifies the responsible actor and focuses on these metaphors—the wound, the bitter taste of memory, the mark (invisibility, castration, atemporality) on cultural identity, and configures this trauma as an impediment to moving forward. De Souza, one who does not partake in the ideological debates surrounding *lo andino*, identifies the unifying thread between *criollo* and Andean texts: the trauma that has lacerated *us*.

As I have outlined above, narrative in the 1980s and 1990s focus on the chaos, violence, and insanity as well as depict the conflict as complicated with different types of actors seeking to enact their vision for Peru. Other authors, such as de Souza, use the internal conflict as a background in the exploration of subjectivity, among other issues. Cultural production after the TRC investigation from 2001 to 2003, however, opens a new chapter in Peruvian narrative that



underscores the effects of the violence, presents a discourse of trauma and resilience, and focuses on the legacy of the counterinsurgency, impunity, and injustice on all sectors of Peruvian society. I have organized the dissertation to reflect this shift from binary representations of the conflict to the whole of Peruvian identity. In all the chapters, I analyze how these novels and films communicate issues explored by the TRC.

The first chapter is an attempt to reconcile *criollo* and Andean perspectives on the internal conflict, and for this reason I examine the moral imagination in *Lituma en los Andes* by Vargas Llosa and *Rosa Cuchillo* by Colchado. These texts exemplify the struggle for memory in literary fiction, which, as de Vivanco reminds us, forms part of the discourses that make up Peru. Previous critics allege that *Lituma en los Andes* emphasizes the culpability of Andeans by representing them as backward and ignorant and justifies the methods used in the counterinsurgency, while *Rosa Cuchillo* has been read as a text that vindicates the peasantry. I disagree somewhat with both these readings, and in this side-by-side comparison, I argue that the narratives within these novels have points of contact and convey pessimistic moral imaginations about recovery from the trauma of the armed conflict. I use Taussig's concepts—space of death and culture of terror—to analyze the narratives within these texts. *Lituma en los Andes* to a certain degree privileges the third person narrator that focuses on *criollo* Lituma, but I argue that Naccos represents a thirdspace that is neither *criollo* nor Andean but a space of death created by the armed conflict. I examine Adriana's narrative and the role she plays in teaching the villagers to kill their brothers. I interpret her as the embodiment of the space of death and weaver of the culture of terror in Naccos. *Rosa Cuchillo* also portrays the Andes as a space of death in the three narratives by Rosa, Mariano, and Liborio (*tú*). The use of multiple narrative voices represents the difficulty of assessing culpability in the armed conflict, but the punishments

suffered in the Andean space of death—the Ukhu Pacha—communicate that everyone must atone for their transgressions and everyone is guilty. *Rosa Cuchillo*, however, more clearly depicts the manipulation of the peasants by the Shining Path. The novel communicates that the ongoing violence in the Andes needs a *pachakuti* to restore the Andean peasant to the top of the social hierarchy. In spite of assumed ideological differences, *Lituma en los Andes* and *Rosa Cuchillo* depict the fratricidal nature of the conflict, the impossibility of a multicultural nation, and the cyclical nature of violence.

The moral imagination of the armed conflict that I analyze in the first chapter shifts in cultural production during the 2000s. The downfall of Fujimori in the 2000 election and the investigation of the TRC from 2001 to 2003 ended the narrative of violence and conflict conceptualized as Andes versus Lima. Instead of narratives that reveal cyclical violence or focus on presumed binaries, contemporary cultural production questions the effects of violence and engages cultural trauma. These post-Truth texts try to make sense of the internal conflict and its relation to the whole of Peruvian identity. For this reason, in chapter 2, I focus on the role that recent detective fiction has played in constructing and deconstructing Peruvian cultural trauma. Scrutinizing *Abril rojo* [*Red April*] (2006) by Santiago Roncagliolo and *Mientras huya el cuerpo* [*While the Body Flees*] (2012) by Ricardo Sumalavia shows that the protagonists, Félix Chacaltana Saldívar and the unnamed narrator-author from Lima, initially had avoided being socially committed and evaded the topic of the internal conflict. I argue that these texts break with the assumed categories of *criollo* and Andean, deauthorize previous narratives of violence, and lay bare how the truth of the armed conflict has forever altered Peruvian identity. The metaphors of the body are metaphysical reflections on the pressing need to explore the who, what, when, and why of the Peruvian conflict. And, more significantly, the detective-heroes'

sickness explores the question posed by Alexander: what does this have to do with me?

Chapter 3 examines traumatic memory, diaspora, and injustice in the film *Cuchillos en el cielo* (2013), directed by Alberto Durant, and the novel *Ojos de pez abisal* [*Eyes of a Deep-Sea Fish*] (2011) by Ulises Gutiérrez Llantoy. Both the film and the book deal with diasporic communities in Peru or Japan, the problem of truth and legal justice, traumatic memory, and the harms of retributive justice on victims, offenders, and communities. I use a restorative-justice perspective proposed by US practitioner Howard Zehr and the retributive-restorative practices in the highlands of Ayacucho to critically read issues of transitional justice. I argue that both texts expose the harm of retributive justice and propose a need for restorative justice models in postconflict Peru. These texts reveal that the needs of the victim-survivors have not been heard and that offenses and the offenders still have power over their well-being and future. In these texts, the two victim-survivors, Milagros and Zancudo, experience flashbacks, intrusive memories, and fits of rage. Traumatic memories of rape or murder affect them differently, yet they demonstrate their resilience by finding ways to carry on with their lives despite legal and emotional obstacles. Furthermore, both texts expose that former prisoners Milagros and Renán cannot wash off the stigma of being ex-insurgents in postconflict Peru. Although there are hints of rehabilitative practices like job placement, halfway houses, and witness relocation in these cultural productions, a society that stigmatizes, hides, and marginalizes ex-insurgents does not permit the full healing of the harmed individual or the community. However, *Ojos de pez abisal* poses a radical paradigm for reconciliation that does not include legal justice or revenge. This work suggests that listening to the narrative of an offender can help a victim accept trauma as part of his or her identity and relinquish the power the offender holds over the individual. Listening and forgiving the offender becomes a critical part of moving forward in postconflict

Peru.

In chapter 4, I explore postmemory and the postgeneration, employing the terminology of Hirsch and the themes of transgenerational trauma and resilience in the film *La teta asustada* [*The Milk of Sorrow*] by Claudia Llosa. Llosa bases her film largely on research conducted by medical anthropologist Kimberly Theidon in Ayacucho, Peru. The film portrays the real experiences of Quechua women in a society where patriarchal forces often silenced their rape narratives. I aim to demonstrate how the film suggests that the Peruvian internal conflict created a metaphorical primal scene in collective memory. From inside the womb, Fausta claims to have witnessed her mother's rape by soldiers. She relives her mother's trauma, mourns her dead mother, and is unable to bury her mother or the traumatic memory. In order to protect herself from rape, Fausta inserts a potato into her vagina; however, she not only wards off potential rapists but also closes herself off from sexual intimacy. I use derridean theory—working at mourning, introjection, and incorporation—to analyze Fausta's coping with the bequeathal of her mother's memory in a time meant for happiness and weddings. However, I also argue that a mother passes on to her daughter not only cultural trauma but also resilience. The use of song and the Andean cultural metaphor of the potato demonstrates how Fausta learns how to cultivate resilience and take charge of her life. The filmmaker makes a claim directed to Peruvian audiences: that the *tiempo de terrorismo*, referring to state-sponsored physical and sexual violence, affected future generations of Peruvians. Fausta learns to break from, the siren's song, her mother's narrative and formulate her own identity. In contrast to other works that focus on trauma and problematize recovery, healing is possible in the Andean migrant community. Fausta's community is hardworking and prosperous in the shantytowns of Lima. There is joy, plenty of food, and gifts at her cousin's wedding. Through Fausta, we observe her journey to join

the Quechua community in this *otro tiempo*—a time meant for happiness and love. *La teta asustada* represents the cultural resilience of Quechua speakers in renegotiating their identity after fleeing from mass violence in the highlands to urban centers.

In selecting texts for the dissertation, I have consciously selected texts that actively engage metaphors of trauma and resilience. I bear in mind the critical limitations of the cultural trauma metaphor outlined by Kansteiner, who explains the importance of distinguishing between violence and trauma and trauma and identity politics:

Through misappropriation, especially in the humanities, trauma has become a moral untruth. The mere presence of violence, actual or symbolic, is routinely conflated with the presence of trauma, with the result that those exposed to violence are summarily turned into victims. Obviously, it is sometimes impossible to determine at what precise point political advocacy, emotional empathy or philosophical ambition beget metaphorical misrepresentation. The experience of perpetrators and some bystanders of violence may still fit the trauma concept, but the pleasures of spectatorship can no longer be reconciled with even the most flexible notion of trauma. Moral honesty and conceptual and historical precision demand that trauma be first and foremost read from the perspective of the victim and only then carefully expanded to explore other borderline phenomena. Only in this way can we better understand the exceptionally destructive combination of violence and identification at the core of the trauma experience. (214)

Kansteiner critically examines the overuse and irresponsible use of the term *trauma* in literary criticism. The approach presented by Alexander and colleagues addresses some of the problems because they do not focus on discourses of trauma but rather on a narrative that speaks to the traumatic effects of violence on group identity. I do not wish to overuse metaphors or make

blanket statements about the traumatic effects of the Shining Path and authoritarian state; rather, I aim to use cultural trauma and resilience theory to demonstrate how an indelible mark has been left on Peruvian identity and show that this wound needs to be accepted and healed in order to reformulate a future Peruvian identity. While I could have chosen many texts about the armed conflict, I have primarily selected texts that deal with the postconflict period because they engage trauma and resilience by addressing the aftereffects of violence and not necessarily the violence itself. While the literature of the 1980s and 1990s deals with the violence of the armed conflict, cultural production in the 2000s tends to deal with the traumatic effects of physical and sexual violence, counterterrorism policies, impunity, and injustice. I also acknowledge that a bystander, like an author, can take on a narrative of trauma and identify with it or present it as a grave problem to national identity. The narratives selected represent witnesses, victims, and offenders and sometimes complicatedly blur the lines between these actors. These texts represent tensions present in a Peruvian society collectively negotiating the memory of the armed conflict and the place of various subjects in that memory.

## Chapter 1

### The Moral Imagination of the Peruvian Armed Conflict: Spaces of Death in *Lituma en los Andes* and *Rosa Cuchillo*

*Lituma en los Andes* (1993) by Mario Vargas Llosa and *Rosa Cuchillo* (1997)<sup>9</sup> by Óscar Colchado revisit Western and Andean myths and multiple narratives to conjure the fratricidal violence of the 1980s and 1990s. These texts are important because they originate from different geographic locations, and critics have labeled the authors as either *criollo* or Andean.<sup>10</sup> Unlike the novels to be studied in the subsequent chapters, these novels fully engage Andean beliefs and spirituality and in distinctive ways put forth discourses of ethnic essentialism.

The *criollo* narrative proposed by Vargas Llosa in *Lituma en los Andes* has been framed as one that recurs to the binaries of *criollo* and the Andean Other. Deborah Cohn examines the intertextual paradigms of the novel and determines that it is “rooted in nineteenth-century anthropological paradigms for social evolution [in which] societies evolve from a state of savagery through one of barbarism to arrive, finally, at the *telos* of civilization” (29). Under this understanding, the Andean highlands are and always have been in a flux state of savagery or barbarism. The indigenous subject, therefore, is at the center of this backwardness and violence. *Rosa Cuchillo*, conversely, has been framed as a text aligned with the social and political thought of José María Arguedas. Colchado presents the armed conflict within the framework of Andean spirituality and beliefs in a narrative that parallels to *The Inferno* and *The Odyssey*. The multiple narrative voices attest that cultural outsiders called *mistis* indoctrinate and force the peasantry to join the insurgency. Military forces and *ronderos* clash with *terrucos*, which results in fratricide and the destruction of Andean villages. Mariano Ramírez argues that *Rosa Cuchillo* postulates

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<sup>9</sup> *Rosa Cuchillo* received El Premio del Concurso de Novela de la Universidad Federico Villarreal in 1996.

<sup>10</sup> As I explained in the introduction, a *criollo* essentially is an outsider to the Andes, has European tendencies, favors the urban over the rural, and may reside in Lima. Andean authors, who live in the Highlands, feel that they value, respect, and understand indigenous cultures more than an author who resides in a coastal, urban space.

“la posibilidad de un encuentro simbólico con el Otro - criollo, blanco, occidental - en el marco de un renovado *tinkuy*” (543). The *tinkuy*, as Ramirez interprets, is a reconciliatory convergence. By contrast, Anne Lambright reads it as “a model of ‘intercultural communication’ and ‘epistemological decolonization’” (“Towards a Narrative”).

In spite of these frames, James Higgins remarks that in texts labeled *criollo* and Andean “la insurgencia de Sendero Luminoso no es sino un episodio en una larga tradición de levantamientos indígenas, que se remontan hasta el movimiento del Taqui Onqoy del siglo XVII” (106). Characters in *criollo* and Andean texts—despite supposed ideological, regional, and political differences—seem to be victims of the chaotic circumstances of the armed conflict. Regardless of the alleged ideological differences between Vargas Llosa and Colchado, both have defined the Shining Path conflict as “el pueblo indígena [que] sigue repudiando el orden occidental y abrigando la esperanza milenarista de que se restaure el antiguo orden andino” (106). In contrast with Colchado, whose narrative suggests the need for a *pachakuti* (another revolution), the narrative by Vargas Llosa favors and rewards a Western lifestyle, urbanization, and modernization as the cure for the ills of exploitation.

The labels *criollo* and *Andean* and their engrained assumptions are not conducive to a healthy dialogue about the traumatic legacy of the armed conflict. Instead of employing those terms uncritically, I propose the need for reconciliatory criticism that examines *criollo* and Andean authors side by side in order to reveal points of contact. For this reason, in this chapter I compare the representations of the conflict in *Lituma en los Andes* and *Rosa Cuchillo* and argue that these works are not as polarized as critics assume. I focus not on how a “*criollo*” or “Andean” author puts forth a liberal or conservative ideology but on the function of the narratives within each respective text in its portrayal of the Andes and the armed conflict. In



order to carry out this analysis, I turn to the concepts of space of death and culture of terror advanced by anthropologist Michael Taussig. I demonstrate how the novels by Vargas Llosa and Colchado construct the Andes as a space of death through recurring tropes about Andean life and landscape and intertwine Western and Andean myth. I pay close attention to narratives within these texts that elucidate the effects of violence, and then identify the characters that mediate and sustain a culture of terror through the elaboration of myth and silence. Finally, I examine figures of victimhood: the drunk in *Lituma en los Andes* and the dead mother in *Rosa Cuchillo*. These pessimistic, archetypal figures reveal the aftereffects of fratricide. Vargas Llosa and Colchado, each through his own *moral imagination* (using John Paul Lederach's term), identify a legacy of exploitation as the underlying cause of the conflict and draw attention to the idea of cyclical violence.

Of utmost importance to my analysis is Taussig's concept "the space of death." He defines it as a physical space constructed by oral or written narratives using specific literary conventions. In other words, the space of death is "where the social imagination has populated its metamorphosing images of evil and the underworld" (40). Taussig underscores the "colonial reality" of the New World and the need to examine the role of terror in the effort of the hegemonic power to create a new structure (39).<sup>11</sup> In places where there are victimizers and victimized, "these spaces of death blend as a common pool of key signifiers or caption points binding the culture of the conqueror with that of the conquered" and ultimately create a space of transformation for better or worse (40).<sup>12</sup> Terror becomes a "ritual art form" as "the values of

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<sup>11</sup> Taussig presents the construction of a "space of death" to expound on torture practices in Putumayo, a region of the Amazon known as The Devil's Paradise where a British rubber company enslaved and tortured its workers.

<sup>12</sup> Taussig adds, "[w]e make think of the space of death as a threshold, yet it is a wide space whose breadth offers positions of advance as well as of extinction" (39).

civilization” are abandoned and an apocalyptic poetics ensues (51).<sup>13</sup> This tradition is largely European and often overshadows indigenous counterdiscourses (51). Taussig highlights a disquieting dualism in this practice: “Tenaciously embedded in this artful practice is a vast and mystifying Western history and iconography of evil in the imagery of the inferno and the savage—wedded to and inseparable from paradise, utopia and the good” (51). Taussig concerns himself with how narrative can foment terror and the perception of a specific space as deadly through “fearful and confusing images of savagery” (50), which need to be demystified in order to understand their logic and source.<sup>14</sup> Lastly, Taussig argues that stories are more pervasive than ideology because narratives shape the worldview of storytellers and listeners.<sup>15</sup> By exploring narratives about the space of death, we can find tales that contradict the *criollo* and Andean ideologies.

I interpret Taussig’s understanding of the space of death through the notion of a moral imagination put forth by Lederach. Taussig cautions us about the aestheticization of violence, but Lederach views this sort of pessimistic moral imagination as a gift. Lederach asserts that people “from violent geographies” confront the problem of transcendence because they have difficulty “embrac[ing] a history that is present and alive” and recognizing that real change can come from within the community, and, although state led, it ultimately is left up to personal responsibility (58). Lederach calls pessimism a gift because “[c]onstructive pessimism teaches us that distrust is needed as a reality check to assure that change is not superficial” and it “keeps things close to

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<sup>13</sup> Taussig refers to *El señor presidente* by Miguel A. Asturias to explain, “cultures of terror are based on and nourished by silence and myth in which the fanatical stress on the mysterious side of the mysterious flourishes by means of rumor and fantasy woven in a dense web of magical realism” (40).

<sup>14</sup> In order to illustrate his point, Taussig examines the rhetoric in a report by Roger Casement about harvesting rubber trees in Putumayo. He explains that the massive violence the rubber company inflicted upon its workers, namely indigenous peoples, went against the ideology of capitalism. Instead he argues that “the narratives are in themselves evidence of the process where by a culture of terror was created and sustained” (45).

<sup>15</sup> Taussig elucidates, “[w]hile much attention is given to ‘ideology’ in the social sciences, virtually none as far as I know is given to the fact that people delineate their world, including its large as well as its microscale politics, in stories and story-like creations and very rarely, if ever, in ideologies (as customarily defined)” (50).

the hard reality that must be changed” (61). Returning to *Lituma en los Andes* and *Rosa Cuchillo*, both texts construct a space of death that deals with systemic and physical violence, communicates distrust, and reveals the difficulty of past and future relations among Peru’s citizenry. These texts put forth a valuable and constructive, although pessimistic, moral imaginations of the internal conflict.

Using this understanding of Taussig and Lederach, I assert that the moral imagination in each texts employs a mixture of truth, myth, and silence in order to explore “images of evil and the underworld” of the armed conflict (40). Although the Shining Path revolt is different from the terror of colonialism that Taussig describes, an examination of texts that construct the space of death and culture of terror may broaden our understanding of the Andes and its representation in fiction. *Lituma en los Andes* and *Rosa Cuchillo*—albeit differently and with distinct goals in mind—implicate the Andes as a space of death where a culture of terror prevails. Both texts produce narratives that confusingly bind the hegemonic and subaltern Other as well as the Shining Path. The hegemonic culture and Andean people mirror the brutality, and all actors are complicit in the violence. These texts convey similar pessimistic moral imaginations when revealing how the Shining Path transformed Peru into a space where fratricide and distrust reign and involvement in the conflict is punished.

### ***Lituma en los Andes: The Criollo Perspective on the Space of Death***

The action of *Lituma en los Andes* takes place during the 1980s. Corporal Lituma is part of the Civil Guard and has been assigned to Naccos,<sup>16</sup> a small, failing mining town in the Andes. While he works with guardsman Tomás Carreño, the two speculate about their imminent deaths and also about a series of disappearances possibly related to Shining Path activity in the region.

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<sup>16</sup> Unlike the cities mentioned in the novel—like Lima, Tingo María, Ayacucho, and Piura—there is no village of Naccos in Peru. The name refers to the Aegean Island, Naxos. In Greek mythology, it is on this island where Dionysus was born and he wed Ariadne.

From the onset, Adriana, witch and cantina owner repeatedly tells him, “Le dije lo que vi. Que lo iban a sacrificar para aplacar a los malignos que tantos daños causan en la zona. Y que lo habían escogido a él porque era impuro” (31).<sup>17</sup> It is under these circumstances that Lituma learns about Andean beliefs governing mountain spirits, the *apus* that require human sacrifices, and *pishtacos* (fat and blood suckers). Lituma is skeptical about these entities, yet he is curious about them and what they mean in relation to the disappeared. None of the villagers want to talk about the men who went missing: Pedro Tinoco, Casimiro Huarcaya, and Medardo Llantac (alias Demetrio Chanca).<sup>18</sup> Lituma suspects that Adriana and her husband, Dionisio, are involved but cannot prove it. Slowly, and with support from the Danish anthropologist Paul Stirmsson (alias, Escarlatina), he realizes that the three victims must have been sacrificed to the *apus* in order to prevent a *huayo* (“avalanche”). Even though other characters confirm his suspicions, he has no evidence. When he does hear a testimony and the rationale behind the human sacrifices, Lituma is indignant and wishes he had never pursued the matter in the first place.

As a whole, the first part of *Lituma en los Andes* includes stories, told from a third-person narrator’s point of view, of the French couple stoned to death; the murder of Sra. d’Harcourt; the mute Indian, Pedro Tinoco; the governor of Andamarca, Medrardo Llantac; and the albino Indian peasant, Casimiro Huarcaya. In part 2 appears the first-person narration of Adriana about her experiences with *pishtacos* and her union with Dionisio. Each chapter in both parts has a tripartite structure that begins and ends with a third-person, limited narration that centers on

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<sup>17</sup> Although Deborah Cohn calls the novel a “murder mystery” (27), I hesitate to classify it under detective fiction for various reasons. Readers know that the villagers of Naccos were involved in the disappearances. Adriana even tells him that the men were sacrificed but Lituma does not believe her.

<sup>18</sup> Women also have disappeared from Naccos. Lituma asks about the disappearance of the wife of Demetrio Chanca and the woman that reported the disappearance of Casmiro Huarcaya: “¿Y por qué se habrán desaparecido las dos mujeres también?” (26). This reminds us of the novel’s patriarchal discourse. Adriana in the fourth part of her narrative comments on this fact: “Por qué extrañarse de que Naccos se quedara sin mujeres. Ellas aguantaban la embestida de los malos espíritus, ellas mantenían la vida y la prosperidad del pueblo” (239). Were they sacrificed or were they part of the women that left the failing village like Adriana suggests?

Lituma. The first section narrates the present situation in Naccos: the villagers, the cantina, and the threat of the Shining Path. The middle portion covers events that unfold in other parts of the Andes and provides readers with some of the characters' background stories. Then the third section abruptly shifts from stories about the deceased or disappeared to Carreño telling Lituma about Mercedes: their romantic escape and tragic parting.

*Lituma en los Andes* has been framed as a novel about *criollos* (mis)encountering Andean Otherness. However, these dichotomized identities, *criollo* and Andean, are insufficient to address the representation of the armed conflict. The encounters among the Shining Path, villagers, and military results in the creation of thirdspace, using the concept of Edward Soja. I argue that Naccos represents an imagined place that is neither *criollo* nor Andean but what I call the space of death. When the apocalyptic poetics and images of savagery in the novel are analyzed, it becomes clear that all the characters construct Naccos as a space of death in which various actors face-off to transform it. After that analysis, I examine the third-person narrator who focuses on the *criollo* Lituma, which provides an outsider's view as to how the Andes has become a transformed space where violence has become the norm. Next, I draw attention to the narrative told by Adriana and argue that she is neither indigenous nor *criollo* but rather the epitome of a clash between people in the Andes and the Shining Path. I underscore that she is the embodiment of space of death and the weaver of the culture of terror. Lastly, I parse the conversation between Lituma and the drunken *serrucho*, making that case that the revelation of human sacrifice and cannibalism speaks not to the politics of representing *lo andino* but rather to the fratricidal nature of the armed conflict. *Lituma en los Andes* allows us to observe how the internal conflict transformed the logic of Peruvian culture, and it does not reiterate the typical binary model.

Taking into account the narrative as a whole, from its inception, *Lituma en los Andes* renders the Andes a space of death through an apocalyptic poetics and confusing images of savagery. Inevitably, in the boundaries between the Shining Path and people in the Andes are blurred. The novel commences in Naccos, with a Quechua woman reporting the disappearance of her husband, Demetrio Chanca. After filing a declaration and testifying that she had not heard about the Shining Path, Carreño tells Lituma bluntly, “Le voy a decir una cosa. Usted y yo no saldremos vivos de aquí. Nos tienen cercados, para qué engañarnos” (6). Adriana, a bourgeois and another enemy of the Shining Path,<sup>19</sup> reinforces his pessimism: “—Si ellos quieren matarnos, nadie se lo impedirá—murmuró—. Lo mismo si quieren ajusticiarlos a ustedes, por supuesto. Eso lo sabe muy bien, cabo. Ustedes y nosotros somos iguales en eso, estamos vivos de puro milagro” (38). The Shining Path encircles the Civil Guardsmen station in Naccos. Carreño refers to Naccos as “un fin del mundo” (7) and the narrator and other characters refer to the Andes as “sierra de mierda” (180) or “la boca del lobo” (88). By being assigned to Naccos, the guardsmen feel demoralized: because any one of these villagers could be an insurgent, their superiors have sentenced the guardsmen to death. The insurgency seems to be an invisible, anonymous, and unpredictable force that on a whim could destroy Carreño, Lituma, Adriana, and Naccos.

*Lituma en los Andes* also borrows from the Christian myth about humanity’s first disobedience and expulsion from the earthly paradise. Lituma and Carreño both have been transferred to Naccos as “punishment.” The godfather of Carreño sent him from Tingo María to the Andes because he murdered a drug trafficker and ran away with the prostitute, Mercedes. At

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<sup>19</sup> While interrogating Adriana about the disappeared, Lituma tells her, “Yo sólo quiero averiguar lo de esos tres. ¿Está ya Sendero Luminoso en Naccos? Mejor saberlo. Lo que les pasó a ellos podría pasarle a cualquiera. A usted misma y a su marido, doña Adriana. ¿No ha oído que los terrucos castigan los vicios? ¿Que azotan a los chupacos? Imagínese lo que les harían a Dionisio y a usted, que viven emborrachando a la gente. Estamos aquí para protegerlos a ustedes, también” (33).

the end of *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* by Vargas Llosa, Lituma discovers who killed Palomino and expects a promotion, but due to mistrust in the institution, his commanding officers do not believe him, and they transfer him to the Andes. Returning to *Lituma en los Andes*, Carreño says, “A veces pienso si a usted y a mí nos han mandado aquí al puro sacrificio” (7). Naccos is the antithesis of paradise. Instead, it is a sacrificial altar; the Civil Guardsmen are the offerings, implying they have been sent to their demise—and no one leaves the space of death.

The theme of paradise lost positions the Andes as hell, exaggerating Piura’s resemblance to paradise. Lituma says, “La sierra es infernal” (57) and yearns for his costal home and friends that “vivían en su memoria como un paraíso perdido” (152). His first nostalgic memory of home appears immediately after Carreño tells him they are probably going to die in the Andes. Lituma questions his fate in such an inhospitable place:

¿Qué hacía en medio de la puna, entre serruchos hoscos y desconfiados que se mataban por la política y para colmo, desaparecían? ¿Por qué no estaba en su tierra? Se imaginó rodeado de cervezas en el Río-Bar, entre los inconquistables, sus compinches de toda la vida, en una cálida noche piurana con estrellas, vales y olor a cabras y algarrobo. Un arrebató de tristeza le destempló los dientes. (5)

He imagines the starry, warm evenings and trees and even the smell of the *inconquistables*.

Lituma wants to be with his type of people and not with Adriana, Dionisio, and the drunk villagers.<sup>20</sup> The wind, alcohol, Andean people, and conversation about Andean myths make him yearn for Piura. Clearly, Lituma idealizes Piura and seems to forget the mistrust in the

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<sup>20</sup> The next time Lituma feels nostalgic is when he goes to help the engineers in the mine, La Esperanza, who are hiding from the Shining Path: “El cabo sintió otro ramalazo de nostalgia por la remota Piura, por su clima candente, sus gentes extrovertidas que no sabían guardar secretos, sus desiertos y montañas sin apus ni pistachos, una tierra que, desde que lo habían mudado a estas alturas encrespadas, vivían en su memoria como un paraíso perdido. ¿Volvería a poner los pies allá?” (152).

institutions he encountered while investigating the death of Palomino and the fact that he and the villagers share the same hobby: drinking at a bar. Lituma is in denial about who he is, a man who enjoys folly and drink as much as the villagers, and the institutions he serves. Nostalgia aids in keeping him in denial about the precarious situation in Naccos. For Lituma, Piura is the space of life, and the Andes are the space of death where myth, reality, secrecy, and distrust culminate.

Not only does the threat of the Shining Path and loss of Piura construct the Andes as a space of death but the Andes are also far from the warmth of civilization. Lituma alludes to the allegory of the cave as he recalls, “cuando vivía en la civilización y el calorcito” (252). The discursive space is littered with the motifs of the cold of the mountains, showering in icy water, rain and storms and the threat of other natural disasters. In the opening chapter, upon hearing the news of the disappearance, Lituma feels chills: “Un escalofrío subió y bajó por la espina dorsal de Lituma” (3). In the section about the French couple, insurgents remove the foreigners, Albert and le petite Michele, from the bus. The narrator explains from the point of view of Albert, “[e]l frío [que] le calaba los huesos”; the Frenchman realizes that they should have not taken the bus through the Andes (14). In the story of Pedro, the narrator explains that “los ritmos y fenómenos de la naturaleza: las lluvias y granizadas de tardes y noches y el inclemente sol de las mañanas” became routine for him (39). Then Lituma observes the effects of the violent weather on the faces of the men in the cantina: “requemadas por el sol fuerte y el frío cortante, los ojitos inexpresivos, huidizos, narices y labios amoratados por la intemperie, pelos indomesticables” (52). The chills, cold, and the inhospitable climate culminate in the epilogue. Therefore, in the novel, Naccos is a place that has distanced itself from the warmth of civilization and its inhabitants suffer the consequences.

The descriptions of the Andes depict violence as deterministic and inherent:



Y ahí estaba, en el horizonte de la Cordillera, donde las piedras y el cielo se tocaban, es coloración extraña, entre violeta y morada, que él había visto reproducida en tantas polleras y rebozos de las indias, en las bolsas de lana que los campesinos colgaban de las orejas de las llamas, y que para él el color mismo de los Andes, de esta sierra tan misteriosa y tan violenta. (119)

The word *piedras* (“stones”) is a synecdoche that underscores the brutality of the Andes. More than anything, the description of the sky and mountains illustrates the incomprehensibility of the space of death, and links the color purple to the clothing and bags that the “mysterious” Andean people use.

*Piedras* are also synonymous with barbarism, and in the descriptions of the murders and disappearances, this word appears suggestively linked to Spanish speakers. The third-person narrator describes the death of the French tourists as storm of rocks surrounding them: “muchos tenían pedruscos en las manos. [ . . . ] Empujándose, azuzándose, emulándose unos a otros, las piedras y las manos bajaban y subían, bajaban y subían” (15). This emphasizes execution by torture and conjures biblical and Greek and Roman historical accounts of stoning as capital punishment. Even though the insurgents have weapons that would kill the French tourists quickly, they choose to stone them to death, a barbaric and painful way to die. Another important detail in the narration is that Albert hears them speak Spanish, not Quechua: “Pero era castellano, no quechua, lo que hablaban” (12). To a certain extent this vindicates the ethnically Quechua speakers in the novel, all of whom disappear and fall prey to the Shining Path or the villagers.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> I will argue in more detail later that those that are culturally Quechua are being eradicated and all that are left are what Vargas Llosa seeks to more precisely define, *el serrucho*, who does not speak Quechua, live in an ayllu, or use coca ritually.

Lituma also imagines<sup>22</sup> the disappeared men and his own dead body in the same language. In effect, the narrative links the space of death to the culture of terror elaborated by the Shining Path. The imagination of Lituma produces descriptions of being pulverized by rocks that is similar to the fate of the French tourists and Sra. Harcourt. During his close encounter with death, he imagines his extinction in the space of death:

Presintió una enorme piedra, rodando desde lo alto de la Cordillera, viniendo derechita contra la roca que le guardaba las espaldas, cayendo sobre ella, pulverizádola, y a él con ella, en un segundo. Con los ojos cerrados vio su cuerpo convertido en una melcocha, en una pestilente y sanguinolenta mazamorra de huesos, sangre, pelos, pedazos de ropa y de zapatos, todo revuelto, sepultado en el fango, arrastrado montaña abajo [ . . . ] (177–78)

He imagines that the hostile weather and unstable terrain destroy his body. Fortunately for Lituma, he survives the avalanche virtually unscathed. After this brush with fate, the villagers accept and trust him and drink with him. Like the villagers, Lituma becomes a symbolic survivor of this apocalyptic space, transformed by the Shining Path revolt.

Now that I have briefly examined the space of death, I turn to the narrative point of view, the *criollo* perspective of Lituma that dominates the novel. Despite the fact that this novel was written after Vargas Llosa lost the 1992 election to Fujimori, the discourse to an extent excuses Fujimori's draconian military tactics.<sup>23</sup> The free, indirect style allows readers to observe how Lituma imagines and reacts to the love stories he hears from Carreño; in doing so, he normalizes and legitimizes violent acts committed by state actors. Lynn Walford notes that

The story of Carreño and Mercedes is absolutely integral to the novel, as is, most

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<sup>22</sup> The verb *imaginar* and its variations recur in the novel reminding us that Lituma is actively constructing the events, people, and places he sees.

<sup>23</sup> Cohn observes that “during this period, Vargas Llosa excoriated the actions of Sendero and the President alike, claiming that the violence wrought by both sides, in conjunction with the fear and social chaos that they had engendered, had set the nation on a course towards destruction” (28).

importantly, Carreño's nightly telling of installments of the story to Lituma, for it is through the shared act of narrating and listening to the narrative that the complicity of both men in the events of Naccos is finally and unmistakably revealed. (143)

To add to Walford's observation, this narrative is also critical to understanding Lituma, who filters the story about rescuing Mercedes from the drug trafficker, el Chanco.

This point of view, as I demonstrate below, is fundamental to the novel because it mediates attitudes towards violence and points to those responsible for cruelty. As Carreño tells Lituma the story about Mercedes being beaten, Lituma imagines the unfolding scenes and aestheticizes and sexualizes the violence. Unlike the "naïve" Carreño, the audience and Lituma understand what is happening in this sexual encounter. The narrator describes the reaction of Lituma to the initial description of a woman being beaten: "Lituma cerró los ojos y la inventó. Era rellenita, ondulante, de pechos redondos. El jefezo la tenía de rodillas, calatita, y los correazos le dejaban unos surcos morados en la espalda" (16). Lituma envisions an attractive woman in an inferior position. Next,

Lituma imaginó los ojitos achinados del sádico: sobresalían de las bolsas de grasa, se inflamaban de arrechura cada vez que la mujer gemía. A él no le excitaban esas cosas, pero, por lo visto a algunos sí. Tampoco lo escandalizaban como a su adjunto, por supuesto. Qué se iba a hacer si la puta vida era la puta vida. ¿No andaban los terrucos matando a diestra y siniestra con el cuento de la revolución? A esos también les gustaba la sangre. (17)

He imagines the sexual excitement of El Chanco and does not make a fuss about sadomasochism. His stream of consciousness goes from hearing about sadomasochism to thinking about how the insurgents also like blood. Like Lituma, the men in the narration—for

example, Iscariote—normalize and justify the violence: “Pero qué crees tú que hacen los hombres con las putas, so huevón” (22). Iscariote implies that those in superior positions do as they please, even if it means drawing blood from those in subservient positions. This is not violence; it is life, reality—it can be pleasing and is justified like the violence assumed by the counterinsurgency.<sup>24</sup> Even Mercedes had told Carreño: “Creíste que me daba una paliza por la palabrotas que soltaba y por mis ruegos y llantos. ¿No te diste cuenta que era para excitarse? ¿Que era para excitarlo? Qué inocente eres, Carreñito” (47). She had willingly participated in this sexual fantasy.

In this phallogentric world, there is a sense that the violence has desensitized the characters and violence is a normal state and silenced by the subaltern culture or casual conversation in hegemonic discourse. When reflecting on the disappeared and the deaths of the French tourists, Lituma thinks to himself: “Todas esas muertes les resbalan a los serranos” (25). The narrator adds, “La noche anterior, en la cantina de Dionisio, había escuchado la noticia del asalto al ómnibus de Andahuayla y ni uno solo de los peones que bebía y comían había hecho el menor comentario” (25). In a dialogue between Lituma and Francisco López, a worker at La Esperanza, they discuss the fear the engineers have of the Shining Path. Fortunately for them, none of the workers revealed their whereabouts to the insurgents. As they converse, the narrator comments on López’s body language: “Seguía soplando la taza y bebiendo su café a sorbitos, como si aquella conversación fuera, también, la cosa más normal del mundo” (125). Terror and violence have been normalized.

This normalization of violence posits torture as an effective way to get information. While consuming alcohol, Carreño confesses that in the Civil Guard “[n]os hemos acostumbrado

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<sup>24</sup> *Mientras huya el cuerpo*, which will be analyzed in chapter 2 of this dissertation, deauthorizes this discourse by scrutinizing the relationship among pornography, torture, and sexual violence.

a la brutalidad” (54). He tells Lituma about the state of mind of lieutenant Pancorvo after the Shining Path slaughtered the vicuñas and left the caretaker, Pedro, who the Civil Guard suspected of being an insurgent and tortured for intelligence:

—Quemarlo con fósforos y encendedores—explicó Carreño—. Empezando por los pies, y poco a poco subiendo. Con fósforos y encendedores, como lo oye. Era lentísimo. La carne se le cocinaba, empezó a oler a chicharrón. Yo no estaba al tanto todavía, mi cabo. Me vinieron arcadas y casi me desmayé. (55)

Lituma justifies the violence by responding, “Figúrate lo que nos van a hacer los terruños a ti y a mí, si nos agarran vivos” (55). This event also emotionally hardens Carreño and he confesses, “no me asusta ni apena nada” (55). Lituma is aware that they have to respond to extreme and barbaric violence by becoming equally or even more brutal than their enemy.<sup>25</sup> There are cannibalistic undertones in this story, too: the guardsmen were slow-roasting the detainee, and his flesh was beginning to smell like *chicharrón*, fried pork. Carreño has an attack of retching and almost faints, reminding us of non-Christians’ abstention from pork.

This vile rite of initiation will prepare Carreño for a career in the Civil Guard, whose mission in the counterinsurgency has turned brother against brother. Eventually Carreño reveals that the torture victim was not a *terruco* but an *opa* from his village, the mute Pedro. (This raises the question, would the Civil Guard have eaten him if he were a Shining Path operative?) Realizing the horrible error of torturing a mute for information, someone who he personally knew, Carreño explains how they tried to heal him:

Lo curamos como pudimos. Le hicimos una colecta en la patrulla. Todos nos sentimos mal, hasta el teniente Pancorvo. Y yo, más que los otros juntos. Por eso me lo traje acá.

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<sup>25</sup> Lituma contemplates his own capacity for brutality when he detains Adriana and Dionisio: “Lituma sintió ganas de agarrarlos a golpes, a ella y al borracho de su marido” (113). Even though he could beat them senseless without anyone finding out, he releases them.

¿Nunca le vio las cicatrices en los pies, en los tobillos? Fue mi desvirgada, mi cabo.

Después de eso, no me asusta ni apena nada. Ya me encallecí, como todos. No se lo conté hasta ahora porque me daba vergüenza. (55)

The members of the Civil Guard try to correct their “mistake” by tending to Pedro’s wounds and atoning for their actions with monetary reparations. However, Pedro is left with the scars on his feet and ankles, which most will never see because his socks and shoes cover any signs of torture. Lituma was not aware of this because the mute could never tell him about what happened to him during the interrogation. Curiously, this story, like the one about Mercedes, is about Carreño losing his virginity.

The story about torture sickens Lituma: “¡Se me revuelven las tripas, puta madre!” He empathizes with Pedro, whom he came to know before Pedro’s disappearance. He links the story about the torture of Pedro to other violent images related to the Shining Path:

Para no pensar en el mudito, Lituma trató de imaginar las caras de los tres desaparecidos convertidos en una masa sanguinolenta, los ojos reventados, los huesos pulverizados, como esos francesitos, o quemados a fuego lento, como Pedrito Tinoco. Qué iba a poder pensar en otra cosa, puta madre. (56)

In his imagination, Lituma mixes images of the Shining Path, the disappeared, and the French couple and is unable to think of anything but violence. Lituma tells Carreño that they should leave the cantina, and asks him, “¿No te remuerde la conciencia ese salvajismo?” (56). Carreño explains that he took care of Pedro, but ultimately he was not responsible: “¿Por qué cree que me los traje a Naccos? Aquí se me fue lavando la mala conciencia. ¿Acaso tuve yo la culpa de lo que pasó?” (57). Carreño feels he has atoned for torturing Pedro by treating him well and saving him

from the Shining Path. He alludes to the fact that he was following orders and he is not guilty.<sup>26</sup>

Lituma finds this story so disturbing that he prefers not to hear any more about it. He displaces the story by asking Carreño about Mercedes:

—La verdad, prefiero que me cuentes tus aventuras con Mercedes, Tomasito. La historia del mudito me ha dejado muy jodido.

—También yo quisiera borrarla de la memoria, le aseguro.

—Las cosa que he venido a saber en Naccos—rezongó Lituma—. Ser guardia civil en Piura y en Talara era pan comido. La sierra es infernal, Tomasito, No me extraña, con tanto serrucho. (57)

Lituma expresses discourses of geographical and racial determinism through the comparison of coastal cities and Naccos and the word, *serrucho*—a metonymic word that literally means “handsaw.” In Peru, it refers to someone who is born in the highlands. Depending on the context, it can also imply that a person is a metaphorical tool, a whore, a backstabber, or a poor person. Implicit in the comment is that a *serrucho*, who is mistrustful, is different from an *indio*, who appears to be a victim like Medardo’s wife or an *opa* like Pedro.

Even though the torture of Pedro is revolting, *Lituma en los Andes* excuses and justifies the abuses committed by the Civil Guard like this one. Although horrified, Lituma understands the logic behind the violence committed by Carreño because the counterinsurgency faces challenges in distinguishing friend from foe in the highlands. The Civil Guard merely mirrors the brutality observed in the five stories about outsiders being killed by the Shining Path. In

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<sup>26</sup> Walford suggests that Carreño may have been complicit in the disappearances because he is a Quechua speaker and a believer in Andean spirituality. In the scene Walford mentions, Lituma jokingly asks Tomás if he is involved. Walford asserts, “[i]t is an oddly chilling little scene that apparently makes no lasting impression on Lituma, but nevertheless furnishes the first of many thread of evidence that weave Carreño into the web of complicity surrounding the events in Naccos” (142). Walford also reminds us that the Tomás storyline is the only one that has a happy ending: “his reunion with Mercedes, which Adriana correctly predicts, is one of the few successful enterprises to be found in all Vargas Llosa’s fiction” (143).

consequence, violent conflict changes a person; they learn to do unspeakable acts.

Because the novel privileges the perspective of an out-of-place *criollo*, the novel is even more critical of the violent beliefs disseminated by Adriana and the crimes committed by the villagers of Naccos. Much critical attention has focused on the role of Dionisio and little on Adriana, whose four-part narrative appears prominently in part two of *Lituma en los Andes*.<sup>27</sup> To Efraín Kristal, the story narrated by Adriana “reads like an intentionally grotesque retelling of the myth of Theseus and Ariadne and in the Greek myth, the abandoned Adriana will be saved by the mysterious Dionisio who has been accompanied by frolicking women in the Andes” (194). Kristal, Walford, Cohen, and Lucero de Vivanco focus solely on the union of Dionisio and Adriana, agreeing that the couple is a reference to the Western myth of Dionysus and Ariadne. Yet their analysis only centers on “[t]he drunken tavern keeper and wine merchant Dionisio, who has no known father and whose mother was killed by a lightning bolt [and] is famous for having introduced pisco into the Andean region” (Walford 140). Furthermore, in use of the Western myth, Priscilla Archibald argues that “Greek mythology offers a symbolic language for that which defies meaning, and represents a refusal on the part of Vargas Llosa to recognize or engage Andean meaning systems” (142). Thus, criticism has focused either on how Dionisio or the couple controls the villagers through folly and alcohol or on how the novel invalidates “Andean meaning systems.” As I will explain, I disagree to some extent with these readings, particularly when juxtaposing *Lituma en los Andes* and *Rosa Cuchillo*. Adriana and Dionisio represent not the Andean belief system but, rather, the embodiment of the culture of terror reigning in the Andes.

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<sup>27</sup> Cohn sustains that “[d]espite the prominence afforded to Adriana’s tale by having her narrate it herself, in the final analysis, it is the Dionysiac symbolism that brings to the foreground Peru’s struggle between the forces of civilization and those of savagery [ . . . ]” (33). Cohn overlooks the power of the narrative Adriana wields and the fact that the villagers were *taught* to kill.



In the first place, the role of Dionisio as an alcohol pusher and an instigator of folly is obvious, but he appears to be in a role subservient to Adriana. He admits to giving the villagers alcohol not only to encourage dance and other questionable activities promoted by Adriana but also to soothe their pain: “Yo solo ayudo a que se olviden de sus tristezas, dándoles de chupar” (116). He also comes close to disclosing the truth about the disappeared, telling Lituma that the bodies are in the old mine: “Sí, ahí deben estar todavía, en ese laberinto, si no se los comió el muki” (83). Even though Dionisio has given clues, he still fears for his life and tells Lituma, “Si se le antoja contar a cualquiera esta conversación, soy cadáver” (86). Whom does he fear? When Lituma temporarily holds Adriana and Dionisio in custody, Dionisio says, “No me acuerdo haberle contado nada—divagó Dionisio, haciendo morisquetas e imitando al oso—. Sería que estaba mareadito. Ahora, en cambio, estoy en plena forma y no recuerdo haber hablado nunca con usted, señor cabo” (114). Dionisio lies to Lituma in front of Adriana. This suggests that Adriana controls him, like a bear on a leash, and he is afraid of her power. Or, does Adriana send Dionisio to throw out a little thread for Lituma to follow? Moreover, Adriana also begs for her husband’s release: “Deje, por lo menos, que Dionisio se vaya. Quién va a atender la cantina [ . . . ]” (119). In this role reversal, Lituma observes her demeanor, which contrasts with Dionisio’s look of disdain, and realizes “en el fondo no le preocupaba lo que pudiera ocurrirle” (119). The question is, who is really in control? Dionisio seems to be nothing more than a terrified facilitator.

Second, if we recall that the Incas drank a fermented beverage made of corn, *chicha*,<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Justin Jennings explains that in the Inca empire, *chicha* and drinks “such as *kusa*, *guiñapo*, and *tekti* [ . . . ] were consumed in a wide variety of settings and were essential in maintaining and transforming gender roles, kinship bonds, status hierarchies, ethnic identities, exchange relationships, and production regimes that structured Andean communities” (26).

and it was the Spaniards that introduced grapes, which were later distilled to produce *pisco*,<sup>29</sup> Adriana and Dionisio represent the ill effects of colonization on the Andes and not Andean indigenous cultural heritage. Dionisio (and later Adriana) change the drinking habits of Naccos. This reflects a changed cultural identity due to isolation, outsiders, and exploitation. If we recall the neoliberal ideology of Vargas Llosa, this parody of Ariadne and Dionisio exposes the harmful effects of neoliberal economic policies on the Andes. More recently, Jorge Secada also has noticed a trend in the way Vargas Llosa understands the effects of neoliberalism:

Vargas Llosa ha evolucionado, y es crecientemente consciente de la manera en que las diferencias de poder en las sociedades capitalistas contemporáneas subvierten insidiosamente la libertad de las personas al permitir manipular sus mentes y alienar sus vidas. (n.p.)

If we read Adriana and Dionisio as capitalists who control the alcohol industry in Naccos—the sole goal of which is profit—the conclusion of *Lituma en los Andes* reveals the effects of an exploitative system that manipulates the lives of the villagers and estranges them from *runa* culture. Alcohol insidiously takes away freedom because it lowers one's inhibitions and interferes with reasoning. By altering their drinking habits, they manipulate the inhabitants of Naccos into practicing human sacrifice and cannibalism. Adriana and Dionisio thereby create a dependency on alcohol from which they profit enormously.

The key to the cultural elaboration of terror in *Lituma en los Andes* is Adriana. Her identity and the labyrinthine narrative she weaves disseminate to tell the “truth” about the creation of a thirdspace, the space of death, Naccos, during the conflict. Víctor Quiroz

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<sup>29</sup> As Adriana reminisces about Dionisio, she reveals that he changed drinking habits in the Andes: “Apenas aparecía y levantaba su tenderete, corrían a comprarle mulitas de pisco y a brindar con él. «Yo los eduqué», decía Dionisio. «Antes se intoxicaban con chicha, cerveza o cañazo y ahora con pisco, la bebida de los tronos y los serafines.»” (211). *Pisco* is more expensive and has higher alcohol content than *chicha* or *beer*. It is also the national drink.

underscores that the Andean appears to be feminized: “es altamente significativo el hecho de que sea una mujer india; quien prefigure la irracionalidad de la sociedad andina configurada en la novela, ya que, desde su inicio, se establece la asociación entre lo femenino y la barbarie” (n.p.). While I agree with Quiroz that the irrational is feminized to some degree (i.e., that Adriana is like Doña Bárbara), Medardo’s wife at the beginning of the novel is different from Adriana and there is nothing irrational about her appearance at the Civil Guard post. Rather, she has difficulty communicating her husband’s disappearance, silences their escape from the Shining Path, and later disappears entirely. Lituma does not understand her and Carreño, who is also Quechua but acts *criollo*, according to Lituma, who takes her declaration. Adriana represents a cultural rift between *criollo* and Andean, and Carreño is the only one who can mediate between the two. Therefore, I emphasize that the novel separates Adriana from the Quechua speakers. We will return to this when we deal with the narrative told by Adriana, where she makes a distinction between the province of Ayacucho and the unique situation in Naccos.

In contrast with the Quechua woman and more like Carreño, Adriana is the embodiment of the confrontation among Western and Andean cultures and the Shining Path. Lituma calls her a *bruja*, *puta*, and *india*; Escarlantina fondly calls her a *cholita*. She appears to be an *esperpento*, or matronly figure, like La Mama Grande from a Gabriel García Márquez short story, or like Celestina. The narrator describes Adriana as having Indian racial features and animalizes her: “Tenía unos pelos lacios, sin canas, estirados y sujetos en su nuca con una cinta de colores, como las que los indios amarraban en las orejas de las llamas” (30–31). Lituma suspects she had something to do with the disappearance of Medardo, and Carreño reinforces his suspicion by telling him that she read Medardo’s fortune and they had a disagreement: “hizo que le tirara las hojas de la coca. No le gustaría lo que le adivinó, porque no quiso pagarle” (28). Significantly,

Adriana makes known that she does not only practice Andean traditions like reading coca leaves: “Soy también palmista y astróloga. Sólo que estos indios no se fían de las cartas, ni de las estrellas, ni siquiera de sus manos. De la coca, nomás [ . . . ] Y no siempre las hojas hablan claro” (30). Catherine Allen reminds us of key identifiers of a *runa* world view: “Language, clothing, coca—these signify for the *Runakuna* their separateness and historical integrity as a people in a society whose origins lie neither in the Incas nor in Spain, but in the Spanish conquest of the Incas” (219). To be wholly *indio*, or more precisely, *runa*, means possessing all three cultural signifiers. The fact that Adriana does not trust the coca leaves reveals what Allen, in dialogue with *runakuna* communities, has witnessed and called the epitome of “the intensifying dilemmas of the *Runakuna*’s ambiguous cultural situation” (219). There also is no mention of Adriana speaking Quechua in the novel. The only Quechua speakers are the three disappeared men and Carreño. Adriana sets herself apart from the *indios* of Naccos—she is more *misti* than *runa*<sup>30</sup>—by displaying her own cultural ambiguity. Although she practices elements from both cultures, she judges Western practices to be more reliable than Quechua ones.

The mythical figure Ariadne is associated with labyrinths, sacrifices, and thread, but in the parody, Adriana embodies and weaves the culture of terror. In *Lituma en los Andes*, Adriana communicates discourses that contain confusing images of savagery, which reflect the abuses committed by the dominant culture on the Andean subaltern culture as well as the new level of savagery introduced by the Shining Path. She disseminates the culture of terror, and at first, Lituma is reluctant to believe in these superstitions. While Carreño tells about his romance with Mercedes, Lituma interrupts him to talk about evil spirits:

—El periódico no hablaba de pishtacos, sino de sacaojos o robaojos—dijo Lituma—.

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<sup>30</sup> Allen draws parallels between *runakuna* (indigenous peoples) who speak Quechua, chew coca, and *mistikuna* (*mestizos*) “who neither chew coca nor live in *ayllus*” (24).

Pero tienes razón, Tomasito, se parecen a esos pishtacos de los serruchos. Lo que no me entra es que ahora también en Lima la gente empiece a creer en esas cosas. ¡En la capital del Perú, cómo es posible! (160)

Lituma further observes, “Hay como una epidemia, ¿no crees?” and “Los diablos y la locura adueñándose del Perú y tú dale que dale con esa hembra” (163). Similarly, Gonzalo Portocarrero Maisch and coauthors recognize that the rumors of *sacajojos* that circulated in the middle- and lower-class neighborhoods seemed like a “psicosis colectiva [que] pareció desde un inicio un hecho sumamente significativo” (13). They also note that the *sacajojos* is a combination of the *pishtaco*, medical doctor, and foreigner and read this is a “desconfianza hacia la modernidad” (63). Lituma does not understand the significance of *sacajojos* and *pishtacos*, dismissing them as an epidemic without seeking out the origin or the cure. Perhaps hoping for clarification from Carreño, who correlates the *sacajojos* to the *pishtaco*, he critiques his colleague for his indifference about the myths that fuels the general consciousness. Adriana, who reiterates these superstitions, is well aware that the appearance of these fat and blood suckers are a sign of trouble and *criollos* like Lituma prefer to dismiss these signs of distress.

Adriana explains to Lituma the “truth” about the disappearances and spirits, but he is not receptive to this sort of “madness.”<sup>31</sup> From the onset, she admits that Medardo was sacrificed: “Eso es lo que vi en su mano. Y se cumplió. ¿No ha desaparecido, acaso? Lo sacrificaron pues” (31).<sup>32</sup> Perhaps she tells the truth about human sacrifices because it is unbelievable. It also is important to note that Lituma never listened to the stories about the *pishtacos*, and he asks

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<sup>31</sup> Lituma is skeptical about *apus*, *pishtacos*, and other supernatural phenomena. The free indirect style is imbued with sarcasm: “Qué diría la superioridad, allá en Huancayo, si enviaba por la radio del campamento este parte sobre los ocurrido: «Sacrificado de manera aún no identificada para aplacar malignos de los Andes, punto [ . . . ]” (35). He fails to interpret the signs of distress.

<sup>32</sup> Adriana reiterates the need for a human sacrifice in order to placate the *apus*, “[e]n esa comunidad de aquí al lado les matan a veces un carnero, una vicuña. Tonterías. Estará bien para tiempos normales, no para éstos. A ellos lo que les gusta es el humano” (35).

Adriana why she never shared them with him: “A propósito, doña Adriana, por qué nunca me contó a mí esas historias de pishtacos que le cuenta a todo el mundo” (258). Adriana replies with a cackle, “Si hubiera venida más a la cantina, las hubiera oído. ¡No sabe lo que se perdió por ser tan formalito” (258). As readers we are privileged in recognizing the fact that Lituma does not know the deeper meaning of the *pishtaco* and that Adriana connects it to a legacy of exploitation.

The narrative told by Adriana does recognize and engage Andean meaning systems and provides a small amount of relief from Lituma’s imagining of the Andes. However, we must remember that Adriana represents adulterated Andean beliefs. Her story about the *pishtaco* is attention grabbing because the *pishtaco* figure plays a major role in constructing a culture of terror. *Pishtacos* are killers, usually foreigners, who murder Indians by sucking their fat and blood. *Pishtaco* actually derives from the Quechua word *pishtay*, meaning “to shred or cut into strips.” (In Colchado’s novels, he uses the terms *qarqachas* or *jarjachas* and *naqak* to refer to these types evil spirits that appear during times of upheaval.) According to Catharine Stimpson, despite variations over time, “the central meaning of the pishtaco has remained stable: he is a colonizer or from the metropolitan center, he is white, he is male, he will penetrate the body of the Indian—female or male—and he will destroy and profit from the Indian” (xiv).

In the first part of the narration, Adriana directly associates the Shining Path with *pishtacos* in Ayacucho and the *rondas* established to help fight off the insurgents: “Cierto, éstos vienen siempre en los tiempos difíciles, como lo demuestra la invasión de Ayacucho” (159). She highlights that the Shining Path caused the secrecy and mistrust: “Y brotó en el pueblo una desconfianza y un miedo parecidos a los que hay ahora entre los peones de la carretera” (156). This demonstrates that the novel as a whole recognizes the meaning of the *pishtaco*, despite the skepticism and ignorance of Lituma.

When Adriana attempts to tell the villagers of Naccos about “ánimas que no dan la cara” that take more than people can give, she is referring not to *pishtacos* (159) but to a concrete reality. When describing these faceless creatures, she is met with resistance by those who do not wish to confront ghosts of past:

Por gusto se enrabian cuando se lo explico. Para qué preguntan si luego se tapan las orejas y no quieren entender? Sigam, más bien, los consejos de mi marido: chupen y chupen hasta emborracharse, que en la borrachera todo se vuelve mejor de lo que es, y desaparecen los terrucos, los pishtacos y todo lo que los enfurece y asusta. (159)

Thus the novel concludes with the villagers turning a blind eye to a legacy of exploitation by neoliberal economics. Using an example from Huamanga, Gonzales and colleagues have determined that the moral of the *pishtaco* or *sacajojos* narrative is: “No se puede confiar en ningún desconocido. Los huamanguinos se sienten amenazados por extraños contratados por el gobierno” (56). Returning to the novel, Adriana has tried to explain that the problem is that which the eye does not see such as those in Lima and the United States. Those in Naccos are in denial: they do not want to hear the concrete reality behind the *pishtacos*, and instead they follow Dionisio’s advice to drink.

Drinking *pisco* and beer is a way to forget the grim reality of a feudal, (neo)colonized, and oppressed region. Gretchen Kristine Pierce and Áurea Toxqui help us appreciate the relationship between exploitation and the consumption of alcohol across Latin America:

Slavery, tributary work drafts, and free wage labor, performed by a combination of native peoples, those of African descent, and the *castas*, provided the products demanded overseas and in local mining and urban areas. These workers patronized *pulquerías*, *chicherías*, and *frucanguería* (taverns that sold *pulque*, *chicha*, and *frucanga* or

*hidromiel*). (23)

Local alcohol can be read as a palliative for the ills of a feudal society and at the same time as reinforcing the status quo because Adriana and Dionisio profit from the workers of Naccos.

The second part of the narrative told by Adriana further reveals the truth about *pishtacos* that plague communities during hardship. In contrast to Lituma's experience of the harsh and cold weather and landscape in Naccos, she remembers the Andes as a bucolic space of life:

Bonito pueblo, Quenka, próspero, de sembríos esparcidos por el llano y las lomas. Se daban bien las papas, las habas, la cebada, el maíz y el ají. Los molles, los eucaliptos y los sauces nos defendían de los vientos arremolinados. Hasta los campesinos más pobres tenían sus gallinitas, su chanchito, sus ovejitas o sus hatos de llamas [ . . . ] (180)

Her land was once bountiful and shielded. Lush trees once protected its inhabitants from the harsh wind and weather that now burns their faces. Adriana attributes the economic and cultural losses of her childhood to the arrival of Salcedo, a man from the coast that once brought medicines, clothing and other items. However, his return to the Andes during this time had been different: "Todos lo conocían, pero esa vez apenas lo reconocimos. Había crecido y engordado hasta volverse un gigantón. Traía ahora una barba color cucaracha y unos ojos inyectados y saltones" (181). This transformed being survives a car accident, disappears from the wreckage, and begins coming out at night to assault and to kill people gruesomely and collect their fat and skin: "Los trinchaba del ano a la boca y los ponía a asarse vivos, sobre unas pailas que recogían su sebo. Los desollaba para hacer máscaras con la piel de su cara y los cortaba en pedacitos para fabricar con sus huesos machacados polvos de hipnotizar" (182). Through a complicated narrative of savagery, she exposes a relationship of exploitation: life became unlivable in these economic circumstances and natural resources became depleted as people in the Andes struggled



to meet the demands of the coast.<sup>33</sup>

Whereas at the beginning of the novel Lituma found himself listening to narratives told by Carreño, he never listens to these stories told by Adriana. Lituma does not have the complete story about the social conditions in the Andes when he is in an analogous situation with the drunken *serrucho*. The main difference is that Lituma did not ask Carreño, who was drinking, to share the information, and at the cantina Dionisio facilitates a conversation that will reveal to him the details about the disappearances. The conclusion of *Lituma en los Andes*, I argue, presents a trauma narrative from the perspective of one of the *serruchos* that Lituma critiqued earlier for not showing any reaction toward death. From him, Lituma draws forth a powerful, chilling narration about the effects of death and “worse things’ on the individual.

If Dionisio is the mythological god of wine and carnival, the drunkard at the end of the novel can be read as a Silenus figure. In Greek mythology, Silenus is the drunken companion of Dionysus. He is often portrayed with the ears of a horse and tail and legs of a horse and, due to his inebriated state, rides on a donkey. When intoxicated, Silenus possesses special knowledge and the power of prophecy. The narrator and characters at the bar animalize the drunkard as he shouts, misbehaves, and rubs himself against Adriana. The narrator describes the man:

Era un hombre de mediana estatura, de nariz muy pronunciada y unos ojitos desasosegados y hundidos a los que el alcohol o la excitación encendían como brasas. Sobre el descolorido overol llevaba una chompa de lana de alpaca de esas que tejen las indias de las comunidades y bajan a vender a las ferias, y, encima, un saco apretado. Parecía preso dentro de sus ropas. [ . . . ] la nuez se movía en su garganta de arriba abajo, como un animalito enjaulado. (261–62)

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<sup>33</sup> In Vargas Llosa’s *La ciudad y los perros* (1963) he also symbolizes the exploitation of the Andean. The guanaco functions as a cultural object representative of the Andes. At the military school, students abuse and torment the guanaco in the courtyard by hurling rocks at the tied up animal.

The man dressed in alpaca woolis like a petulant animal inside a cage. In order to tame this beast, Adriana tells him, “—Ven, bailemos, para que se te pase la rabia. ¿No sabes que rabiar es malo para la salud?” (265). Dionisio watches while the drunkard touches his wife all over her body, and Lituma asks if this bothers him. Dionisio says no, and replies with a question, “No lo envidia?” As Lituma watches, he remarks, “Está animalizado—escupió Lituma al suelo—No puede darme envidia una bestia así” (265). Dionisio rejoices at the fact that the inner animal of the drunkard has emerged: “Los animales son más felices que usted y yo, señor cabo [ . . . ] Viven para comer, dormir, y cachar. No piensan, no tienen preocupaciones. Nosotros, sí, y somos desgraciados. Ese está visitando ahora a su animal y mire si no es feliz” (265–66).

Lituma is taken aback by this spectacle and, even though he is the authority in Naccos, decides to be an equal at the cantina that night.<sup>34</sup> He tells the drunk man, “—No estoy aquí como guardia civil, sino como un cliente cualquiera—dijo—. Este campamento ya se ha cerrado, nada de líos. Mas bien, brindemos” (263). Dionisio, living up to his mythical role of making others do Adriana’s bidding under the influence, encourages Lituma to talk to the drunk: “Si cree lo que dice un borracho, vaya y que se las cuente él. Salga de la curiosidad de una vez. Hágalo hablar, sonsáqueselas a tiros” (266). Lituma, like the donkey, carries the drunkard home.

The drunkard has three functions in *Lituma en los Andes*. First, despite vomiting and being extremely unbalanced, the drunkard at the end of the novel displays great lucidity. He speaks a truth about the armed conflict: “¿No hay muertos por todas partes? Matar es lo de menos. ¿No se ha vuelto una cojudez, como mear o hacer la caca? No es eso lo que tiene jodida a la gente” (272). Death has become commonplace and is not what damns people. Second, he reveals the truth about the disappearances. Lituma asks the drunkard about the three men, “¿Los

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<sup>34</sup> In the fourth part of the narrative told by Adriana, she explains that “[b]ailando y bebiendo, no hay indios, mestizos ni caballeros, ricos ni pobres, hombres ni mujeres” (238). When dancing and drunk, the inequalities and social constructions disappear.

sacrificaron para que no cayera el huayco? ¿Para que no vinieran los terrucos a matar a nadie ni a llevarse a la gente? ¿Para que los pishtacos no secaran a ningún peón? ¿Fue por eso?” (271). The man admits, “No sé quechua—roncó el hombre—. Nunca había oído esa palabra hasta ahora. ¿Apu?” (271). The myths of *apus* and *pishtacos* seem like obsolete untruths used to cover up the grim, violent reality of Naccos. The Quechua speakers are not agents of violence: if anything, Pedro, Medardo, and Casimiro are victims.

Last, the drunkard discloses that the issue is not the violence but rather the effects of violence. He reveals how one cannot shake the memory of murder and cannibalism: “El gusto en la boca—susurró el barrenero y se le rajó la voz—. No se va, por más que uno se la enjuague. Ahorita lo estoy sintiendo. Aquí en mi lengua, en mis dientes. También en la garganta. Hasta en la barriga lo siento” (272). Killing and things far worse—the unmentionable and unspeakable—have literally left a bad taste in his mouth. The drunkard drinks to forget that “Todos comulgaron y, aunque yo no quise, también comulgué” so that he will not have nightmares. It is as if his free will and agency were taken away, and even though he refused, he ate the flesh of his brother. However, alcoholism also takes a toll on his body: “Ni cuando duermo se quita—afirmó el barrenero—. Cuando chupo, nomás. Por eso me he vuelto tan chupaco. Pero me hace mal, se me abren las úlceras. Ya estoy cagando con sangre de nuevo” (273). Alcohol is a merely a palliative; human sacrifices and cannibalism and other things that the Shining Path or Adriana taught them to do, and that Dionisio attempts to treat with alcohol, linger in the unconscious memory of the villagers of Naccos. They drink and frequent the cantina to cleanse their palates but fail. The drunkard concludes that this is no way to live: “Pero ¿y la úlcera? Dígame si eso es vida, pues,

carajo” (273).<sup>35</sup>

Unlike his reaction to Carreño’s torturing of Pedro, Lituma is unsympathetic and indignant; for him, it is better to suspect that the three men were sacrificed to the *apus*:

Me arrepiento de haberme enterado tanto en saber lo que los pasó a esos. Mejor me quedaba sospechando. Ahora, me voy y te dejo dormir. Aunque tenga que pasar la noche a la intemperie, para no molestar a Tomasito. No quiero dormir a tu lado, ni cerca de esos que roncan. No quiero despertar mañana y verte la cara y que hablemos normalmente. Me voy a respirar un poco de aire, puta madre. (274)

This confession deepens the cultural rift between Lituma, a man from Piura, and this drunken man from Naccos. Communication, let alone understanding, is not possible. Lituma is able to excuse the actions of the Civil Guard in the Andes and still speak to Carreño, but he does not want to know anything more about the drunkard and never see him again. He would prefer not to interrupt the lovemaking of Carreño and Mercedes, so he keeps such unspeakable acts silenced.

Walford reminds us that that the relation between cannibalism and *Lituma en los Andes*’s “happy ending” has often stumped critics and reviewers. At first glance, the ritual sacrifice with cannibalism and the reunion with lovemaking may seem arbitrary. However, one must recall the centrality of the narratives told by Carreño to the events as they unfold in Naccos. Lituma spends time with Dionisio, Adriana, and the villagers; over time, he hears several narratives and eventually earns their trust and gets to the truth. Lituma realizes that the violence was taking place because of his disinterest and lack of fraternity with the villagers.<sup>36</sup> Had Lituma gone to the

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<sup>35</sup> The ulcer is a metaphor that appears in *Lituma en los Andes* and will be discussed further in chapter 2 of the dissertation. What is interesting about the ulcer is not only the problem it poses to quality of life, but rather Lituma’s unsympathetic reaction.

<sup>36</sup> Walford concludes that “[b]ecause Lituma chooses what he thinks is safety, he will continue to live on the margin, alienated and vaguely perplexed, with a vague sense of guilt about the complicity he refuses to recognize. Carreño, on the other hand, because he accepts responsibility for his part in the violence, is able to ‘[sufrir] y [gozar] en abundancia, como deber ser’” (144).

cantina, as he would have with the *inconquistables*, he could have prevented the death of Pedro, Demetrio, and Casimiro. More than being a fictional representation of the Uchuraccay report, as Walfordh, Cohen, and Kristal contend, I read the novel as an apologia about how ignorance or prejudices about Andean signs of distress can lead to ill consequences.<sup>37</sup>

Like many critics,<sup>38</sup> Cohn has argued that Vargas Llosa “criticizes the Andean indigenous populations for what he considers to be their perpetuation of violent practices derived from pre-Columbian cultural traditions” and blames the indigenous subject for the violence of the 1980s and 1990s. Although portraying *lo andino* as primitive and cannibalistic is problematic, my reading of *Lituma en los Andes* is not literal. Instead I interpret Vargas Llosa as defining the role of the *serrucho*, not the indigenous subject, in the fratricidal conflict. I read the conclusion of the novel as purely hyperbolic and metaphorical. Adriana, who is more like the problematic *serrucho* than *india*, consistently berates the villagers for not taking any responsibility for the repression, exploitation, and incursion by outsiders and insurgents. She blames the destruction of her bucolic Andes on the passivity of people from the highlands, and with Dionisio perpetuates the exploitative relationship. Unlike those in Ayacucho, the villagers of Naccos sit passively as the world ends until it is too late. Her repetition of “a menos que” in the fourth part of her narrative reiterates the need to bring back the “old order” of ritual sacrifices to reestablish equilibrium in the Andes because all other efforts to awaken the collective consciousness have failed.

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<sup>37</sup> Carlos Arroyo Reyes reads the novel similarly, yet is highly critical of Vargas Llosa, and does not take into account the narrative told by Adriana: “había que mirar un poco más en el presente, desperdiciarse de una serie de prejuicios toledanos y dejar de pensar que la historia es siempre la resurrección de las cosas que están empozadas en el pasado” (80).

<sup>38</sup> De Vivanco notes: “El hecho de que la novela no atribuya a los senderistas la culpabilidad final de los desaparecidos, no los exculpa de otras muertes, y menos de la barbarie con la que va a ser caracterizado el pueblo de Naccos en la novela. Más bien diluye las fronteras entre víctimas y victimarios, indiferenciando los roles únicamente por el hecho de que comparten región geográfica, cultura y creencias” (16). In my reading of the novel, discourses of ritual sacrifice do not originate from Quechua speakers but from the figure of the *serrucho* represented by Adriana, Dionisio, and the drunken villagers, all of who are alienated from Andean practices and culture.

Lituma fulfills the role of a curious and imaginative observer: he is an ineffectual, nonviolent man who at times struggles with his capacity for brutality but ultimately does not do harm to others. He cannot change himself or others. He is weak, and the narratives he hears from Carreño and the drunken *serrucho* sicken him. In essence, he survives the space of death because this is not his battle or problem to solve. His superiors move him to another physical space, Tingo María, and this suggests that he will observe the Amazonic region of Peru, another place representing a divided Peruvian identity.

On the other hand, Carreño is rewarded as Adriana predicts—love being the ultimate expression of reward. With the thesis that one cannot be a modern and Andean in *Lituma en los Andes*, Misha Kokotovic's interpretation runs counter to mine. He concludes that

Mercedes, from Piura, and Tomás, from the southern Andes and raised in Lima, are the future of Peru. The relationship and probable marriage between the white *piurana* and the 'good,' acculturated indian is the only alternative to the barbaric violence of *Sendero Luminoso* and the atavistic human sacrifices promoted by Dionisio and Adriana. (163)

I do agree with Kokotovic's interpretation that the couple is the future of Peru, but would like to add that Carreño is a modern Andean subject, not an acculturated one. He represents the past and future migration of Andeans to urban centers, where they inevitably experience transculturation. As a Quechua speaker, he is unlike the villagers of Naccos and has chosen a side in the conflict by joining the Civil Guard. He feels no fear or shame; he is stronger than the skeptic Lituma. He knows and believes both systems of knowledge and spirituality and practices them in different contexts.<sup>39</sup>

If food is a key marker of identity, the Peruvian Andes is consuming itself in fratricidal conflict in which the victims are Quechua speakers. In her postconflict research, Kimberly

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<sup>39</sup> Carreño allows Adriana to read his fortune. Lituma does not believe in such witchcraft.

Theidon reminds us about the intimate and fratricidal nature of the Peruvian armed conflict:

In the words of the villagers, “we learned to kill our brothers”. Thus, while these villagers assert the Senderistas “had fallen out of humanity”, this moral discourse acknowledges that they too engaged in acts they had never before imagined. (“Reconciling” 100)

Using the idea that villagers in Andean communities *learned to kill* and the Shining Path had caused a *fall out of humanity*, we can read *Lituma en los Andes* as a text that early on observes the insurmountable moral dilemmas and consequences caused by the armed conflict. Violence is not an intrinsic quality of the villagers, and Adriana, who embodies the space of death and culture of terror, taught them to do unspeakable acts.

Returning to the torture of Pedro by the Civil Guard, Carreño metaphorically abstains from eating his fellow villager by demonstrating his revulsion. By contrast, the drunken *serrucho* does not speak Quechua, has no idea what an *apu* is, and reluctantly partakes in a cannibalistic communion, embodying the betrayal of Quechua speakers.<sup>40</sup> As Theidon reminds us, the violence created “a new moral order” (“Reconciling” 101). Adriana constructs the “enemies” as impure and views them as marked by the Shining Path. The drunken *serrucho* is taught and forced under the influence of alcohol to participate in the fratricide of three men that are symbols of the Andean: a governor of an Andean district, the mute that represents a silenced population, and the albino, a survivor of the Shining Path. The drunk *serrucho* reveals that the Shining Path, “Esos conchas de su madre dijeron que él estaba condenado, que tarde o temprano vendrían ajusticiarlo. Y como hacía falta alguien, mejor uno que estaba en su lista y que tarde o temprano iba a morir” (272). They killed the men to prevent either a *huayo* or the Shining Path from coming to Naccos. The drunken *serrucho* will have to live with having done unimaginable acts; the villagers killed their brothers to prevent violence and failed.

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<sup>40</sup> Lituma asks the *serrucho*, “¿Te ves comiendote a tu paisano? ¿Eso es lo que sueñas?” (273).

### ***Rosa Cuchillo*: The “Andean” Perspective on the Space of Death**

The action of *Rosa Cuchillo* takes place in an around Illaurocancha during the presidencies of Fernando Belaúnde (1980–85), Alan García (1985–90), and the election of Fujimori (1990).<sup>41</sup> There are multiple narrators in *Rosa Cuchillo*; the chief ones are Rosa Cuchillo herself, who tells her story in the first person, a second-person narrator who focuses on Liborio and Shining Path, and the first-person narrator, a *rondero* named Mariano Ochante. The days of Rosa Cuchillo on the Kay Pacha (This World) are told in the third person, and through this lens we observe the climax and conclusion of the violent confrontations involving insurgents, *ronderos*, villagers, and military forces. The novel, however, opens with Rosa on her way to the afterlife and her journey through the Ukhu Pacha (World Below)<sup>42</sup> in search of her insurgent son, Liborio (alias Túpac). Her dog, Wayra, guides her, like Virgil leads Dante, as she cleanses her *penas*, sorrow, and shame in the Ukhu Pacha before her final ascension to the Janaq Pacha (World Above).<sup>43</sup> Along the way she meets her family, neighbors, and strangers who died in the conflict or from other causes.

Here I examine the narrative voices that construct three different spaces of death to reveal the multiple dimensions of the culture of terror in *Rosa Cuchillo*. I argue that *Rosa Cuchillo* offers a more panoramic view of the armed conflict than *Lituma en los Andes* but also shares

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<sup>41</sup> Mariano is shocked when he hears that Fujimori is running for office, “¿Un japonés quiere ser Presidente? . . . ¡Vaya!” (194).

<sup>42</sup> Ramírez explains the Andean cosmology: “El Ukhu pacha no se entiende como un lugar destinado únicamente a los condenados, sino como un espacio inquietante de fuerzas no necesariamente invisibles o inmateriales de las que depende la propia existencia, es un espacio de energía peligrosa pero también protectora. Aquí están los ‘gentiles’ o representantes de la antigua humanidad y los wamanis o dioses montaña que mantienen una relación recíproca con la comunidad a la que protegen y rigen. Sobre el Janaq pacha hay pocas referencias, pero se entiende que es el espacio de realización y felicidad plenas” (544).

<sup>43</sup> Gordon F. McEwan cautions us to refrain from drawing parallels to the heaven and hell of Christian afterlife like chroniclers: “The Spanish compared these regions to the Christian concepts of heaven and hell, but apparently that was not their meaning to the Incas. The Incas expressed the belief that ordinary people went to *ukhu pacha* when they died regardless of their virtue unless they were found sinful enough to be condemned to wander the earth as spirits. Members of the nobility were said to go to the *hanaq pacha* after death regardless of their merits when alive. In both cases life seemed to continue much as it had on earth” (138).



some commonalities. I first analyze the narrative told by Rosa as she travels through the Andean space of death, the *Ukhu Pacha*. Colchado blends both Western and Andean myths to demonstrate the cyclical effects of terror in the Andean afterlife. Then I make the case that *Rosa Cuchillo* more thoroughly depicts the cacophonous and fragmented narratives emerging from subaltern and hegemonic cultures. I take on Ramírez's thesis that the novel is about reconciliation with the hegemonic other by demonstrating that the space of death is a more useful way to frame the encounters in the Ukhu Pacha. In contrast to *Lituma en los Andes*, however, *Rosa Cuchillo*'s Andean space of death has shamanic undertones that present the innocent or duped (like Rosa and Liborio) the possibility of atonement for their involvement in the armed conflict. Secondly, I turn to the narration in the second person that focuses on Liborio and the Shining Path. The *tú* narration forces the Self/Subject to experience the exploitation, marginalization forced recruitment and cultural loss experienced by the Other, the Andean peasant turned insurgent in the space of death. I then interpret the first-person narration of the *rondero* Mariano as a *testimonio* that garners empathy from the reader, which attests to the paradoxical and fratricidal nature of the internal conflict. The narratives about Liborio and Mariano demystify the Andean space of death and further reveal that a multicultural nation is unfeasible. Finally, I conclude with an interpretation of the figure of victimhood, Rosa, as mother of the messianic Liborio. Both mother and son had to become violent to end physical or symbolic violence and prevent themselves from becoming victims in the space of death.

*Rosa Cuchillo*'s construction of the Andes as space of death prior to the decade of the 1980s is akin to the first part of Adriana's narration in *Lituma en los Andes*, in which her bucolic Andes are transformed into a place of loss and injustice. She meets the souls of Fidencio and Teodulo and "un alma chúcura" (23), a violinist dying on the Kay Pacha and a fiery governor in

chains. Fidencio had fallen off a cliff, and Téodulo had died of alcoholism. The suffering of the first two souls ties into the suffering of Rosa and Mariano from poverty and injustice. After discovering her son joined the insurgency, Liborio tells Rosa, “Más vale la muerte, mamita, que esta suerte miserable, ¿no te cansas de sufrir?” (70). These encounters with unfortunate figures in the underworld and the injustice in the highlands suggest that the natural and social environment is a dangerous place of suffering. In consequence, depression and alcoholism are problems in this vulnerable population; Liborio also reveals that death would be better than living in the debt and enslavement so common in this context. The other three souls represent different facets of society affected by the transformation of the Andes into a battleground. People are condemned to wander the space of death, the wrongfully accused are executed without proper burial, and those with political power are ineffective or incapable of leadership during conflict.

The sociopolitical criticism in the Ukhu Pacha makes the underworld Dante Alighieri conceives in *The Divine Comedy* a natural model for understanding a legacy of corruption and injustice in the Andes. *The Inferno* facilitates understanding between hegemonic and subaltern cultures. For example, Colchado borrows the storyline and imagery from cantos 7–8 of *The Inferno* in which Virgil and Dante arrive at a swampy area with fire.<sup>44</sup> This episode from *The Inferno* connects to *Rosa Cuchillo* when Liborio (*tú*) observes a symbolic fire during the takeover of a school: “En el palo mayor de la escuela, flameaba ligeramente la bandera roja con la hoz y el martillo” (104). Then, in the section immediately following, Rosa also sees light, like Dante: “se observaba a lo lejos, sobre la espesura, un vivo resplandor en medio de esa luz como

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<sup>44</sup> Virgil tells Dante that the souls in the fifth circle belong to “the souls of those whom anger has defeated” (“Canto 7” 116). Dante sees a fire and asks Virgil its meaning, and Virgil asks Dante to look for himself. It is a light on a boat. Then Dante sees a red glow and his guide explains, “[t]he eternal flame burning there appears to make them red, as you can see, within this lower Hell” (“Canto 8” 73–75). The fifth circle contains a “house of sorrow,” which the travelers cannot enter (“Canto 8” 120) and the prevailing theme is how Dante has not yet seen the worst of the inferno and must see for himself the horror.

de luna que nos alumbraba” (107). When Rosa asks about the *luminosidad*, Wayra replies, “Es del Marañón—me dijo—, del mar de candela. No temas, no va a ocurrirte nada estando conmigo” (107). The two vignettes are thematically connected. In the section featuring Liborio, the imposition of the flames on the sickle and hammer flag conveys a sense of anger and self-destruction, and Rosa encounters a similar destructive luminosity: the sea of fire. This suggests that the transgressions of anger and wrath, the sins of the Shining Path, cannot be purged and are cyclical. We understand the actions of the Shining Path as morally wrong, but we must remember that Rosa, in light of sin, is trying to find the right path to the gods in the Janaq Pacha.

As Wayra guides Rosa deeper through the Ukhu Pacha, they encounter dehumanized souls: “Hombres que habían dejado de ser humanos y estaban tomando aspectos de fieras, como sombras cruzaban esos terrenos pantanosos. Más allá, un entrevero de gruñidos, jadeo, chapoteos, entre una gritería de sapitos nos hizo detener” (108). They walk through a marshland, where there are men who have turned into beasts, and she believes she hears toads croaking. Wayra tells Rosa that they are not toads: “son voces de personas que padecen el hielo de las aguas que inundan esos carrizales. Afina tu oído y escucha” (108). Despite the assurance that they are not toads, Rosa thinks, “Haciéndole caso, me puse a orejear. De veras. Voces de gente era, que hablaban en un gran entrevero. Aunque también debían gritar sapitos porque a ratos tapaban la conversación de las personas” (108). Instead of one narrative thread of the armed conflict, the utterances are fragmented and plurivocal:

— . . . Nos decían cachacos robagallinas, rateros, abusivos. . . .

— . . . por una calle de Ayacucho, claro . . .

— . . . tenía guardada en su casa la calavera del mando . . .

— . . . la matanza de los comuneros de Runguyocc . . .

[ . . . ]

— . . . en Uchuraccay luego de la masacre de los periodistas . . .

— . . . le cortó ambas orejas, seccionándole . . .

— . . . ¡basta de sentimentalismos! dijo la camarada . . .

[ . . . ]

— . . . violamos a las terrucas, después lanzamos granadas . . .

— . . . los mandos regionales, dijo el presidente Gonzalo . . .

— . . . la sagrada familia en Ayacucho . . .

— . . . por soplón, sí, por soplón lo matamos . . .

— . . . Vargas Llosa alentó a Huayhuaco y . . .

[ . . . ]

— . . . comités populares, o sea dictaduras conjuntas . . .

— . . . fueron aniquilados más de ochenta, eso fue lo real . . . (109–10)

It is difficult to get a sense of the whole story in this toad-sounding chatter that occupies several pages of the novel. Nonetheless, these voices mention or implicate Vargas Llosa, the military, the Shining Path, and politicians as actors that sustained a culture of terror in the Andes. The narrators are many, and Rosa only hears bits and pieces of their stories, leaving them out of context. In spite of the talking past each other, we can infer who is speaking and what is happening. In this cacophonous chorus, readers see the voices of the military, the insurgents, the *ronderos*, and Abimael Guzmán. This chatter references military tactics of rape, torture, and mass killings. The *Partido Comunista Popular* is compared to a dictatorship and represented as emotionless. Woven into the chatter, there is also a critical stance about the conservative Vargas Llosa. As is well known, Vargas Llosa supported the military leader Huayhuaco, who was later

accused of being involved in the drug trade. He formed part of a committee that infamously investigated and wrote about Uchuraccay, where Andean villagers murdered eight journalists, determining their actions to be part of ritualistic killings.<sup>45</sup>

Darkness, pain, fire, water, swamps, and a chorus of toads construct the world through which Rosa traverses. In fieldwork in Sonqo, Allen learned from its inhabitants that “the marsh [in the community] is known to be *saqra* (demonic) and liable to swallow people or to make them sick” (39). With this insight regarding the significance of the *saqra*, we can see that the marsh in *Rosa Cuchillo* has swallowed all actors in the armed conflict and will make them ill in perpetuity, like the drunk *serrucho* with the ulcer in *Lituma en los Andes*. The presence of an ignoble, harmless amphibian can conjure a variety of meanings in the Ukhu Pacha. In the Middle Ages, the toad was a symbol of the devil, and for some Andeans its presence is an ill omen. In the corpus of Arguedas, however, the toad is a metaphor for the oppressed and silenced Indian class.

This vignette recalls the efforts of the TRC to write an official narrative of the armed conflict in Spanish by recovering testimonies from those that experienced the violence firsthand. Lambright has observed that “the voices reproduced in *Rosa Cuchillo*, in their very incompleteness and fragmentation, point to the futility of such an effort. Neither the individual nor collective will ever be fully apprehended” (“Towards a Narrative”). In the truncated passage from *Rosa Cuchillo*, one can hear the actions that took place in various places, and also a plethora of voices. It is difficult to distinguish between the voices of the “innocent” and bad *sapitos*. To add to Lambright’s understanding of the difficulty of forming “a coherent, consensual, and conclusive narrative,” the chorus of toads, in contrast to the narration about

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<sup>45</sup> Later in his career (and prior to the publication of *Rosa Cuchillo*) Vargas Llosa, who is mentioned twice in *Rosa Cuchillo*—both times critically—had denounced many of the counterinsurgency tactics and human rights violations. However his change in perceptions of the armed conflict and politics does not enter the marshland discussion.

Rosa, Liborio, and Mariano, utters not one single word in Quechua. The omission of Quechua and Andean culture draws attention from the cultural loss and onto the *mistis*, or members of the community who betrayed and transformed the cultural landscape of the Andes for which they are ultimately responsible. Perhaps the *sapitos* Rosa hears are those who have no voice, the Indian class, whose words are lost among the fragments in Spanish.

The toad-like voices sound like a noisy collective memory that is struggling to coalesce but cannot because its enunciators are stuck in the mud and only quarrel among each other. As Rosa and Wayra walk through the marshlands, a voice begins to speak to them. The man identifies himself as Mañuco Julca from Uchuraccay (also called Iquichana). He explains that he does not regret killing the *terrucos*: “no me arrepiento de haber matado terrucos como cancha, a hachazos y machetazos” (111). This may suggest that the villagers of Uchuraccay, where the eight journalists were killed, interpreted their presence as that of the *terrucos*. Later investigations have determined that the Sinchis had ordered the people of Uchuraccay to kill any strangers that entered their village on foot and had informed them that the military would arrive by helicopter (Vivanco 22). As Mañuco speaks other heads, representing the *terrucos*, emerge from the mud, “tratando de sacarse el barro de los ojos” (112), and accuse him of being a pawn of the military and his master, “¡Eres un cabeza negra, Iquichano, un traidor y un mentiroso! Fueron los militares y tus patronos quienes te metieron a sus mesnadas para combatirnos” (112). The voices continue arguing over who the real traitors are: peasants, Sinchis, overseers, or insurgents. The mud metaphorically represents the blindness that results from their alliances and judgments about each other. Rosa and Wayra walk away and “mientras nos alejábamos asustados, oíamos que chapoteaban en el barro, jadeaban, maldecían, luchaban . . .” (112). Symbolically, hegemonic narratives and counternarratives are stuck in the mud. It is useless to

name those responsible for the violence in the Andes; everyone's hands have been sullied by their involvement in the conflict.

I read *Rosa Cuchillo*, particularly the narrative that takes place in the Ukhu Pacha, as one that validates the Andean cosmos and posits the impossibility of reconciliation between *runakuna* and *mistikuna*. While I agree with Ramírez that “El universo narrativo colchadiano busca claramente reproducir la lógica andina de los mundos en el relato” (345), I have difficulty seeing the second part of his argument, which focuses on reconciliation with the hegemonic Other. Ramírez explains that the discourses of *tinkuy* and *kuti* are central to his reading:

El primero [*tinkuy*] es la relación tensional y asimétrica que surge entre entidades que intercambian y se oponen. Señala la posibilidad de una negociación y, por tanto, del reconocimiento del Otro. Por su parte, el *kuti* señala la ausencia del diálogo a causa de la ruptura del intercambio. Indica, en este sentido un estado de caos, pero al mismo tiempo la potencialidad de la regeneración del orden que será siempre posible. (344)

His thesis insists that the concepts of *tinkuy* and *kuti* are present in the work of Colchado, but Ramírez flaunts an idealistic understanding of indigenous cosmology. While Ramírez reads the *tinku* positively, as a space of negotiation and recognition, for Allen the ritual of *tinku* is a “competitive and violent” encounter: “[w]hen streams converge in foaming eddies to produce a single, larger stream they are said to *tinkuy*, and their convergence is called *tinku* [ . . . ] *Tinkus* are powerful, dangerous places full of liberated and uncontrollable forces” (205). Taking into account Allen's understanding of *tinku*, we find that it does not necessarily mean an encounter between the hegemonic Other and the Andean community. Instead, I find evidence in *Rosa Cuchillo* against the idea of *tinku*. For instance, in the marshland, discourses and counterdiscourses compete without any recognition. The notion that these narratives will

coalesce is out of the question; rather, the marsh represents a sort of standstill, not a *tinku*. Rather, using the words of Allen, “the *ayllu* needs the *tinku* to define itself” (206). The *tinku* is not about a convergence with the hegemonic Other but about the identity of selves within a community that “function as a particularly hard collective push to keep the flow of life moving on” (210). This raises the question, how does one “keep the flow of life moving on” after violent conflict? Like Vargas Llosa, Colchado does not answer that question in *Rosa Cuchillo*.

Even though Ramírez has observed “la oposición irreconciliable y con la posibilidad del diálogo” in the corpus of Colchado, the former stands out in *Rosa Cuchillo* because of the nature of the internal conflict. There is speaking, as I have illustrated, in *Rosa Cuchillo*, but the dialogue (when present) is not conducive to reconciliation. Taussig’s understanding of the space of death is more useful than the idea of *tinkuy* because the culture of the victimizer and victim are bound together and there are points of encounter, which do not necessarily mean reconciliation. For example, Rosa engages in conversation with people from the Andes and people whom she knew on the Kay Pacha, such as Edilberto, Lieutenant Governor of Illaurocancha. According to Mariano, while he and Edilberto were under police-military detention, the threats of torture issued during interrogation broke his detainee: “Don Edilberto Huarhua terminó acusándolo por último hasta a su sobrino carnal” (140). Edilberto seems to be a character that evades the Shining Path and betrays members of the community by giving their names to the police. In the Ukhu Pacha, Wayra discourages Rosa from engaging in conversation with people like Edilberto, who are purging their sins and suffering because they could potentially harm her or they are no longer who they once were: “Vamos—dijo Wayra—así sea la misma persona que conociste no podrás reconocerla. Avancemos” (111). There are encounters in the Ukhu Pacha but, again, there is no *tinkuy*. In the space of death, there is good, represented by Rosa and Wayra and evil represented



by the toads and the encounters with dehumanized beings. There is a potential for transformation, but we do not know what kind, if any, will take place.

In another example, when Wayra and Rosa reach a fork in the road, we can see a literal divide between non-Andeans and Andeans. Wayra explains to Rosa, “Estás en el cruce de los caminos por donde se baja al Ukhu Pacha o se sube a los cielos [ . . . ] Éste es el Pachapa Sapin, la raíz del mundo” (147). Although Wayra describes a fork in the road, there is another road in the middle of the ones that lead to Ukhu Pacha and Janaq Pacha. When Rosa asks Wayra about this other path, Wayra replies, “No lo sé—respondió—. Por ahí se encaminan los que tienen creencia en los dioses cristianos” (149). Although the Andean cosmos has made space for a road to heaven, there is no encounter, dialogue, or understanding between *runakuna* and *mistikuna*. There is instead a symbolic rejection of the hegemonic beliefs represented by Christianity. This further emphasizes the idea that quarrelsome beings in the mud suggest: there is only conflict and rejection and dualistic thinking about both epistemologies. The convergence of opposites, as suggested by *tinkuy*, does not seem possible in Rosa’s first-person narration.

In spite of this representation of the Andes and internal conflict, the space of death in *Rosa Cuchillo* contains shamanic undertones (unlike *Lituma en los Andes*) and is a place of transformation for the indigenous subject. Throughout the journey, Rosa wonders if she will make it to Janaq Pacha or end up in another place. First, she returns to “life” by arriving at Auquimarca—a space of joy—where she joins her earthly family. Then she ascends to the Janaq Pacha to join the gods, Pedro Occro, and her son Liborio. Before her ascension, she remembers a useful tip from one of the souls she met: “Tienes que hacer simulación de cargar esas piedras mujer, encomendándote” (162). After completing this penance and crossing a bridge, Rosa is finally in the realm of the gods; Wayra reveals to her, “¿no eres acaso Cavillaca, la bellísima

diosa que un tiempo vivió en la tierra en la época de los incas?” (185). The space of death transmutes Rosa into her true form, an Inca goddess, and Wayra into the God of Wind. The pair had been gods who wanted experience life on earth and were given mortal forms. What is more, the Janaq Pacha is a space not only of identity transformation but also of memory cleansing. Another god, Mama Zara, responds to Rosa’s inquiries about her husband Domingo and son Liborio: “Aún están frescos tus recuerdos, pero al pasar al otro lado del puente donde habita nuestro padre, solo pensarás como la diosa que eres” (200). In the short-lived reunion between mother and son, Liborio tells Rosa, “me envía el Padre a ordenar el mundo. ¿Un pachacuti?, dije. Sí es necesario voltear el mundo al revés” (207–08). Liborio returns to the earthly space of death to flip the world upside down, and continue the Indian rebellion and quest for justice in the Andes. After this exchange, Rosa crosses the bridge to join the gods permanently: “Dejando atrás a Zaramama, yo también corrí al encuentro de mis hermanos, sintiendo la mirada dulce y bondadosa del Creador del Mundo, su leve sonrisa y el amor infinito con que me recibía de nuevo en su sagrado reino” (210). Rosa has purged her *penas* and enters a space of love, transformation, and oblivion. Once again, she must let go of Liborio, who returns to fight in the Andes. And as readers we must remember that this is not where *Rosa Cuchillo* concludes; this happy ending takes place in the Janaq Pacha, but as I will discuss, the novel closes with the death of Rosa on the Kay Pacha.

Ramírez interprets the happy ending as “la opción mítica que asume la novela para resolver el final de la historia nos señala los mandatos de un camino que supone la reconciliación con el otro, dado que el héroe andino no es un vengador sino un regenerador de un nuevo *tinkuy*” (548). The Inkari myth constitutes a violent revolution in “El sueño del pongo” by Arguedas: “Es el viejo y universal sueño campesino en el que se espera que algún día la tortilla se vuelva,

pero en los Andes, donde los conflictos de clase se confunden con enfrentamientos étnicos y culturales, todo esto parece contagiado por una intensa violencia” (Flores Galindo 20).

Additionally, Allen explains that the *pachacuti* is “the world turnaround” when “the Incas would emerge from Paiti with golden corn and reinstate the *Runakuna* as masters of the land” (215).

Flores Galindo and Allen do not suggest any form of reconciliation but rather a violent inversion of the social hierarchy. They keenly observe that the Andean frame of thought accepts and fears violence, which it recognizes as a part of life. A reversal of the status quo could be a form of justice for repressed populations, foment regeneration or equilibrium; however, it does not take into account reconciliation with the hegemonic Other. Instead, the *pachacuti* proposes cyclical violence and an inversion of power akin to the Spanish conquest.<sup>46</sup>

Now I would like to turn to the space of death in the story of Rosa’s son Liborio (alias Túpac) that is told in the second person, which I argue exhibits the concept of *tinku* that Ramírez intuitively suggests. The use of *tú* and Liborio does suggest a type of nonviolent, yet forced, convergence and the union of opposites: the possibility of transforming the heart of the reader. In this portion of the text, we can observe a young man who was kidnapped by the Shining Path and given no choice but to join the counterinsurgency. He admires the cell leader, Angicha, and falls in love with her. Initially, he believes their rhetoric and in their struggle for social justice, but in due course he realizes that their vision is exclusive and marginalizes Andean beliefs. Just as he recognizes the deception of the whole enterprise, he realizes Angicha will never have feelings for him because she is a *misti* and he is a *campesino*. Nonetheless, the possibility of actual social

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<sup>46</sup> In *Las Memorias de la Pivihuarmi Cuxirimay Ocllo* (2008), based on Juan de Betanzos *Suma y narración de los Incas* (1551), the narrator equates the end of Inca rule and the rise of the Spanish as a *pachacuti*: “Algunas imágenes tal vez les resultaron incomprensibles y borrosas, pero les sirvió para comprender lo que sería la llegada del temido Pachakuti. Sería la vuelta o el viraje del mundo, el cambio y la transmutación de lo establecido, el trastrueque de la vida, de los pensamientos y costumbres, todo aquello que les cercenaría de un tajo y para siempre cualquier intento de placer o de alegría” (Yáñez Cossío 18). It would be hard to argue—as Ramírez does—that the *pachacuti* in the sixteenth century recognized the indigenous Other and was a form of reconciliation.

change keeps him in the insurgent ranks. During an attack on a mine, marines capture and execute him. But upon death, Liborio transforms into a dove and ascends to the Janaq Pacha only to be sent back to lead the aforementioned *pachacuti*.

The second-person narration in *Rosa Cuchillo* creates a binary that allows readers (Self/Subject) to temporarily occupy the position of an Andean peasant (Other). Employing the second person is rare in fiction.<sup>47</sup> The use of *tú* or *you* in these texts and *Rosa Cuchillo* allows the reader to become simultaneously protagonist and spectator, insider and outsider. In Spanish the use of the informal pronoun conveys a sense of familiarity. This creates the union of Self/Subject, representative of the hegemonic epistemology, and Other, who occupies a secondary place and is imagined by the Subject. In *Rosa Cuchillo*, this familiarity allows us to know intimately, even to become the peasant turned insurgent.

Thus the section about Liborio is deterministic and gives the reader no choice about *your* kidnapping, *your* forced recruitment, and *your* decision to join the Shining Path. The decision that Liborio has to make becomes the existential quandary of the reader. A group dressed as Civil Guardsmen explain that they are going to take *you* to Huamanga and not the local detention center as *you* presumed (18), which increases *your* confusion about their identity and *your* destiny. Comrade Santos (Nieves Collanqui) has requested to speak to *you*. With this news, “caes en cuenta. Y comprendes que estás ante guerrilleros [ . . . ] del Partido Comunista del Perú ‘Sendero Luminoso’” (19) and not the Civil Guard. (This raises the question, if *you* had been captured by the Civil Guard, would *you* have been pressured to join the *rondas*, as Mariano Ochante was?) Under immense pressure, *you* must join them or suffer the consequences. Not only is this a matter of life and death. It is something inevitable: “Claro que lo sabías, hombre.

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<sup>47</sup> Successful uses of this narrative voice include *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* and *Aura* by Carlos Fuentes and *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* by Italo Calvino.

Sólo faltabas tú. ¿Qué esperabas? El Partido necesitaba urgente en esta coyuntura el concurso voluntario de los huajchas, sus hijos más preclaros, compañero . . .” (19). The *tú* voice establishes that *huachas*, a game similar to horseshoes, in which two players or teams compete against each other to throw metal washers into a hole in a sandbox, is a metaphor for the conflict. Liborio has to join one of the two teams, the counterinsurgency or the Shining Path, who compete for the Andes. The Shining Path flatters the peasants to join the “team” by telling them that they are *illustrious* and crucial to the mission of the political party. In this example, everyone else had joined the insurgency and *you* were the only one missing.

However, for *you*/Liborio this is not an easy decision to make, and *you* had avoided joining the game for some time. Night after night, “Te rascas la cabeza. Piensas. Tantas noches has luchado contigo mismo dudando si incorporarte o no a la guerrilla” (19). Naturally, the narrative *tú* experiences fear and shyness when responding to the mission of the Shining Path. In this entrapment, the *tú* acquiesces to Santos, “Entonces tú te apresuras y atropelladamente respondes poniendo cierta firmeza en tu voz, Sí, compañeros, así era, en de veras” (20). Even though previous works may present this type of decision as an easy or fanatical choice, it is something the narrative *tú* had evaded. When all is said and done, joining the Shining Path, like the reader joining the *tú*, is a forced decision marked by trickery, implied threats, and destiny.

As *your*/Liborio’s indoctrination, loyalty, and acceptance of the Shining Path strengthens, the narrative *tú* becomes part of *ustedes*, the body of insurgents acting on behalf of the Shining Path. As *you*/Liborio learn how to use a rifle and the philosophy of the Communist Party, the narrative voice goes back and forth between *tú* and *ustedes*, demonstrating a distinction between the Self and the insurgent Other. For example, they tell *you*, “Iban a abatir, compañeros, el capitalismo burocrático y el semi-feudalismo,” and *you* are confused: “Ay, caracho, eso sí que

nadita entiendes” (29). The narrative *tú* does not fully understand the collective mission and Angicha assures him, “vamos a irles explicando conforme pasen los días” (30).

Liborio’s love for Angicha, cell leader and university student, symbolizes his attraction and loyalty to the Shining Path and deception:

Ahora que el sueño te está agarrando, aparece Angicha con su alma de ave, ésa que a ti te gusta. Como saliendo de entre la neblina, le estás viendo llamarte, sonriendo, haciéndote señas, vestida con uniforme de campaña. Está subiendo una ladera gredosa, resbalándose a ratos, empuñando el fusil. Arriba, el cielo con pocas nubes. (39)

This is but a mere dream and illusion; Liborio does not yet realize the *engaño*, which is present in the dream. Love is not possible between a peasant man and a university-educated *misti*.

Angicha uses his love to make him follow her as an insurgent up a clayey, precarious ladder.

This commitment to follow Angicha, the symbolic representation of the Shining Path, turn into feelings of shame: “Si tu madre supiera, Liborio, en lo que andas metido, piensa, ¿qué diría?”

(46). He imagines returning home to his mother, hugging her, lying by omission: “no le confiarías nada todavía de tu compromiso con la guerra, ni sabría tampoco que ahora tenías otro nombre: Túpac, para tus compañeros” (46). The fact that he is Túpac to his comrades and Liborio to his mother illustrates his split identity and the shame he feels in telling his mother that he changed his name; symbolically, as Túpac, he would not be recognized as her son.<sup>48</sup>

Over time we join Liborio in mundane tasks that take place alongside insurgent activity; for instance, “Estabas fajándote, luego de hacer tu necesidad, cuando en eso viste que algo como

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<sup>48</sup> The Truth and Reconciliation Commission echoes the idea about the denial of one’s name and identity that is present in *Rosa Cuchillo*: “El nombre propio es una marca de nuestra identidad, nos identifica y singulariza. Con él nos reconocemos y somos reconocidos por los otros. La violencia del conflicto y las condiciones que impuso obligaron a mucha gente a alterar o negar su nombre o el de sus familiares para salvarse y salvarlos. [...] A la larga el ocultamiento o negación del nombre, o de otros aspectos de la persona, su estigmatización, constituyeron una experiencia que conllevó cuestionamientos a su identidad y a su autoestima, además de falta de reconocimiento y valoración por parte de otros” (“Las secuelas” 219)

una sombra se ocultaba detrás de un árbol. [ . . . ] ¡Los sinchis! —exclamas recién reconociéndolos, viendo que acaban de volar la puerta y una parte de la casa” (60). The act of going to the bathroom, which is a private scene, adds a sense of realism and commonality—we all do the same. Next to the attack by Sinchis, the action communicates the disruption of everyday life. The reader joins Liborio as the narrative *tú* hides from the Sinchis and as the *ustedes* that will later dynamite the jail in order to release insurgent prisoners. Then the narration returns to the *you* injured in the crossfire and left behind: “Herido en la pierna, aguantando el dolor, sigues corriendo unas cuantas cuabras en medio de la oscuridad de la calle” (76). Once wounded, *you* are left in the darkness, but *you* are rescued by the *apu*, *your* father, Pedro Occro.

The use of the narrative *tú* and Liborio communicate a duality of Spanish and Quechua, *misti* and peasant/indigenous frame of thought. First the reader experiences the Andean frame of thought in such instances as when the mountain spirits, the *apus* or *wamanis*, protect the *runakuna*. Then Liborio’s insurgent name, Túpac, becomes ironic because the communist revolution is not the *pachacuti* Liborio had imagined. When Liborio begins to question the goals of the revolution, he reveals had originally interpreted the movement as a peasant-led *pachacuti*, “Y al término de esta guerra, compañero—dijiste—, ¿seríamos los comuneros campesinos, mejor dicho los naturales, los que gobernemos este país?” (92). The veils of illusion come crashing down when Santos explains that this is not the world flipped around, as Liborio had initially understood: “Pero es imposible volver a una época tahuantinsuyana, compañero, intervino Santos, sentado junto a Edith [ . . . ] vivimos una época moderna, distinta” (93). Liborio clarifies by explaining that he intends that they should not reestablish the Inca order but instead invert the current class structure and form an intentional community that empowers the peasantry: “reactivar los ayllus” so that “se ayudarían unos a otros, se socorrerían, viviendo

como en familia, repartiéndose las ganancias entre todos” (94). Santos, Edith, and Omar dismiss the idea of communalism by agreeing with him just to silence him; Omar in particular displays “una ligera sonrisa irónica” (95). The *mistis* do not hear the grievances or future prospects of the peasant class by assuming that the Shining Path’s national project is right for everyone. Once again, like in *Lituma en los Andes*, the peasants are the pawns of the Shining Path that help them take over the nation and the cost is the cultural values of Andes.

While in the Andes, Lituma witnesses defunct and corrupted Andean cultures in which there are no Quechua speakers, only Spanish-speaking *serruchos*, in *Rosa Cuchillo* this destruction also becomes evident to the narrative *tú*. Liborio realizes that Angicha, although dressed like a peasant and leading and fighting alongside the peasantry, “el pensamiento de ella era misti” (130). The *mistis* capture a vicuña and Liborio irately says, “Ahora, por culpa de este animalito, los dioses de la montaña, los Apus, nos castigarán (127). There is a huge storm in response to the act of taking the animal, which reinforces the validity of the Andean worldview: disrespect for nature will lead to punishment by those protective spirits. The *misti* frame of thought, it seems, could never understand the *runakuna*: “Nunca podrían aceptar que las cochas, los cerros, los ríos, tuvieran vida. Que en las piedras mismas se alojan espíritus. No, no eso no lo entenderían” (136). As readers, we have been guided to vicariously experience the journey from peasant to insurgent, and the revelation that a *misti*, presumably identified with the reader, cannot comprehend these beliefs, exposes our guilt, and reinforces the need to make space for the indigenous worldview in one’s Self.

The use of *tú* in *Rosa Cuchillo* subverts the hegemonic, Western discourse to which readers have been exposed. As noted above, *Lituma en los Andes* narrows the scope of the conflict, highlighting the brutality of the Shining Path and the responses to this violence by the



villagers, who learn to kill their brothers brutally. Colchado, by contrast, finds a place for the insurgent narrative among first-person and third-person narrations. Recurring to the words of villagers from the Andes, “*concientizados, rescatados, arrepentidos and engañados*,” Colchado allows these characterizations to emerge alongside the insurgent identity (“Reconciling” 112). More clearly than *Lituma en los Andes*, Rosa Cuchillo underscores the discourse of innocence and victimhood and the complicated nature of the internal conflict. The act of reading, therefore, becomes an act of acceptance of insurgent identity.

While we get to walk in the shoes of Liborio, we also hear the trauma narrative that Mariano tells about the paradoxical, destructive social process in the Andes. The first-person stream of consciousness also functions as a testimony that helps hold together the narratives told by Rosa and Liborio. Mariano represents the view of a villager who is forced by the *cachacos* to take up arms against the Shining Path and is shot and left for dead by the *terrucos*. His first-person narrative sounds like a *testimonio* told from his deathbed (42). Mariano recounts the effect of foreigners, then the Shining Path and counterinsurgency on Illaurocancha. It is through this testimony that we understand the punishments in Ukhu Pacha, as seen in the examples of feudalism and Edilberto, and observe that a multicultural Andes is impossible.

While I do not want digress on the definition of *testimonio*<sup>49</sup> and this problematic genre, I will summarize a general consensus that the *testimonio* has specific goals: “inducing readers to participate in a project of social justice” (Nance 7) and “raising consciousness and building solidarity” (Bickford 1). While Nance and Bickford analyze the capacity of *testimonio* for social change, John Beverly’s description on the function of the *testimonio* is more precise:

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<sup>49</sup> See *Can Literature Promote Justice?* for a timeline that tracks the development and criticism on the *testimonio*. Nance in her study defines *testimonio* “as body of works in which speaking subject who present themselves as somehow ‘ordinary’ represent a personal experience of injustice, whether directly to the reader or through the offices of a collaborating writer, with the goal of inducing readers to participate in a project of social justice” (7).

the testimonio gives voice in literature to a previously “voiceless” and anonymous popular-democratic subject, but in such a way that the intellectual or professional—usually bourgeois or petty-bourgeois background—is interpellated, in his or her function as interlocutor/reader of the testimonio, as being in alliance with (and to some extent dependent on) this subject without at the same time losing his or her identity as an intellectual. (78)

Mariano’s narrative can be interpreted as a *testimonio* because it mediates the experiences of villagers in the Andes. Unlike the chorus of toads, his narrative includes references to Andean beliefs and uses Quechua and Quechua-Spanish words like *Taita Dios* (literally, “Father God”), *tropakuna* (“soldiers”), *alalau* (“how cold!”), and *dizque* (*se dice que*, “it is said”). His testimony confirms that Rosa died of sorrow, and Liborio (Túpac), upon recognizing him, shows him mercy and lets him go. Mariano’s *testimonio* is an essential part of Colchado’s effort for literary reconciliation, which Lambright highlights, and is another way of building solidarity between villager from the Andes and readers.

In the opening section, Mariano, as if answering a question posed in an interview by the TRC, establishes the origin of the evil that blazes through in the Andes:

Yo diría que los males de este pueblo los trajo Nieves Collanqui [Santos] junto con el maestro y esos otros foráneos que por acá venían . . . aunque, eso sí, tarde o temprano, con ellos o sin ellos, los alzamientos tenían que darse por aquí también, como está ocurriendo en casi todo Ayacucho y en los otros departamentos. (55)

The Shining Path declares Illaurocancha “a liberated zone,” and he inserts Edilberto’s voice, which pushes the community to resist, “no hay derecho a que ideologías extrañas vengán a imponernos. Como los Pokras y los Chancas, nuestros antepasados, que lucharon hasta el último

antes de ser sometidos por los incas” (113). Although Mariano holds the Shining Path responsible, he also acknowledges that the people would have risen up eventually. In spite of the latter sentiment, the *testimonio* focuses on the evil that began with the Shining Path, not the resentment brewing among the peasantry. The Shining Path enters Illaurocancha, changes the values of the community, and opens the chapter of physical violence: “La primera muerte que vimos en estos lugares en aplicación a la justicia popular” (116). Momentarily, Mariano uses *nosotros* to reflect the collective act of witnessing the Shining Path forcing a young woman to execute a man that stole some money and a radio. The *terrucos* change the culture of this community and force them to commit acts of savagery.

Mariano’s narrative returns constantly to scenes of savagery and violence designed to elicit the reader’s empathy. The presence of *terrucos* brings military forces to Illaurocancha and the actions of the Civil Guard and Sinchis are no better than those of the Shining Path. Mariano recalls his detention: “. . . De terroristas nos acusaban a todos . . . ¡Quiénes son los jefes! ¡Habla terruño de mierda! . . . así diciendo nos ponían hachas, machetes, cuchillos, en nuestras gargantas . . .” (139). The interrogators force women to denounce their husbands:

Hay anexos donde los maridos de las mujeres están en la guerrillas. Ellas entonces tiene que decir que no los ven, que ya nada las ata a ellos . . . si por casualidad los cachacos se enteran de que regresó y no fue denunciado por su mujer, a punta de bayonetazos o culatazas a liquidan a ésta por más que sus criaturas se abracen a ella y se arrodillen. (44)

Mariano explains why people were hesitant to talk about the conflict through the image of a divided family. Mothers must be silent as they bear the consequences of the insurgent activity of their spouses. This reminds us of Rosa knowing that her son is an insurgent and the danger of this knowledge.

Mariano's diction allows the reader to experience the confusing "logic" of the counterinsurgency's solution to "protect" the inhabitants of Illaurocancha. Mariano recalls that the Sinchis had named Edilberto "jefe de las rondas campesinas o Frente de Defensa Civil de toda la zona . . . Nos organizaron, pues, para enfrentar a los terrucos dándonos un mes de instrucción [ . . . ] (145). However, the formation of *rondas* with one month of training does not convince Mariano, who had planned to leave Illaurocancha like people left Naccos in *Lituma en los Andes*. The use of the third person, *nos organizaron*, demonstrates the passivity of the villagers. Like the Shining Path used rhetoric to sway peasants, the Sinchis also have their own rhetoric to convince the villagers to fight the *terrucos*: "nos decía el teniente [ . . . ] quieren implantar el comunismo y eso significa que ya no habrá libertad; les harán trabajar como a esclavos y hasta a sus hijos les quitarán . . . y por eso era necesario dizque rechazarlos, combatirlos" (145). While these statements have some truth, they are scare tactics used to intimidate the villagers into joining the *rondas*. The word *dizque* in the quote above reflects that these words are someone else's, not his own, communicating some irony. Following the military's orders also has diminished civil liberties; the military detained and beat people from the village. Mariano further emphasizes the idea of coercion by the military: "Ellos fueron los que me obligaron a pasar lista todas la noches a los poquísimos que quedan en Illaurocancha . . ." (42). His language also suggests the difficulty of taking arms up against and monitoring community members who became *terrucos*. Again, the ideas of distrust and violence to prevent violence come up; however, this violence is fratricidal.

The problem with the armed conflict, in *Rosa Cuchillo*, is the internally contradictory position in which it has placed people like Mariano and his narrative exposes it, allowing solidarity between Mariano and the reader. Mariano recalls the hair-raising slogan of the Shining

Path, *El partido tiene mil ojos y mil oídos*. Then the Shining Path shoots him and leaves him for dead because he is a *rondero*. Mariano consequently finds himself in a double bind because now “Si me ven los cachacos así como estoy con esta herida, son capaces de decirme que seguro soy terruco” (43). There is no place for him in his community anymore; he should have fled.

During the last moments of Mariano’s life, he has a series of haunting nightmares that remind the reader about the paradoxical situation of victim, witness, and offender in the space of death. There is discourse of failure in the dreams: “soné que los terroristas tomaban Lima” (186) and he dreams that the police rape doña Emilia in front of him and he is powerless to stop them. Mariano desperately tries to cling on to life but spirits, to which he refers to as “Almas de la Sentencia” (195), bedevil him. Theidon reminds us of the relationship among the Ukhu Pacha, spirits, and dreams: “[t]he *uku pacha* is normally invisible to the living and cloaked in darkness, with spirits that may emerge at night and frequent people’s dreams” (*Intimate Enemies* 65). He tries to fight them: “yo estoy tirando garrotes al aire, sí, con el garrote que traje conmigo; gritando y carajeando . . .” (203). He senses that his body is being taken to a plaza, and women are trying to hang him. Next he is in a church before *la Virgen de la Candelaria* and explains, “la Virgen de la Candelaria me castigará [ . . . ] y me arrodillo a suplicarle que haga volver mi espíritu a mi cuerpo, ofreciéndole pasar su fiesta el próximo año” (202).<sup>50</sup> The blessed Mother’s silence reveals the failure of Christian cosmology. She does not intercede on his behalf, and leaves him to suffer alone. Instead the following scene unfolds:

El viento chicotea mi cara . . . [ . . . ] estoy entrando al puente . . . el agua que corre abajo torrencial, sonando entre las piedras, me marea . . . de pronto, luchando con mi cuerpo cuando estoy, he dado un mal paso y . . . ¡oh, santo Dios!... caigo a la quebrada . . . Las

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<sup>50</sup> Earlier in the *testimonio*, Mariano explains that Emilia lit a candle for him at *la Virgen de la Candelaria* because “[a]unque los santos cristianos son aparte, también hacen milagros...” (138).

aguas me envuelven . . . lucho . . . doy manotazos . . . saco mi cabeza . . . ¡Ay!, las  
 piedras me golpean.[.] ¡Aggg! . . . el agua en mi boca, en mis oídos . . . siento como  
 chispas que saltan de mi cerebro . . . un manto negro me tapa . . . me tapa . . . (202)

If we read Mariano's fate alongside that of Rosa on her journey in the afterlife, Mariano has an out-of-body experience, like the violinist dying on the Kay Pacha whom Rosa and Wayra encounter in the Ukhu Pacha. The harsh wind burns his face, and Mariano falls off the bridge that leads to the Janaq Pacha. He almost drowns, rocks hit him, and a black cloak covers him. This cloak, as Theidon suggests, can be read as the Ukhu Pacha. There may be space to suggest that Mariano could be the *alma chúcara* at the beginning of the novel. Could this be Mariano's penance in the afterlife for killing or turning in the sons and husbands of women? While as readers we sympathize with a man caught up in a paradoxical situation, the Andean understanding, as in *Lituma en los Andes*, punishes Mariano for taking arms up against or turning in his brothers and sisters.<sup>51</sup> Nonetheless, we are left to speculate. Will Mariano purge his sins and make it to Auquimarca or the Janaq Pacha, like Rosa? Perhaps.

The silence of women represented by *La Virgen de la Candelaria* in Mariano's *testimonio*, echoes the role and absence of Rosa on the Kay Pacha. More than anything, *Rosa Cuchillo* subverts the phallogentric discourse of the armed conflict by epitomizing the loss of mothers during the conflict. Rosa represents an untold story. She becomes an emblematic, holy Quechua mother of Peru who searches the hills for their fallen children, and, as distinct from *Lituma en los Andes*, in which female experience is largely absent, her narrative becomes the central thread that speaks to the trauma experienced by the nation. The name of the protagonist,

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<sup>51</sup> We must recall that the *wamani*, Pedro Occro, punishes the entire village for Rosa's refusal to live in the mountains with him. Rosa explains, "no me haría daño porque llevaba un hijo de él en mis entrañas, pero que por mi culpa todo el pueblo sufriría su castigo. Y de veras, ese año fue mal año, no hubo lluvias y los animales no aumentaron como otros años" (35).

which serves as the title of the novel, is a hybrid name representing both Spanish and Quechua cultures. Her name also resonates with first Saint in the Americas to be canonized, Santa Rosa de Lima, the patroness of indigenous peoples. Rosa witnesses the destruction of her village, Illaurocancha. Rosa is an Antigone figure as well in that she mourns the death of her son and searches for his body to give him a proper burial. As she wanders in search of Liborio, she screams with despair and almost freezes to death. However, the natural environment is not what kills her. Mariano says, “De pena de su hijo se murió la pobre” (88). This shows not solely the fragility of life but also the violence experienced by the silent witness that is powerless to stop escalating violence. The aftereffects are so severe that one *can* die from sorrow.

The protagonist is born Rosa Wanka, but people begin to call her Rosa Cuchillo, “Rosa Knife,” because she sleeps with a knife close to her. She explains that she was an attractive young woman and men pursued her. In the Ukhu Pacha, to the women shepherds who also died of sorrow, Rosa explains,

Como usted dice, mamita, no solo me sirvió para ahuyentar a los espíritus malos, sino también para contener a los hombres que varias veces intentaron abusarme, como el Lorenzo Taipe, hombre casado, con cuatro hijos, a quien puse el puñal en el pecho haciéndolo retroceder acobardado cuando ya estaba entrando en la choza. [ . . . ] Desde entonces, los hombres me miraban con una mezcla de temor, admiración y respeto. La gente dejó de llamarme Rosa Wanka para nombrarme con el mote de Rosa Cuchillo. (34)

The journey of Rosa emphasizes that all actions have consequences: her tale openly addresses the rape and victimization rampant in the historical conflict. Sexual abuse proliferates in the highlands. The example demonstrates how the wealthier class dominates and takes advantage of peasant women. Rosa then takes up a weapon to protect herself.

The name change reflects the notion that in order to prevent violence, one must become violent so as not to become a victim. Rosa acknowledges that the knife wards off evil spirits and male perpetrators. In the Ukhu Pacha her husband, Domingo, describes himself as a *cuchi* or *cuichi*.<sup>52</sup> “Yo soy el cuchi que los estaba acosando, ¿recuerdas? Pues ya impregné mi espíritu pecador en el suyo. En adelante, será él quien ande buscando una víctima” (21). In the afterlife, Domingo explains, he has to impregnate another with his sins before entering the Janaq Pacha. These narratives containing sexual undertones conceal abuse and rape, depicting a patriarchal society in which women are at a biological disadvantage. A woman cannot protect herself from being penetrated unless she carries a knife.<sup>53</sup> In order to survive the patriarchal world, Rosa on the Kay Pacha is so armed, reminding us that violence must be met with violence—and even in the Ukhu Pacha, Wayra must protect Rosa from spirits seeking to do her harm.

Furthermore, Rosa shares with the shepherds that the *wamani* Pedro Orcco, the mountain god of her village, is the father of her missing son, Liborio. Rosa tells about the night during a storm when a visitor arrives at her home and she allows him to enter:

[ . . . ] Rápidamente cogí el puñal, y me aproximé a la puerta con sigilo. Aguaité por la hendidura y, sorprendida del silencio de mis perros, tal si estuvieran ausentes, vi en medio de la noche negra, iluminado por los breves fulgores de los relámpagos, a un hombre alto, fornido, con un cuero de cóndor sobre la cabeza, vestido con chamarra y

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<sup>52</sup> *Cuchi* in Quechua means rainbow. According to a legend, the *Cuchi* or *Cuichi(g)* pursues Indians dressed in colorful clothing, causes skin diseases, and impregnates women (Ocampo López 180). In order to evade an encounter with this foe, people must walk while waiving around a shiny machete whose light will scare off the *Cuichi* (180). A man, however, can also show his penis to the *Cuichi* to scare it off or smoke a cigarette to calm it down (180). In another version of the legend, the Salascas say they cannot wear light colored clothing because the rainbow will stick to them (Bernand 154). Moreover, in the Salascas narrative, there is also resistance to being “white” and conserving traditional indigenous clothing. In all three, there are clothing boundaries: the Indians dress colorfully and the *Cuichi* is white.

<sup>53</sup> The incidences or appearances of these types of spirits are indicative of a collective narrative of trauma. In Cabeza de Vaca’s account, La Mala Cosa is a short bearded man that has the power to harm and heal. In the works of José María Arguedas, *el comegente* is a trope revealing the fear of being consumed by a dominating antagonist.



pantalón de vicuña, calzando ojotas, que me hablaba con dulzura [ . . . ] (34)

In response to Rosa's defensive stance, he says, "—Ábreme, hija. Ya sabes quién soy, ¿verdad? Antes, arroja tu cuchillo. El acero me hace daño" (34). Rosa then recognizes him: "Y al ver su barba rubia, su cabello largo hasta los hombros, ya no dude que quien me estaba ordenando era el taita Pedro Orcco, el dios montaña que daba protección a nuestro pueblo" (34). Permitting his entrance, she gives herself to the *wamani* Pedro and becomes pregnant with Liborio.

The story about Rosa's pregnancy and relationship with her son echoes the story of the Virgin Mary.<sup>54</sup> Rosa reveals that Domingo, like Joseph, married her and recognized Liborio as his own son. Like the *La Virgen de la Candelaria*, Rosa is absent from the conflict that consumes her son in the sense that she is only a witness. Her son, in effect, is a demigod. Like the Virgin Mary, she suffers upon knowing that her son is sacrificing himself:

Abrazándote, lloró tu vieja aquella vez que llegaste, todo roto, hambriento, lleno de espinas, Terruco te has vuelto, hijo, diciendo. Secando sus lágrimas con tu pañuelo, le respondiste:

—Terruco no, mamita, guerrillero.

—¿Por qué pues, hijo? ¿Por qué?

—Por buscar justicia para los pobres, mamita; por eso.

—Te matarán, hijo; me moriré yo también.

—Más vale la muerte, mamita, que esta suerte miserable, ¿no te cansas de sufrir?

La sombra del cerro Pedro Orcco, tu padre, parecía alargarse hacia ti, como dándote la bienvenida. Taita, le hablaste en tu mente, ¿me protegerás? (70)

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<sup>54</sup> Mariano mentions Rosa's maternal suffering: "Pobrecita, yo a ella siempre le tuve harta consideración... fue mujer muy sufrida... huérfana desde muy joven. Ella sola tenía que trabajar para mantenerse, ya sea pastoreando sus animales o sembrando en su propio terreno... Y después que falleció su marido también, el Domingo Pariona, harto sufrió criando a sus dos hijos, de los cuales uno de ellos murió tierno nomás, quedando sólo el Liborio más para su perdición..." (88).

It is as if her son were wearing a crown of thorns and has decided that death is better than suffering. As a guerilla fighter has become willing to sacrifice his life for equality and empowerment. Pedro Orcco, the omnipotent presence and protective father, opens his arms for his son who has chosen to sacrifice himself in the name of social justice.

Like *La Virgen de la Candelaria*, Rosa is merely an onlooker and cannot intercede. She watches as soldiers drag women out of their houses, rape them, and execute them: “Ella ya no tuvo valor para mirar, ahora que les arrojaban granadas haciendo saltar rocas en pedazos, elevando del suelo enormes hongos de polvo” (141). She also turns away as the *rondas* clash with the insurgents:

Ella vio cómo la Defensa Civil iniciaba el ataque lanzando piedra y piedra con sus huaracas, aprovechando la ventaja de hallarse en terreno elevado. Los senderos respondieron lanzando “quesos rusos” y disparando con sus armas de largo y corto alcance. (150)

In *Rosa Cuchillo*, *piedras* take on a deeper significance than in *Lituma en los Andes*. Here, the synecdoche *piedras* represents Illaurocancha. First, the military launches grenades that destroy the foundations of the village: the people. Then the *ronderos* respond to the Shining Path with rocks in an action that echoes the battle between David and Goliath. Unlike in *Lituma en los Andes* and the biblical story, *piedras* communicate the physical destruction of the Kay Pacha, and the *ronderos* take up these fragments to fight against the Shining Path to no avail. Violence begets more violence, and unfortunately, as the fight escalates, the *ronderos* realize they have no choice but “atacar también con armas de fuego” (151). *Piedras* are too weak to counteract the violence burning through the Andes, which reinforces the need for the *pachakuti* led by Liborio.

*Rosa Cuchillo*, however, concludes not with the image of the *pachakuti* but with third-

person narration about Rosa. In a haunting image of lack of closure and loss, at the site of Libori's execution, Rosa finds

Con el pico sucio de tierra, [los huishqus] rescataban como sea algunos pedazos de carne que no habían sido sepultados del todo. Parte parte [sic] se veían jirones de ropa, sangre salpicada por las rocas, sobre la paja, mechones de pelos, tripas desparramadas como hilos, pedazos de costillas blanqueado. Y por más que buscó los restos reconocibles de su hijo, no los halló. (216)

By the sight of it, her son died days ago. The scavenger birds have eaten most of the bodies. Not burying the dead in Andean communities had consequences:

[P]eople were unable to hold wakes or bury their loved ones properly, which had implications for the fate of their souls. [ . . . ] Thus the unburied dead can become a danger to the living, either by beckoning them to follow or by placing demands for beyond. (Theidon, *Intimate Enemies* 65)

Rosa's inability to find her son emphasizes the disruption of the cycle of life and its rituals. As seen in her journey through the Ukhu Pacha, she encounters many souls who place demands on her or have returned to wander the Kay Pacha and torment the living.

Throughout the journey to the Janaq Pacha, the notion of dying from sorrow repeats itself and in the final image of the novel, the narrator describes what it means to die of sorrow. Rosa is overcome with grief: "Llorando se volvió por el camino, sin ver bien ni por dónde iba. La granizada la agarró por los cerros. Varias veces se rodó por lugares gredosos, pero ya ni sentía dolor. Estaba como adormecida. Ni hambre ni sed tenía" (216). The narrator portrays her state of severe depression and a slow suicide in which she stop taking care of herself. Upon returning to her village, she interrupts the silence with despairing yelps: "Cuando por fin asomó a la placita

silenciosa de Illaurocancha, un ataque de nervios la agarró, y empezó a gritar y a llamar a su hijo, a destrozarse la ropa arañando su carnes” (216). Her failed journey ends with her self-destruction and her voice screaming for Liborio. Her refusal of food, when taken into account of the role of flesh in *Lituma en los Andes*, reflects the destruction of her identity and her community. The scratches she inflicts on her represent her rage, pain, and loss. The violence leads to her unconscious state: “ella se convulsionaba y apretaba los dientes botando espumarajos, quedándose después rígida, con el cuerpo que se le enfriaba” (216). The *espumarajos* (“salvia”) coming out from her mouth as she grits her teeth—having a seizure—demonstrate her loss of language to speak about the gruesome battlefield that Illaurocancha has become. The loss of her son and the inability to find his body takes the life out of her body. Despite the attempts of her community to cure her, “Doña Emilia le frotó los brazos con timolina, le hicieron oler hierbas para que recobrar el conocimiento, pero fue por demás” (217). In death, “los ojos de Rosa Cuchillo se habían congelado para siempre” (217). Like the heroes of nineteenth-century romanticism, she dies of sorrow because she is not able to live in this world. Her corpse remains a witness, with its eyes frozen, open, to the “difficult time.” Her body reflects the effects of witnessing the fratricidal conflict that tore the Andes apart as well as the inability to perform the rituals of life and death. *Rosa Cuchillo* concludes not with the hopeful image of the goddess Cavillaca, Mariano’s failed attempt to protect Illaurocancha, or Liborio’s return to lead a *pachakuti*, but with a vignette of a mother that has no sense of closure and dies of sorrow.

### **Conclusion**

*Lituma en los Andes* constructs a thirdspace, a space of death, to represent the horror of the armed conflict. *Rosa Cuchillo*, similarly, recurs to the Ukhu Pacha to mystify the violence taking place on the Kay Pacha and to offer a path to redemption. The narratives about Liborio

and Mariano demystify discourses of evil spirits, but neither offers a solution to the cultural gap between *criollos* or *mistis* and Andeans. Despite the different manners of constructing the space of death and culture of terror, these novels communicate pessimistic understandings the armed conflict in which reconciliation between the hegemonic and subaltern other is impossible. This discussion of *criollo* and “Andean” writers leads me to observe a commonality that Lederach calls the “gift of pessimism.” Human sacrifice and cannibalism in *Lituma en los Andes* and the *pachakuti* in *Rosa Cuchillo* reveal the impossibility of conceiving a Peru without violence. Both works highlight themes that Theidon heard in testimonies in Andean villages—“we learned to kill our brothers” and “we had fallen out humanity”—and both view recovery from these degenerate states as nearly impossible. The internal conflict created communities dominated by distrust and fear, which resulted in a cultural, linguistic, and indigenous genocide. In spite of the pessimism these texts communicate, they have a place in the imagining of the armed conflict because they communicate the insurmountable loss in the Andes and the intricacy of reestablishing trust between *criollos* and “Andeans.” That is to say, among Peruvians.

***Coda: The Moral Imagination of the Peruvian Internal Conflict***

Healing and reestablishing trust had been one of the initiatives of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and in cultural production there has been a transformation of this pessimistic moral imagination. For this reason, I turn briefly to the manner in which the theater troupe Yuyachkani has revised the moral imagination of Colchado’s *Rosa Cuchillo*.<sup>55</sup> Lambright notes that the adaptation of *Rosa Cuchillo* was “[c]reated specifically for the group’s collaborations with the 2003 public hearings of Peru’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission” (“A Nation Embodied” 147). We can observe that Yuyachkani has revised the moral imagination

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<sup>55</sup> I did not have the privilege of seeing the performance in Peru but I have seen, on YouTube, the performance by Ana Correa at Brown University.

of the novel conceived by Colchado. The play echoes the *testimonio* of Mariano and the drama *Antigone*. Rosa first walks around the audience with a microphone in her hand to tell her story of the three *pachas* through words and dance. She narrates the moment when the troops enter her town and her search for Liborio. Her dance evocatively tells the story of her life. She uses her dress as a prop to simulate her pregnancy, the birth of her son, the harvest, her suffering, and her death.

There are some significant modifications that are crucial to the revision of the novel's moral imagination. Her speech does not mention the Shining Path and instead focuses on the treatment of the community by the *tropakuna*. While in the novel, Rosa carries a knife that earns her the last name *Cuchillo*, in the play she explains that she buries the hatchet, a symbolic gesture intended to protect herself from potential assailants—she renounces violence and approaches the audience armed only with memories. Although in the novel the Janaq Pacha is a place where memory is cleansed, Rosa's main message to the audience is: “mi pueblo todavía está enfermo de pena y de olvido,” and she, a resilient individual, travels and dances “para que florezca la memoria” (Watson Institute). The shamanic undertones of the novel blossom. Lambright notes that the period of melancholy has ended: “When she ends the dance by throwing rose petals soaked in water over the audience, a traditional Andean gesture of adoration or purification, it is as if Rosa Cuchillo has become the mother of all Peru, returning to ritually cleanse the country” (“A Nation Embodied” 148). I would add that this ritual is a blessing and shamans require that the blessed take the petals to finish the ritual, which in this case would be by either remembering or retelling the story. As mourning commences, the *pachacuti*, *tinkuy*, and Christian cosmology become silenced discourses. Her story no longer condones violence but emphasizes loss and the need to remember and receive trauma narratives with an open heart. To

reinforce the relationship between art and life, as Rosa leaves the stage a video of testimonies from people who suffered the armed conflict plays for the audience. In this short play that focuses on the effects of violence and memory, recognition and healing are possible.

Both *Lituma en los Andes* and the textual *Rosa Cuchillo*, however, understandably negate the possibility of reconciliation after years of violent confrontation and distrust. Vargas Llosa and Colchado cannot conceive of a Peru free of violence, silence, and dualism. The moral imagination of the play *Rosa Cuchillo*, however, revises the violent conceptions of the armed conflict and focuses on building a collective memory and cleansing Peru. As will be discussed in more detail in the next chapters, following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the moral imagination shifts in cultural production. Later texts seek to question the effects of violence on the body politic (as I explore in chapter 2) and transcend the need for revenge (as I will closely examine in chapter 3). Cultural production is in the process of building, to borrow from Lederach, a “moral imagination [that] requires the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies” (5).

## Chapter 2

### Exposing Truths in Detective Fiction: (De)Constructing Discourses of Trauma in *Abril rojo* and *Mientras huya el cuerpo*

*Detectives peruanos cantemos  
con delirio y al pie del altar,  
de esta Patria, que tanto queremos,  
nuestras glorias y hazañas sin par.  
Recorramos la senda trazada  
que en la Escuela, el deber señaló  
y a los héroes, que en dura jornada,  
el destino su muerte selló.  
A la Patria jurando ofrecimos  
en la brega jamás olvidar,  
nuestro lema de honor que tenemos  
y por ella la vida inmolar.*

–Himno de la Policía de Investigaciones del Perú

Modern detective fiction can be achingly dark and shock the senses of a reader, and at the same time, it is one of the most popular genres of fiction. These works often set out to resolve a crime through clever ratiocination in which the reader joins the sleuth in the role of surrogate investigator. In recent cultural production, however, these texts tend to conclude with more questions than answers, making the resolution of the offense and “happy ending” elusive. Detective stories from Latin America use hardboiled detective fiction, *la novela negra*, as a model. Amelia S. Simpson notes that a key characteristic of Latin American works is modifying the conventions of genre, like the ability to resolve a crime in order to “project a view of society unlike that expressed in conventional detective-fiction models” (139). The research of Persephone Braham, in particular, explores the relationship between authority and justice, demonstrating the genre’s strong sense of social commitment (2). Braham focuses primarily on Mexican and Cuban texts and the specific circumstances surrounding the adoption of the genre in these countries. Cuban detective fiction emerged in the 1970s—“the black decade,” when communist militancy was at its peak—and focused on individuals causing harm to state



institutions (39). In Mexico, the genre appeared after the Tlatelolco massacre in 1968 and challenged Octavio Paz's views on Mexican identity by presenting alternatives to violence and *mestizaje* that encompasses "humanity, individual responsibility, and heterogeneity" (66). Braham further notes that "the dark Mexican *neopoliciaco* contests official ideology" (4). In contrast to the traditional detective story stemming from scientific rationalism, he explains that in Spain as well as the previous examples, "the *neopoliciaco* genre arose in times of upheaval, when epistemological and political conditions were undergoing major transformations and outcomes were uncertain" (3). In Peruvian cultural production, I argue that the development of this genre is best exemplified in *Abril rojo*<sup>56</sup> [*Red April*] (2006) by Santiago Roncagliolo (b. Arequipa, 1975) and *Mientras huya el cuerpo*<sup>57</sup> [*As the Body Flees*] (2012) by Ricardo Sumalavia (b. Lima, 1968). These texts reveal that in postconflict Peru, to borrow from Simpson "truth is (like) fiction, specifically, like mystery fiction" (157).

The particular truth in question is that of the consequences of political violence, just as it is in the detective fiction of other countries studied by Braham. Research conducted by Jo-Marie Burt on the Peruvian internal conflict underscores how both the Shining Path and the authoritarian government resorted to political violence, and how civil society responded to its silencing (*Political Violence* 13–14). In Peru, violence emanated from both ends of the political spectrum, and civil society was wedged between them as they struggled for control of the country. During this period of insurgent and state-sponsored terrorism, "the two adversaries treated civilian populations with equal brutality, especially the indigenous peasantry" (Degregori

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<sup>56</sup> *Abril rojo* has experienced international success and won the Premio Alfaguara in the year of its publication and has been translated into several languages, including English.

<sup>57</sup> Although Sumalavia has not received the same critical attention as Roncagliolo, he is an expert on detective fiction and has published short stories and a novel. Interviewer Juan Carlos Soto Díaz describes Sumalavia as "uno de los escritores peruanos que ha crecido a la sombra de la violencia terrorista y la crisis económica del 90" (Sumalavia, "La brevedad").

22). As Burt argues, “violence intimidated people into inaction and paralysis, but it also galvanized others into resistance” (*Political Violence* 14). Others justified government authoritarianism because by 1992 Alberto Fujimori’s government had captured Presidente Gonzalo (Abimael Guzmán) and nineteen of the Shining Path’s twenty-two top leaders (Degregori 27). Despite their capture, Burt explains, “civil society remained covered by fear, a process that intensified during the years of the Fujimori regime” (*Political Violence* 14).

Victims and their families sought to denounce atrocities committed by the Shining Path or counterinsurgency and seek justice, but the leadership did not provide space to address grievances or to restore public trust. For instance, in 1995, “progovernment congress members passed a bill that granted amnesty to all military and police officers, convicted or otherwise, who committed or were accused of committing crimes during the war against terrorism” (*Political Violence* 182), and Fujimori signed it, effectively silencing those terrorized by its institutions. During the fall of his regime in 2000, the government forced police officers to retire; this gesture was intended as a way of recognizing wrongdoing, but it was ineffective in addressing the larger trauma that had been suffered by Peru’s people. Although Peruvians voted for Fujimori in three separate elections, the *vladivideos*,<sup>58</sup> which depicted widespread corruption and the exhumations of mass graves in the Andes, toppled the administration. President-elect Valentín Paniagua established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and from 2001 to 2003 there ensued an investigation of this dark period in Peruvian history (2).

It should come as no surprise that this period came under scrutiny in contemporary cultural production, particularly in detective fiction, given the truth-seeking narrative structure and the literary conventions that justify the inclusion of violence. *Abril rojo* and *Mientras huya el*

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<sup>58</sup> Francisco Lombardi’s films *Ojos que no ven* (2003) and *Mariposa Negra* (2006) illustrate the political corruption that characterized the Fujimori-Montesinos regime. The former deals with the actual release of the videos and the arrest of many high profile figures.

*cuervo*, two of the most powerful novels to emerge during this period contest and subvert official discourses through detective fiction while engaging themes of ethics, social responsibility, and recovery. These texts engage in a metaphysical reflection upon the postconflict period and particularly the secrecy symbolized by the Servicio de Inteligencia Nacional (SIN)<sup>59</sup> and perpetuated by the complicit institutions, an indifferent citizenry, and avid government supporters. These texts indict the actions of Fujimori in 2000 and the efforts of his administration to conceal the draconian measures used in the counterinsurgency. At first glance, *Abril rojo* purports to reinforce a *fujimorista* position, pro-military and pro-police, racist and sexist. However, the thriller also engages in some forceful social criticism, which comes to light when we consider the psychological deterioration of Félix, as he unearths corruption and cover-ups and realizes that he is an instrument of a sinister, apparently omnipotent force. I argue that *Abril rojo* is a bridge novel that rehearses preconceived notions about the armed conflict but, as the serial murder case unfolds, ultimately subverts these discourses in order to portray a disconcerting image of postconflict Peru. *Mientras huya el cuerpo*, meanwhile, breaks more radically than *Abril rojo* from the representations of the internal we saw in chapter 1. This novel elucidates why writers in the postconflict period turn to the disturbingly dark and popular genre of the detective novel to frame cultural trauma and question resilience.

### ***Lo Andino in Post-Truth Texts***

As previously demonstrated, the downfall of Fujimori after the 2000 election and the investigation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission from 2001 to 2003 changed the

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<sup>59</sup> The National Intelligence Service of Perú, was founded in 1960 and increasingly attained power during the administrations of presidents Fernando Belaúnde and Fujimori. In 1992 Fujimori enabled the organization to obtain, by any means necessary, intelligence on counterinsurgency operations and assist with national reconstruction. The head of the organization Vladimiro Montesinos was caught on tape paying bribes. Due to the uncovering of numerous scandals involving kidnapping, torture, and murder, Fujimori disbanded the agency. (Obando 394-95, 403)

cultural trauma narrative about the armed conflict. With the shift from the Shining Path to the Fujimori administration as the primary focus, there is also a shift in the way narrative addresses *lo andino*. First I would like to underscore that *Abril rojo* is not a historical or testimonial work. It is detective fiction that follows the rules and norms of a genre and uses texts produced during the conflict to construct a story that deauthorizes both *criollo* and Andean narratives. Although it uses stereotypes, one must pay attention to discrepancies between the enunciator and third-person narrator-protagonist. Secondly, *Mientras huya el cuerpo* discusses events surrounding and involving the conflict and engages *lo andino* by allowing space for identification between a *criollo* and Andean by demonstrating how someone can take on another's trauma.

Roncagliolo, born in Arequipa but now residing in Spain, decided to distance himself from the ideological battle between Andean and *criollo* writers explored in chapter 1. He explains that theirs is not a productive dialogue: "Son políticamente opuestos y mantienen una pésima relación en los debates públicos. También en este sentido, pertenecer a mi generación es una ventaja, porque yo no formo parte de estos debates" ("Entre las ventas"). Nor does Roncagliolo pretend to write from the perspective of a peasant or an indigenous person. When interviewers asked him about the cultural conflict between the Western and indigenous worlds, he responded,

No me atrevía a escribir desde el punto de vista de un campesino. Mi protagonista nació en Ayacucho, pero creció en Lima. Necesitaba que llegase de la costa, para que fuese lo más cercano posible a mí. Los campesinos sí aparecen, pero no quería meterme demasiado en esa problemática demasiado complicada. Esa decisión también servía para poner de manifiesto algo que pensaba respecto a este conflicto: todos decían que estaban defendiendo a los campesinos, pero los que dirigían, o bien estaban en Lima, en el caso

de los militares, o bien eran intelectuales de la clase media mestiza provinciana, en el caso de Sendero Luminoso. Los campesinos eran, una vez más, la mano de obra. Esa situación me venía muy bien para no tener que meterme con ellos. Los conflictos en la novela son conflictos entre mestizos. (“Entre las ventas”)

Essentially, he chose to write about people who are neither prototypically indigenous nor white. Most of the characters in *Abril rojo* fall in a space in between these cultures, and he refers to these people from the Andes and Lima as *mestizos*.<sup>60</sup> I believe *Abril rojo* communicates a “double hybrid,” which, using the words of Marisol de la Cadena, demonstrates that: “‘Mestizo’ thus houses a conceptual hybridity—the mixture of two classificatory regimes—which reveals subordinate alternatives for mestizo subject positions, including forms of indigeneity” (“Are Mestizos Hybrids?” 259). In the context of the ideological debate, Roncagliolo situates himself apart from both Arguedas and Mario Vargas Llosa. He writes from a vantage point that he finds familiar, which allows him to display the irony of the military’s defense of the peasantry, and significantly, how this conflict is a cultural trauma that not only affects indigenous, rural populations but all Peruvians.

Despite the effort of Roncagliolo to elide ideological debates, many Andean writers are not pleased with *Abril rojo*. In the criticism, one can observe attempts to discredit Roncagliolo. For instance, Andean author Dante Castro finds *Abril rojo* to be reductive: “Pienso que el tema de la violencia política no puede ser reducido a un thriller” (25). Understandably, Castro questions the ethics of appropriating a period in which seventy thousand people died; however, the remainder of the criticism lies in minor details. Castro critiques the appearance of the Civil Guard’s slogan, *el honor es su divisa*, which appears in the office of the police captain: “Si la

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<sup>60</sup> According to research conducted by Corporación Latinobarómetro, in 2011, 76% of Peruvians considered themselves to be mestizo, 6% white, 7% indigenous, 1% mulato, and 1% black (264).

novela de Roncagliolo narra los hechos que se suceden en la postguerra, precisando enmarcados en la etapa de pacificación fujimorista, se supone que el lema citado no corresponde con la época ni el espacio tiempo narrado” (28). Castro is nitpicking. An alternative reading of this detail, which in my opinion draws attention to the text and questions the relation of reality and fiction, would view it as a remnant of the past. Not only does Castro reproach this anachronism—he also attempts to discredit Roncagliolo’s research methods: “Para ser una gran novela, le faltan ingredientes que son exigibles en el tema de la violencia política que vivió el Perú. Necesita verismo, investigación del tema y de los detalles que enriquezcan el universo narrado” (29).<sup>61</sup> This criticism of *Abril rojo* lies not in the craft of its writing, but in ethics of its appropriations: who can write about the armed conflict and how does one “correctly” portray its violence?

Castro misses that *Abril rojo* is about the legacy of the internal armed conflict. For instance, as Félix waits in the hospital to talk to the doctor examining the first corpse, prototypical characters of the internal conflict surround him that illustrate fundamental problems in postconflict Peru. As Félix looks for the morgue, “Se desorientó entre los lisiados, golpeados y sufrientes” (20), and he decides to wait for the coroner:

La enfermera había salido a contener a una mujer que gritaba de dolor. No estaba herida. Sólo gritaba de dolor. El fiscal se sentó entre una anciana mamacha que lloraba en quechua y un policía con un corte en la mano que goteaba sangre. Abrió su periódico. El titular anunciaba un plan de fraude del Gobierno par alas elecciones de abril. Empezó a leer con disgusto, pensando que esas sospechas se debían denunciar al Ministerio Público para su pertinente aclaración antes de publicarse en la prensa [ . . . ] (20)

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<sup>61</sup> Among other criticisms, Castro says Roncagliolo incorrectly uses the word Sinchi to describe police officers (that mainly worked in the Amazon) in the Andes and narrates that a helicopter flies backwards when this is physically impossible, and overstates the effects of a gunshot. Curiously, Castro does not critique the representation of the Andes, Andeans, or festivities surrounding Holy Week in Ayacucho.

The sobbing Quechua woman is a Rosa Cuchillo figure with an invisible wound that has not been attended to. As cultural outsiders, Félix and the readers do not know why she cries because we do not speak her language. The injured hand of the police officer suggests that he injured himself while doing his job, revealing the self-harm that comes with following orders. Félix sits in between both, indifferently, and draws his attention to the newspaper. At this point, Félix is still a believer in the government and its institutions. He is offended that the press would publish anything negative about Fujimori. This scene reveals his ignorance or denial about unresolved issues amongst victims and offenders in postconflict Peru.

*Abril rojo* uses essentializing discourses, but it is important to note who utters them and how the third-person narrator and Félix react to them. First, as a representative of the military, Carrión characterizes *cholos* as inherently violent and gives examples of their thirst for blood. He asks Félix, “¿No los ha visto pegándose en la fiesta de la fertilidad? Violentos son” (44), and he mentions Turupukllay<sup>62</sup> and Uchuraccay. Carrión, having observed the predominant discourses of “El informe Uchuraccay,” links cultural practices to the murder of journalists by Andean villagers.<sup>63</sup> Félix, however, recognizes Andean practices and his knowledge conflicts with stereotypes perpetuated to instill fear. Although the memory of Uchuraccay frightens him, the time of terror is over, and Félix “[s]e sintió aliviado de que las cosas hubieran cambiado. No quiso decir nada. Le parecían palabras lejanas que era mejor dejar lejos” (45). Félix censors his knowledge of rituals and celebrations in the Andes and does not dare challenge the official discourse.

Secondly, Father Quiroz, representative of the Catholic Church, communicates

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<sup>62</sup> The *Turupukllay* is an ancient Inca celebration that is still practiced in the Andes. Arguedas dedicates the novel *Yawar Fiesta* to this practice. People tie the condor to a bull and the animals fight to free themselves. As the third-person narrator in *Abril rojo* notes, “Suele ganar la lucha el condor, un vencedor despellejado y herido” (45).

<sup>63</sup> The report also showed that the military authorized villagers to kill anyone that came into their town.

essentialist views of Quechua speakers and reveals that his parish had ties with the military during the internal conflict.<sup>64</sup> On several occasions, Quiroz tells Félix that the *indios* feigned the adoption of Christianity and still continued worshipping the mountains and rivers: “Como le dije la vez anterior, los indios son insondables. Por fuera, cumplen los ritos que la religión les exige. Por dentro, sólo Dios sabe qué piensan” (196). He effectively constructs them as an Other that has collectively resisted assimilation. This is news to Félix, who tells him, “A mí me parecen muy devotos, padre Quiroz” (197). Carrión and Quiroz also link contemporary indigenous culture to the ancient Wari and Chanca cultures and emphasize their warring nature. Quiroz reveals that the Wari used to bury slaves alive with their dead masters (195), and Carrión reiterates that since pre-Columbian times, Ayacucho, “[e]ste lugar este lugar está condenado a bañarse en sangre y fuego para siempre” (243). Félix, although puzzled by this language, does not challenge the essentializing discourses the military purports openly and weakly expresses his opinion to the priest. But as readers we can and hear a problematic dissonance. His failure to confront these characterizations unfolds in the disturbing denouement in which we find out Félix was an instrument of and responsible for the ongoing symbolic and structural violence in the present day.

*Mientras huya el cuerpo* breaks even more with the writing style of earlier cultural production and *Abril rojo* by not engaging in ethnic discourses. Instead, the narrator tells about the experiences of his family and his wife’s family. However, in one particular chapter he describes an unsettling exchange with a man that he recognizes as ethnically Quechua. The narrator is navigating the floors of the University of Bordeaux library and comments on the

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<sup>64</sup> Quiroz was involved in the disappearance of bodies: “El crematorio recién se construyó en los ochenta a petición del comando militar” (55). Later Carrión reveals that Justino, “A él se le ocurrió usar el horno de Quiroz para desaparecer el cuerpo. Y Quiroz estuvo de acuerdo, porque también él tenía mucho que perder si Cáceres hablaba” (312).



structure: “Dada la particular arquitectura de este inmueble, era complicado que los usuarios pudieran darse cuenta de la existencia de estos pisos vistos desde fuera” (117). On his journey to the stacks, he recalls an elevator encounter involving a student with whom he identifies:

Se trataba de un hombre joven. Apenas verlo reconocí su aspecto andino. [ . . . ] Su cabello era corto, peinado de lado y de color negro azabache, como alguna vez lo tuve yo. Era bastante delgado, lo que marcaba aún más su rostro anguloso, el cual remataba en el metón con unos cuantos pelos que le brindaban un buscado aspecto de descuido. (118)

The narrator recognizes the young man as an expatriate and talks to him: “Le pregunté si era peruano y me respondió [*sic*] que sí. Pero me lo dijo en francés. Luego me explicó, siempre en francés, que nació en Perú, pero que vivía aquí desde niño” (118–19). The narrator hesitates to ask him personal questions, yet the young man immediately trusts the narrator and reveals a disquieting fact about himself, “—Costé 15 mil dólares” (119). Then a woman gets on the elevator and pushes the button for the fifth floor. During the silence encouraged by her arrival, the narrator thinks about what the young man said: “Por su aspecto calculé que tendría alrededor de unos veinte años, por lo que seguramente había nacido entre 1987 y 1989. En esa época muchos niños fueron literalmente vendidos en el Perú a parejas de extranjeros” (120). After the young man departs, the woman says, “Ils sont beaux les indiens!” The narrator wishes for the woman to leave, and he expresses his inner rage: “Cuando llegué al piso ocho, fui hacia mi rincón habitual. Realmente hacía mucho frío. Y si encendiera todos los libros me dije” (120).

The University of Bordeaux library is a Borgesian labyrinth: it is difficult to navigate and has secret floors and old books, but it is also extremely cold and symbolic of secrecy and search for the core in which an epiphany takes place. Labyrinths can suggest orderliness and complexity but also chaos, and symbolically the elevator seems to be a way to navigate this structure. The

elevator in itself is strange because it is both a space and a means of transportation, and in relation to the labyrinth, it is arguably a shortcut or a way to get to its center. In film and literature, the elevator is also a common trope in which characters experience a moment of truth. Andreas Bernard calls the elevator a type of “secular confessional” (252). The two characters (and later the woman) are momentarily trapped in the enclosed space. Instead of othering the young Andean man, the narrator recognizes that he and the young man have the same type of hair, which often is a racial-ethnic marker. The narrator wonders how the young man ended up in Bordeaux and why he did not feel comfortable speaking Spanish. He then remembers a devastating truth about the armed conflict: orphans that were adopted—or bought—by foreigners. The woman, however, only sees the racial markers of the young man and communicates a paternalistic and Andeanist discourse. The literal coldness of the library becomes a metaphorical one by the end of the chapter because the narrator desires warmth after this chilling encounter. As if to purge this part of Peru’s history, he fantasizes about setting the books ablaze, thereby destroying the physical space. The narrator confronts the center of his labyrinth; he sees his identity in the orphan of the armed conflict, whom the woman essentializes, he feels rage as he sees the truth that he had originally heard.

To different degrees, authors from the 1980s and 1990s have recurred to ethnic essentialism and Andean beliefs or cosmology to support either the culpability or innocence of Andean populations in the conflict. By comparison to the earlier texts examined in chapter 1, Roncagliolo and Sumalavia evade the ideological battle and demonstrate the problems of essentializing Andeans. Novels like *Abril rojo* and *Mientras huya el cuerpo* try to make sense of the internal conflict and its relation to Peruvian identity. These authors envision a diverse Peru in which all types of people interact with each other. These types of work aim to reflect on the

institutional failures and violence. *Abril rojo* uses and questions essentialist discourses and exposes the results the Peruvian armed conflict has on all segments of society. *Mientras huya el cuerpo* demonstrates the possibility of identification and solidarity between a bystander, victim, and offender. The narrative has shifted; Andeans are not at fault; the Shining Path is not the perpetrator but the government, with its many institutions, is the sole culprit behind the harm done to its citizens. These post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission texts communicate an unfulfilled need for recognition of wrongdoing by powerful institutions and understanding between members of the various cultural groups.

### **The *Neopoliciano* and the Metaphysics of Cultural Trauma**

In *Abril rojo*, a detective by the name of Félix Chacaltana Saldívar investigates a series of murders perpetrated by a serial killer. The story takes place during the reign of Fujimori around the time of the April 2000 elections. Félix is not a policeman or a detective by trade, but rather an associate district prosecutor acting on his own accord. As the investigation ensues, Félix realizes that there is evidence against him and manipulates his reports to vindicate himself from the serial murders. We follow the story by reading the third-person narration that focuses on Félix as well as the reports written by Félix himself. The author of the final report is Carlos Martín Eléspuro, an agent of the Servicio de Inteligencia Nacional who writes about how his organization succeeded in preventing information from leaking to the press and public about the serial murders and the role of Félix as the assassin.

*Abril rojo*<sup>65</sup> follows the conventions of the police thriller by providing gruesome details and creating hair-raising suspense. Braham notes that “[t]he *neopoliciano* is necessarily visceral

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<sup>65</sup> *Abril rojo* includes the reports written by Félix, the police, and the SIN. As the investigation ensues, Félix realizes there is evidence against him and manipulates his reports to vindicate himself from the serial murders. The author of the final report is Carlos Martín Eléspuro, an agent of the SIN, who writes about how his organization prevented information from leaking to the press and public about the serial murders and the role of Félix as the assassin.

and physically brutal: the systemic crises of society work themselves out through the body and psyche of the detective, marking him as damaged, contentious, and Other” (12).<sup>66</sup> Félix follows clues and leads and conducts interviews regarding the murder of the first victim, Edwin Mayta Carazo. The interviews and site visits related to the murder(s) fuel his own paranoia and evoke traumatic childhood and national memories. Almost certain that the Shining Path<sup>67</sup> is active in Ayacucho, Félix discusses his findings with the police captain, one Pacheco, who accuses him of being an *aprista*, a supporter of the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA), a party that openly opposed the Fujimori administration, or in their words, the “dictatorship.” Pacheco does not want an investigation because the military has not authorized it, nor, he believes, is it in the national interest to pursue the matter. The “return” of the Shining Path threatens to spoil the outcome of the April 2000 election. By contrast, Commander Carrión, despite his support for Fujimori, encourages Félix to investigate the murder and applauds his efforts, even promoting Félix by having him monitor polling sites. Over the course of the investigation, however, Félix uncovers corruption and secrecy and slowly spirals into madness. Félix finds only red herrings and himself to be the patsy. Upon discovering the identity of the serial killer, Carrión, Félix murders him and becomes a fugitive. According to the final report by the SIN, Félix is insane and no longer threatens the silence imposed by state institutions.

While *Abril rojo* mimics the conventions of the police thriller, *Mientras huya el cuerpo* departs from them. There are no gory details, and the narrator (narrators, in fact), are aware of this omission: “Pude haber agregado un poco más de sangre. Los códigos de este género policial

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<sup>66</sup> In chapter 1, I explored the representation of the Andean Other, and in these postconflict texts explore the detective Other, representative of Peruvian institutions.

<sup>67</sup> Throughout *Abril rojo* there is a strong sense that the Shining Path is responsible for the murders. It is pertinent to note that the epigraphs in the preface to *Abril rojo* quote Efraín Morote—from the University of Huamanga—Abimael Guzmán, and Helmut Von Moltke. These quotations communicate a millenarian discourse that would make it seem as if the Shining Path has returned to Ayacucho.

lo justificarían. No lo hice” (141). More importantly, however, *Mientras huya el cuerpo* is a self-reflective novel about the composition of the short story of the same title, “Mientras huya el cuerpo.”<sup>68</sup> Sumalavia’s narrator, who closely resembles the biographical author, glosses the story’s events, characters, and makes general observations or judgments.<sup>69</sup> This unnamed narrator includes personal and biographical information about himself. He also engages different versions of the story’s detective protagonist Apolo in the chapters *La voz de Apolo* and *Álbum de familia*. He bases this fictional detective on a “real-life” ex-police officer named Apolinario. Interspersed throughout the novel are literary, historical, and personal anecdotes obliquely related to the opening short story.<sup>70</sup> Interwoven throughout the novel are twelve sessions in which an unknown perpetrator, possibly an officer from the Peruvian Investigation Police (PIP), tortures and interrogates a young woman named Tina, who is suspected of involvement with an insurgent group. From the beginning, the novel constructs a complex relationship among the fictional detective story, so-called real-life events, including the narrator’s biography and the stories of victims who were tortured for intelligence purposes.<sup>71</sup>

Following the conventions of detective fiction, the protagonists of *Abril rojo* and “Mientras huya el cuerpo” share some similarities in the characterizations of their supposed heroes but also differ from those conventions in ways that turn their detectives into complicated figures of victimhood and criminality—and essentially, antiheroes. At the beginning of each

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<sup>68</sup> The narrator italicizes the name of the short story and other versions, *La voz de Apolo* and *Álbum de familia*. In order to distinguish between the novel as a whole, I will place the titles of the short stories in quotation marks: “Mientras huya el cuerpo” and “La voz de Apolo.”

<sup>69</sup> Although we may assume Sumalavia draws from his personal experience in Peru, I shall invoke Roland Barthes’ “Death of the Author” and avoid placing a biographical limitation on the text. From hereon I will refer to the authorial voice in *Mientras huya el cuerpo* as *the narrator*.

<sup>70</sup> The fictional segments are in italics while other chapters (unitalicized) include his commentary on his own work.

<sup>71</sup> To add to the intertextuality of the novel, the narrator has read a great deal of literature, but he admits that the most influential texts are pornography magazines as well as Samuel Beckett’s *Fin de partie* [*Endgame*]. He quotes the play directly and draws the title from one of Beckett’s interviews: “J’ai toujours souhaité avoir une vieillesse active...L’être ne cessant de bûler alors que le corps fout le camp...” The narrator translates this to “Siempre he deseado tener una vejez tensa, activa...El ser que no deja de arder mientras el cuerpo huye” (33).

work, the protagonist lives a mundane and uneventful life, but the opening of an unusual case dramatically telescopes his past and future. Félix was born in Ayacucho, grew up in Lima, and returns to work in his native city. The narrator describes him as a person who “[n]o había hecho nada malo, no había hecho nada bueno, nunca había hecho nada que no estuviese estipulado en los estatutos de su institución” (22). He has also never had any direct experience of the Peruvian armed conflict yet finds himself involved in a postconflict investigation. This simple man, who has both visions of grandeur and faith in the institutions he serves, normally investigates domestic disputes such as marital rape, but now he finds himself worried about the possible return of the Shining Path. Adding to his peculiarity, he has romantic notions of being a writer, and he prefers to use a typewriter:<sup>72</sup> a 1975 Olivetti that is missing the ñ, to compose his police reports. After the initial report about the murder of Edwin, the narrator comments on Félix put on the finishing touches: “Volvió a leerlo, borró una tilde y agregó una coma con tinta negra. Ahora sí. Eran un buen informe. [ . . . ] Se repitió satisfecho que, en su corazón de hombre de leyes, había un poeta pugnando por salir” (16). Although he is a career-driven loner, during the investigation he falls for a young woman named Edith, who becomes a rape victim and a target of the serial killer.

In “Mientras huya el cuerpo,” Apolo, who is based upon the real-life Apolinario, is unattached, bored, odd, and a lady’s man. He is a fifty-year-old, ex-PIP, hot-cocoa addict, porno-magazine aficionado who is upset about living alone and running out of cocoa powder. The

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<sup>72</sup> At a talk by Anne Lambright, she argued that the typewriter was symbolic of Andeanism and the backward portrayal of people from the Andes. However, I argue that the typewriter from 1975 (the same year as the Limazo that is mentioned in *Mientras huya el cuerpo*) is a figure of his desire to be a writer as well as indicative of *institutional* problems and backwardness. Even though Félix uses the typewriter in Ayacucho, it originated in Lima. Félix—without success—has been desperately trying to get the government to purchase him a new one: “Antes de ir a la comisaría, escribió una vez más—como todas las mañanas—su solicitud de envío de material para recibir una nueva máquina de escribir, dos lápices y una resma de papel carbón. Ya había mandado 36 solicitudes y guardaba los cargos firmados de todas. No quería ponerse agresivo pero, si el material no le llegaba rápido, podría iniciar un procedimiento administrativo para exigirlo con más contundencia” (16–17).

doctors have told him that he needs to drink plain milk because he has an ulcer that has landed him in the emergency room on several occasions. However, drinking cocoa milk is a soothing childhood habit that he finds difficult to break. Despite living alone, he has a romantic relationship with Zulema, a shopkeeper who sells him the cocoa powder he voraciously devours. He is something of a sloth: having never looked for a real job, he is supported by his children, who send him money from the United States. Near a painting of *La Venus del espejo* in his home, he routinely sits in a chair and reads explicit magazines. Occasionally, he does investigate marital infidelity—and he comes on to the married women who hire him to follow their cheating spouses. However, a crime of passion results in Apolo taking on an unusual case in which he cannot seduce the married woman because she is the victim. A couple was fighting while exiting a bar: the woman was trying to run away as her husband repeatedly stabbed her in the back, before gouging himself and dying from his wounds. His name was Braulio Zevallos, but the woman remains officially unnamed—“No Identificada”—because no one wants to identify her to the police (16). Her name, however, is Rebeca, and it is her mother who asks Apolo to investigate the murder despite the fact that the police call it an open-and-shut case. She is certain that they loved each other and suspects there was something amiss. Apolo seeks to uncover the mystery in Rebeca and Braulio’s home. However, to his bewilderment, at the door of the apartment, a group of ex-police officers greet him, beat him, and tie him naked to a chair.

Félix and Apolo are set apart from marginalized, justice-seeking, rebellious detectives of the Anglo-European hard-boiled tradition. Although they may seem endearing and genuinely motivated to resolve marital disputes or infidelity, they have shady pasts that resurface to determine their future, making them villains. Throughout *Abril rojo*, specifically through the mother motif, one learns that Félix is not as mentally sound as his reports make him out to be. He

never mentions his father and treats his dead mother as if she were alive: “Mi señora madre está aquí y yo no había venido en veinte años” (22).<sup>73</sup> He even makes a shrine of a reproduction of her house that is “un retrato en tres dimensiones de su nostalgia” (33). At first a conventional detective hero, Félix becomes an antihero when he sexually assaults Edith, whom he loves, and murders Carrión, who reveals that Félix had murdered his abusive father and accidentally killed his mother by setting the home ablaze. These realizations, among other social concerns, were the catalysts for his full-blown insanity.

On the other hand, Apolo was kicked out of the police force years prior, yet he still carries his gun and holster with him. Zulema is proud of his career in the police and does not like it when people speak badly about him: “‘Todos nos hemos mojado por igual con las cosas que sucedieron en este país’, le insistía Zulema para reconfortarlo, ‘Pronto pasará’” (13). The narrator insists that he was never formally charged or investigated: “‘Él no tuvo procesos judiciales por abusos ni otras irregularidades que la prensa ya se atrevía a detallar diariamente. Nadie lo delató’” (13). One is left to wonder what Apolo did during his career with the PIP. And why have these men tied him to a chair and left him in a room? While both Félix and Apolo have been able to move on with their lives and not face any consequences for their actions, they seem to be condemned to living alone and never forming any real attachments. Their conditions at the conclusions of both novels convert the typical heroic detectives the damaged, contentious Others that Braham observes in Hispanic detective fiction.

These *neopoliciaicos* by Roncagliolo and Sumalavia, furthermore, depart from other Peruvian detective novels such as Vargas Llosa’s *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* (1986) and

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<sup>73</sup> In an analysis of *El señor presidente*, John Walker notes that “[i]n this infernal atmosphere the idiot’s only happiness resides in the memory of his dead mother somewhere in the distant past” and “he re-creates [ . . . ] the beautiful mother-figure that he lacks in real life” (164–65).



*Lituma en los Andes* (1993).<sup>74</sup> I would even suggest that Roncagliolo and Sumalavia (un)consciously use detective fiction to deauthorize the narratives that I explored in chapter 1. Roncagliolo deemphasizes the Shining Path, which was prominent in texts from the 1990s, and focuses on pro-military discourses only to subvert them. Sumalavia also focuses on the Fujimori administration and departs from the phallogocentric world to engage openly the torture and rape of detainees and express solidarity—as well as shame, complicity, and guilt—with a female torture victim. *Abril rojo* does something radically different within the narrative space of the thriller. In his author's note, Roncagliolo reveals he borrowed much of the material from court hearing transcripts, testimonies, and military reports. He explains that the verisimilitude of his text rests in descriptions of actual events and torture. In fact, he goes on, “los diálogos de los personajes son en realidad citas tomadas de documentos senderistas o de declaraciones de terroristas, funcionarios y miembros de las Fuerzas Armadas del Perú que participaron en el conflicto” (327). Although, the novel initially seems to denounce the Shining Path exclusively, like *Lituma en los Andes*, *Abril rojo* actually subverts pro-counterinsurgency discourses by intentionally juxtaposing suspected Shining Path activity with military secrecy, corruption, and cover-ups alongside the April 2000 election, drawing upon resources from the 1980s and 1990s. In so doing, this post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission text reveals the failure of Peruvian institutions and society to recognize wrongdoing and thereby constructs cultural trauma.

Sumalavia directly takes on the writing of Vargas Llosa (and perhaps even Roncagliolo).

In *Mientras huya el cuerpo* the narrator alludes to this crucial difference between Vargas

Llosa's process and his own:

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<sup>74</sup> As previously discussed in chapter 1, even though *Lituma en los Andes* seems like detective fiction, Lituma from the onset knows that the villagers are responsible for the disappearance but does not understand why, and I would be hesitant to call it such because there is no mystery to be solved; the Andes and the villagers will remain mysterious to the investigator. In *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero*, Lituma solves the murder and instead of being rewarded, he is punished and sent to the Andean Highlands. The action of *Lituma en los Andes* resumes this narrative thread.

Una vez leí que Mario Vargas Llosa, en sus inicios de escritor, cada vez que se quedaba sin historias, las buscaba en la sección de crónicas policiales de los diarios. [ . . . ] Por entonces me informé todo lo que pude sobre este crimen y después guardé en una carpeta todos los recortes. No hubo ninguna combustión en ese momento ni mi imaginación hizo nada al respecto [ . . . ] Pero la memoria, comprobé al poco, no va a la par con lo deseado. Este crimen reapareció sin ser convocado. Sin más. Y la consideré mi historia. (71–72)

The narrator emphasizes two technical differences between himself and Vargas Llosa: first, in how a writer objectively selects an event<sup>75</sup> and composes a story surrounding it, and second, in how a story appropriates an event, becomes part of the author, and loses its relation to the place of origin. Even though the Spanish news story does not inspire a short story, the author's real-life experiences do, and he channels his feelings and emotions concerning this tragic and incomprehensible act through his personal creation. In contrast to Vargas Llosa, the novel by Sumalavia collects anecdotes from the author's family, friends, and the media. Metafiction, violent historical moments, sexuality, and the theater of the absurd compose a post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission text that expresses how an individual and a society cope with the policy and methods used by the Peruvian state to eradicate insurgent groups. The narrator reveals the underlying trauma in detective fiction and the horror of trying to move past a turbulent period.

In either case—*Abril rojo* or *Mientras huya el cuerpo*—we are left with different types of mystery stories that engage collective memory and discourses of Peruvian cultural trauma. They do so by taking on the character of what have been called “metaphysical detective stories.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> The crime he is referring to is a murder-suicide in Spain. A Spaniard stabbed his Peruvian girlfriend to death and then attempted to stab himself rather unsuccessfully at first but eventually died.

<sup>76</sup> Howard Haycraft coined the term in 1941 “to describe the paradoxical plots and philosophic-theological intentions of Chesterton's Father Brown tales” (Merivale and Sweeney 4). Furthermore, in an investigation on the

Patricia Merivale and Susan Sweeney elucidate,

[a] metaphysical detective story is a text that parodies or subverts traditional detective-story conventions—such as narrative closure and the detective’s role as surrogate reader—with the intention, or at least the effect, of asking questions about mysteries of being and knowing which transcend the mere machinations of the mystery plot. (2)

Sweeney further explains that “[t]his disturbing dénouement—in which the narrator [or detective] realizes that he is at once victim, criminal, and investigator of the crime—prefigures similar endings in metaphysical detective stories” (255). This type of novel is not about solving a crime but about exposing the self in a society where there is no justice and where silence permeates.

The denouements of *Abril rojo* and *Mientras huya el cuerpo* expose a metaphysical reflection of the type that Simpson, Merivale and Sweeney have identified in their own research on other modern detective fictions. In *Abril rojo* and “*Mientras huya el cuerpo*” the investigators, instead of resolving the crimes, encounter problems and questions surrounding government cover-ups. Like the heroes in the novels studied by Braham, they “pursue an elusive truth behind official lies, ideological crimes, and institutionalized hypocrisy, interpreting the violence inscribed on their bodies in lieu of material evidence” (13). Toward the end of *Abril rojo*, Félix discovers the identity of the serial killer and administers justice. Referring to detective literature more generally, Gill Plain reminds us that “[t]he capture of the serial killer consequently demands a collective effort, and the formula favours the presence of an agent working within the structures of law and order” (223). Félix, by contrast, goes at it alone, and in spite of resolving

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work of Feinman, Leñero, and Piglia, Simpson observes that “[t]hese works share numerous characteristics, especially the missing or unsatisfactory solution, with the so-called ‘anti-detective’ novel and with the metaphysical detective story” (156). Although this style seems anti-detective, Simpson, Merivale and Sweeney might deem these types of works to be metaphysical detective stories.

the crime, the institutions of Peru successfully prevent any information from leaking to the press about the murders and the role of Félix as the assassin. Apolo, meanwhile is left naked and bound to a chair in a locked room without an explanation. The troublesome and unconventional conditions in which these protagonists find themselves demands scrutiny and thereby urges readers to consider the nature of being and society.

### **A Space to Discuss the Undiscussable**

Detective fiction can be violent and disturbing, and writing and reading these works inevitably raise ethical issues. Ernest Mandel undertakes a Marxist study of the genre and its popularity in Anglo-European traditions. His principle research questions deal with the social, historic, and economic circumstances that informed its reception.<sup>77</sup> He argues that the genre is an ironic sign of civilization: “if the mass consumption of detective stories is proof of a certain degree (let us even admit, progress) of civilization, it also expresses the partial, contradictory, and self-negating nature of that civilization” (69). He outlines its twofold nature: “[r]eading about violence is an (innocent) form of witnessing, and enjoying, violence—albeit perhaps in a shuddering, shameful and guilt-ridden way” (68). Lastly, he deems the reading of detective fiction “vicarious violence” that allows readers to experience or be reminded of a

civilization born of violence and leading to ever enlarged violence at the margins of “civilized life”: violence against colonial peoples; violence against the poor; violence against foreigners; violence against the non-conforming; violence against women; occasionally violence against the proletariat itself when in revolt. (69)

It is important to distinguish that the works Mandel undertakes deal with symbolic institutional and economic violence while Peruvian detective fiction deals with violent confrontations among

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<sup>77</sup> Mandel focuses on the popularity of detective fiction in the United States, Germany, France, Britain, and Russia. He highlights that from the 1930s and 1950s saw the most paperback publications of this genre.

insurgents, the state, and its citizenry. Peruvian detective fiction addresses violence and the trauma that results from it.<sup>78</sup> Although detective fiction is entertainment, these texts form part of the collective memory and may elicit feelings of guilt and shame in postconflict societies, as Mandel suggests.

Using Mandel's framing as a point of departure, the discussion of detective fiction and the larger discourse of trauma theory reveal that the genre is a carrier of facts and signs that allow readers to experience violence through fictional surrogates. Fictional sleuths tend to follow a pattern that encourages mediated enjoyment of off-limits experiences. Braham observes, nonetheless, that these conventions deceptively appear straightforward: "[i]t was the very 'flatness' of the detective novel, its lack of symbolic layering, that intrigued Borges: signs were not symbols but indices of a hidden, yet concrete, reality" (16). Discourses of cultural trauma can be lost or silenced to the passive reader; one must look beyond the detective framework to understand how contemporary authors engage these discourses. In *Abril rojo* and *Mientras huya el cuerpo*, the "flat" signs of detective fiction connect a profound reality of violence and its traumatic effects. I aim to look at the almost cliché signs in these detective fiction to explain how these texts engage postconflict reality.

In continuation, I briefly would like to establish the points of contact between trauma narrative and detective fiction. Then I interpret *Abril rojo* as an ironic interlocutor with the dominant narrative of the armed conflict. *Abril rojo* is deceptively flat, meaning it only appears to be a mass-produced police thriller.<sup>79</sup> That flatness exposes the rigid boundaries of institutional

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<sup>78</sup> To add to this, Simpson that detective fiction presents "history as the investigation of an enigma in order to reopen the past to contemporary reflection" (159).

<sup>79</sup> Víctor Vich express views contrary to mine and view *Abril rojo* as one designed to be an international bestseller: "Me parece que *Abril rojo* es un buen ejemplo para observar cómo lo 'nacional-literario' está obligado a *performar* en el contexto de la globalización y cómo este proceso redefine un determinado campo de representaciones entre las cuales resulta muy clara aquella que despolitiza la violencia y la convierte casi solo en un problema de fanatismos religiosos" (249).

secrecy and scrutinizes the normalization of violence. For its part, *Mientras huya el cuerpo* connects the signs in the detective short story to events experienced by the narrator or his family. The sections that follow that discussion, with the exception of the torture sessions, concern the deep-rooted nature of Peru's cultural trauma. These chapters in the fiction focus on the relationship between ex-PIP, Apolinario, and several catastrophic or obliquely related moments in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. With this side-by-side discussion, I hope to offer a more nuanced understanding as to why authors recur to this genre to frame Peruvian cultural trauma.

Trauma theory explores the nature of a catastrophe and the construction of cultural trauma. In *Forgetting Futures: On Memory, Trauma, and Identity*, Petar Ramadanovic explores the paradoxical relationship between remembering and forgetting a catastrophe and its relationship with and effects upon the future. For him, repeating trauma is an act of remembering, and literature's role is an act of mourning:

There was a traumatic event in the past which was not fully incorporated by either the survivors or their descendants and that, consequently, this trauma is acted out and repeated, both within the novel on the level of its narrative, and *as* the novel itself.

(Ramadanovic 97)

If literature is an act of mourning, then this perpetuates mourning, and may provide a means to incorporate the trauma, but it may also hinder closure by focusing solely on the traumatic events.

One may further note that literature not only memorializes trauma and loss but also has a social function. It can be a vehicle for defining group trauma and exposing the needs of survivors, witnesses, and perpetrators. Jeffrey C. Alexander demonstrates how narratives allow an individual to take on another's suffering:

It is by constructing cultural traumas that social groups, national societies, and sometimes

even entire civilizations not only cognitively identify the existence and source of human suffering but “take on board” some significant responsibility for it. (1)

Alexander goes on to explain how a sense of moral responsibility emerges from a trauma narrative. He identifies “carrier groups” that present claims of a “horribly destructive social process, and a demand for emotional, institutional, and symbolic reparation and reconstitution” (11). Alexander’s ways of coping with trauma raise some questions: To whom does a group assign moral responsibility? What happens if the horrible social process is addressed, but there is no way of healing from the event? All in all, Ramadonovic and Alexander explore the key role narrative plays in the way people remember and deal with the effects of catastrophic experiences through either memorialization and mourning or presenting claims to foster recovery.

By analyzing metaphysical detective fictions like *Abril rojo* and *Mientras huya el cuerpo*, in light of trauma theory, we can better understand how fiction constructs, discusses, and memorializes a catastrophic event. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission created a public space for cultural production that could reinforce or contest the commission’s reports, could challenge official discourses, and could motivate readers to identify or take some of the responsibility. In doing so, they had recourse to “metaphors, fantasies or stories,” to borrow from Bar-On, that could “become symbolic in their meaning . . . [bringing] to the surface silenced facts which have directed our discourse” (156). The detective story, with its “flatness” and signs that connect to a concrete reality, proves to be an effective vehicle through which to address and question traumatic experience as well as silences imposed by the hegemony. The themes of detective fiction parallel traumatic experience and even recovery: a frightening, violent, and horrific event takes place and the detective must resolve it. The literary conventions allow for gruesome descriptions that often mark trauma, but the texts, although they use violence, end up

questioning trauma's effects. The narrative structure allows for, in this case, the consequences of political repression and violence to surface. By resorting to detective fiction, these texts address themes posed by Alexander, like the naming of the perpetrators and the need for healing from a wound on the group's identity. In contrast with the texts examined in chapter 1, they clearly assign responsibility to the counterinsurgency, the Fujimori administration, and an indifferent society. Instead of resolving the crime, the texts explore the possibility of recovery from silence, secrecy, and social violence.

In *The Indescribable and the Undiscussable*, Dan Bar-On centers on how people “understand socially constructed facts and try to discuss this understanding with each other” (1). He acknowledges the presence of “facts” from different groups: how perceptions of events or facts may vary from person to person. In a chapter on the discourse of victimizers, he also conceptualizes the discussability of national trauma narratives:

The more severe or threatening the silenced issues, the more rigid will be the boundaries, framing the discussible, and less leakage or signals of the undiscussable can be traced back through the discourse. The less severe the silenced issue, the more flexible can this boundary become, allowing more signals pointing at the silenced facts to leak into everyday discourse. (158)

Violent social processes are secretive by nature; their ineffability is a paradox. Even though horrific social acts are publicly silenced, there is still evidence of their unspeakable nature in public discourse. Bar-On goes on to reveal that the perpetrator's narrative becomes a normalized discourse, silencing and making the victim's narrative out of bounds for discussion.

*Abril rojo* is an intricate work about the Peruvian cultural trauma that centers on silenced issues and their undiscussability. The military and police form part of the institutionalized



presence that normalizes the idea that society has recovered from the armed conflict, which is said to pose a threat no longer. Félix is conducting an investigation for the military, the dominant institution, and slowly realizes that its operatives are manipulating the narrative of insurgent activity, and that they are the *real* perpetrators. In this novel, the institutions under the Fujimori administration perpetuate the idea that the terror is over, but these rigid boundaries and silences indicate severe and threatening issues in postconflict Peru. Dominant discourses justify or silence abuses committed by the counterinsurgency and blame only insurgent groups and their supporters. The postconflict period, the clean-slatting of memory or denial of trauma, may be just as ideologically terrifying as the attempt of the Shining Path to reboot society.

In *Abril rojo* the boundaries of the narrative and the ideology of the perpetrators are rigid and violence has become a normalized discourse. Bar-On emphasizes how a perpetrator's actions enter a "pattern of undiscussability" (200) that spreads into a society that silences the victim's perspective (198). In an eerie *1984* tone, the government and participating institutions propagate messages of healing and justice, and Félix gobbles up every word by aspiring to be one the men who make healing and justice happen. After he finishes the report about the first victim, he walks to the Plaza de Armas and listens to the loudspeaker proclaiming the great deeds of two men:

Los altavoces colocados en las cuatro esquinas de la plaza difundían la vida y obra de los ayacuchanos ilustres como parte de la campaña del Ministerio de la Presidencia para insuflar valores patrios a la provincia: don Benigno Huaranga Céspedes, insigne doctor ayacuchano, estudió en la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos y dedicó su vida a la sabia ciencia médica en la que cosechó diversos elogios y honores varios. Don Pascual Espinoza Chamocho, conspicuo abogado huantino, se distinguió por su vocación de ayuda a la provincia, a la que legó un busto del libertador Bolívar. Para el fiscal distrital

adjunto Félix Chacaltana Saldívar, esas vidas solemnemente declamadas en la Plaza de Armas eran modelos a seguir, ejemplos de la capacidad de su pueblo para salir adelante a pesar de las penurias. Se preguntó si algún día, en mérito a su infatigable labor en pro de la justicia, su nombre merecería ser repetido por esos altavoces. (17)

These names are purely fictional, but they serve to demonstrate how real-life institutions move on after turmoil. The narrator alludes to the armed conflict in “la capacidad de su pueblo para salir adelante a pesar de la penurias” and also notes the resilience exhibited by this type of discourse. Félix, who has visions of grandeur, hopes that one day he will be commemorated alongside these men.

These performances however, also serve to whitewash history. Félix hears the loudspeakers praise Benigno Huaranga Céspedes and Pascual Espinoza Chamocho. These names are cleverly constructed to recall the suffering, and even atrocities, that the public ritual attempts to disavow. The name *Benigno*, meaning “nonmalignant,” honors a medical doctor, who symbolically heals the province. However, it also is the inversion of the “evil” Shining Path leader Abimael Guzmán, doctor of philosophy at San Marcos, the place where the Maoist-communist group originated and then went on to indoctrinate Andean and university communities. The surname *Huaranga* also sounds like *Huamanga*, a reference to the university in Ayacucho where the Shining Path established a strong foothold. The second name, Pascual Espinoza Chamocho, references government forces and conjures images of death. *Pascual* refers to a sacrificial lamb, and *Espinoza* could refer to the Shining Path insurgents or Peruvian soldiers that had this last name. When coupled with the profession of law and justice, the surname of General Carlos Chamocho, retired Commander of the Peruvian army (Mares and Palmer 151), becomes ironic. The Huanta origin of the lawyer recalls that this city was a Shining

Path stronghold but also that constitutional rights were suspended and human rights violated in the 1980s, which resulted in the deaths of peasants (Méndez, Chipoco, and Goldenberg 51). The bust of Bolívar is a facade for justice that associates the armed conflict with the fight for independence: it invokes patriotism and liberation in order to divert attention from human casualties. Hence, the names suggests a type of forgetting in which the malignant is replaced with the benign in an effort to deliberately cover up the difficulties of the past.

The façade of the pro-military discourse slowly crumbles as Félix becomes more involved in the investigation and, at Carrión's insistence, monitors electoral sites. Upon arriving in Yawarmayo, a town whose name means "blood" and "the month of May," a lieutenant welcomes him by saying, "No, Chacaltana. Esto es el infierno. En nombre de la Benemérita Policía Nacional, le doy la bienvenida" (101). In effect, he welcomes him to hell. As Félix approaches the town, "[u]n escalofrío recorrió su espalda. Los perros llevaban carteles que decían: 'Así mueren los traidores' o 'Muerte a los vendepatrias'" (96). During the evening, lights on the hillside frighten him. The narrator describes the Shining Path symbolism burning in the distance: "Enormes fogatas coronaban las montañas en cada uno de los puntos cardinales. Arriba, exactamente detrás de él, la figura de la hoz y el martillo dibujada con fuego se cernía en la noche sobre el pueblo" (106). This sign confirms his suspicions that the Shining Path is active in Yawarmayo and has not, as he has been led to believe by Pacheco and Carrión, been defeated. In twenty-four hours, Félix witnesses the events of the 1980s and 1990s: dead dogs hang off the lampposts, a fiery hammer and sickle burns on the hillside, and the law is violated in numerous ways, including the provision of his own quarters in the home of a reluctant and terrified Quechua family.

The police actively work to sweep Yawarmayo clean of subversive imagery, and all signs

of the Shining Path quickly disappear during his visit. In the early morning, Félix previews the life of the police in the city. The narrator tells us, “Apoyaron sus escaleras contra los faroles y retiraron a los animales siguiendo un orden establecido, con más hastío que asco, como acostumbrados a una rutina de cadáveres caninos” (96). Cleanup has become the primary task of the police. Then, Lieutenant Aramayo announces, “Carrión está en el pueblo. El pobre Yupanqui ha tenido que subir al cerro a borrar los restos de las fogatas. Los demás se han pasado la mañana pintado las paredes. Va a ver usted qué bonito se ve este pueblo. Parece Miami” (109). With a little housekeeping and the application of some paint, the police continuously transform this hell on earth into a paradise sarcastically compared to Florida’s southernmost metropolis.

Even though Félix exposes corruption and abuses, he cannot publically voice these concerns. Félix is in a position to leak to the press about the Shining Path activity, election corruption, forced military recruitment, and other violations. When the journalist asks him, “—¿No ha habido problemas en los últimos días? ¿Esta zona está pacificada del todo?” (127), Félix begins to speak: “—Bueno, a veces . . .” but lieutenant Aramayo cuts him off, “—A veces uno piensa que aquí nunca hubo una guerra [ . . . ] Ya ve usted —continuó el policía— Buen clima, la tranquilidad del campo, la gente ejerciendo libremente su derecho al voto . . . ¿Qué más se puede pedir?” (127). As if fearing that Félix will tell all, he interrupts and prevents the truth from entering everyday discourse. Aramayo emphasizes the tropes of calm, good weather, and freedom in the place he initially had deemed *el infierno*. The dominant discourse perpetuates the idea that society is at peace and that everything looks as if there never had been a violent altercation between the government and insurgent groups.

To the surprise of Félix, Carrión reveals that “they” know the Shining Path is active in Yawarmayo, but that the military and police do not have orders to attack or do anything: “—El

Ejército tiene órdenes de no hacer nada ahí. Y la policía no tiene recursos. El teniente Aramayo lleva diez años pidiendo armas y pertrechos. Lima no lo aprueba. [ . . . ]” (179). Félix thought he was intelligent and intuitive for solving the murder by assuming it was the Shining Path but realizes that the authorities had known all along that the group is active everywhere. Carrión tells him, “Lima lo sabe, señor fiscal. Ellos lo saben todo y están en todas partes. Si por alguna razón lo necesitan, entrarán a Yawarmayo y los matarán. El operativo saldrá en televisión. Vendrá la prensa” (179). The administration also controls the narrative in the media. Carrión tells him they have everything under control in the village, “Ésos están controlados. No actúan fuera de esa zona. Pero parece que hay otros” (178). This raises serious questions: Exactly who is out of control in this peaceful time, and why is Félix on a proverbial wild-goose chase?

In a series of chapters that are deliberately poorly written, containing errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, we encounter the voice of the serial killer. His words mirror the mission of the Shining Path to wipe clean the slate of memory and create a new hegemonic order. At first it is as if these chapters figure a deranged, fanatical, and uneducated Shining Path insurgent, but in fact, the culprit is a Peruvian Military officer. Initially, the serial killer explains, “vamos a hicendar el tiempo y el fuego creará un mundo nuevo” (28). He explains that the turn of the century marks a new beginning and a radical cleansing:

algún día, los hombres—los muertos—mirarán atrás y dirán que conmigo comenzó el siglo XXI.

pero tú ya no versa el siglo XXI.

tú estás limpio.

por mí. (61)

The serial killer uses the religiously zealous supposed language of the Shining Path to show how

memory will be forgotten at the turn of the century. The bodies of the slain represent a purging of those implicated in the conflict. The victims form a Frankenstein body of Peru, as Carrión explains,

[m]e pedían que la sangre no fuese derramada en vano, Chacaltana, y yo lo hice: un terrorista, un militar , un campesino, una mujer, un cura. Ahora todos están juntos.

Forman parte del cuerpo que reclaman todos los que murieron antes. ¿Comprende usted?

Servirán para construir la historia, para recuperar la grandeza, para que hasta las montañas tiemblen al ver nuestra obra. (315)

The murder of symbolic people was to cover his tracks so that they would not leak information about him and show the power of the hegemonic order. On another level, Carrion is the head of the fragmented and beaten body that all Peruvians share, and Félix is the pawn that finishes the crime. Metaphorically, the turn of the century marks the danger of oblivion and the threat of not dealing with the consequences of upheaval on the Peruvian social body.

Themes of secrecy, corruption, and the search for “truth” also come up in *Mientras huya el cuerpo*. The main historical event that informs the opening short story is Fujimori’s decision to force various officers into retirement after evidence of military and police brutality and political corruption emerged in the press through the release of the *vladivideos*. This “retirement” of officers was an attempt to legitimize the *fujimorista* government by separating the governing body from the head of Peru’s SIN, Montesinos. Also in play are events that took place before Fujimori, such as the 1986 unification of the police forces into a Civil Guard by then-president Alan García. The narrator mentions the nickname for the old Peruvian Investigation Police, *raya*, and explains their disappearance from history:

Esta aclaración no tendría ningún sentido si no fuera porque todo esto es parte de una

historia que muchos preferirían clausurada. Ahora ya no se puede llamar o reconocer a nadie como un *PIP*. No existen. Todos, como Apolinario, fueron reasignados a los que paso a llamarse Policía Nacional. Como era de esperarse, no hubo ningún entusiasmo en estos cambios. Quizás alguno creyó que de este modo se borraban antiguos errores. *Una manera de desaparecer y reaparecer, como hacen los magos*, solía bromear Apolinario. *Siempre con aplausos*, continuaba él. Pero no fue así. Muchos de ellos, al final del gobierno de Alberto Fujimori, fueron literalmente echados de la Policía. Todos desaparecieron en un único acto. (24)<sup>80</sup>

The narrator speaks with tongue in cheek about the government machine's ability to elide legal responsibility and prosecution for the excessive measures taken by the military and police in the name of an antiterrorist effort. He compares the power to erase errors or crimes to the magician who creates an illusion mystifying to an audience. This is humorous to Apolinario because society applauds the magician's power to make something disappear and reappear. However, the PIP completely disappeared, but, as the narrator keenly observes, instead of entertaining everyone with an astonishing illusion, its disappearance only raised uneasy questions, and produced horror regarding the police's activities.

The disappearance of the PIP was only one of the cover-ups that were endemic to Peru's violent history, as the novel insists. Understandably, any pursuit of truth reopens old wounds and makes public narratives of trauma from the perspective of both offenders and victims. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission challenged the way in which the magician Fujimori "disappeared" police officers and their crimes. Although in the first short story Apolo's involvement in the PIP remains unknown, the narrator's father-in-law, Apolinario, admits to

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<sup>80</sup> The PIP and the Civil Guard eventually were integrated in *La policía nacional*. At a soccer match between La U and Alianza—which I attended in 2010—spectators, responding to the police quelling violence among the rival fans, chanted, "policía, policía, la desgracia nacional."

running down people with his car and feels embarrassed when he reveals how many people he killed during his time working for the PIP:

Hizo una cuenta con los dedos, dudando de su memoria, como si fuera la primera vez que le preguntaran algo así. Respondió que veinte. Lo dijo con serenidad. En seguida agregó: *todos en accidentes automovilísticos*. [ . . . ] No me atreví a pedir aclaraciones. Había dicho *veinte*. Al ver mi cara de desconcierto, él sonrió y me dijo: *A ver, hagamos un recuento*. (42)

Despite the revelations from TRC, Apolinario has never been interrogated about his actions as a PIP and speaks rather nonchalantly about the suspected terrorists or corrupt police officials he assassinated. In *Mientras huya el cuerpo*, the relationships among the PIP officer, insurgents, and government convey a failed sense of justice and reconciliation. Apolo and Apolinario are both sympathetic characters and emblematic of unresolved internal conflict. However, they are suspicious because no one knows the extent of the crimes they committed while operating under orders from the state.

These characters also are related in complicated ways to the unnamed narrator and intertwined with his sense of self. In the self-reflective portions of the text, the narrator puts forth the central unknown that became the basis for the detective short story: Apolinario. He explores the police in Peru through his relationship with his father-in-law, Apolinario, and his unnamed mother-in-law. By contrast, in the short story, Apolo's past actions remain unexplored and even excused.<sup>81</sup> The narrative conceals his past police work (like Félix's past), and even Zulema

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<sup>81</sup> In the short story, the fictional Zulema excuses Apolo's past actions by saying everyone was "mojado" and in time, people will forget his role in the PIP. This demonstrates the normalized discourse of excusing past actions, like in Apolinario's attitude toward the people he killed. With regards to families and perpetrators, the narrative conceals Apolo's past police work (like Félix's past), and even Zulema suggests that this period is something that can be hidden and will be forgotten.



suggests that this period is something that can be hidden and will be forgotten.<sup>82</sup>

Although the narrator is at ease with Apolinario and always feels safe with him in a vehicle, there is suspicion about the jovial father figure that joins the family by marrying the narrator's widowed mother-in-law. He struggles with turning a blind eye to Apolinario's history:

No soy capaz de atribuir la violencia de este Apolo a su modelo Apolinario, pero tampoco puedo descartarla. Como muchos otros, no creo que haya podido eludir durante los años ochenta y noventa ser testigo, sino participe, de los abusos y crímenes que predominaron en las fuerzas armadas y policiales. (101)

As a model, Apolinario represents the victimizer's perspective, which is a theme that inspires the short story. The narrator wonders about his involvement with the militaristic and authoritarian regime and the nature of the crimes he committed, or if he was responsible for those crimes. This moment in the text above also emphasizes how Apolinario's social web silences facts, the narrator meanwhile remaining aware of wrongdoing and unhealed trauma. Yet equally disturbing is that no one else inside the power structure spoke up, and now the narrator feels he must. In his research, Bar-On reveals how "some perpetrators go on 'as if' normally, supported by bystanders' indifference or by claiming 'objectivity,' thereby trying to impose the original quest for intentional silence" (199). While Apolo and Apolinario try to live their lives routinely and normalize the traumatic experiences, the narrator does not want to be a simple bystander anymore but rather wants to shed light on some of these indescribable experiences that are part of Peru's cultural trauma.

*Mientras huya el cuerpo* discusses not only Apolinario but also the victims of violence

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<sup>82</sup> Bar-On also describes a similar situation in which a wife is fully aware of her husband's crimes at the Treblinka trial. While most people close to mass murderers admit that they had no idea, "Manfred's mother is a sense an interesting exception which can teach us about a rule: such facts can be silenced almost hermetically for generations, if one is intelligent and motivated to do so and if the relevant bystanders are similarly motivated to 'turn their blind eye'" (156).

and these unknown narratives. Throughout the rest of the novel, the narrator allows the victims' perspectives to emerge side by side with the "real" Apolinario and fictional Apolo. Bar-On emphasizes how "[o]ne has to retrieve into the discourse the original meaning of the silenced experiences, including the victim's overruled perspective of it, in order to overcome the process which has actually created the normalized discourse" (198). The narrator guides the reader through his life in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s and matter-of-factly mentions stabbings and murders in the English and French press. Three main episodes intersect obliquely with the short detective story: his experiences during the 1975 police strike in Lima, his narration about his brother-in-law's drowning, and his experiences being followed and filmed in the park—moments that all reflect the relationship between the state and its citizens, and are exemplary of collective, unassimilated, and silenced trauma.<sup>83</sup> Whereas the narrator in *Mientras huya el cuerpo* only witnesses trauma and attempts to voice it, a different event, in which the narrator asks his students in Bordeaux to tell him about the bombings during World War II, demonstrates forgetting and resilience. Nonetheless, I dissect all these events for their common themes: open-ended conclusions, silence, a prevailing air of the absurd, and no sense of closure.

The unknown, which plays a role in the short story, manifests itself in several episodes in the narrator's life which feature a caustic social process and no atonement and reconstitution. The narrator describes the events he witnessed in 1975 known as el Limazo or Febrazo as a "sucesión de escenas teatrales" (90) in which dictator and general Juan Velasco Alvarado responded to a police strike with military force. The narrator remembers the event through images of his home on the third floor. His school cancelled classes, his mother listened to the radio, and he heard sounds of military tanks and machine-gun fire. His mother despaired because

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<sup>83</sup> Cathy Caruth highlights the "unassimilated nature [of trauma]—the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance—[and how it] returns to haunt the survivor later on" and one may never discover its truth (4).

her husband and daughter left early for work that day, but the narrator is at home during these events looking out the window. As violence erupts from all angles, people run for cover on the streets or steal items from stores. One of the perceived looters enters the property and goes up to the third floor. The children who see this wounded man examine him intently: “Algunos muchachos, mis hermanos y sus amigos, subieron tras él. Nunca antes habían visto una herida de bala. Yo tampoco” (89). His mother quickly takes action and cleans the victim’s wound; he turns out to be a salesman whom the military mistook for a looter and shot.

Next, his sister returns home, dodging gunfire and running for her life. She explains that after an explosion, she and several others fell into a collapsed doorway. A man with a knife threatened them: “Mi hermana nos dijo que no recordaba más, pues luego de ver a ese hombre amenazante, se desmayó. Me miró como si me confirmara a mí lo sucedido. Después volvió a desmayarse” (90). What was she confirming? It seems as if she is fainting because something awful happened to her that she is not able to discuss. Lastly, the chaos and absurdity culminates with the father’s entrance into the living room. He enters the room angry, with his fists up, but he eventually calms down:

Pasados unos momentos noté que mi padre tenía algo en la mano. Eran dos juegos de cordones de zapato, y estaban nuevos. Todos le preguntamos por qué los tenía, y él dijo que no sabía cómo habían llegado hasta su mano. (91)

The narrator provides a text that speaks to images from his childhood. In the sister and father’s experiences and, to a certain degree, in the narrative about fearing the identity of the looter, one can see the effects that the breakdown of social order has on the individual as he or she is reduced to the instinct to survive. Caruth notes: “It is only by recognizing traumatic experience as a paradoxical relation between destructiveness and survival that we can also recognize the

legacy of incomprehensibility at the heart of catastrophic experience” (58). The survivors suffer from partial amnesia. His sister’s fainting and father’s rage emphasize the indescribable nature of a traumatic event. Was she raped, and if so, why? Did the father steal the shoelaces? Did he happen to pick them up on an impulse or by mistake? These mysteries will never be resolved and the narrator does not attempt to find closure in retelling them because he cannot claim these unassimilated experiences. As Caruth suggests, catastrophic experience is incomprehensible for the survivors and the witnesses.

Another event that affects the narrator is his brother-in-law’s drowning, which he addresses in two chapters, one in the narrator’s voice and the second in italics, which makes it seem as if it were part of a short story. According to the “real” life event, a whirlpool dragged the young man into the depths of the ocean. But even more meaningful are the events surrounding his ill fate on the beach. The irony was that he was fleeing for his life, and Apolinario was trying to clear his name: “El mayor había desertado del ejército y tuvo que permanecer escondido hasta poder regularizar sus documentos. Apolinario había ayudado en ello” (114). On the day of the young man’s death, Apolinario nonchalantly takes pictures of the corpse. The narrator tells how these resurface, evoking the tragedy of his death and the family’s loss, and they had to dispose of the pictures: “Hubo que hacerlo. Se estaba volviendo insostenible ver a mi suegra todo el tiempo contemplando y llorando ante esas imágenes, viendo a su hijo muerto tendido en la arena.” (116). The family’s loss is evident as it is relived when looking at the pictures, which they throw away in order to forget. In this chapter, the narrator also discusses how people used to take pictures of the dead as if they were living, which emphasizes how the image allows for the deceased to live, and memory not to be forgotten. It also demonstrates death’s seeming inability to affect Apolinario in the same way as it does his stepdaughter and his wife. Last, it expresses how

memorialization perpetuates mourning and the need to move forward after a traumatic event.

Even more telling are the social circumstances surrounding the young man's death, which the narrator turns into fiction. The narrator includes a prose piece concerning the drowning that serves as a metaphor for national trauma. In the following passage, the young soldier deserted from the military because the Shining Path was after him and tortured him:

Una mañana de enero de 1992 un remolino bajo las aguas succionaba al joven hermano de Carmen que había vuelto a los paseos familiares y a la playa después de retornar a casa tras varios meses de estar escondido por haber desertado del servicio militar cuando un grupo de senderistas infiltrados lo encapuchó en las duchas del cuartel y lo golpeó duramente para que revelara información de su puesto en las oficinas de la base central a la que llegó por ser el único que sabía leer y escribir y que había terminado los estudios secundarios poco antes de haber sido reclutado en una redada a una fiesta juvenil donde lo que él hacía era únicamente bailar y girar como si estuviera siendo tragado por un remolino. (148)

In this one-sentence paragraph, the narrator highlights the year 1992, which happens to be the year the Shining Path's top leader, Guzmán, was captured. He emphasizes the military's destructiveness through the party and whirlpool metaphors emphasizing pleasure and inexperience as well as the military's devastating effects on society. The metaphors in this long sentence intensify the speed and whirlpool effect in which the counterinsurgency swept the nation. Also, the young deserter had unique skills for a soldier: he was literate and had a secondary education. This implies that the Peruvian military lacked educated individuals. The young soldier was in a situation where he had no control.<sup>84</sup> This gross, festive turmoil whished

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<sup>84</sup> Francisco Lombardi's *La boca del lobo* (1988) is a film that demonstrates the ethical breakdown of the military as soldiers abuse, rape, and massacre indigenous people in attempts to suppress the Shining Path's insurgency.

through the country in pursuit of Guzmán and ended with soldiers, like Carmen's brother, deserting or dying.

The last moment of trauma has to do with the great fear society had of police detention. The narrator explores the surveillance of citizens suspected of involvement in insurgent activities. Returning to 1990, when he and his friend were on a park bench in Miraflores, he remembers two men recording them (108). Both were surprised how open and deliberate the surveillance was: “—Ya ni siquiera se esfuerzan por ser discretos, carajo—dijo mi amigo claramente indignado” (109). Furthermore, his friend said he was probably being watched because he was an engineering professor: “Eso automáticamente lo convertía en sospechoso de formar parte de Sendero Luminoso” (109). Naturally, the fact he was a suspect rattled him, and his wife decided to ask Apolinario for help. Much to their relief, Apolinario tells them “—Todos ustedes están limpios. Quédate tranquilo” (109). The narrator was further shocked by “[s]u rápida respuesta” and did not want to demand a more detailed explanation (109). As a whole, this episode reveals the larger trauma of government intrusiveness and vigilance that resulted in the disappearance, torture, and assassinations of those believed to be affiliated with the insurgency.

The exploration of cultural trauma and resilience is exhibited further during the narrator's time as a Spanish professor in France. In Bordeaux, “en medio de lo que alguna vez fueron escombros” (127), the narrator asks students who lived through World War II bombings to share their experiences. He is looking for something specific and desires a link between image and text. He wants to hear about the airstrikes, but the students only remember the soldiers who wanted their pictures taken in front of historical sites. He explains his frustration:

A pesar de mi insistencia, los demás me hablaron de sus viajes por los viñedos, de la pronta y bella reconstrucción de Burdeos después de la liberación, de sus amores. Sus

palabras me divertían, pero yo quería algo más, que estallara la bomba. (128)

He desires to hear the horror but discovers a different type of traumatic experience and the difference between individual experiences and the construction of a well-known cultural trauma.

An older student, Madame Laforêt, on the other hand, reveals the absurd nature of trauma:

*Nada sucedió. No hubo explosión. Aguardamos un buen rato, como si no hubiera otra opción que morir allí. No importa de qué. Con la espera ni cuenta se dieron que el bombardeo había pasado. Ella y su familia, todos lo que sobrevivieron en ese momento, volvieron a la ciudad. Y, efectivamente, muchos hallaron solo escombros. (129)*

Traumatic experience is often not understood, and a child who experiences an event will interpret it with a child's language and framework. The oxymoron of a silent bombing demonstrates the state of shock and unawareness experienced by these people as they hid during the bombings, accepting the ensnarement and imminent death. Ironically, the bombing is a nonevent, which registers in the mind as a historical fact. There is no memory regarding the traumatic event in itself, perhaps because the children never encoded it. There is no sound or image of the moment of destruction. There is only the devastating image: a ruined city and unmentionable death. Paradoxically, Europe after World War II has a legacy of cultural trauma and memorialization, yet the narrator's students in Bordeaux have managed to exhibit their resilience by focusing on the city's reconstruction and images of beauty. Unlike the narrator, who grapples with the unknown and absurd, his students' narratives link the image of destruction to love and recovery.

Unlike this example from World War II, *Mientras huya el cuerpo* addresses a wound in need of healing. The novel functions as a meaning maker, challenging official discourses that made police officers disappear or granted amnesty to those who committed crimes against

humanity. The novel does not outline demands for reparation and restitution but rather emphasizes the horror of cultural trauma and how it immobilizes society. The narrator does not understand resilience or how one bounces back after trauma. Although he witnessed a turbulent period, his writing reflects the need for society to take responsibility for the destructive social process even if the outcome of this recognition is painful and unknown.

### **Our Sick Selves: The Intersection of Sexuality with Cultural Trauma**

All in all, trauma is a social construction, and Rocagliolo and Sumalavia take on the task of constructing cultural trauma through real life experiences, documents, fiction and its many recourses. Elizabeth Montes Garcés and Myriam Ossorio discuss the function of illness in Francisco Lombardi's film *Ojos que no ven* (2003). They explain that Lombardi alternates between newscasts about Montesinos and Fujimori, diseases such as the respiratory ailment phlebitis, cancer, and injured or raped female bodies: "Illness as a metaphor of corruption is not only a structural device that links the six stories together; it also serves as a strategy to produce the atmosphere of confinement and despair that characterize the entire film" (87). Like this film, *Abril rojo* and *Mientras huya el cuerpo* also recur to illness metaphors and images of sexuality.<sup>85</sup> Sexuality is linked to sickness and is best understood as a complex signifier in which the body functions as a site of cultural meaning. I will first analyze the discussion of sexuality and ethics in both works, and then I will turn to the breakdown of ethics and the ensuing illnesses, insanity and gastritis in these texts.

*Abril rojo* questions physical and institutional violence through Félix, who follows the

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<sup>85</sup> There is little to no criticism examining the role of sexuality in detective fiction. Nina L. Molinaro explains that "rape continues to be so pervasive in most Western countries that detective fiction can include it in the name of social realism. On the positive side, in the realm of literature the reality of gender crimes such as rape has moved beyond a metaphorical or symbolic sidebar to occupy center stage [ . . . ]" (102). In *Abril rojo* rape is symbolic of the failure of patriarchy, and in *Mientras huya el cuerpo*, torture and rape literally move to center stage where the witness identifies with the victim, Tina.



laws as written. Marriage, in the space of the novel, is a reflection of the state and abuse can be resolved without recurring to the law. Félix, who spends time contemplating rape, holds a traditional view of marriage in which the husband has control over his wife, and therefore problematizes the use of the term *rape* to refer to sexual violence between husband and wife:

El fiscal Chacaltana veía ahí un problema de tipificación del delito y, de hecho, había remitido al juzgado penal de Huamanga un escrito al respecto, que aún no había recibido respuesta. Según él, esas prácticas, dentro de un matrimonio legal, no se podían llamar violaciones. Los esposos no violan a sus esposas: les cumplen. Pero el fiscal Félix Chacaltana Saldívar, que comprendía la debilidad humana, normalmente abría un acta de conciliación para amistar a las partes y comprometía al esposo a cumplir su deber viril sin producir lesiones de cualquier grado. (18)

He does not view rape as possible between a husband and wife and, therefore, has the husband promise that he will not harm his wife while having sex. He also believes that another law should be changed so that women can marry their rapists: “Al principio, había pedido prisión para los violadores, conforme a la ley. Pero las perjudicadas protestaban: si el agresor iba preso, la agredida no podía casarse con él para restituir su honra perdida” (21). He observes *honra*, a norm in which a woman could restore her lost honor by marrying. Félix also ponders another disturbing issue, an honor violation between two men: “Se preguntó cómo sancionar una violación de un hombre a otro. Tomó conciencia de que no podría casarlos por ausencia del respectivo trámite” (34). He cannot reconcile the rape of a man by another man; sexual violence, according to Félix, is best understood as bureaucratic issue not an ethical one.

These reflections on sexual violence reflect the ineffectual nature of patriarchal institutions and the limitations of Félix in understanding trauma. Félix attempts to wrap his head

around ethical, social, and legal issues of sexual violence, and instead of focusing on punishment for the offender, he attempts to restore bonds between men and women. Since he believes in the institutions he serves, he writes to them with the hope that they will educate him, clarify the statutes, and change the laws. However, the boundaries are unclear and he receives no answers, leaving Félix to operate independently and enact his naïve morals and personal judgments, with troubling implications for contemporary Peru. The ambiguity is compounded when agents of the state commit sexual violence and the victim does not achieve a sense of justice.<sup>86</sup>

In contrast, *Mientras huya el cuerpo* gives women's bodies deeper meaning. Pornography is a genre that acts directly in the social world of *Mientras huya el cuerpo*. Pornography is intended to elicit feelings of sexual arousal, but in the novel, porno magazines and the painting *La Venus del espejo* link sexuality to ethics and moral responsibility. When the narrator refers to the books he read as a child, he mentions reading Antoine Saint-Exupéry, José María Arguedas, and anthologies for children. However, he had a desire, a notion that repeats itself, for something more:

Yo buscaba algo concreto, algo por lo que no podía preguntar así, suelto de huesos, y que pensé abundaría en la biblioteca del suegro de mi hermana, como sí abundaba bajo el colchón de la cama de mi padre. Pero ni. No las encontré. (60)

Pornography, curiously, becomes crucial to the narrator's literary formation, and he searches for these magazines in his brother-in-law's library as if they were an essential component. His father reads *Zeta*,<sup>87</sup> a Peruvian magazine like *Playboy*, in his chair, which fascinates and attracts him.

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<sup>86</sup> For a more in depth analysis on justice in postconflict Peru, see chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>87</sup> A blogger comments that "*Zeta* fue una revista precursora en su genero [en Perú] y muy popular entre fines de los setentas y principios de los ochentas. Era una especie de versión chicha de *Playboy*. Su especialidad eran los artículos seudo pornográficos, acompañados por fotografías que mostraban desnudos femeninos, pero con la particularidad de ser mujeres bien peruanas" (Arkivperu). Also included in the blog is a 1981 cover of Cuchita Salazar. One of the headlines, however, contains political commentary: "GOBIERNO PROTEGE A LOS QUE ROBARON 1,500 MILLONES."

Whenever he gets close to his father looking at the magazine with a nude female on the cover, his father pushes him away.

In his father's stack of pornographic magazines there are two types of pornography: one that depicts blondes performing sexual acts, and a second that depicts female Peruvians in the nude. One presents violent, distorted and "unreal" sexual images, but the other type of magazine represents something "real" with which the narrator can identify. The narrator explains his attraction to the Peruvian pornography magazine:

En cambio con la revista *Zeta* era diferente, pues esta era nacional y a sus mujeres, a pesar de no aparecer en ningún acoplamiento—la dictadura militar de entonces lo impedía—y estar ausentes de carnes firmes, las podía comparar con las vecinas, las señoras del Mercado, las dependientas de las tiendas de ropa, alguna profesora de mi escuela, etc. Y de las fotos pasé a los textos, pues me decía que alguna relación entre palabra e imagen debía existir. (62)

First and foremost, although North American magazines feature trim, blonde women in explicit poses, what fascinates him about *Zeta* is its authenticity and descriptions of Peruvian reality. The images do not arouse him but rather he concentrates on finding a connection between the images and texts in the magazine. The juxtaposition of *farándula*, political commentary, and female nudes seems arbitrary but as readers we can observe a complex relationship between the government and its citizens. The censorship of explicit imagery in *Zeta* demonstrates the government's capacity to silence. On another level it relates directly to the detective fiction. *Zeta* represents how government corruption got out of control and began to inflict harm upon real Peruvians while other members of society metaphorically watched.

In the short story, the narrator mentions a nude that Apolo has in his home—Diego

Velasquez's *La Venus del espejo* (1647):

Y también contemplaba la reproducción de un cuadro de Diego Velásquez, *La Venus del espejo*, aunque él no supiera de quién se tratara. [ . . . ] En algún lado había leído que era recomendable poner un cuadro como ese y tener un sillón, ya que de ese modo propiciaba mayor confianza y las confesiones llegaban fácilmente. Allí recibía eventuales encargos de seguimiento de maridos y mujeres infieles y, a estas últimas por un súbito deseo, terminaba por poseerlas en medio del chirriar de los resortes de su viejo sillón. (15)

Unlike the narrator, who finds meaning in a porno magazine, Apolo does not recognize the female figure, and the artwork mystifies him. His purchase of the painting seems arbitrary. It is an object he is expected to have in his house for aesthetic reasons. He believes it creates an ambiance of trust, which is an illusion, during sessions with clients. Apolo's failure to relate the signifier to the signified reveals his failure to reflect and to cultivate real trust.

The end of the short story emphasizes the need for forced self-reflection as Apolo's body becomes the signifier, and he feels shame for his exposed, naked body. In Velazquez's painting, Venus is lying in a sensual pose, looking at her reflection in a mirror held by her son Cupid. Apolo is nude before a mirror like Venus: "Observó un tocador al lado derecho y se vio reflejado en un espejo oval, con algunas estampas de santos y oraciones sujetas a los bordes" (21) and "Nuevamente se vio y reconoció en el espejo. 'Pronto pasará', recordó que le decía ella, e intentó concentrarse en esto" (22). What is the signified? What does he recognize? As previously discussed, in detective fiction, the mirror represents identity and a moment of self-reflection. However, in both cases we could ask, what are they really looking at?

The *Venus effect*<sup>88</sup> is a term describing how an onlooker interprets a painting in which

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<sup>88</sup> The psychological illusion is planted as follows: "Often someone is attending to Venus and orienting a mirror, as in Vasari's *The Toilet of Venus* (1558) or Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus* (1647), so that there is no doubt that the mirror

there is a mirror. Viewers assume Venus is looking at herself, but since we can see her face, she is actually looking at the painter or onlooker. Venus therefore is actually looking at Apolo while he seduces women and has sex with them on his chair. Like the painting, Sumalavia's novel itself produces a Venus effect. These relatives—Venus, Apolo, Apolinario,<sup>89</sup> and the narrator—seem to be looking at themselves in the mirror. These nudes, metafictional works of art, implicate Peruvian society and complicated nature of fratricidal violence. The narrator explains a similar thought: “Porque es factible que, si todos comenzáramos a tirar la cuerda, encontremos a un pariente controvertido o condenable, si es que no nos encontramos antes con nosotros mismo” (27). Although members of society can point fingers at those responsible, when all is said and done, Peruvians are confronting themselves in the mirror.

Both *Abril rojo* and *Mientras huya el cuerpo* contain graphic descriptions of sexual violence, but *Abril rojo* is the only work of the two that dramatizes rape. In this, the novel picks up on a tradition of associating the body of a woman violated by a man as a figure of the nation.<sup>90</sup> In the police thriller, Félix engages issues of morality but rapes Edith, who is a virgin. This violation parodies the narrative of the deflowered virgin because Félix is not a “powerful male figure.” By contrast, *Mientras huya el cuerpo* engages sexuality differently and proposes a model breaking with traditional romances in which the narrator identifies with the victim, Tina. Both works correlate sexual violence to a sick society.

In *Abril rojo*, at two thirty in the morning, Félix goes the parish house to see Father

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is being used for grooming or other narcissistic purposes. The problem is that the vantage point from which the scene is represented (as well as the vantage point of the viewer, were they to differ) is different from the vantage point of Venus. Therefore, if we see Venus's face nicely framed inside the mirror, she must see something quite different. If the painter reproduced what he saw, then the model must have seen the painter in the mirror” (Bertamini, Latto, and Spooner 595).

<sup>89</sup> Venus, in Roman mythology, and Apolo, in Greek mythology, are brother and sister.

<sup>90</sup> Garcés and Ossorio—as well as the scholarship of Doris Summer—concerning foundational romances affirm that “[i]n using the image of the female virgin that is sacrificed to a male misogynist, Lombardi reaffirms a literary and cultural Latin American tradition of representing the nation as a female body raped by a powerful male figure” (90).

Quiroz, who has been helping him with the investigation. The reason for his visit is a sudden realization: “Todas las personas con que hablo mueren” (250). Instead of launching into his usual pleasant conversation with the priest, Félix hears the person he believes to be the serial killer and discharges his weapon in the darkness of the basement. Then he discovers the corpse of Father Quiroz, who had been burned with acid. He flees the scene of the crime and goes to Edith’s house, asking for her. She is not allowed to have men in her room so she tells her landlady, doña Dora, that they are cousins. Félix tells her everything and she soothes him like a mother caresses a child, and the two fall asleep. Félix wakes up around eight and sees that Edith is cleaning herself with a washrag. She asks him to turn around. Flirtatiously, yet sordidly, the narrator explains the interaction between the two and correlation of violence with sex:

El fiscal no se volteó. Le sonrió. Ella le devolvió la sonrisa. Se había puesto roja. [ . . . ]

El fiscal recordó la noche anterior. En su cabeza se agolparon fragmentos de su encuentro con el padre Quiroz en el sótano, de su llegada a casa de Edith, del tierno regazo de la joven. Sentía ganas de tocarla. De refugiarse en ella. (267)

Edith tells him that she is waiting for marriage and for him to let go of his dead mother: “Te quiero mucho pero . . . en verdad . . . para casarme contigo . . . necesitaría que ella no estuviese ahí” (269). For the first time ever, Félix parecía incapaz de convocar las palabras justas para hablar de lo que más le importaba” (269). He fondles her; her fear excites him, and he rapes her. During the rape, he feels his body become larger and her body become smaller “cada vez más diminuto, se estremecía bajo el cuerpo del fiscal, arrugado pero fuerte, aún fuerte, más fuerte que nunca” (271).<sup>91</sup> She calls him a “Supaypawawa” (“hijo del diablo”; “son of the Devil”) and tells

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<sup>91</sup> Through circumlocution Félix avoids using the word *rape* to describe the sexual violence he inflicted on Edith: “A pesar de que tenía que conseguir una solución rápida, no podía quitarse de la cabeza el incidente con Edith. No entendía por qué había hecho lo que había hecho. Trataba de recordar y a la vez de olvidar el episodio de esa mañana. No era sexo lo que había buscado, sino una especie de poder, de dominio, la sensación de que algo era más

him to leave. At his home, he kisses the picture of his mother and says, “no he logrado hacer nada para que estés orgullosa de mí” (273). He concludes that he either wanted to feel powerful or “quizá simplemente quería sexo. En cualquiera de los dos casos, se sentía como un perfecto imbécil. Sobre todo, constaría mucho convencer a Edith” (279). The violence he inflicts on her he does not call rape; he feels that he can fix the harm done.

The rape of Edith, who is based on the mythologized and martyred insurgent Edith Lagos,<sup>92</sup> echoes the foundational romances of the deflowered virgin but the Peruvian internal conflict sets *Abril rojo* apart from these early fictions. His feelings of power at the moment emphasize his status as a parody of those strong male figures of novels past. The first hand experience of violence perverts love and sexual intimacy. Together, Edith and Félix make up the body of the nation, cousins, and there is an incestuous violation and conflict between insurgent and investigator. They love each other and have a serious discussion about the future of their relationship. However, for the first time, Félix lacks the words to express himself poetically; he does not acquiesce to Edith’s wishes and he takes her virginity without her consent. Felix has troubling calling what he did rape because he claims he uses the body of Edith to feel powerful.<sup>93</sup> He reframes the violence he committed but paradoxically his motives serves as evidence that he has committed rape. Félix is not the powerful male figure of the patriarchy of the national romances of the nineteenth century. On the contrary, Félix is a pawn of the state, representative

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débil que él mismo, que en medio de este mundo que parecía querer tragárselo, él mismo también podía tener fuerza, potencia, víctimas” (279). Calling himself an *imbécil* is an understatement.

<sup>92</sup> Edith is also the name of mythologized Shining Path insurgent Edith Lagos. Gustavo Gorriti explains, “[w]ell before dying, Edith Lagos had touched the fibers from which myth is woven among certain groups of poor people. The image of the polite rebel, the romantic bandit, that arises from almost any civil conflict was in this case a woman. There was nothing romantic about Guzmán or his old guard. Perhaps because of this, a collective longing for a tragic figure of this rebellion had focused on Edith Lagos” (240).

<sup>93</sup> Manuel Prendes Guardiola also observes this desire for power: “Y lo cierto es que, a medida que Chacaltana se va transformando por fuerza de las circunstancias en un ‘hombre de acción,’ momento marcado significativamente con la recepción de una pistola, reproducirá los tan temidos comportamientos del militar represor, excitado y liberado al sentir su propio poder y el miedo de los otros” (235).

of the failure of the patriarchy during the internal conflict to seek out and handle terrorists. In the postconflict period, Félix represents the counterinsurgency. He accuses Edith, whose parents were insurgents, of being an insurgent. Edith, who was a child during the conflict, does not want to see him and runs away when he tells her that he knows her past: “Edith estaba de pie frente a él, desafiante. Parecía incluso más alta [ . . . ] ‘voy a denunciarte ante la policía de Ayacucho. Tienes tiempo de huir hasta entonces’” (290). The concept of *honra*, which he had witnessed earlier, seems antiquated now and does not cross Edith’s mind; reconciliation is not possible between these symbolic characters. Edith becomes a tragic figure, like her real-life counterpart, and a victim of a military commander.<sup>94</sup> After raping her and returning later to apologize, Félix sees her mutilated body, her torso missing, on her bed and he screams.

During the denouement of *Abril rojo*, readers become conscious that the investigator, Félix, who has been framed for the murders, is a pawn of the serial killer and a killer himself. In the first place, Carrión shows him a confession,<sup>95</sup> “Lo escrito todo. Lo he explicado todo,” but Félix sees that the writing is illegible and incoherent, “El mundo no podía seguir la lógica de esas palabras. O quizá todo lo contrario, quizá simplemente la realidad era así” (313). Carrión wants Félix to shoot him in order to complete his *obra*: “La cabeza de su monstruo era la suya. Ahora su obra estaba terminada” (320). He tells Félix that he was “Mi mejor cómplice” and then provokes him by revealing that he knew his father, “El suyo también era militar. Un joven guapo, blanco. Se casó con una cusqueña muy dulce” (316–17). During this dialogue, which Félix tries to deny vehemently, Carrión reveals that although Félix’s father was better than his,

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<sup>94</sup> Prendes Guardiola notes that in the space of the novel, “[l]a víctima es Edith, del mismo modo que los padres de la muchacha lo fueron del Ejército” (235).

<sup>95</sup> The incoherent writing that Félix reads are the intercalated chapters in *Abril rojo* written by the serial killer about the murders.



there was extensive abuse in the home.<sup>96</sup> Carrión seems to allude to the fact that his military father made him the serial killer he is today and asks Félix about the murder of his parents, “¿Los disfrutó como yo he disfrutado Chacaltana? ¿Le gustó? El estaba demasiado ocupado pateándola para ver lo que hacía el niño, al que por lo demás consideraba un retrasado mental” (318). Félix yells a final “¡Noooooo!” and shoots Carrión multiple times: “Se dio la vuelta sin dejar de grita y vació el cargador de la pistola contra el cuerpo que sintió más cercano. Una, y otra, y otra vez, tiró el gatillo, como si toda su vida se fuese en ello, como si él solo encarnase toda la guerra de los asesinos” (319). By asking Félix if he enjoyed murdering his abusive father, Carrión strikes a nerve that makes Félix shoot him to death, just as the serial killer wanted. After staring at the corpse, Félix calms down and joins the masses for the Easter celebration: “El fiscal se confundió entre la gente [ . . . ] se persignó y dijo mentalmente una oración” (320). The he disappears, and the third-person narration that had focused on Félix ends.

Rape and murder seem to contribute to the mental collapse of Félix at the end of the novel. Even though he appears to leave the room where he murdered Carrión unscathed, Carlos Martín Eléspuro reports the contrary. Eléspuro implicates Félix as the serial killer and conveys a startling image of his state of mind:

Recientemente, nuevos informes del Servicio de Inteligencia del Ejército señalan que el acusado Félix Chacaltana Saldívar, fiscal distrital adjunto, ha sido visto en la inmediaciones de las localidades ayacuchanas de Vischongo y Vilcashuamán, en circunstancias en que trataba de organizar «milicias de defensa» con fines poco esclarecidos. Nuestros informantes afirman que el susodicho fiscal mostraba señales ostensibles de deterioro psicológico y moral, y que conserva aún el arma homicida, que

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<sup>96</sup> Guardiola explains that “[e]n cuanto a Abril rojo, el fiscal Chacaltana niega directamente tener padre (86), figura ausente en sus recuerdos y afectividad hasta que, en el clímax final, resurja como otro fantasma aún más castrador que el espectro materno, y ligado precisamente a la violencia sobre la mujer” (234).

empuña constante y nerviosamente a la menor provocación, aunque carece de la respectiva munición. (335)

The report begins by saying that Félix “se encuentra en paradero desconocido” (323) and then says passively that he has been seen in and around Ayacucho (325). Although military intelligence has not apprehended Félix, they have been able to monitor his activity. For John Walker, who analyzes El Pelele<sup>97</sup> in *El señor presidente*, “Choosing the idiot as a representative of the innocent, the a-political, who suffer the abuses of a totalitarian regime, [the author] underlines the point by showing how dictatorship corrupts a people and destroys its values [ . . . ]” (164). According to the final report, Félix, like El Pelele, is running around the province of Ayacucho specifically in Vischongo, a district made up primarily of Quechua speakers, and Vilcashuamán, an ancient Inca settlement. Despite this, the report observes: “Ni los cuerpos de ronderos de la zona ni los destacamentos de las fuerzas del orden han atribuido excesiva importancia a la belicosa actitud del susodicho fiscal, que no consideran que revista mayor peligrosidad de momento” (325). Félix, like El Pelele, a mother-loving figure, portrays the effects of authoritarianism on the individual and represents the screaming collective subconscious that poses no threat to the dominant institutions. Yet at the same time this seems to suggest that the insurgency has been quelled and no one is seeking to take part in the absurd millenarian struggle that Félix proposes.

This insane Félix reflects the consequences that stem from the manipulation of discourse regarding the internal conflict by apparently omnipotent institutions. The home life of Félix reflects the nation during conflict. His father was white, representative of the hegemonic order,

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<sup>97</sup> *El señor presidente* by Miguel A. Asturias portrays the grim reality of life during dictatorship in the opening chapter through the insane, idiot character, El Pelele. He is an insignificant, beggar that runs around the city uttering unintelligible babble, “INRIIdiota,” and screaming for his mother. One night, he is asleep and Coronel José Parrales Sonriente, a favorite of el Señor Presidente, decides to antagonize him by screaming, “Madre,” and Pelele wakes up and kills him. The narrator represents the flight of El Pelele from the crime scene through images of delirium.

and his mother was from the Andes, standing in for repressed Andean populations. Félix is a product of this marriage; he is a victim and victimizer. Like El Pelele, Félix is also a mother-loving figure; he hated his authoritarian father aligned with the state and had repressed the memories of burning down his childhood home to kill his father. His mother ended up being an unintended casualty of his hate. As he uncovers the truth about military and institutional abuses, he is not in a position to expose them to the public. Even though he kills Carrión, as the serial murderer contrived, powerful institutions control the postconflict narrative and implicate him as the assassin. The murderer may be identified, yet the shocking denouement raises only questions about the nature of the Fujimori administration. Reality or truth is incoherent, incomprehensible, and produces insanity; order and structure is merely an illusion. The fate of the idiot, Félix, is eerily open-ended.

In *Mientras huya el cuerpo*, the torture sessions<sup>98</sup> in roman type and direct style convey a sense of harrowing realism and can be interpreted as the epitome of the effects of draconian tactics on civilians. Elaine Scarry's pathbreaking work on the language and meaning of pain reminds us that torture not only inflicts pain upon the body but also destroys the sense of self: "World, self, and voice are lost, or nearly lost, through the intense pain of torture and not through the confession as is wrongly suggested by its connotations" (35). The image of Tina naked and bound to a chair initiates the torture session and concludes the novel and short story. In the sessions composed entirely of dialogue, there are five people involved, only two of them present during the interrogations.<sup>99</sup> Despite all the questions the torturer poses, Tina's lack of voice

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<sup>98</sup> In *Mientras huya el cuerpo* the narrator silences the discourse of torture. Although he does mention vandalism done to *La Venus del espejo* and a feminist suffragist's torture, it is a topic the narrator does not delve upon in the self-reflective portions of the text. The final chapter unites the twelve torture sessions, the detective story, and the commentary for a discussion of widespread and visible institutional perversion that has infected all Peruvians.

<sup>99</sup> There are two female detainees, Tina, who has an insurgent boyfriend, and Rosa, who seems to be affiliated with a university. During the interrogation session, her torturer reminds her how she has been or will be tortured. The anonymous torturer tells Tina that he is her caretaker and that Toto and Pascualino are the crazy ones torturing and

throughout the text is unsettling. In session 6, Tina speaks for the first and only time. She says “Por favor . . .” (81) as if asking her torturer to stop. The torture sessions in *Mientras huya el cuerpo*, therefore, can be interpreted not as seeking information to bring down the Shining Path and other insurgent groups but rather as demonstrations of the regime’s power and control over the individual. In the interrogation room there is moral depravity and the subject involved becomes a pawn of the state.

In the *Politics of Cruelty*, Kate Millet examines torture sessions in Radha Bharadwaj’s film *Closet Land*. She writes of how “a male interrogator’s assertion of sexual ownership over a female prisoner [is] a form of sexual assault that is not only torture but sexual torture” (173). In *Mientras huya el cuerpo*, to assert his possession of her, the torturer decides to call Tina *Gusanita*—“Serás mi gusanita” (44)—and to loan her to his superiors: “Serán tus dueños por unos días” (54). The name he imposes on her imposes an identity<sup>100</sup> and also marks his ownership of her. Not only does this position Tina as an inferior and in an inconsequential position in relation to her torturers: it dehumanizes her. Then the torturer, in a more paternal manner, refers to her as “hijita” (54). In another moment, there is discussion about mutilating her body by cutting off her breasts (81), two pieces of flesh that mark her physical identity as a woman. Millet further describes how a torturer reduces his victim from woman to child, “frightened before the great, all-powerful, adult sadism of the state,” and how this makes the individual docile and impedes any sort of resistance (190). In the case of our novel, the identification of the victim as a child that not only figures the state as specifically a *patriarchal* structure but also breaks the incest taboo like in *Abril rojo*. Incest, moreover, is not just a

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raping her friend Rosa: “Son ellos los que te han desnudado y amarrado a esta silla...No te va a gustar lo que ellos te quieren hacer” (34). He tells her that she can avoid rape by signing a typed confession.

<sup>100</sup> Tina’s many identities demonstrate how she could be any woman in society; she could be one of the women in *Zeta*, owned and sold under the patriarchy’s justified wrath.

personal injury inflicted on the partner: it has social consequences that play out over time. It produces offspring with genetic diseases or defects and breaks the social fabric. It represents harm done to one's own social group, which endangers group solidarity and the livelihood of future generations.

*Mientras huya el cuerpo* engages the silenced and undiscussable “routine” fate of detainees.<sup>101</sup> Because the torturer is not getting the information he desires from her, he says he no longer can protect her from the deranged Toto and Pascualino. By the fifth session, they have shaved her head bald. At this point, she does not seem to be able to speak, and she becomes an ugly woman in the torturer's eyes. The narrator says that one of them will be able to leave, and he thinks it will be Rosa. He also says he can no longer take care of her because she is a Shining Path whore: “El Bardales te la metía primero porque él era el jefe de esa cédula. Porque el jefe cacha primero, ¿verdad? . . . ¿Ves esa foto? ¿Él te la metía primero, verdad? . . .” (81). Because Tina does not sign the declaration or incriminate herself, her boyfriend, or Rosa, he tells her that *she* is responsible for Rosa's death and the disappearance of her friend's body.

Tina refuses or cannot reveal information about the insurgency, so the torturers desire to reenact scenes from pornographic films on this “whore.” These men construct a narrative in which they are victimizing her, but are giving her what she wants and deserves. Through this video evidence, they can justify their actions. Similarly, with relation to *Closet Land*, Millet describe the damaging nature of pornography on women:

The violence inherent in pornography itself is the inevitable punishment reserved for

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<sup>101</sup> During Félix's the second visit to the Maximum Security Prison in Huamanga, Hernán Durango describes sexual violence in the prison: “A mí me dieron en la cabeza, en los testículos, en el estómago... Pero no se quedaron contentos con eso—ahora, Durango miraba hacia algún punto de la pared blanca, hacia algún lugar del infinito—. A las mujeres les... —cerró los ojos—... les arrancaron la ropa, y luego, frente a nosotros, empuñaron sus garrotes riéndose, diciéndoles cosas, «ven, mamita, que te va a gustar», decían... ¿Quiere... quiere usted saber lo que les hicieron con esos garrotes, señor fiscal?” (218).

female participation in sex, a participation which that the female is dirty and horny and at fault, that she “wanted it (isn’t pure as she is supposed to be, pretended to be) and so now she’s going to get it”—sex is visited upon her as rape and mortification. (174)

In session 6, Tina is reduced to the name *puta*, and he insists that she willfully enjoys the repeated rape and is nothing but an object that pleases men. The unnamed interrogator explains their plans for her: “—Pascualino dice que ha visto en una película porno que una zapatilla puede entrar por el culo de una mujer. El Toto dice que hasta una bota entra más fácil. ¿Qué dices? Esta noche harán la prueba” (130). In its diminutive form The name *Pascual* suggests a child that can be compared to the narrator. Whereas the narrator as a child identifies the women in the magazine *Zeta* with women in his social space, Pascualino and Toto represent the breakdown of ethics and the destruction of a fellow Peruvian’s world.

As a consequence of the rape and torture in this phallogentric world, Tina’s body fails to beget a healthy human being on multiple occasions. Sessions 4, 8, and 9 deal with Tina’s pregnancies and miscarriages. The torturer tells her, “Vengo a decirte que ya no estás embarazada. El feto se lo están comiendo unos perros. Es tu culpa. Ni para eso sirves” (92). He connects her lack of cooperation with failure to engender life. Even though she supposedly suffered a miscarriage, he later tells her: “Tu barriga crece porque sigues embarazada. El gusano sigue allí. Si quieres, cuando nazca, yo seré el padrino. Voy a necesitar quien me limpie los zapatos” (111). Once again, this scene of psychological torture reinforces the theme of family: he will be her child’s godfather, which emphasizes the patriarchal structure that subjugates women and children. After she loses the child (perhaps this time for real) he tells her “Ya no llores, mierda. ¿Tú para qué querías ese niño? Ese niño era horrible. Te lo dije: era un fenómeno” (142). He is aware that the resulting baby could be born a *gusantio tarado* (66) with a mental disability.

He also lies and says that the pregnancy never happened, revealing the secrecy of rape in the institution.

The hostile world in which Tina lives makes her womb inhospitable. Garcés and Ossorio demonstrate how in *Ojos que no ven*, the “metaphors demonstrate that women and men are not the only victims of the violence inflicted by government officials. Even unborn generations of Peruvians are not spared” (95). Even if the child is born, the interrogator in *Mientras huya el cuerpo* places the child in a position of servitude, calling him or her a *gusanito* who will shine his shoes. Her fetuses represent a small glimpse of extinguished hope in a turbulent world. Tina’s body has been injured and bloodied; for her, the possibility of engendering another world, extending the self, and raising a voice amid the draconian chaos is impossible.

The last chapter of *Mientras huya el cuerpo* is also the first moment in which the narrator addresses the torture victim Tina. “Fact” and fiction converge. The narrator uses the future tense to propose a different version of the short story that opens the novel and thereby demonstrates his identification with all the characters.<sup>102</sup> First, we must recall the significance of this vignette in the work as a whole. Apolo, like Félix, is a troubled Other, to use Brahm’s term, whose involvement in criminal acts such as torture, rape, and murder has remained hidden. Society’s malaise is literally inscribed on the body of the detectives, either through the ulcer or insanity, as their status as their hero status comes under scrutiny. Apolo’s to-be-determined destiny after he is beaten, undressed, and tied to a chair is the most disquieting part of the story: “Al volver en sí se descubrió amarrado a una silla, desnudo, dentro de una habitación, de la habitación que había pertenecido a Braulio y Rebeca [ . . . ]” (19–20). One of the men enigmatically explains why they

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<sup>102</sup> Earlier in the novel, the narrator explains how he represents himself through his characters: “Como ya es popular la frase de Gustave Flaubert: ‘*Emma Bovary c’est moi*’, yo podría decir: ‘*Apolo c’est moi*’; incluso este Apolinario que describo, mal me pese, tangible para quien quiera comprobarlo, ‘*c’est moi*’. Y digámoslo de una vez por todas: cada sujeto nombrado en estas páginas ‘*c’est moi*’. ‘*Tout le monde c’est moi*’” (30). Flaubert identifies with the female character, and the narrator also agrees with him, identifying with every character.

will not kill him: “Éramos de la misma institución, mi teniente. Y no seré yo quien lo enfríe. Al menos no ahora. Así que se quedará aquí. Acompañado a las almas. Si tiene suerte y Dios lo escucha, ya vendrá alguien por usted” (20). These ex-police officers want to torture him. Apolo is not the hero who exposes the truth, and what is more, we do not know what is being uncovered. Nudity is a metaphor for seeing the damaged Other as he really is; in this case, we are seeing this by force. His anxiety causes him to feel his ulcer and close his eyes in pain: “No logró convocar otros recuerdos. En cambio le sobrevino un fuerte dolor en la boca del estómago, un fognazo que lo obligó a apretar los dientes y cerrar los ojos” (22). Like his time with the PIP, his destiny is unknown, and the reader is left wondering, what triggers his nausea and pain?

The narrator unites the narrative about Apolo to Apolinario, Tina, readers, and himself. Through the use of the third person, first-person singular, and first-person plural, the narrator incorporates all his selves and experiences. All these characters are the same body in the same position: “Ahora desaparecen todas las luces, la habitación se reduce y es Tina la mujer amarrada a la silla. Apolo, Apolinario y yo somos Tina. Ocupamos otra vez su lugar. Las sogas me sujetarán fuertemente. No tendré fuerzas” (159). They all appear to be pawns subjected to torture and feel a sense of malaise in the room where they are captives. Breaking with the foundational romances of the violated woman, there are no virgins at the end of the novel. Narratives from perpetrators, bystanders, and victims come together to form one single body: the sick body of the injured nation on a single stage.<sup>103</sup>

The narrator uses the name *Apolinario* and changes the ulcer to gastritis: “Y cada vez que nos despertemos en las alas de Emergencias no solo nos preguntaremos dónde estamos sino

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<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, Scarry discusses the theatrics of torture, specifically how the environment becomes part of the torture process and everything is an agent of pain: “It is not accidental that in the torturers' idiom the room in which brutality occurs was called the 'production room' in the Philippines, the 'cinema room' in South Vietnam, and the 'blue lit state' in Chile: built on these repeated acts of display and having its purpose the production of a fantastic illusion of power, torture is a grotesque piece of compensatory drama” (28).



también quiénes somos” (152). In popular belief, stress causes ulcers—although modern medicine has linked ulcers to the proliferation of the bacteria, *H. pylori* in the stomach. The avoidance of foods to control the symptoms is a palliative that does not treat the underlying causes of the ulcer or gastritis. In “Mientras huya el cuerpo” Apolo aggravates his ulcer not while drinking the hot cocoa but rather when he is forced to look at himself in the mirror while tied to a chair. In the concluding chapter, the ulcer is a metaphor for a lingering national sickness. This internal, chronic torture makes one lose his or her sense of awareness and identity. The gnawing or burning feeling in the pit of one’s stomach may be a metaphor for guilt or shame. This ailment is not life threatening, and is treatable, but not under the circumstances the narrator puts forth. In a locked room, the loss of consciousness threatens understanding the *dónde estamos* and formulating an identity after violent internal conflict. The underlying problem causing the ulcer or gastritis needs to be addressed before the body can heal.

The locked room stands in for repressed memories, representing the mystery of the unknown. Once again, Sumalavia draws upon the tradition of detective fiction. As Michael Cook demonstrates, the locked room often functions as a mystery-to-be-solved by the detective or somehow reflects the structure of the detective story.<sup>104</sup> But he also emphasizes that it can serve as a metaphor for the psyche: “[the locked room] challenges our mental capacity, the sepulchral chamber closed to view and the sense of entrapment all speak of a world that seems just beyond our level of understanding” (161).<sup>105</sup> Together with the ulcer metaphor, it allows us to examine the nature of Peruvian identity by exploring what lies outside objective experience.

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<sup>104</sup> Cook explores the trajectory of the locked room mystery in Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” a foundational prototype of this subgenre. In Poe’s short story, the detective investigates a murder and a crime scene where the perpetrator could not have entered or left the room through the apartment door. The detective solves the mystery, through clever investigation and ratiocination, by revealing the culprit was an orangutan (1–2).

<sup>105</sup> In the example of “Ibn-Hakam Al-Bokhari, Murdered in his Labyrinth” by Jorge Luis Borges, Cook demonstrates how Borges uses “the same structure as a Poe or a Chesterton and yet offers quite a different view of the world” and how “the enclosed world of detective fiction is just as capable of conveying complex ideas as any other generic structure” (133).

The stage for torture, the endgame,<sup>106</sup> has been set: a mirror and chair, images of saints, and photographs of the deceased. In this room, the narrator shifts vantage points with the main actors. For example, the narrator explains, “[v]olverá a ser Apolinario el amarrado a la silla y yo lo observaré desde una de las fotografías. Hay muchas sobre la cómoda” (158). Although the narrator is the one who is seated in the chair, he becomes Apolinario and looks at his father-in-law from one of the pictures of victims. The image of Braulio and Rebeca’s portrait sitting on the dresser becomes one of many unidentified pictures. These evocative photographs are hauntings of moral failures that prod at the emotions within the body on the stage. Garcés and Ossorio highlight how “[ . . . ] Peruvians were in a state of denial, for example, regarding the massacre of hundreds of students and peasants perpetrated by the ‘Grupo Colina’ and the manipulations of Vladimiro Montesinos” (87). In this torture chamber, there is no escaping Peruvian reality. The chair places the individual in a passive position to watch and wait; his or her gaze alternates between his or her reflection and images of the deceased. There is no control, no possibility of denial. This final scene in the novel, which the narrator describes as a stage, the lights go out and Tina, emblematic of all the characters, remains in the darkness. The trauma inflicted by the authoritarian regime has made everyone a victim on a stage: a tortured body that is incapable of engendering healthy offspring or moving forward. Although the body is weak and dying, Beckett explains as, “[e]l ser que no deja de arder mientras el cuerpo huye . . .” (33): the inner torture continues to burn within the individual and Peruvian nation.

If trauma is addressed in Peruvian detective fiction, it is addressed through metaphors of sexuality and illness. In both works, sexuality is linked to morals and ethics, and to the

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<sup>106</sup> Like in Beckett’s *Endgame*, Peru experienced the metaphorical end of the world during the years of internal conflict. Members of society find themselves in a room 10 feet by 10 feet by 10 feet where escape and denial is impossible. “Endgame” is also the term that describes the stage of chess when there few pieces left on the board. The government’s pawns, Apolo and Apolinario, become more important at the end of the game.

institutions that police social norms. Félix and Apolo are failures because they were part of institutions that were supposed to protect its citizens and instead harmed them. The body's involuntary nudity, vulnerability, and lingering sickness at the end of *Mientras huya el cuerpo* (and even *Abril rojo*) reveal an unfinished game. Félix and Apolo cannot free themselves of the memories, torture, or guilt. *Abril rojo* demonstrates that traumatic experience is external, visible, and concrete. After discovering that Carrión was creating a monstrous body of victims, Félix, like El Pelele, is left as a madman running around Ayacucho trying to start an insurrection. There seems no cure but to watch him carefully, and he no longer poses a threat to the dominant discourse. *Mientras huya el cuerpo*, however, demonstrates how trauma is also internal, aggravates and erodes the body of the victim, perpetrator, and witness from the inside out. In both texts, the quest for truth and justice results in more questions, suppositions, and sickness and raises doubts regarding the possibility of closure and healing.

### **Conclusion**

*Abril rojo* and *Mientras huya el cuerpo* are richly layered novels that have emerged in the decade after the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The use of the deceptively flat detective fiction genre allows Roncagliolo and Sumalavia to encapsulate little-known or entirely unknown truths about the broad-scale corruption and cover-up engineered by Fujimori's authoritarian government. Even though Félix and the narrator never personally experienced traumatic events, the narratives reflect the manner in which the Peruvian cultural trauma involves all of society's members. Police, military, government, the Catholic Church, and bystanders have walked away from social responsibility. These works scrutinize this denial or indifference, revealing that inside each "good" individual there may be a victim, bystander, or victimizer. No one has emerged unscathed from the violence. The novels also address one of the fundamental

issues with the internal conflict in Peru: endemic secrecy and corruption and what to do after the truth is known. Violence and truth aggravate society's internal affliction, becoming part of the Peruvian identity, and impede society from moving past the torture and vigilance justified in the name of the counterinsurgency. Both works seem to be suggesting that the trauma will be repeated, relived, and mourned for an undetermined time before a metaphorical liberation (from insanity or the chair) and reconstruction can take place, if resilience is possible at all.

### Chapter 3

#### **Cries from Above and Below: The Need for Restorative Justice Models in Postconflict Peru in *Cuchillos en el cielo* and *Ojos de pez abisal***

Two important recent texts, Alberto Durant's film *Cuchillos en el cielo*<sup>107</sup> (2013) and Ulises Gutiérrez Llantoy's novel *Ojos de pez abisal* (2011), engage diasporic communities, traumatic memory, and injustice in postconflict Peru. The film narrates the story of Milagros,<sup>108</sup> who had been accused falsely of being a *terruca*<sup>109</sup> and imprisoned. During her initial detention, soldiers raped her, and as a result, she became pregnant and given birth to Noemí.<sup>110</sup> After serving a ten-year sentence, the court pardons her and releases her in Lima. Milagros works with her attorney to bring her case to trial with the hope of receiving monetary reparations and punishing the rapists. During the process of rejoining her family and pursuing the lawsuit, Milagros suffers from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including panic attacks and rage. She struggles to reintegrate into an inhospitable society and tell the truth about her time in prison to her eleven-year-old daughter, Noemí. *Ojos de pez abisal* narrates the story of a Peruvian graduate student, Zancudo, living in Kochi, Japan. He lives with the traumatic memory of the murder of his brother, Ariel, and the death of his parents. Like Milagros, he suffers symptoms of PTSD, including nightmares and fits of rage. In Japan, he recognizes his brother's murderer, the insurgent Renán,<sup>111</sup> and grapples between avenging the murder of Ariel and bringing the offender to justice. Both texts reveal the problem of truth without justice in the context of diaspora. These

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<sup>107</sup> *Cuchillos en el cielo* was part of the film series, "Contra la violencia, memoria" organized by PetroPeru, and part of the Latin American Film Festival in Chicago and Utrecht Film Festival in Holland.

<sup>108</sup> *Cuchillos en el cielo* is based on a true story. Durant explains, "Esta es una historia real. Cuando me la contaron supe que allí había una película que yo quería hacer. «Cuchillos en el cielo» trata sobre la energía de vida que se moviliza para superar los destinos trágicos. Es la historia de una madre y una hija separadas por el secreto de una experiencia dolorosa ocurrida durante los años finales de la violencia política que vivió el Perú en su lucha contra el terrorismo de Sendero Luminoso. La esperanza de la relación entre madre e hija solo será posible cuando la verdad se abra paso" ("Nota").

<sup>109</sup> *Terruco*, a derivation of *terrorista* ("terrorist"), is a derogatory term for a Shining Path insurgent.

<sup>110</sup> *La hora azul* by Alonso Cueto also deals with the topic of a child born of rape.

<sup>111</sup> The Shining Path often changed the names insurgents to reflect their new identity as comrades and supporters. Renán is the insurgent name of the character who was born Celestino.

texts demonstrate that war crimes are traumatic, and if the offense is left unresolved, the offender continues to exercise control over the victim. This control may be exhibited in the emotions of the victim such as intense fear, anger, or guilt as well as in the need for justice through revenge, reparations, and retribution. Inevitably, this binds the fate of the victim and his or her recovery process to the offending party. Milagros and Zancudo express the need for retaliation, retribution, and healing but cannot achieve any sense of justice through legal channels. Lawful and unlawful avenues exacerbate trauma, place little emphasis on the needs of the victim, and they provide no closure.

I would like to turn to how I use the terms *victim*, *survivor*, and *victim-survivor* in this chapter by recurring to the wisdom of Kimberly Theidon and Lisa J. Laplante:

First, not all people with whom we have spoken identify as victims in their daily lives. Indeed, they may reject the term for the helplessness it implies, choosing to distance themselves from such an image. In Peru, for instance, those who suffered human rights violations use the term “afectados” (affected). Second, one aspect of our ongoing research focuses on the ways in which people organize to demand reparations, and how this political activism leads to new perceptions of citizenship and agency. Finally, we are influenced by the work of Mahmood Mamdani, and his assertion that people must move beyond dichotomized identities as one way of searching for new forms of justice and coexistence following atrocity. (229–30)

I use the term *victim* to describe someone who grapples with his or her trauma, continues to relive the traumatic experience, and during moments lives in fear of the power the offender has over him or her. I use *survivor* to refer to someone who has been able to relinquish the control the offender has over him or her, has accepted trauma as part of his or her narrative, and may

have forgiven the aggressive party. Milagros and Zancudo are victim-survivors because they exhibit both qualities along their journeys and are in the process of transitioning from identifying as victims to claiming survivor identities.

Almost a decade after the findings of Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Cuchillos en el cielo* and *Ojos de pez abisal* reveal the damaging legacy of the armed conflict. The *Informe Final* had determined that injustice and impunity exacerbate trauma: "actualizan nuevamente el trauma, produciendo a veces más dolor, pues el rechazo, la humillación, el desconocimiento o la banalización de su tristeza y de su reclamo de justicia, los aplasta" ("Las secuelas" 245). When the trauma narrative of a victim falls on deaf ears, the traumatized person feels invalidated. Victims of injustice also express that the traumatic memory replays constantly for them: "Pero es peor, no hay ni un día que estoy sin recordarme, en mi mente se ha quedado grabado todo eso lo que ha pasado" (245). Along with feelings of emotional distress, there also is a call for retaliation: "La justicia debe sancionarlos drásticamente a estos delincuentes, peor que a un criminal [ . . . ] con la cadena perpetua, para que realmente estos aprendan y sufran, y aprendan como nosotros estamos sufriendo" (243). Left unattended, victim-survivors create revenge narratives to frame their need for justice.

Because of the perceived failure of retributive justice in the space of texts to be examined, I turn to restorative justice (RJ). The RJ theory and practices that I will discuss sometimes are rooted in Christian principles or the beliefs of autochthonous communities, like the Navajos in the United States and the Quechua in the Andes. I first turn to Howard Zehr for a definition of restorative justice and how it differs from retributive justice. Then I turn to psychoanalyst Judith Herman, who clearly outlines a victim's needs and the stages of recovery he or she undergoes. Although Herman is not an RJ practitioner, her understanding of the needs

of trauma victims exposes how a fantasy of revenge or compensation, which traditional retributive justice encourages, can trap victims in a revenge cycle and inhibit their recovery. Finally, I turn to Theidon's fieldwork on retributive/restorative justice practices in Andean communities as a means to (re)integrate victims and offenders from inside or outside their communities.

The founder of restorative justice in the United States, Zehr has been instrumental in addressing the detrimental effects of the civilian justice system and promoting changes in the way Western culture understands crime and practices justice. His groundbreaking text *Changing Lenses* examines the damaging effects of a retributive justice system<sup>112</sup> that focuses on punishment and isolation and places little emphasis on the needs of the victim. Retributive justice understands that crime is a violation between the offender and the state, and in Western responses to crime, "prison is normative" and "judges find it necessary to explain and rationalize a sentence other than prison" (34).<sup>113</sup> Retributive justice concentrates on punishing the offender<sup>114</sup> and not addressing the harm caused by the offense. Susan Jacoby further understands retributive justice to be a form of "legalized revenge" (114–15). When one takes into account the punishments of prisoners, as outlined by Zehr, being confined in "setting structured to dehumanize," creating dependency on the state,<sup>115</sup> and not changing the behaviors or mindset that led to the offense, one can see how the legal system legitimizes revenge. Although one would assume that punishment of the offender would satisfy the victim's needs, Zehr expresses

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<sup>112</sup> Zehr defines retributive justice: "Crime is a violation of the state, defined by lawbreaking and guilt. Justice determines blame and administers pain in a contest between the offender and the state directed by systematic rules" (181).

<sup>113</sup> Susan Jacoby adds that "[t]hose who administer the law have the right to punish or to determine that no punishment is required; they have neither the right nor the duty to forgive" (116).

<sup>114</sup> Zehr uses the terms *victim*, *survivor*, and *offender* to describe the actors involved during and after a committed offense. He suggests that the *victim* and *offender* can move on to be *survivors* once justice has been achieved.

<sup>115</sup> Zehr summarizes the dependency prison creates on the offender: "During those years he will not pay rent, will not have to manage money, will not be primarily responsible for a family. He will be dependent upon the state to take care of him" (38).



the contrary, “It would seem logical [ . . . ] that victims would be at the center of the justice process with their needs as a major focus[; however,] [v]ictims have little say as to whether or how the case is prosecuted” (30). The recovery of the victim is not taken into account during proceedings and sentencing. It is assumed that victims want retribution. According to Zehr, “the system discourages the processes of reconciliation” and “the legal process itself has no real place for repentance and certainly not for forgiveness” (51). Instead, “It actively seeks to keep victim and offender apart, encouraging them to be adversaries and discouraging them from finding a common understanding of the offense and its resolution” (51–52). Offenders sometimes rely on denying their guilt<sup>116</sup> in order to reduce sentencing. Instead of finding common ground, the case becomes about punishment and money, resulting in an adversarial court case. Although Zehr acknowledges that outcomes such as reparations for a victim can be transformative, he recognizes the paramount need for reconciliation between both parties in order to heal from the offense.

In a restorative justice model, the victim comes first and foremost. In research of survivors of rape and incest survivors, Herman outlines the three stages of recovery from a traumatic experience: “The fundamental stages of recovery are establishing safety, reconstructing the trauma story, and restoring the connection between survivors and their community” (3). Herman takes on a restorative, victim-centered approach. However, when she discusses the second stage of recovery, she also reveals obstacles for the victim-survivor to completing their recovery. She acknowledges that reconstructing the trauma story and mourning can be difficult, and hence the survivor may avoid it by developing a narrative in which he or she feels empowered. Herman discusses two fantasies that a survivor may create that intrude on the

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<sup>116</sup> Nicholas Tavuchis explains that an offender who does not apologize means that he or she will “never be sorry, never express remorse, never seek forgiveness” (68).

trauma narrative and hinder recovery: compensation and revenge.

The fantasy of compensation is often fueled by the desire for a victory over the perpetrator that erases the humiliation of the trauma. [ . . . ] The compensation may represent an acknowledgement of harm, an apology, or a public humiliation of the perpetrator. Though the fantasy is about empowerment, in reality the struggle for compensation ties the patient's fate to that of the perpetrator and holds hers recovery hostage to his whims. (90)

And I would add that the legal system reinforces this fantasy. This fantasy of compensation could be in the form of mediation, a trial, punishment, or shaming. However, the impossibility of legal action or an avenue to compensation makes the survivor dependent on the offender. The fantasy reinforces the original trauma, the control the offender had in the situation, and the power that the victim wishes to have over the offender.

In the revenge fantasy, the victim-survivor positions him or herself as the offender seeking retribution or righting the wrong done to him or her.<sup>117</sup> In contrast to the view that revenge can be justifiable, Herman reveals an unsettling fact about revenge:

The revenge fantasy is often a mirror image of the traumatic memory, in which the roles of perpetrator and victim are reversed. It often has the same grotesque frozen, and wordless quality as the traumatic memory itself. The revenge fantasy is one form of the wish for catharsis. The victim imagines that she can get rid of the terror, shame, and pain of the trauma by retaliating against the perpetrator. The desire for revenge also arises out

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<sup>117</sup> Understanding that acts of vengeance arise from a sense of injustice, Peter A. French reveals that “[r]evenge, of course, is sweet for the obvious psychological reasons. You, or someone close to you, has suffered an injury at the hands of another, an injury that you take to be unwarranted. You are filled with resentment or indignation. Then you devise a way to retaliate, to inflict a like, or greater, injury on your offender. This sense of accomplishment and moral righteousness at getting even or, better yet, at having legitimately, justifiably, righteously, inflicted a greater injury can be intoxicating, exhilarating, sweet” (3).

of the experience of complete helplessness. In her humiliated fury, the victim imagines that revenge is the only way to restore her own sense of power. [ . . . ] this is the only way to force the perpetrator to acknowledge the harm he has done her. (189)

The revenge fantasy causes more harm on the victim, who unconsciously desires to act out the original crime by forcing an acknowledgement of harm like the offender forced the victim.

Instead of traditional retributive justice or the desire for revenge, which could perpetuate cycles of violence, Zehr proposes an alternative understanding of crime and resolution of conflict. In Zehr's view, restorative justice involves an understanding that crime "is a violation of people and relationships. It creates obligations to make things right. Justice involves the victim, the offender, and the community in a search for solutions which promote repair, reconciliation, and reassurance" (181).<sup>118</sup> To add to this, Dennis Sullivan and Larry Tifft reiterate that RJ is a process of "peacemaking," "talking things out," and "making things right," and they highlight the use of restorative processes by Navajo communities and South Africans (1–2). Practitioners and theorists of RJ first and foremost address the needs of the victim,<sup>119</sup> who generally "need[s] to know that something has been done to correct the wrong and to reduce the chances of its recurrence" (Zehr 191).<sup>120</sup> Then the offender's needs must be addressed, which vary and range from understanding the offense, learning responsibility, developing employment and interpersonal skills, channeling emotions in healthier ways, developing positive self-image and dealing with guilt (200). Victim and offender require emotional support and the opportunity to

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<sup>118</sup> Sullivan and Tifft add, "Restorative justice sees the pain and suffering of all as worthy of our collective attention while the state discriminates between those worthy of the community's attention and those not. It is easy to see how such differencing views contain the seeds of ideological and administrative dissension and why restorative justice is seen by the state as subversive, as an act of insurgency that must be put down, contained, co-opted, or modified in some other way to meet the state's ideological and administrative requirements" (2).

<sup>119</sup> Zehr outlines victim centered questions: Who has been harmed? How have they been harmed? What are their needs? Who did it? What should be done to them? (191).

<sup>120</sup> Sullivan and Tifft also note that RJ is a "voluntary process for those who have been harmed" (2). I would add that for the offender as well. In order for such a process to occur there needs to be a mutual agreement, individual counseling, and a mediator trained in RJ.

share their narratives with each other and express how the offense has personally harmed them in order to become survivors. In contrast to retributive justice, which focuses on blame, the past, and differences and results in win-lose outcomes, RJ focuses on the future, commonalities, repentance and forgiveness, repairing social injuries, and creating win-win outcomes (211–14).<sup>121</sup>

Independently of the theorists previously cited, communities in Ayacucho have implemented both retributive and restorative practices reflecting their juridical-religious-indigenous traditions. Historically, because of ineffectual or expensive legal systems,<sup>122</sup> Andean communities have resorted to *rondas campesinas* or local community members for justice. After the fratricidal violence of 1980s and 1990s communities in Ayacucho have administered patriarchal justice that emphasizes “the maintenance of ‘community’ rather than the satisfaction of the individual plaintiffs” (Theidon, “Reconciling” 117). Although there seems to be less importance placed on the claims of the victim, a theme central to the concept of RJ, “their cultural practices and local initiatives offer an example of the reconstruction of society and sociability, family-by-family and community-by-community” (119). In this conception of RJ, the actions of the offender not only harmed individuals but the body politic.

During the armed conflict, communities created a language to talk about ‘impure’ offenders. They would refer to the visible moral stain on the skin of ex-insurgents. In order for an offender to be (re)integrated into the community, he or she must undergo a cleansing. The offender must atone for his or her offenses to transform from a *terruco*, *malafekuna* (the people of bad faith), antichrists, or *tuta puriq* (those who walk at night) to their form as *runakuna*, a member of the community (104). As Theidon eloquently notes, “Becoming *runakuna* again is a

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<sup>121</sup> See Zehr pp. 211–14 for a complete list of differences between retributive justice and restorative justice.

<sup>122</sup> Theidon adds, “[c]ity justice’ is expensive, highly bureaucratic, and rarely do villagers actually achieve the resolution of their cases” (“Reconciling” 117).

moral conversion that carries with it a ‘change of heart’” (113). Communities also found words to help identify the “change of heart” and restore the bonds of the offenders with the community: “People seeking to come back were referred to as *concientizados*, *rescatados*, *arrepentidos* and *engañados*” (112).<sup>123</sup> A narrative summed up by one of these words illustrates that some only raised consciousness about the Shining Path, or they were rescued by villagers, repentant, tricked, or fooled by the Shining Path. Some ex-insurgents (and their families) returned to their homes or neighboring communities, and in a process involving repentance, crying, whippings and acceptance, communities (re)integrated former insurgents and their kin.<sup>124</sup> Over time, as ex-insurgents atoned for their transgressions, the marks on their skin disappeared.<sup>125</sup> Even though the memory of the offense remained, in the TRC interviews conducted by Theidon, she observed that villagers focused “on the need to *recordar*, pero *sin rancor*—to remember but without rancor. The goal is to live with the memories but without the hatred” (116). In these conversations, Andean communities expressed the need to remember but also to forgive offenders, let go of feelings of hate and anger, and learn to coexist.

This remarkable example of reintegrating ex-insurgents into the fabric of a wounded community emphatically raises questions: How does one integrate an offender who killed or starved members of the community or destroyed the village? How does an offender wash off the moral stain? Theidon explores the issue in Ayacucho and finds a model of victim (community)

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<sup>123</sup> I would like to summarize Theidon’s research on the significance of these words and their ambiguity in this community in Ayachucho. *Engañados* referred to those that unconsciously went and were not fully aware of their actions. Villagers also strategically used the word, *engañado*, to shift responsibility from offenders to the Shining Path as well as represent power imbalances. *Concientizados* were people that came to the village to spread propaganda “but did not willingly participate in combat.” On the other hand, *arrepentidos* were combatants. *Rescatados* were insurgents that were captured and brought back to the community. Theidon explains that these fluid categories allowed for forgiveness and reintegration of former Shining Path supporters: “The gray zone of jurisprudence left space for porous categories-and for conversions, moral and otherwise.” (“Reconciling” 133)

<sup>124</sup> In the interviews conducted by Theidon, it seems that only former insurgents were punished.

<sup>125</sup> Theidon reflects upon the concept of the moral mark and its disappearance: “One afternoon I was talking with a group of women when I remembered the mark that identified the Senderistas. I asked the woman what happened with the mark – the mark burned into the flesh of their forearms.” To this, Mama Justiniana replied, “Ah, when they began to act like *runakuna*, the mark disappeared” (“Reconciling” 116).

and community-led justice: “There is a place for both Christian charity as well as righteous wrath, and an emphasis on settling accounts between perpetrators and those they have injured” (111). The community has the opportunity to confront the offenders and share their losses. Offenders needed to show repentance, confess their crime, receive punishment for the offense, but ultimately the community needs to forgive and accept the offender. Theidon places importance on confession in this model of retributive-restorative justice: “Confession of wrongdoing is considered fundamental to morality because it constitutes a verbal act of self-recognition as wrongdoer and hence provides the basis of rehabilitation” (110). Then she adds, “To refuse confession is to be obdurate, hard of hearing, resistant to amendment. In short to be a ‘moral monster.’” (110). I would add that there must also be a receiver of the confession; likewise, refusing to hear a confession would also make one a “moral monster,” would further marginalize the offender, and would pose an obstacle to the community’s recovery. Both parties need to help restore the fabric of the community by sharing their narratives and washing off the moral stain through penance and acts of kindness. In order to facilitate their reintegration, this community in Ayacucho supports offenders by giving them land on which to live and to cultivate and arranging mutual labor agreements.<sup>126</sup> Instead of isolating ex-insurgents (and their families) and punishing them indefinitely, they empower them to be successful and productive community members (115). This example of retributive and restorative justice practiced by Andean communities broke the cycle of vengeance. It helped to restore the dignity of victims and (re)integrate offenders, ensuring the future harmony and success of the village.

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<sup>126</sup> Theidon further elaborates on the significance of land and mutual agreements in communal justice and rehabilitation. Land and labor agreements allow offenders to become “*Runa masinchik* – people with whom we work – [which] reflects the dominant moral ideology. [ . . . ] These forms of communal labor establish interdependence among the villagers who participate in them [ . . . ] to treat labor agreements as strictly material or economic configurations obscures the symbolic dimension of these agreements [ . . . ] Working together and establishing mutual obligations makes ‘good people.’ Reciprocity constructs social networks [ . . . ]” (“Reconciling” 115).

While I have placed an emphasis on victims and offenders within a community, the two texts to be examined in this chapter, *Cuchillos en el cielo* and *Ojos de pez abisal*, reveal the problem of locating justice in diasporic communities. The restorative justice theories presented by Zehr, Sullivan, and Tift do not accommodate the realities of migration and diaspora because they assume communities are stable, that actors are “in place,” or that people return to their homes after conflict. However, some Andean communities, as Theidon has demonstrated, would take in *recogidos* (a hybrid of *recogido* and *refugiado*) from other places and make space for those seeking refuge and redemption (“Reconciling” 114). The texts at hand stretch the notion of community from the village to the nation-state, and diaspora and migration pose an obstacle to national reconciliation. Diaspora, in many ways, is the opposite of a nation because it implies geographic scattering. Diasporic memory is necessarily hybrid and displaced, forms independently of the nation’s memory because a nation purports to be geographically united, with a clear identity and homogenous sense of the past. Postconflict Peru can be interpreted through the oxymoron *diasporic nation*, which speaks to challenges of coalescing diasporic memory and national reconciliation. Victims and offenders are out of place, and reintegration into Peru becomes a nearly impossible feat because of the virtually nonexistent “safe” and “forgiving” community. Judgment and distrust reign in the memory of diasporic communities, and the preexisting national justice system is inadequate for addressing the needs and grievances of displaced victims and offenders. Diasporic Peru is a metaphor for the nation-state that has not found the means to help victims and offenders transition to survivors and bring together and heal the body of the fragmented nation.

As cultural production attests and as exemplified by setting the action of narratives in a diasporic context, there are still many pending victims’ claims without a foreseeable resolution

and there is a desperate cry for restorative justice. *Cuchillos en el cielo* exposes a civilian justice system that stigmatizes and continues to harm victims, survivors and offenders and discourages reconciliation. An innocent ex-offender, as the film suggests, can be empowered after release from prison and highlights rehabilitation in the form of (short-lived) halfway homes and job placement. However, the Andean community values are obsolete because the migrant family of Milagros and her community is scattered in Lima, maybe in the Andes, and in the tropical city of Tingo María, on the eastern slopes of the Andes. Lima also lacks cultural or social systems to heal the rift between Milagros and her family, surrounding community, and her rapists, who are in undisclosed locations. In *Ojos de pez abisal*, the “Ley de arrepentimiento” (Repentance Law)<sup>127</sup> did not restore justice between offenders (like Renán) and victims (like Zancudo) but, rather, in exchange for intelligence relocated them and changed their identity without addressing the needs of victims. Because of the nation’s failure to address the needs and grievances of diasporic subjects, these texts advocate for a restorative paradigm of justice.

### ***Cuchillos en el cielo*: The Harsh Reality of Retributive Justice in Postconflict Peru**

*Cuchillos en el cielo* opens with a passage that situates the action of the film in 2001 in Lima:<sup>128</sup> “Llega a su fin la guerra desencadenada por el grupo terrorista Sendero Luminoso.” On the screen appears these words: “Cientos de inocentes injustamente encarcelados salen en libertad,” and “Esta historia está basada en hechos reales” (Durant, *Cuchillos en el cielo*). Durant premises the film on a story he heard from mayor Susana Villarán<sup>129</sup> (“Chicho Durant presenta”). *Cuchillos en el cielo* takes an anti-*fujimorista* stance by exposing the effects of the

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<sup>127</sup> The “Ley de arrepentimiento” reads, “se acogerá al beneficio de la exención y no cumplirá pena aquél que estando comprendido o no en un proceso penal por delito de terrorismo y que proporcione voluntariamente información oportuna y cierta, que permita conocer el accionar de grupos u organizaciones terroristas e identificar plenamente a los jefes, mandos, cabecillas, dirigentes o integrantes de la organización así como la captura de los mismos y que impidan o neutralicen futuras acciones terroristas o comuniquen a la autoridad policial o judicial alguna situación de peligro que permita evitar la producción del evento dañoso” (Congreso de la República del Perú).

<sup>128</sup> Many of the scenes in the film take place in Surquillo and Chorillos, districts of Lima.

<sup>129</sup> Villarán was elected mayor of Lima in 2010.



draconian methods and the failure of transitional justice for those with alleged ties to the Shining Path.<sup>130</sup> Not only did the military detain people suspected of terrorist activity: the innocent were also falsely accused, physically and sexually abused, forced to incriminate themselves, and convicted in military tribunals. Milagros was one of these people. Only after being freed from prison, can she present a case to redress her detention, abuse, and rape. The oxymoron *innocent ex-insurgent* divulges the contradictions of justice in postconflict Peru and the difficulty of returning home after being morally marked.<sup>131</sup> Current practices of justice in undermine the need for equality, trust, security, and community outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and make life impossible for ex-insurgents.

During the opening credits of *Cuchillos en el cielo*, there is a quick shot of a roadway and people who are waiting for a bus, and then the camera cuts to a prisoner-visitation scene. The lens pans right to left, following a chain link fence strung with barbed wire. The frame focuses on a metal barrier as it passes by the blurred images of two seated figures, one on each side. The male figure passes a piece of paper through the barbed-wire fence to the woman. As camera pauses on a shot of the tangled and twisted metal, the man—a lawyer—says, “Te están indultando. Sales libre.” Despite the good news of a pardon, the metal of the barbed wire and chain link fence convey a sense of entrapment with no beginning or end in sight. Then the shot cuts to a high-angle shot in which we see Milagros (Alejandra Guerra) on the left side of the

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<sup>130</sup> Laplante notes that following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the *Plan Integral de Reparaciones* (PIR) was formed and struggled with the Clean Hands Doctrine, which states that victims of state abuses need to be treated equally despite ties (or alleged ties) to insurgent groups. As a result, “despite the inclusive nature of the PIR due to the TRC’s intent to include all foreseeable victims, the PIR struggled with the treatment of one group: members of illegally armed groups and their families” (72).

<sup>131</sup> Fabrizio Aguilar’s *Paloma de papel* (2003) also deals with the pardoning of ex-insurgents. The film begins with the release of Juan—imprisoned for being a Shining Path child soldier—from a center in Lima. While Juan is on the bus returning home, the narrative flashes back to the events during the armed conflict led to his kidnapping and indoctrination by the Shining Path. Unlike *Cuchillos en el cielo*, Juan’s childhood friends recognize him immediately and receive him with open arms. The film assumes that the recovery from isolation and the stigma of an insurgent is simple.

screen looking at the paper opposite her attorney, Dr. Jiménez (Gustavo Bueno). The white pattern on the mosaic floor tile suggests repetitiveness. Milagros examines and folds the paper and says, “Sí, pero, doctor, acá no dice que soy inocente.” The verb *indultar* means “to pardon”: she *is* guilty but has been forgiven and does not need to be punished in prison. Dr. Jiménez sympathetically urges her to reconsider the offer on the paper, “Que importa el palabreo legal. Lo que vale es que sales libre. ¿O quieres quedarte aquí adentro diez años más?” The camera abruptly cuts to a shot of congested streets in Lima and then to a close-up of Milagros seated in the car with her mother, Consuelo (Milena Alva), who wears sunglasses, says nothing, and smiles weakly at her daughter. Milagros has followed her lawyer’s suggestions, admitting on paper that she was an insurgent in exchange for her freedom. While she rides in the taxi, a man sells her candies to fundraise for a drug rehabilitation program. This small exchange once again underscores the principle themes in the film: rehabilitation for ex-offenders.

However, for Milagros freedom does not mean being free nor healing; she is trapped in the confines of the criminal justice system with the stigma<sup>132</sup> of being an ex-convict and a victim-survivor seeking retribution for the eight rapists. Upon returning to her mother’s home, she discovers that her daughter, Noemí (Gala Gonzales), whom she gave to her mother to raise, believes she had been in Venezuela working all these years. Despite her desire to leave Lima and go to the jungle city of Tingo María to reunite with her brother, Pedro, she cannot leave Lima until the court proceedings conclude, which could take years. Manuel (Oscar Carillo), her mother’s new husband, will not have the *terruca* in the house, and Milagros cannot get a job because she does not have the proper identification or a work history. Milagros transitions from a barbed-wire prison to the prison of Lima and the lies told to her daughter.

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<sup>132</sup> Yael Danieli advises that “relieving the victim’s stigmatization and separations from society” is one of the components for healing that survivors of mass trauma need (343).

Below I examine Milagros's release in Lima. I first pay close attention to the dinner and bedroom scenes as representative of the inhospitable nation to which stigmatized victims and offenders return. Then I analyze how her past affects the status of Noemí in the community and how reparations may not ensure a secure future for the two of them. Next, I turn to the theme of disempowerment, as evidenced in scenes about the lawsuit against her rapists and Noemí's detention for stealing. Then I highlight two characters, Juanita and Tía Cenaida, who practice restorative techniques in this inhospitable place and explain why their good intentions ultimately fail. The film's open-ended conclusion calls for interpretation, which completes the analysis.

*Returning to the Inhospitable Postconflict Nation*

After ten years in prison, Milagros reunites with her mother, Consuelo, and finds that things are different in her mother's home. Manuel, a man who her mother has remarried, now sits at the head of the table as if he were the new ruler. The three women sit at the dinner table awaiting his return, but when Manuel comes home from work, he seems irritated. Consuelo begins serving spaghetti, serving Manuel first. Next, the camera cuts to a slightly above eye-level wide shot of the dining room table. The lighting creates a chiaroscuro effect; the table receives the most highlighting, while the figures seated around it are shadowy. Manuel looks despondently at Milagros, and he sympathetically strokes Noemí on the head. Milagros stuffs her mouth full of spaghetti as if she were in prison trying to finish before the end of mealtime.

Following dinner, in an eye-level medium shot that primarily uses backlighting, we see the silhouettes of Manuel and Consuelo as they sit on the bed covered with a highlighted green bedspread. Their backs are turned to each other as they get ready to turn in. The camera shifts to close-ups of Manuel and Consuelo as the two debate Milagros's innocence. Manuel does not want her to live with them because he is afraid he will get fired: "Si la chamba se entera que está

acá, me friegan, me joden.” To this, Consuelo affirms her daughter’s innocence: “Ella es inocente, salió porque es inocente”—but it doesn’t matter. Manuel replies, “Inocente, diez años en la cárcel, nadie se va a creer eso.” After ten years in prison, a pardon cannot wash off the stigma, and husband and wife are split as to how to identify Consuelo’s daughter. Consuelo reassures him that Milagros will only be with them temporarily, “Se va a ir donde Pedro.” Finally, they choose not to fight anymore and remain silent about the issue.

The dinner and bedroom sequences depict the family as a microcosm of the nation that, despite a change in rule from authoritarianism to pragmatism, has not changed at all for the people like Milagros who are victim-survivor-offenders. Consuelo’s marriage demonstrates that diaspora changes relationships and challenges national memory: while the nation has “forgiven” Milagros, Consuelo has faith in her daughter’s innocence, to which Manuel responds by calling her innocence unbelievable. The draconian methods of the Fujimori administration imprisoned the innocent Milagros, and now the pragmatic stepfather, Manuel, creates an inhospitable place for his stepdaughter by first making her feel unwelcome and then declaring that she cannot live with them. Consuelo has acquiesced to her new ruler and does not stand up for her daughter publicly, that is to say in front of Milagros and Noemí. There is no space for a mother’s compassion. The ritual of dinner further reflects the patriarchal society to which Milagros has returned; it begrudgingly provides her a space at the table. While a family dinner could have positive connotations, representing unity and love, in this scene it seems forced and as if everyone is trying to maintain appearances for the sake of Noemí. Instead of light conversation, silence and awkward glances predominate. The diasporic community, as represented by the family, is trying to reconcile its memory with the impetus for national reconciliation.

The exchange at dinner between Noemí and Manuel about the *cuy* (guinea pig) and

monkey reveals a great deal about how Andean migrants have changed in Lima and how they view ex-insurgents in the community. When Consuelo says, “Ella es Milagros,” Manuel responds with a grunt. Then Noemí tells Manuel that her *cuy* died and she wants a monkey—and he tells her no. The guinea pig is a delicacy in Andean cuisine, yet they eat spaghetti. The guinea pig has apparently ceased being a cultural symbol and commodity; it is a replaceable, nameless pet.<sup>133</sup> It is also important to return to the “cause of death” and burial of the *cuy*. Milagros touches the *cuy*, which squeals, scurries away, and dies; she and Noemí then bury it. In Andean thought, *curanderos* use the *cuy* to identify an illness and heal a person, and in the film the *cuy* is a sign of social sickness. The *cuy* detects Milagros is unhealthy, stigmatized;<sup>134</sup> in response, it squeals and dies. In fact, during dinner, Noemí notices a bodily sign, the scars on her mother’s wrist, which she cannot interpret, and her mother covers up her attempted suicide with the story of an accident. (Later, a conversation between Milagros and her friend from prison, Juanita, suggests that the pregnant Milagros tried to commit suicide while the two were detained.) The scars echo her stigmatization and show its effects on her kin. For it is also believed that “illness that the *cuy* absorb[s] from the patient could come back to the person who has disposed of, or witnessed disposal of [the *cuy*]” (Morales 86). The disease transmitted through the *cuy* infects her daughter. In Lima, the *cuy*, symbolic of Andean systems of community and knowledge, healing, and economic prosperity, is defunct. It forecasts a dismal future for Milagros and Noemí.

In contrast to the *cuy*, the symbolism of the monkey demonstrates that Milagros is a

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<sup>133</sup> When Milagros and Noemí bury the *cuy*, Noemí tells her that her it does not have a name: “Es un *cuy*, no es gente.” In research on the *cuy*, Edmundo Morales explains that unlike other animals in the Andes, “Chickens and *cuy*s, however, are rarely named” (11).

<sup>134</sup> The research of Erving Goffman demonstrates that stigma “refers to bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier. The signs were cut or burnt into the body” and in Christian times these signs “referred to bodily signs of a physical disorder” (1).

liability and out of place. After leaving prison, she aspires to travel to Tingo María, symbolic of a warm environment, to see her brother, Pedro. For instance, when Noemí asks for a monkey to replace her *cuy*, Manuel's preoccupation with protecting against destructive elements seems pointed at Milagros, the monkey who is destroying the perception of a family in Lima's diasporic community. Often "people believe the person with a stigma is not quite human" (Goffman 5) and therefore discriminate. Perhaps Noemí intuitively feels that she is not immune to the power of Milagro's stigma. She wants to go with her mother, whom she has just met, to Tingo María. Noemí suggests that the jungle, where her uncle Pedro lives, is a place where there is no death: "Quiero ir contigo. [ . . . ] Quiero ver sus monos. Además allá no se mueren." Whereas in Lima there are no vestiges of a preconflict community and only social death, represented by the burial of the *cuy*, the name *Pedro* means "rock," a foundation, and Tingo María represents the hope of a new life.

In addition to being stigmatized inside the home, Milagros has difficulty obtaining a job because she has no work history or proper documentation and suffers from PTSD. She also has little social capital: as an outsider to the migrant community she has few people she can turn to for help. After asking about employment at several places, however, the prospect of working off the books at a Chinese restaurant seems promising. At first the owner claims to have no open positions, but then he offers her a cleaning job. The shot cuts to a close-up of a mop and bucket. Milagros swishes around dirty water on the tile floor and rings the mop. While she dumps the black water in the toilet, a man enters to use the urinal. There is a close-up of his camouflage pants tucked into his black, leather military boots. Milagros looks up from stall to see the man urinating and she sneaks out of the restaurant. It is evident that she is in an altered state; she takes off her apron and begins to run. She is so disoriented that she gets hit by a car. The driver, a young woman with glasses, offers to drive her to the hospital, but Milagros replies, "No te

preocupes. Estoy bien.” She returns to the apartment, vomits in the sink, and tells Noemí that she must have eaten something that made her sick.

Exposing the needs of victims after trauma, the mopping scene communicates the effects of unresolved psychic damage and injustice. The quintessential components of healing, according to Yael Danieli, include “relieving the victim’s stigmatization and separations from society” and “the reestablishment of the victim’s equality of value, power, esteem” are essential for the victim (343). But no matter how much Milagros rings the mop, the floor will never be clean: just as she cannot wash off the stigma or the scars on her wrist, her reputation cannot be cleansed. Because of the circumstances of her release, when she beats the odds and does find a job (legally or illegally), she cannot hold the job. The car accident, which she miraculously survives uninjured, demonstrates her precarious situation. The stigma of an ex-insurgent and the status as a victim-survivor of rape jeopardize her well-being and that of her daughter.

As illustrated with the example of infection symbolically transmitted by the dead *cuy*, Noemí also bears the stigma her mother carries, and it jeopardizes her friendship with Sheryl (Fátima Barrezueta). In one scene, as Noemí walks to see Sheryl, a man juggles knives in the street. Then, Sheryl informs Noemí that her parents want her to stay away from the “ex-insurgent” and her daughter. In an effort to conserve the friendship, Noemí spends her mother’s money, which is meant to pay the medicinal plant distributor, at an arcade. Despite her effort to buy Sheryl’s friendship, no amount of money can clean the mark on her identity. Once the money runs out, her friend reminds her, “Ya le dije a mi mamá que estabas en la selva. No quiere que me junte contigo.” In effect, Sheryl is telling her: *you are long gone, so I didn’t and can’t spend time with you*. Taking account of the film as a whole, this reminds us that even with reparation money obtained from the trial, Milagros and Noemí will remain social outcasts.

When Milagros finds out that her daughter “lost” the money, a violent altercation takes place that leads to Noemí running away, trying to steal from Consuelo, and then unsuccessfully stealing from the medicinal plant distributor. Milagros is worried because Noemí has returned home late, and then she becomes upset that she has not paid the sixty soles for the herbal medicines as she originally promised her mother. Milagros does not believe that Noemí lost the money or that it was stolen. She grabs Noemí, lifting her up from her seat: “Yo no quiero una hija mentirosa ni una hija ladrona. Así no te quiero.” Then Noemí does not reveal why she stole the money but admonishes her mother: “Tú ni siquiera sabes como se llama mi papá. Eras una puta. ¡Una puta!” Milagros slaps Noemí twice. The violent reaction provokes tears and regrets as Milagros sits on the ground yells after Noemí, who leaves the apartment. Milagros has physically punished her daughter, and the consequences of her actions lead to more deviant behavior and retribution—to summarize—involving Manuel, the medicinal plant distributor, and the police.

Noemí serves as an example of retributive justice’s worsening effect on offenders: that approach does not resolve the original impetus for the crime. It is not clear why Noemí needs money, and no one bothers to elicit her side of the story. Does she want to pay for more games with Sheryl? Does she want to repay her mother? Does she want to indulge on things for herself? Instead, her mother physically punishes her, Manuel blames her mother for her deviant behavior,<sup>135</sup> and the medicinal plant distributor takes her to the police. The lack of communication among all parties permits no one to address the harm caused by the offense, the motivations of the offender to commit the crime, or alternative ways she might make up for the

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<sup>135</sup> Noemí goes to stay with Consuelo and Manuel. While Manuel is sleeping and Consuelo leaves the house, the young girl takes the opportunity to sneak into the bedroom and take some money out of a small metal box. In a medium shot, a gun points at Noemí. She looks startled to see Manuel awake, and says, “Soy yo, pa.” He puts the gun on the bed and asks her what she was doing, “¿Estabas agarrando plata de Consuelo?” Noemí clarifies that she was not exactly stealing, “No, lo que pasa es que yo solo quería sacar un poco de plata porque no está Consuelo. Y quería comprar . . .” Manuel tells her that she is stealing, asks her to leave, and then adds, “Cuando vivías con nosotros jamás hiciste esto. Es tu madre . . .”



violation of trust. By taking Noemí to the police, the man assures that she will have a permanent record and be branded a thief—all without her fully understanding the harm of her actions. In postconflict Peru, crime leads to punishment and there is no space for understanding, rehabilitation, or restoration.

*Utterly Disempowered: No Justice, No Voice, No Action*

In addition to meeting emotional and social needs of massive-trauma survivors, Yael adds, the nation with a history of widespread psychic or physical violence must “provide and maintain equal value under law and the provisions of justice” (343). However, in *Cuchillos en el cielo* the law and institutions ensure little equality or efficiency. If the *cuy* represents the destruction of Andean systems, Milagros must now turn to a dysfunctional centralized system. As Lisa J. Laplante, who discusses transitional justice in Peru, explains, “many victims are left in a setting where existing judicial mechanisms typically failed to protect their fundamental rights to begin with, there is an obvious impracticality to resorting to the courts to resolve all of these reparations claims” (58). During the scene at a coffee shop, Dr. Jiménez, whose hands are folded in front his mouth, admits a startling truth about rape cases: “A lo largo de estos últimos años he llevado un montón de juicios por casos de violación durante detenciones militares. No he ganado ninguno. No hay un solo violador preso.” Ironically, the military detained, convicted and imprisoned Milagros easily, but under the civilian legal system, she struggles to present her case and put the soldiers who raped her behind bars. Milagros has to take part in a system in which she has no power.

The pursuit of her case causes Milagros a great deal of emotional pain, and she wonders whether legal justice is worth all the frustration. In one instance, Dr. Jiménez explains that the medical reports have been falsified—they are “Basura. Que saliste del cuartel sin ningún signo

de maltrato.” Milagros hesitates and finally says, “Eso es mentira. Acaso . . . acaso no quedé embarazada.” Dr. Jiménez is convinced that they must continue despite this setback, but Milagros asks whether it is worth pursuing the lawsuit, “¿Qué voy a ganar con todo esto?” Dr. Jiménez replies, “Primero que vayan a la cárcel. Que paguen sus culpas. Y después viene lo de la reparación personal porque si son condenados tienen que pagar una reparación.” Compensation functions as merely a symbolic act because Milagros can never be fully compensated for her detainment and rape; however, legal restitution would help her reestablish her life. Dr. Jiménez is really using Yael’s understanding about the role of reparations: “The money *concretizes* for the victim the confirmation of responsibility, wrongfulness: he [or she] is not guilty, and somebody cares about it. It is at least of token” (349). However, we do not know what the reparations mean for Milagros. Never does Dr. Jiménez ask her about her needs for closure and security, as a restorative victim-centered approach would advise.

The scene that best exemplifies the intrusiveness and insensitivity of the civilian justice system involves Milagros finally meeting Lima’s provincial prosecutor (Miguel Medina) to present her case. Three men listen to her testimony: the prosecutor, Dr. Jiménez, and the secretary. Milagros narrates her kidnapping and humiliation and the following conversation ensues as she begins to speak about the gang rape:<sup>136</sup>

Milagros: [ . . . ] Me velaron, doctor, como ocho, me velaron.

Fiscal Provincial de Lima: Dígame señorita Levano, ahora Ud. dice que fueron ocho y en la manifestación que tengo aquí delante firmada por Ud. dice que fueron seis y ahora son ocho. ¿En qué quedamos? Dicen que fueron seis y ahora son ocho.

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<sup>136</sup> Yael notes a similar experience among Holocaust survivors that presented claims for apologies and reparations to German officials: “The survivors had to prove that they had been damaged. Their attempts at self-cure were destroyed once they had to admit that their damage was permanent, sealed, and signed by the authorities. To receive payments, often sorely needed, the applicants had to subject themselves to the most humiliating and degrading, seemingly very correct legal type of investigation” (348).

Dr. Jiménez: Señor fiscal, le ruego que comprenda que mi patrocinada no puede recordar exactamente cuantos fueron. La memoria tiende a crear lagunas ahí donde uno puede sentir que el recuerdo le trae daño, sea psíquico o emocional.

Throughout the legal process, men surround Milagros. She hesitates as she tells her narrative, revealing personal and humiliating details. In Hispanic culture, people tend not to talk about sex, let alone rape, and Milagros tells intimate details to the three men in the hope that her testimony will allow her to file a case against the offenders. However, the prosecutor interrupts her and zeros in on the number of men. He *re-victimizes* her by subtly accusing her of lying. This discrepancy causes her emotional stress, and Dr. Jiménez offers a trauma-sensitive response for the lapse in memory. The prosecutor is not interested in the crime but rather in whether her case would merit a formal complaint, and first they must verify that the claim is true. When the prosecutor asks her to continue, Milagros chokes and cannot speak. Dr. Jiménez further demonstrates his care and sensitivity by giving her a glass of water. The prosecutor, seeing that Milagros cannot continue, speaks directly to Dr. Jiménez, effectively ignoring her. The civilian legal system bases itself on a scientific and pragmatic approach and does not include emotional or restorative processes that Dr. Jiménez hints toward. The prosecutor abruptly ends the meeting without listening to the rest of Milagros's testimony because he has determined that the only thing that matters is a paternity test identifying one of the eight offenders.

Dr. Jiménez hopes that Milagros will consider submitting DNA samples because this type of case could set a precedent for the handling of future rape cases: “Por eso estoy seguro si el fiscal admite la demanda, vamos a juicio, ganamos. [ . . . ] Es importante sentar un precedente judicial. No solo por ti, también por otras mujeres que pasaron el mismo infierno que tú.” For Milagros, the memories of her abuse, rape, and imprisonment are too difficult to bear, especially

if she can only bring one offender to court. Moreover, she does not want to put her daughter at risk of knowing that her father was a rapist. Had the pursuit of justice involved a restorative justice process and the civilian complaint filing system been victim centered, Milagros may have immediately chosen to set a precedent.

After this exchange at the coffee shop, Milagros discovers that Noemí has been arrested for theft. She goes to the police station to pick her up, and the police officer on duty tells her that she can retrieve her ten-year-old daughter the next day. Faced with the prospect of her daughter having to spend the night in prison, Milagros raises her voice in dismay. Manuel, however, arrives and casually asks to speak to the police chief. In his office, Manuel requests that Noemí's record be erased, "Es una niña, una menor de edad. Es primera vez que hace algo así. Es como mi hija. Ha vivido en mi casa desde los cinco años. ¿Tú crees que podría borrar la denuncia?" The institutional corruption is such that her mother's alleged affiliation with the Shining Path can never be erased, but the eight rapists have no criminal records.

This scene emphasizes the distrust, corruption, and sexism inherent in the criminal justice system. In the first place, the facial expressions of Milagros communicate horrible thoughts of what could happen to her daughter overnight in a cell with other offenders and at the hands of the police. She is completely disempowered from resolving her daughter's detention. While Manuel says she is *like* his daughter, she *is* the daughter of Milagros; despite her pleas, however, the mother cannot get her daughter out of jail. The well-connected Manuel, on the other hand, assures that the police erase her record and release her immediately to her mother. He demonstrates his paternal love for Noemí and uses his influence to protect her. On another note, this scene contains a positive exchange between Manuel and Milagros: he says, "Suerte," and she thankfully acknowledges him. Despite this friendly recognition, the scene communicates the

Milagros's inability to protect her daughter and her dependence on a patriarchal figure. The facility with which men can erase complaints and the disregard for the victim of theft disclose endemic problems with justice. Like the scenes with Dr. Jiménez, the institutions in Peru are male dominated and corrupt, and women cannot obtain justice for themselves.

*The Short-Lived, Good Intentions of Juanita and Tía Cenaida*

Upon release from prison, Juanita and Tía Cenaida provide Milagros warmth, affection, and assistance. The two women represent the little social capital Milagros has in Lima. First, Juanita and Milagros were in prison together have had an intimate relationship, and naturally, Milagros seeks out her friendship and help. Juanita had saved Milagros from the suicide attempt and witnessed the birth of Noemí.<sup>137</sup> Serving them soup, Juanita is genuinely happy as she shows Milagros and Noemí a picture of her boyfriend to who she refers to as *un príncipe*, a prince. Milagros shares her plans with Juanita: “Necesito conseguir un lugar por un par de meses para las dos.” Juanita generously offers, “Quédate en mi cuarto. Está vacío. [ . . . ] Yo ya me mudé con mi nueva pareja.” Milagros has postponed her plans to go to the jungle because she is going to try to pursue her lawsuit. She believes it is possible attain justice.<sup>138</sup>

The second instance in which life appears to improve for Milagros is when she runs into Tía Cenaida. In an over-the-shoulder shot of Milagros, Tia Cenaida contrasts with Consuelo, giving Milagros a sincere and affectionate smile and saying, “Qué gusto verte.” She hugs and holds her: “Déjame mirarte.” Tía Cenaida recognizes Milagros as a human, offers to put her needlepoint on sale, and presents her with a temporary job. Consuelo sells natural medicines for ailments in the market—shamans often ask their patients to buy the ingredients necessary to cure

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<sup>137</sup> When Juanita sees Noemí, she says, “Yo te vi nacer.”

<sup>138</sup> Milagros asks Juanita to go to Dr. Jiménez to sign some papers. Juanita replies, “No voy a ir. Ya no voy a seguir con eso. Me huevaron. Ya no más.” Milagros walks away from Juanita and sits at the table to eat with her daughter. It seems as if Juanita has been able to move on with out legal retribution.

ailments or to perform cleansing ceremonies. Once again, like the candies sold by the recovering addict, the medicinal plants remind us either of the need to heal naturally from the trauma one has suffered or of the need to cleanse the stigma that marks on one's identity. Western medicine or Western justice, as exemplified in the handling of Milagros's rape case, does not take this postconflict problem into account.

The help that Juanita and Tía Cenaida provide for Milagros is unconditional and could be restorative. Juanita, who seems to be living a fairy-tale ending with her prince charming, gives her the keys to a new life. This halfway home will allow her to establish safety, save money, and live in an environment away from Manuel's indignant gestures.<sup>139</sup> She will have independence while she pursues her case against the rapists. Symbolically, Tía Cenaida is a natural healer and does not fear the stigma that others in the community see. She immediately trusts Milagros: instead of isolating her, she wants to help her. Unlike the medicinal-plant distributor, who immediately passes judgment on Noemí, Cenaida protects Milagros and empowers her.

The failure of these good intentions is due to an angry, unforgiving, and alienating society. Although there are individuals who attempt to restore justice, the patriarchal community prefers to condemn and punish Milagros and Noemí, sometimes through isolation. In another scene depicting an inhospitable environment, Noemí's soccer ball accidentally knocks over a large cut of steak on the market floor. Milagros goes to defend her daughter as the fat butcher grabs Noemí by the arm and angrily yells at the children; Milagros pays him for the sullied meat. Insultingly, he wraps the meat up and gives it to her. Even though Milagros makes up for the accident by paying for the meat, the butcher continues hurling insults at Noemí. Again, it seems

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<sup>139</sup> Milagros worries that Manuel may have taken advantage of Noemí. By moving out of her mother's home, she ensures the safety of her daughter. She asks her, "Noemí una pregunta, ¿cómo te trata Manuel? ¿Te trata bien? ¿Nunca te ha pegado, no?" Noemí does answer but asks her mother for money by saying, "Me das un sol. Mi pa siempre me da uno." Manuel has been a good father to Noemí.

as if money cannot make up for the accident. Despite this awful encounter, Milagros makes the most of it by having steak, instead of the usual spaghetti, for dinner.

*The Fate of Noemí and Milagros*

Consuelo and Manuel have been lying to Noemí by telling her that Milagros has been working in Venezuela for the past ten years. Slowly, the lies unravel themselves. Noemí confronts Milagros, asking her about her time in Venezuela and calling her a “mentirosa.” Milagros admits to Noemí that she was in prison and she was pregnant, but Milagros does not know how to tell her daughter the truth. However, she does relate a symbolic version of her story:

Noemí, el otro día estuve con Juanita y . . . me estuvo contando de una amiga de la cárcel que . . . cuando la detuvieron, los policías . . . la . . . la agarraron y . . . quedó embarazada. [Noemí says, “Mamá ayúdame,” and Milagros sits next to her to help her put her doll in her backpack]. No entra. Bueno, entonces, esa mamá no sabía como contarle a su hijo lo que le había pasado. Tenía miedo que . . . que el papá . . . pues le dijo que si le va a conocer algún día al papá . . . [ellipses indicate pauses]

Noemí does not want to listen to the story and instead asks her mother to help her pack up the doll, which does not fit in the small backpack. Milagros wants to discuss the truth with her daughter, but Noemí interrupts her and says, “Mamá yo no soy ese niño y no me gusta esa historia.” Milagros and Noemí pack up their few belongings and leave Juanita’s apartment. The ending of *Cuchillos en el cielo* is open.<sup>140</sup> The camera pans from left to right over the landscape of Lima and pauses on the doll that did not fit in the backpack. Noemí has left it behind. Where

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<sup>140</sup> In 2009, I met with Durant and a group of students (from the University of Virginia) at La Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya (UARM) to discuss his film *El Premio*. I remember students being frustrated with the open-ended conclusion to the film. He responded that Hollywood fills the expectations of its viewers by providing happy endings while He enjoys hearing the public’s interpretations. Durant suggests that the interpretation of the open ending reveals more about the ideological stance of the viewer and sparks conversation and debate.

do they go? Does Milagros plan to pursue the case?

My reading of the conclusion of the film is that the mother and daughter leave Lima and go to Tingo María. The *mise en scène* of Lima throughout the film, the traffic, the glares from Manuel, the hot peppers, the angry butcher, the street performer juggling knives and the fire at the restaurant where Juanita works, the stacks of paper, the dirty water, and the meat that has fallen on the market floor all suggest that Lima is an inhospitable place for the stigmatized, innocent ex-insurgent and her child born of rape. There is nothing but *cuchillos en el cielo* in Lima, yet mother and daughter have found resilience in each other. My theory is supported by the fact that Milagros seems to be in the best emotional state when she is with her daughter. Noemí, who has plenty of questions and doubts about her mother's whereabouts for the prior ten years, unknowingly gives her mother space to symbolize her trauma. As if understanding the complexity or danger of her mother's narrative, Noemí tells her that she does not want to hear the story about her friend because she is not just a symbolic child in the story, she is *real*. The film posits the urgency for honesty between mother and daughter and suggests that Milagros will preserve the memory of trauma in a way that will protect the psyche of her daughter. Noemí realizes that her mother has serious issues and will not injure her by asking about her father, like the child in the story that wanted to know the identity of his father. Manuel, after all, has been a protective and loving father figure for Noemí. In turn, Milagros will not put her daughter through DNA testing because, in the end, they need to keep the father—representative of the patriarchy—out of their lives. The two women need to carve out a path together.

In contrast to the chain link fence and barbed wire at the beginning of the film, a doll now sits on the wall, as if looking at the city; the sky is blue and the light is bright. Like the child in the story Noemí denies is her, the doll she leaves suggests that she has to grow up, is no longer a



child, and needs to be present for her mother instead of making her life more difficult. Noemí cannot resort to deviant behaviors that endanger their shared well-being. Perhaps in another space, where there is no one who knows that Milagros was imprisoned and raped and that Noemí stole money, they can begin her life anew. The pragmatic father who sits atop the hierarchy and wields his authority and condemnation and the pragmatic mother who has no voice and submits to his authority have closed off their home in Lima to Milagros. The friend and aunt who attempt to restore balance cannot succeed if the greater community does not practice fairness, equality, and compassion. Perhaps with support of her brother, Pedro, a friendly figure, the mother and daughter may encounter acceptance in the warmth of Tingo María.

***Ojos de pez abisal: Postconflict (In)Justice and a Restorative Paradigm***

*Ojos de pez abisal* is the first and only novel<sup>141</sup> written by Ulises Gutiérrez Llantoy (Huancavélica 1961).<sup>142</sup> Iván Thays considers it to be one of the best novels of 2011 in Peru because, I suspect, it inherently places emphasis on the discourses of trauma and resilience:

A diferencia de otras novelas que retratan la violencia política desde una perspectiva de primera mano, desde el interior y no una recreación posterior (es decir, cuyos personajes son testigos presenciales y viven esa violencia cotidianamente), Ulises Gutiérrez muestra la existencia en dos polos de esos años. Hay violencia, hay muertes, hay terror y existe sobre todo esa sensación de que no puede confiarse en nadie (terroristas, policías, todos son escollos y amenazas); pero también hay esperanza, fe, hay vida social, hay necesidad

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<sup>141</sup> Gutiérrez Llantoy has published a collection of short stories *The Cure en Huancayo*, which deals with the youth and music of the 80s in the Peruvian highlands.

<sup>142</sup> In an interview from 2012, Gutiérrez Llantoy discusses his generation of authors and explains the autobiographical elements that inform the novel: “Para mi generación es inevitable escribir sobre la violencia. Yo, por ejemplo, viví mi infancia en los ochentas, en Colcabamba, un pueblo minúsculo de la provincia de Tayacaja, en la región Huancavelica; luego mis padres me enviaron a estudiar la secundaria a Huancayo y después, en los noventas, emigré a Lima para estudiar en la universidad. Mi vida ha coincidido con la evolución social y geográfica de la violencia que se vivió en el Perú de esos años, así que era imposible no escribir sobre los dramas que me contaron y de los que fui testigo. La historia de Nemesio, por ejemplo, la historia que se narra en el capítulo cuatro, es real, la conté tal cual fue” (“Preguntas”).

de crecer y de educarse. (n.p.)

*Ojos de pez abisal* is one of the post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission texts that not only acknowledges and tells a story about the violence of the armed conflict but also affirms the possibility of a hopeful future. The novel takes into account narratives of trauma but also exhibits the resilience of the human spirit of those that migrated to Japan during the 1980s and 1990s.

In the back matter of the novel, Gutiérrez Llantoy provides startling figures about Peruvian migration and acknowledges the resilient Peruvians living in Japan. Here, one finds statistics on the subject of Peruvian diasporas: “Entre 1990 y el 2009, 2 millones 38 mil 107 peruanos abandonaron el Perú y no regresaron. 85 mil 601 lo hicieron al Japón” (211). There was a flee response to the traumatic stimuli of the internal conflict; Peruvians of Japanese and non-Japanese descent left their country to forge new identities in strikingly different cultural context. On the next page Gutiérrez Llantoy thanks his friends who contributed their memories of Peru and Japan: “Gracias infinitas a mis amigos [ . . . ] (por hacernos quedar tan bien en el Japón. Por sus respuestas, sus testimonios de peruanos que se sentaron a estudiar y trabajar allá echando de menos al Perú)” (213). Shadows of a haunting past inform this narrative, as does the resilience of Peruvians who carved out a space for themselves in Japan.<sup>143</sup> The novel therefore functions as a repository of collective memory about the effects of the conflict and ensuing diasporas that have not been addressed in current cultural production or criticism.

In *Ojos de pez abisal*, the first-person Peruvian narrator appears with the nickname

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<sup>143</sup> To a certain degree, *Ojos de pez abisal* idealizes the experiences of Peruvians by focusing on a wealthier and more educated population in Japan. In the novel, the academic community of the university offers inclusion that is not typical in other places of Japanese society. Often Japanese discriminate against Brazilian and Peruvian immigrants, who tend to work lower paying jobs. The field research of sociologist Ayumi Takenaka, on the subject of the return migrant, explores how Japanese rank Peruvians lower than Brazilians. She explains that some of the reasons are: Brazil has a higher GDP and political influence, Brazilians were more likely to look and speak Japanese, and Peruvians were often of non-Japanese descent and of poorer origins (262). In 1990, Japan also created immigration laws for foreign workers based on “the criterion of ‘Japanese blood’” and hierarchy that “matches certain ethnicities and nationalities with certain kinds of occupations and legal rights” (264).

*Zancudo*.<sup>144</sup> He discusses his life in Japan as well as his life during the 1980s in Samaylla, Huancayo, and Lima. The novel opens with ambivalence about seeing his Peruvian friend, Cayo (Manuel/Bohemia), in Kyoto: “como si algo en mí adivinara que los tres días que planeábamos pasar conociendo aquella ciudad estaría pintada con la pesadumbre de enfrentar la aprensión de recuerdos que yo creía haber dejado enterrados para siempre en el Perú” (11). The presence of Cayo stirs up old memories about the internal conflict in the Andes. Flashbacks take the reader from the present-day experiences of Zancudo in Japan to terroristic violence to petrifying moments that involved the authoritarian state or the Shining Path. The primary traumatic memory that haunts Zancudo is the murder of his brother, Ariel. The Shining Path attacked them, and the insurgent, Renán, killed Ariel but allowed Zancudo to escape. Ariel’s death had devastating consequences on his family; his parents died from sorrow.<sup>145</sup> Zancudo became an orphan,<sup>146</sup> fleeing from the violence of memory. In Japan, Zancudo has reinvented himself as an engineering student who contemplates whether to pursue a PhD or take a job in Mexico. Yet despite his success, indecisiveness, nightmares, and flashbacks continue to cast a shadow over him.

Both parts of *Ojos de pez abisal* assume monologic epistolary forms, including letters from 1986 and e-mails from 2001. The one exception is “La odisea de Nemesio,” which is an account from 1986 narrated in the first person by Nemesio, a Quechua man and friend of the

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<sup>144</sup> *Zancudo* is a nickname that means mosquito and symbolizes the manner in which the narrator moves from place to place to avoid being metaphorically squashed by his memories.

<sup>145</sup> In the discourse of the armed conflict, *morir de pena*, as we saw in chapter 1, is common idiom used by people in the Andes. It implies depression that leads to self-destructive behaviors such as not accepting food or exposure to the elements. I am hesitant to use the word *suicide* because of the Western notions of overdose and other methods of finalizing one’s life. While *morir de pena* could be described as suicide, it is a slow, sad, and self-destructive process that seems socially acceptable—albeit tragic.

<sup>146</sup> Theidon explains what orphanhood means in the countryside: “es notable el énfasis que se pone a ‘ser huérfano’, aun cuando la persona ya es adulta. La palabra utilizada para huérfano en quechua-*wasqcha*-se refiere no solo a la falta de familiares sino también a la pobreza. Vivir sin familia es vivir una destitución emocional y material y, en vez de ser una condición estrictamente vinculada a la niñez, es un estatus que marca a la persona por toda la vida” (*Entre Prójimos* 79)

family.<sup>147</sup> In the letters from 1986, Zancudo is in school in Huancayo and writes to his friend Ramiro in Samaylla. These letters hint at the tough times, but the violence has not affected Zancudo and his family—yet. The violence becomes real when Nemesio reveals the assassinations in his village led by the Shining Path and that the insurgents wanted him to be president of the base. Nemesio and his wife survive; they escape and seek refuge with Zancudo’s family. The second part of the novel features e-mails from Zancudo to his friends Cayo and Camila. Zancudo also tells about his life at the university in Kochi and his love interest, Masami. In these e-mails, he grapples with what to do with memories of the violence that intrude on his consciousness as well as his hatred for Renán and thirst for revenge.

The background of Japan in *Ojos de pez abisal* provides a space far from Peru to explore the limitations of rule of law and the negative psychosocial effects on individuals and their communities. Zancudo is aware that Fujimori<sup>148</sup> lives in exile in Japan, and here he also encounters Renán and wishes he be tried for the crime. However, the “Ley de arrepentimiento” passed by Fujimori in 1992 reduced sentences, pardoned, or exonerated those who participated in the insurgency. Although this law was passed with the intention of national pacification, the law was not designed to address the grievances of victims-survivors, their families, and communities. Nor did the law help reintegrate *arrepentidos* into the national community. Contributing to the narrator’s feelings of injustice, Renán also is protected by the fact that Peru and Japan do not have an extradition treaty. Zancudo, Fujimori, and the offender, Renán, make up the Peruvian diasporic community in Japan, yet nothing can be done to attend to the harm done to Zancudo.

*Ojos de pez abisal* addresses a cultural trauma and recovery from traumatic experience. I

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<sup>147</sup> Gutiérrez Llantoy heard this narrative while living in the highlands and included it in his novel (“Preguntas”).

<sup>148</sup> Amid the scandalous release of the *vladivideos*, tapes revealing widescale corruption and bribery involving politicians, judges, and media representatives affiliated with the administration, Fujimori flees to Japan in 2000. The first video, implicating the head of the Servicio de Inteligencia Nacional, Vladimiro de Montesinos, was released to the public in September of 2000, and shortly thereafter, the Fujimori administration fell.

argue that Zancudo's transformation marks a paradigm shift from retributive to restorative justice. I first examine the meaning of exile by acknowledging the research conducted by Herman that explains that self-exile provides a period of safety. Then I engage Edward Said's notions of self-exile as wounding experience in itself and that exiles are aware of two cultures. The traumatic experience left an indelible mark on Zancudo's Andean identity that he prefers to suppress, yet the geography of Japan and globalization of classic rock evoke traumatic and nostalgic memories of Peru. Next I turn to the fish metaphors of recovery and the role Japanese culture plays in Zancudo's recovery. Subsequently, I analyze Zancudo's struggle with his inner monster that believes he must avenge the murder of Ariel. And finally, I interpret the conclusion as one that advocates for forgiveness and restoration of bonds with one's community.

*The Geography and Musicology of Memory and Trauma*

In response to a stressful or frightening situation a person may choose to act, flee, or freeze.<sup>149</sup> Both acting and freezing imply occupying the same space, but fleeing implies choosing another space for oneself—perhaps a sanctuary, as Herman outlines, or a holding space in which one can formulate a plan of action. Although Zancudo experiences success in Japan, over time exile becomes a painful experience. In his “Reflections on Exile,” Edward Said asserts that exile can be a traumatic event in itself. He defines exile by distancing his understanding of the term from romanticized or heroic constructions of the exilic literary or public figure. For him, exile is “the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: sadness can never be surmounted” (173). His description of exile as an unhealable rift is similar to the description of psychic trauma, and implied in his understanding of exile is the notion that a subject may be forced to leave his or her homeland due to violence. Fleeing from

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<sup>149</sup> Most psychologists use the terms *fight* and *flight* response, and I have added *freeze*. I choose to use *act* because *fight* implies violence and I would like to emphasize that there are alternate actions one could take in a stressful situation. I also use *flee* instead of *flight* because it makes more sense to run away from a stressful situation than *fly*.

one place to another can also augment feelings of futility, guilt, and inaction. The displaced subject may have difficulty moving forward because of a deep personal loss. As Said attests, “The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever” (173). The exilic space implies solitude, isolation, friendlessness, homelessness, and feelings of not belonging. Self-exile as a response to trauma, therefore, is vinegar on an existing wound.

The self-exile of Zancudo allows him assume the identity of a Peruvian expatriate, who easily has adapted to Japanese life. His past identity as a subject from the Andean highlands is one that he suppresses and he hides this part of his identity from non-Peruvians, like Milagros hides her imprisonment from Noemí in *Cuchillos en el cielo*. His migration and adjustment to Japan, learning a new language and acquiring a new identity, were together a relatively simple task. In an e-mail to Cayo, Zancudo explains that he welcomed inquisitive students: “Querían saber cómo son las cosas aquí y cuando llegamos al tema del idioma, me preguntaron que tan difícil era dominar el japonés. Yo les dije que era difícil, pero que, como todo en la vida, con empeño y dedicación, se aprende” (113). The narrator silences the period of arrival and understates the difficulty of adjusting to Japan. Implicitly, he communicates the idea that it was easier to establish roots in Japan and live in exile than to stay in Peru.

In contrast to other exiles who yearn to return home but are unable for political reasons, initially Zancudo chooses to remain in self-exile. In Kyoto, Cayo asks him “No has pensado en volver al Perú?” (27). He takes a moment to respond—“Pensé en lo lejana que ahora me sonaba esa idea. En cómo mi vida había terminado arraigándose en el Japón hasta convertirse en mi casa, mi empleo, mi hogar”—and finally says, “No creo. A Lima, a Huancayo, quizá algún día. A Samaylla, nunca. A ese hueco de mierda no regreso jamás” (27). He does not disavow entirely

the physical space, Peru, in which he was born, but rather renounces the violent space symbolized by the Andean village Samaylla, in which his subjectivity was constructed as a young man. His emotional connection to Samaylla makes him degrade his once-beloved hometown. Lima and Huancayo seems to have less traumatic memories associated with them. Nonetheless, at least initially, Zancudo rejects the return to any city in Peru.

Pierre Nora has theorized the manner in which symbolic elements and places incarnate national memory. With the French in mind, he argues that “A *lieu de mémoire* is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community” (xvii). Largely, symbols construct the memory of a historical event, Nora suggests. These places or objects, which can be battlefields, palaces, landmarks, or monuments, appear against the backdrop of the present and evoke memories of a bygone era. To add this spatial concept, Said notes that exiles are aware of two cultures and home, essentially two geographies and memories:

Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that, to borrow a phrase from music, is contrapuntal. For an exile, habits of life, expression, or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. (186)

Said argues that at minimum two cultures and memories exist in the exilic space, which permits comparisons, reflections, and memories. Even though Zancudo has tried to repress his memories of Peru, he inhabits the space of Japan as well as the space of memory of Peru. For Zancudo, the backdrop of Japan inevitably evokes memories of sites in his homeland.

However, Said does not go into the potential contrapuntal tension between traumatic and

nostalgic memories. Zancudo's reflections on sites of memory and feelings evoked by classic rock echo the contrapuntal culture of the exile but also betray the seemingly definitive statement about never again returning to Peru. This ambivalence toward Peru becomes evident during his time with Cayo, whom he holds dear to his heart: "en los años que llevaba viviendo en el Japón, no había logrado tener una amistad tan memorable como la que había tenido con él" (28).

Traumatic memory—Samaylla as a *hueco de mierda*—speaks to the effects of the insurgency on his village. However, Zancudo associates Cayo with pleasant memories and realizes that he has never had a friendship like his with Cayo in Japan.

Exilic nostalgia intrudes on the narrative of trauma and loss, and we can observe the role the Japanese and Peruvian sites of memory and contrapuntal awareness of different cultures. The first chapter, "El cielo de Kioto, la laguna Huacracocha," as evident in the title, establishes a contrapuntal relationship between the sky of Kyoto (present/future in Japan) and the Huacracocha Lagoon (the past in Peru). In this way, the landscape awakens both traumatic and nostalgic memories. The Andean *puna* appears in one of Zancudo's dreams, and he interprets it as an omen narrative:

Pensé que era la costumbre, heredada de mi madre, de llevar el día pensando en el destino que revelaban los sueños. De creer que andar ordeñando vacas en una puna roja y desértica, en medio de celestes neblinas y soles púrpuras, era de mal augurio. Pero no, todo aquel temor que me perseguía desde que abordé el tren en la estación de Kochi, tenía razón de ser. (11)

Zancudo explains that his mother has passed down to him Quechua beliefs about the importance of dreams. He recognizes the dream is prophetic but does not interpret the dream, so I propose the following reading: The desert conditions reflect the idea of thirst and a desire to quench it



with cow milk. The image of red and barren earth is a negative symbol representing his memories of blood and death. He is trying to bring down the milk, a sweet and rich liquid, in this harsh environment. The blue haze or fog and purple suns are atmospheric phenomena with diametrically opposed colors. In the dream, it may be that the sun appears purple, a secondary color, because of the combination of the primary colors in red earth and blue fog. Blue represents the depression the narrator experiences, so the fog can be read as a cataclysm: the sky fallen on earth. The future represented by the sun, therefore, can be interpreted as a composite of the past (red) and present (blue). This dream reveals that which “tenía razón de ser” about how he is holding himself back by not resolving the relationship between his past (the *puna*) in the present (Japan), which will give way to his unknown future.

In chapter 2, “Celina, labios de ciraca,” as Zancudo falls asleep in his hotel room in Kyoto, pleasant childhood memories surface: “Me acordé otra vez de Samaylla. Me acordé de Ramiro. Me acordé de Celina” (29). This nostalgia is filtered of negative emotions and incorporates symbolic representations of the past. He remembers Samaylla, not as *un hueco de mierda* but as Edenic: “Samaylla era un estadio gigante y vacío. El valle era el gramado; los cerros, las tribunas. Todo estaba lleno de colores; las chacras, las tribunas” (29–30). His childhood friends symbolize his love for Samaylla and his connection to his Andean village. Despite previously calling Samaylla *un hueco de mierda* his memories, letters to Ramiro, and love for Celina betray this statement.

Toward the end of chapter 2, the failure of the harvesters to come down from the mountains to the festivities signals the discourse of loss that began in 1986. The second chapter concludes with the narrator, his parents, and Ariel looking out on the balcony: “Sobre el lomo inclinado del cerro Pasorcco, como un gigantesco anuncio de neón, una hilera de antorchas con

la forma de una hoz y un martillo, titilaban en la oscuridad” (44). Then, back in Japan, he awakes suddenly to sounds of a police thriller on the television. It as if it were an allusion to *Abril rojo*, which I discuss in chapter 2 of this dissertation, that reiterates the idea that this genre can speak to the trauma of the internal conflict. In effect, Samaylla became a *hueco de mierda* after the insurgency began affecting everyday life. Samaylla is a paradise lost, the place where Celina vanished, near where his brother was murdered and where his parents died of sadness. Samaylla is a site of memory to which he has difficulty returning even in dreams.

Inevitably, the urban geography of Kyoto elicits the memory Peru contrapuntally, as Said suggests. However, it also complicates the model because not only is there a here (Japan) and there (Peru) but there is a Peru (and a Japan) before and after the war. This layering of geography and time opens a discussion on trauma and resilience. First, Zancudo associates the cityscape of Kyoto to the Andes, which establishes the contrapuntal awareness of cultures, “[I]a ciudad se veía plana, trozada en cuadrículas por las calles y avenidas, rodeada de montañas, como algunas ciudades de la sierra del Perú” (24). However, what captivates him are not the Japanese-style buildings, but the bizarre architecture of the Central Station: “Los pisos del edificio ascendían como un anfiteatro piramidal cuyos niveles, manera de andenes incas, se elevaban por encima de las armaduras del techo” (24). The narrator shares this admiration for the out-of-place architecture in Kyoto with Cayo, who domesticates Kyoto by comparing it to Cuzco:

Kioto es como el Cuzco, es la joya histórica de Japón. Según me contaron, se salvo del bombardeo de los norteamericanos en la Segunda Guerra Mundial solo por la importancia de sus monumentos. Todos los templos de la era imperial son originales, por eso la mitad de los ciudadanos odia la arquitectura de la Estación Central dicen, no va con la historia.  
(26)

Cayo reminds Zancudo that Japan also has a history of war and trauma, yet the historic city was saved from the allied bombings. Cuzco, being in the heart of the Andes, similarly faced violence and managed to preserve its sites of memory, a central part of national identity. This added dimension to the contrapuntal awareness of culture demonstrates that even in a country ravaged by war, the gems of history, cultural memory, and identity can remain intact.

Zancudo's identification with the out-of-place Central Station echoes his own trauma, resilience, and suppression of his Andean identity. In contrast to the Japanese, who detest the architecture, Zancudo marvels at the Central Station and compares it to Inca terraces. He thereby appropriates the building to create continuity with his own traumatic past. The sites of memory of Kyoto were saved from the bombing of World War II, much as Renán spared Zancudo in the Andean highlands. He is like the Central Station because he stands alone in Japan; he has not made contact with other expatriates and has few Japanese friends. He brings Peru, specifically the Andes and the Andean past, to Japan, reminding us of the suppression of this crucial part of his identity. The presence of modern architecture communicates a disharmony not only between past and present but his Andean and Hispanic-Japanese identity. He has become an Andean subject that speaks Japanese and Spanish, not Quechua, and has migrated to an urban center to live a "modern" lifestyle. Not only is Zancudo like the proverbial fish out of water; the openness of Central Station, as I will discuss, also reveals the possibility of reconciling his identities.

Classic rock functions as a device that collapses the distance between Peru and Japan and also introduces the theme of reconciliation. Globalization does not allow for exile to be as radical and complete as it may have been in the past because American music is ubiquitous and makes all places proximate. Motti Regev notes the manner in which American rock became legitimized worldwide "because of the connection between rock music and ideologies and rebellion and

subversiveness (among other reason)” (225). Classic rock is tied to identity because it is perceived as empowering and creates a counterculture in rebellion against traditional culture, much like the effect that the Central Station has in Japan. The salience of rock music in *Ojos de pez abisal* is a reminder of the denial of Zancudo’s Andean identity and his repression of the armed conflict as well as art form that helps him get through the difficult time.

Various songs appear in *Ojos de pez abisal* that tell us about the role of classic rock in the Andean highlands. The song “Breakfast in America” by Supertramp saves the narrator from being detained by the military as a Shining Path insurgent. When Zancudo correctly identifies the song playing on the radio, the second lieutenant tells him, “Esos conchasumadres no saben nada de música, a un terruco nunca le gustaría esa canción” (19), and they release the aficionado of globalized culture. “Stairway to Heaven”<sup>150</sup> by Led Zeppelin plays when the driver decides to stop and check the truck. It is a song that speaks to Zancudo’s desire to flee and his depression about the loss of his family. Another song that appears is “Comfortably Numb” by Pink Floyd, which is about a speaker who tries to reach out to someone who is barely intelligible and has become settled in detachment after experiencing a loss during childhood. However, Supertramp’s “Crime of the Century,”<sup>151</sup> which I examine below, recurs twice in the memory of military checkpoints and travel to Lima. The song echoes not only the theme of loss but also foreshadows the confrontation between two unexpected figures, Renán and Zancudo.

Zancudo has tried to put a literal ocean between him and his traumatic past, but as he

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<sup>150</sup> The song has multiple interpretations. It begins with a story about a naïve woman that believes she is buying a stairway to heaven. The speaker, however, is skeptical. He is on a more earthly path: “There’s a feeling I get when I look to the west,/And my spirit is crying for leaving. [ . . . ] And a new day will dawn for those who stand long,/And the forests will echo with laughter.” The song is about the different paths people take and the reality that all lives come to an end. The woman seems to be more hopeful about buying a stairway to heaven, the future, while the narrator using the first person plural explains his pessimism, “Our shadows taller than our soul” (Led Zeppelin).

<sup>151</sup>The lyrics to “Crime of the Century” are as follows: “Now they’re planning the crime of the century/Well what will it be?/Read all about their schemes and adventuring./It’s well worth a fee./So roll up and see/And they rape the universe/How they’ve gone from bad to worse/Who are these men of lust, greed, and glory?/Rip off the masks and let see./But that’s no right—oh no, what’s the story?/There’s you and there’s me./That can’t be right” (Supertramp).

looks up at the dark, starry night above the Central Station, he hears “Crime of the Century.” He walks to the center of the hall, where the music comes from: “elevé la mirada al techo y como si de pronto me invadiera una sucesión de fotografías, me llegó a la memoria las punas de Ticlio, la noche frente a la laguna Huacracocha y el rostro de mi hermano Ariel. Quedé absorto” (12). He experiences a flashbulb memory, which is like series of fleeting images without a narrative, that first takes him back to 1991 and then to a remembrance of his brother Ariel.

The asterisks in the chapter take the readers to a full-blown narrative in 1991 when Zancudo and Cayo were on a bus to Lima and the military briefly detained and released Zancudo. Alejo (a friend and soldier at the checkpoint) and Cayo are in a truck listening to the radio. Alejo reminds the narrator of his loss: “Tu hermano era la cagada. Era mi pataza. Lo que esos conchesumares le hicieron ni tiene perdón de Dios” (21). Zancudo decides to change the subject by asking the name of the song playing on the radio. Alejo tells him that it is “Crime of the Century,” and the song elicits the memory about his brother’s love for classic rock:

Al pasar por Casapalca volvió a sonar *Crime of the Century*. [ . . . ] Imaginé a mi hermano simulando que tocaba la guitarra eléctrica en el cuarto de pensión que habíamos compartido en Huancayo, cuando mis padres me enviaron a estudiar la secundaria; imaginé a mi hermano haciendo ese viaje conmigo, diciendo: ¡eso es música, Zancudo! Los ojos se me humedecieron cuando la canción terminó. (23)

The melody to the song is very sad; the electric guitar wails and moans. On one level, the song reminds us of the subversive and rebellious nature of classic rock, especially when considering that Ariel openly spoke out against the Shining Path. On another level, it relates to Zancudo. The song is about an unknown story in which two people, an addressee and the speaker, do not know the narrative. While at first it seemed *they* were planning a crime, in the end the speaker rips off

a mask to discover a *you* and a *me*. The song that plays in the Central Station is the instrumental version of the song and a reminder of his brother's murder, and how Renán (you) and Zancudo (me) are the ones who walked out alive and are trying to construct the narrative.

In *Ojos de pez abisal* the globalized space does not allow for Zancudo to remain isolated from his memory or identities. Instead of the contrapuntal effect proposed by Said and initially observed by Zancudo, memory becomes like a globalized rock song. It is complex and ubiquitous; it has vocals, a harmony, and instruments. A song might tell a sad story and evoke a plethora of good and bad feelings, but ultimately it creates a singular piece of art. Music tells us who we are and makes us consider where we are. Together with the geography, the land, and the sea and sky imagery, music brings together the past (red), present (purple), and future (blue). American music reinforces the denial of his Andean identity and the trauma he experienced in the highlands, but it also makes him acknowledge the emotional pain involved in accepting his identity and moving forward.

*From the Depths of the Ocean to the Sky: Metaphors of Recovery*

Fish fascinate Zancudo, and he shares this with his love interest, Masami, a marine biologist. He uses fish as metaphor to discuss how he feels and thinks about his past and present. Expressing his predetermined beliefs about fish, he explains that he likes them because “me parecen animales solitarios, independientes” (118). To the contrary, Masami demystifies the fish by presenting her expert view, “Se sorprendería con lo sociables y dependientes que son algunas especies” (119). She is a social fish; she speaks Spanish well, introduces herself to him, and invites him on several outings. Although Zancudo desires to be a lonely and independent creature, he (surprisingly) is looking for a meaningful attachment and is interested in having a relationship with her.

Zancudo, the deep-sea fish, has the opportunity to explore the depths of his past in Peru and future with Masami and Cayo on several trips outside of Kochi as well as in e-mails with Camila, a friend who works at the Peruvian embassy in Japan. First, Masami invites him to join her and her students in exploring coral reefs in Muroto. On the return trip, the narrator asks her about words she wrote on the board during the lesson: “¿Qué es la fauna abisopelágica?” (126). Masami explains to him that there are organisms that live 3,000 feet below sea level and he becomes curious: “Le pregunté si a esa profundidad había luz y me dijo que ahí todo era oscuridad y nada más que oscuridad y que al contrario de lo que se piense, esos peces no son ciegos, sino que tienen ojos” (127). This insight that these fish are capable of producing their own light in the darkest depths makes Zancudo reflective and brings him some peace: “La imagen de ellos, vagando solos, en su mundo, alumbrándose el camino, me transmitió tranquilidad” (127). The deep-sea fish, which spend their lives in a part of ocean that is uninhabitable for many creatures, represent his melancholic state. Despite these harsh conditions, some deep-sea fish produce light that helps them navigate the dark waters. After the trauma of the armed conflict, Zancudo has managed to show his resilience by finding a path in Japan and pursuing graduate studies. Metaphorically, the eyesight of an individual can evolve to generate light and find a path through the darkness of memory. He knows he can continue making his own light, meaning he accepts being alone on an abysmal journey.

Zancudo begins to realize he needs to let go of his past on the Japanese celebration *Umo no hi* or, as Masami translates, El día del mar [Sea Day]. The festivities remind him of Huancayo: “La gente estaba vestida con kimonos, los vendedores de artesanía, plantas y comidas estaban dispuestos en carpas a dos aguas, como en la feria dominical de Huancayo [ . . . ] y todo eso se transformó para mí en la fiesta de la Virgen de la Mercedes de Chupaca” (131–32). The

domestication of this Japanese celebration not only functions as a means to understand but also triggers a nostalgic memory. He also is reminded of the Andes and the Virgin of Mercy, who is often represented with an open cloak and protects captives. In one sense, the memory of a celebration calls attention to the way he has been cloaked in the safety of Japan as well as the theme of pardon. As if to stop thinking about these memories and quell his loneliness, he puts on his headphones and listens to his Walkman. He watches the bay and a wave of sadness hits him: “He dejado el Perú, puedo quedarme a vivir en el Japón si me decido por el doctorado, o puedo irme a Centroamérica; no importa a dónde me vaya, esa soledad va a perseguirme siempre porque voy a ser un hombre sin familia y sin patria” (133). He finally realizes that fleeing will never resolve his state of orphanhood, his solitude, or his trauma.

This moment of reflection ceases when Zancudo sees children by the river releasing fish. This custom puzzles him but decides to take part in the festivities:

¡Qué locos!, dije y me sumé al rito. Compré unos peces amarillos, me acerqué a la playa y los fui liberando uno tras otro en el río. [ . . . ] Vi el resto de los peces que hacían lo propio y en ese momento, como si en el *walkman* hubiera empezado a sonar una canción que tuviera grabada en el *minidisk*, me acordé de las letras del poema que Celina me regaló antes de irse de Samaylla. Me sentí como uno de esos peces, uno que estaba a punto de ser liberado en un nuevo e incierto mar. (134)

On this day of liberation, the narrator shares with Masami suppressed identity through a memory about Samaylla and Celina. This symbolic letting go of the fish is “un exorcismo, una confesión que necesitaba hacer desde hacia tiempo” (135), and he makes himself vulnerable to Masami. He shares with Masami the Quechua poem that Celina gave him—“Mayun mayunmi purichcani, chalwaschallay. Manañan tarikiñachu, chalwaschallay. Astawanmi llullarini, chalwaschallay.



Sutiquita llullaripa, chalwaschallay”—which he then translates into Spanish, “De río en río ando, pescadito; pero no te encuentro, pescadito. Me acuerdo más y más de ti, pescadito; recordando tu nombre, pescadito” (135). In the presence of Masami, he reconnects with the Andean identity he had suppressed. He reveals that he was raised bicultural, in between Quechua and Hispanic cultures.

The lyrics of the song emphasize novel’s themes of searching and memory. It reflects how Celina searched for his friendship and how later he futilely searched for her during the armed conflict. It also demonstrates the search of Masami for Zancudo, who is amid the fog of melancholy. Masami replies, “Qué me lleve la Chingada” (“I’ll be damned!”; *Ojos* 135), and she kisses him, as if throwing herself into the water, taking a chance on this man. Furthering the searching and memory themes, Zancudo knows the name of Ariel’s murderer, Renán, and will never forget it. At this point, he does not disclose the loss of his family and role of Renán in their deaths. Nonetheless, it is a beginning; Masami seems to have wanted him to share something about himself and he finally made himself vulnerable to her by revealing that he speaks Spanish and Quechua. He becomes the dependent, social fish that emerges from the depths.

On a trip with Cayo, the carp-fish metaphor surrounds a discussion between Zancudo and his friend, which links depression to the possibility of transformation. Whereas earlier in the novel Zancudo remembers Peru against the backdrop of Japan, here Japanese culture helps Zancudo deal with an aspect of his traumatic past. The narrator discusses the Japanese custom of suicide in which one leaves a good-bye poem behind for others to read: “—No cualquiera se suicida —respondí—. El que lo hace, lo hace con honor y escribe un *jisei*” (151). Then, on a tour of the waterfall, the guide explains to the narrator and Cayo about a stone shaped like a carp: “había una piedra en forma de *carpa*, en referencia a la leyenda china de la *carpa* que subió por

la cascada y se convirtió en dragón, y que por eso los japoneses consideraban a ese pez como símbolo de progreso” (151). In a symbolic step forward, the narrator confesses to Cayo that he thought about committing suicide and almost did: “Yo estuve cerca del final de ese trecho; estuve a punto de tirarme desde un acantilado del cerro Mulería, ese cerro en forma de mujer embarazada que había en Los Olivos” (151). He describes the moment in Lima when he headed to a hill to end his suffering. However, in chapter 6, “El cerro con forma de mujer,” Camila unknowingly saves his life. During this critical moment, Camila and Zancudo have a conversation about life during the armed conflict. She shares with him that she is also an orphan, that her parents also died of *pena*, and that she is going to leave Peru. She tells him that in life one must be like an airplane: “Siempre mirando adelante, sin necesidad de un retrovisor” (104). Mysteriously, he says to Camila, “Gracias por lo que has hecho hoy por mí” (104). For the first time ever, Zancudo admits to Cayo how desperate he was to end his suffering, and reveals the difficulty of following Camila’s advice to look forward and upward.

For Zancudo, exile provides a safety net that he must discard to confront his memories and himself. The fish serve as a therapeutic device for survival of hard times and his adaptation to his exilic condition. The presence of Japanese symbolism against Christian-based Peruvian beliefs demonstrates the role interpretation plays in how we view our circumstances. In Christianity, the dragon is a symbol of evil and sin, but in Japanese thought, the carp is rewarded for his perseverance, courage, and strength and turned into a dragon. The narrator is in between these two frames of thought, as I will demonstrate. Zancudo needs to decide what he will do with his inner monster. Will he cause harm, or will he persevere and fly?

*Converting the Inner Monster: The Compensation and Revenge Fantasies*

The traumatic event that holds Zancudo in the depths of the ocean and does not let him

metaphorically fly is the murder of Ariel. Zancudo remembers the monstrous individual that shot and killed his brother: “Vi la figura de un cóndor cayendo en un paracaídas tatuado en el antebrazo derecho [ . . . ] Tenía la nariz aguileña, los ojos hinchados y una cicatriz que le partía la ceja izquierda por la mitad” (83). He remembers him as a monstrous man with a hooknose, marked by scars, and a tattoo. His memory of Renán also includes a fanatical representation of the insurgents: “Arengaba a sus hombres como un poseído y estos le contestaban con la misma devoción” (82). He constructs the offender as a fanatical, devout killer. Zancudo has never fully recovered from the traumatic experience that marked him because the monstrous (and fearful) offender is at large and still controls the way in which Zancudo lives his life.

Retribution and compensation are recurring themes, as previously noted in *Cuchillos en el cielo* and as will be discussed in *Ojos de Pez abisal*. Milagros and Zancudo feel they need to have something or do something to be able to move forward or heal from the traumatic experience. Zancudo in particular experiences difficulty in mourning his brother, Ariel, and demonstrates no signs of mourning the death of his parents. For example, after the soldiers collect the body of Ariel, Zancudo says that he did not cry: “Tampoco lloré en el velorio en nuestra casa en Samaylla [ . . . ] No lloré cuando paseamos el féretro por las calles de Samaylla, ni cuando enterramos sus restos en el cementerio de Sanco” (84).<sup>152</sup> He has not allowed himself to accept the death of his family; instead, he goes through periods of sadness and nightmares and he contemplates revenge as a remedy for his loss.

The revenge fantasy makes Zancudo a mirror image of Renán. He has a nightmare in which “Ariel yacía echado sobre unas rocas blancas, con el torso desnudo, los brazos atados a la espalda y la cabeza enterrada” (88). Upon seeing this in the dream, Zancudo enacts the revenge fantasy and his subconscious reveals the desire to kill Renán:

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<sup>152</sup> Zancudo admits that when it was time to leave Samaylla for Huancayo, “Sólo entonces lloré” (85).

Yo blandía un fusil sobre la frente del tipo de la ceja partida que me miraba asustado y juntaba las manos suplicando que no lo matara. El cóndor en paracaídas tatuado en su brazo derecho, resplandecía con un brillo azul. ¡Ariel!, ¡Ariel!, gritaba, pero no había ninguna respuesta. Entonces acribillaba al asesino, golpeaba su cadáver con la culata hasta convertirla en un amasijo de sangre [ . . . ] (88)

In this reexamination of his brother's murder, Zancudo is holding the gun, Renán is begging for his life, and Zancudo turns him into a bloody pulp. He tries to speak to Ariel, but his brother is silent, dead. His mother appears "sonriendo, pero luego se echaba a llorar" (88), and he runs to her as if trying to explain his violent actions. This fantasy could be read as a way to master the traumatic stimulus, which resulted in his orphanhood and self-exile. However, the narrator ties his recovery and future, represented by the blue tattoo, to the offender. In his subconscious, Zancudo contemplates his own brutality by judging and executing Renán. The nightmare therefore exposes a limited model of justice because Zancudo becomes the offender.

Throughout the novel, Zancudo contemplates his inner monster and the horrific consequences of revenge, which this further demonstrates the power Renán has on his future. For Susan Jacoby, "the literature of revenge is shaped by a persistent tension between moral condemnation and psychological fascination" (15). Zancudo grapples with the notion of vengeance and knows it seems morally wrong yet potentially intoxicating. In an e-mail with the subject line "Otras novedades" written to Cayo, he mentions a conversation with an Ethiopian about revenge culture.<sup>153</sup> Zancudo explains:

Resulta que entre los Karas, una tribu que vive en la parte central de Etiopía, la venganza se hereda. Pensé que había entendido mal, pero, no; entre ellos, si alguien mata a alguien

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<sup>153</sup> Jacoby adds that revenge often is projected "onto more primitive peoples and cultures" (17). The Japanese by contrast have been able to relinquish feelings of anger and hate, and the need for revenge. President John F. Kennedy represents Western culture and reiterates the idea, forgive but do not forget.

de tu familia, el padre debe vengarlo y si el padre muere antes de lograrlo, el hijo, el nieto, el tataranieto, heredan la venganza hasta que ésta se concrete. El etíope dijo que eso era absurdo, pero de que la venganza es dulce, es dulce y nadie te la quita; y luego, citando a Jhon [sic] Kennedy, dijo que a los enemigos había que perdonarlos, pero que nunca había que olvidar sus nombres. Yo reí. Sin embargo, aquello me recordó a los asesinos de mi hermano. [ . . . ] (112)

The Ethiopian shares a story, which the storyteller also finds to be absurd but true and even gratifying about cycles of violence.<sup>154</sup> As the adage goes, *revenge is sweet*, and is at odds with the notion of *forgive but do not forget*. At this point, Zancudo has not forgiven or forgotten nor had the opportunity for vengeance. He adds, “Lo malo de haber dejado el Perú es que nunca podré encontrar justicia por él; de cierto modo, también yo he heredado la venganza” (113). He desires justice but this is impossible since at this point of the novel he does not know if Renán is dead or alive or his whereabouts. Instead, he rationalizes that he has inherited revenge, an impossible task in a diasporic, postconflict Peru, and he is not sure what to do with the burden.

Zancudo shares the story told by the Ethiopian with Masami, who is a representative figure of a postwar society that has been able to move forward after the atomic bombings and restore relations with the West. In an e-mail to Cayo, Zancudo summarizes the conversation between him and Masami about the Ethiopian revenge story:

[ . . . ] le conté aquella historia que me narró el etíope sobre la venganza y le pregunté como han hecho los japoneses para superar ese sentimiento con los norteamericanos, por aquello de las bombas atómicas. Ella dijo que en México había leído a un argentino, un tal José Narosky que decía que el perdón siempre contiene justicia, aunque no sea justo y

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<sup>154</sup> An excellent film on the subject of intergenerational cycles of violence and the destructive nature of revenge culture is the Brazilian film *Abril Despedaçado* [*Behind the Sun*] (2001) directed by Walter Salles.

que al menos ella los había perdonado. Iba a decir que yo no perdonaría, pero me quedé callado porque eso hubiera significado tener que hablar de todo lo que pasó con mi familia y es algo que no quiero hacer. (122)

Using the paraphrased and paradoxical words of José Narosky, “el perdón siempre contiene justicia, aunque no sea justo,” Masami expresses that she has forgiven the allied bombings. She presents the radical notion that forgiveness is justice, even though it may not seem to be just. This suggests that while our idea of justice is retribution, forgiveness is just and a step toward reconciliation, as Zehr expresses in his practice of restorative justice. Since her moral code is different from that of the narrator and the Ethiopian, Zancudo is unable to be completely vulnerable with Masami. With Cayo, Zancudo can share his fantasies of revenge and unwillingness to forgive the murderer of his brother because they lived through the turbulent period in Peru. Cayo knows this part of his friend’s identity, but the narrator feels he needs to hide the monster who yearns for revenge and does not know how to forgive from Masami.

The feelings Zancudo experiences and the journey through Japanese sites, particularly the Golden Pavilion, evoke memories of Peru and his inner monster. Zancudo tells Cayo, “he tratado de olvidar lo que sucedió con mi familia, pero nunca como en este viaje he recordado tantas cosas sobre me vida en el Perú” (143). One of the last stops on their itinerary is the Buddhist temple, *Kinkaku-ji*. They arrive at closing time, but the employee tells them, “si han venido desde tan lejos no podemos hacerlos esperar” (147). This symbolic accommodation of Peruvian travelers reiterates the idea with which the novel began: *tenía razón de ser*.

While at the Buddhist temple, the narrator shares with Cayo the plot of a novel by Yukio Mishima called *El Pabellón de Oro*.” He describes a “monstrous” individual from the text:<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> I call the crazy monk he describes a monstrous figure because he is ugly and full of defects, and reflects the interior state of the narrator.

Un monje feo y lleno de defectos que desde niño había crecido con la idea de que no existía un lugar más bello y deslumbrante que este templo; hasta que con la II Guerra Mundial llega el peligro de que desaparezca por los bombardeos norteamericanos y entonces el monje jura que el morirá con el templo. Creía que así dejaría de ser defectuoso y pasaría a ser parte de la belleza que encarnaba el templo, pero como el bombardeo no llega, el monje decide incendiarlo y luego suicidarse. Incendia todo, pero al llegar el momento de matarse, se queda con el deseo de seguir viviendo. (150)

Monsters often are hideous and perform physical harm on people or places. Because of his love for the temple, the monk swears he will die during the allied bombings. However, the monk survives because the planes never arrive. Instead, the monk turns to arson and suicide to reach a transcendental state and perhaps join the beauty of death and rest along the others that had died. While he is destroying the sacred temple, the monk realizes he wants to live.

Zancudo is like the monk. And, like the temple, Samaylla is a sacred space. As previously noted, Zancudo idealizes his hometown and Celina on many occasions. As in the narrative about the monk, he destroys this image Samaylla by reducing it to a “shitty” place to which he will never return. He even reveals to Cayo that he thought about killing himself but Camila unknowingly talked him out of it. During the blackout, she reminded him of all the music he would leave behind: “Sabes qué es lo peor de morir? Qué, dije yo. Que te vas a perder los libros, las películas, la música que crearán los que queden vivos”(152). Camila implies that despite the ugliness in the world and inside oneself, there is still beauty and hope. The only thing left is for Zancudo to tame the monster within himself so he can live in peace.

However, the evening after their travels, revenge becomes possible and the narrator’s inner monster appears when he recognizes Renán. As in the Japanese legend about the carp, he

becomes the fish that turns into the dragon, but it is the dragon of Western thought. He hears “The Sound of Silence” by Paul Simon and walks toward a group of Andean musicians:

Ahora vamos a tocar un huayano boliviano, dijo en japonés el *quenista*, «Vervenita», de Savia Andina. El cuerpo se me heló. Regresé de inmediato al lado de la gente. Conforme el *quenista* seguía hablando, el timbre de sus palabra me enfriaba más y más el cuerpo. Mierda, dije para mí. El grupo comenzó a tocar. Por un momento pensé que era otra más de mis confusiones, o el efecto de la cerveza en mis sentidos, pero, no; el *quenista* tenía la ceja izquierda partida por una cicatriz y la nariz aguileña. [ . . . ]

Caminé hasta el *quenista* y me paré frente a él.

—Renán—le dije. (154)

The sound of Andean music and the words of the *quenista* have a chilling effect; his body reacts to the sound of man’s voice before his mind identifies him. Once again the globalization of music does not allow for him to separate from his Andean identity. In this case the Andean song reminds him of his brother’s murder. He feels confused as he hears the familiar voice and then recognizes the scar on the eyebrow of the musician. Then, Zancudo explains, “[t]omé su brazo derecho y lo levanté. El poncho se abrió y me dejó ver un cóndor en paracaídas tatuado en su piel” (154). By exposing the mark of a condor on the arm of the *quenista*, he confirms that it is Renán. According to the research of Peter A. French in literary studies, “For vengeance to be successful, the target must understand that he or she is suffering injury or being killed as a penalty for his or her actions that triggered the revenge behavior of the avenger” (34). Although words do not communicate the harm done to Zancudo, there is a silent recognition. The *quenista* stops playing the *quena* and turns pale when he hears the attacker use his insurgent name. The unforgiving retributive monster rages from inside Zancudo: “Una furia caliente se apoderó de mí



y me abalancé contra él” (154). He enacts the revenge fantasy in his dream and effectively becomes the offender; he becomes the mirror image of Renán.

*What is Forgiveness? A Change of Heart*

After assaulting Renán, Zancudo finds himself in jail and uncertain about the events that transpired. Susan Jacoby reminds us, “Justice is a legitimate concept in the modern code of civilized behavior. Vengeance is not” (1). Zancudo contemplates whether his act of vengeance was successful or not: “La duda me quedó dando vueltas. ¿Qué fue lo que hice? ¿Lo habré matado?” (155). Then he states the irony of his predicament: “Yo en la cárcel y el asesino de mi hermano andando libre” (166). The context of the armed conflict allowed Renán to go free and in Japan the vengeance of his brother has landed him in jail. His friend Camila suggests, “Le puedo decir al tipo que he hablado contigo. Que estás dispuesto a no revelar su pasado si es que él retira cualquier denuncia” (166). Zancudo at this point would rather spend the rest of his life in jail for attempted murder than negotiate with Renán. Nonetheless, he is in despair and talks to his dead brother, Ariel: “¿Qué hago Ariel? ¿Qué habrías hecho tú si el muerto fuera yo? Lo habrías dejado ir así nomás? ¿Habrías vengado mi muerte? ¿Habrías terminando de matar a aquel sujeto? Qué cruz tan pesada es todo esto, Ariel [ . . . ]” (167). Zancudo implores his dead brother’s guidance and tries to think about what Ariel would have done in his place. This calls to mind what French says about revenge: “Taking revenge typically provokes extreme psychological tensions in the avenger that may be so difficult to bear that they render him or her incapable of effective action” (34). For the first time, Zancudo realizes the heavy the burden of revenge and, even though he attacked Renán, he does not feel at peace. Needless to say, Zancudo cannot continue living with the feelings of loss and injustice either.

Although Renán has a right to press charges against Zancudo, he makes a step to restore

justice. Masami first reveals that Renán cannot be extradited and brought to trial in Peru because he is protected under the law. Whereas the judicial system forces the offender to deny guilt and form a defense, here, the victim of the attack reaches out to the offender expressing his needs.

Masami facilitates the communication by handing Zancudo a letter from Renán that reads:

Le ruego me permita reunirme con usted, cualquiera que sea la decisión que tome respecto a mí. Lo que sucedió no es exactamente lo que sucedió. Necesito explicarle mi verdad y contarle la historia de todo lo que pasó con su hermano. Había pensado en escribirle, pero lo que tengo que contarle es tanto que decidí que era mejor hacerlo en persona para que no queden dudas de mi testimonio. Entenderé si no acepta, pero le ruego considerar este pedido que le hago con el mayor respeto. (169)

Renán refers not to his position as victim of an attack but rather as an offender, who understands why Zancudo assaulted him. Renán recognized Zancudo as “un hombre al que perseguimos en Tayacaja y al que matamos a su hermano” (164) and that if his true identity is known by the Japanese authorities he may be expelled from Japan. Renán makes an eloquent gesture toward peace, leaving Zancudo the option to accept or reject the meeting. At first, Zancudo cannot imagine forgiving “ese gran puta,” and Masami gently reminds him, “Nadie ha pedido que perdones a nadie. Lo que queremos es sacarte de aquí; luego veremos la manera de cambiar las cosas a nuestro favor” (170). In spite of her gentleness, Zancudo thinks to himself, “Yo empecé a preguntarme cómo haría ahora para lograr justicia o concretar mi venganza” (171). This demonstrate the destructive nature of vindictive rage, and in Jacoby’s words, “vengeful anger is at its most powerful and pervasive when there are no mechanisms for releasing it through legitimate channels” (182). Once released from prison, Zancudo still obsesses over avenging the death of his brother because he cannot pursue a lawsuit against Renán.

The intuition of Masami helps Zancudo realize the emotion driving his thirst for revenge: fear. Even though Zancudo has kept the thoughts of vengeance to himself, Masami sees through the facade, “Que me hayas mentido respecto a tu familia, lo puedo perdonar; pero que me sigas mintiendo respecto a lo que tienes en mente, no” (176). She firmly tells him, “Nunca dejarás de pensar en todo lo que te pasó, si no enfrentas tus miedos. [ . . . ] Tienes miedo de hablar con ese sujeto, tienes miedo de enfrentar el futuro, tienes miedo de dejar atrás todo lo que te pasó” (176). After confronting him, she says that it is time to let go: “Es hora de que mires únicamente el futuro y no te distraigas más sufriendo, recordando el pasado. Hagamos lo que hagamos, no podremos resucitar a tu hermano ni tus padres” (179). Like the deep-sea fish, he has wallowed long enough in the ocean depths and must move forward, like the carp, toward the sky, the future. No matter the avenue of justice Zancudo chooses to pursue, his family is gone and he needs to accept the loss. Like Herman identifies the harmful effects of revenge fantasies, Masami asks Zancudo to stop letting his fear (symbolized by Renán) control him.

The return of Zancudo to the Central Station, where the novel commenced, to meet with Renán illustrates that the journey of repressing memories against the background of Japan is over, and his is about to confront his fear. In contrast to his first visit, which took place during nighttime, “Ahora el hall estaba iluminado por la luz blanca del alumbrado y no había música” (181). While Masami and Zancudo walk toward the place to meet Renán, “daba la sensación de estar viajando hacia la boca de salida de un profundo agujero” (181). Whereas his first visit to the Central Station was in darkness and filled with the sound of “Crime of the Century,” now the hall is brightly lit and silent. He even tells Masami not to accompany him, saying, “Esto tiene que ser una conversación solo entre él y yo” (183). It is as if the song had ended with the lyrics, “Rip off the masks and let's see./ But that's not right—oh no, what's the story?/There's you and

there's me./That can't be right" (Supertramp). The silence of the station will allow the two unmasked men, Renán and Zancudo, to recognize each other and figure out the story and why they both occupy the same space. During this encounter, Zancudo learns that Renán is not the real name of the man that murdered his brother; his name is Celestino and he was born in Chungi, a small village in Ayacucho.

The narrative of Celestino, both an apologia and apology, parallels the testimony of Nemesio and is a step toward redemption. Essentially, Celestino tells the story of what would have happened to Nemesio if he had not escaped the Shining Path. Celestino, a child at the time of the conflict, and his family left Chungi with the insurgents and could not return (191). Eventually the military soldiers capture Celestino and his family in Puquiopata and execute them.<sup>156</sup> Celestino miraculously survives as evidenced by scar on his eyebrow that reveals that the bullet only grazed him. He shows Zancudo the tattoo of a condor in a parachute, which is not artwork but a wound inflicted by a branding iron: "Como al ganado me marcaron con esto" (193). Celestino also reveals why he is meeting with Zancudo, "quería decirle que estoy aquí para pedirle perdón y poder mirarle a los ojos" (184) and he also he wanted to share that "[yo] he sido víctima de esa guerra" (185).<sup>157</sup> Celestino was a victim of both the Shining Path and counterinsurgency.<sup>158</sup> He also confesses that he had to meet a killing quota: "Tuve que matar

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<sup>156</sup> Celestino says he was with his father, mother, sisters, and twenty other people: "A los niños nos separaron de los adultos. Nos llevaron a la vuelta del cerro y no metieron bala, una bala en la cabeza a cada uno. A todos. Los mataron. A mis tres hermanas como moscas las mataron. Ban, ban, ban" (192). He also adds that before his father was murdered, the soldiers forced his father to eat his own ear.

<sup>157</sup> Laplante problematizes the implementation of the Clean Hands Doctrine that states that victims of state abuse that also had ties to insurgent groups are entitled to reparations in Peru because there is a failure in classifying former insurgents as deserving victims (55). In the case of Celestino (Renán), he has received little or no reparations because of his ties to insurgent groups. The novel emphasizes the idea: who is a deserving victim of the armed conflict? Zancudo initially believes that Renán is not a deserving victim.

<sup>158</sup> It is startling to note that in *Cuchillos en el cielo* and *Ojos de pez* offenses committed by the state are secondary issues. In the film, the soldiers that raped Milagros are in undisclosed locations, and in the novel, there is no questioning of the police state and counterterrorism policies. Laplante also observes this failure of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: "Here, the TRC added to an already existing tension in Peru in which 'victims of terrorism' (the armed forces) have more rights, recognition and protections than 'victims of the state' (populations

obligado” (195) and admits that the Shining Path forced him to kill Ariel, who openly opposed them. However, he showed Zancudo mercy because he identified with him: “Tú estabas como yo cuando los caminantes llegaron por primera vez a Chungi” (197). He also repeats three times, “Yo no soy lo que imaginas” (185, 187). In his research on confession, Peter Brooks notes that “confession is in part a search to define the self, morally and psychologically” (141). In this sense, Celestino tells Zancudo that he is not the stigmatized monster, Renán, which Zancudo created in his imagination; he is like him, a victim-survivor of the internal conflict.

Incidentally, the narrative presents some commonalities between Zancudo and Celestino. They were wholesome students before the conflict began in the early eighties and became survivors of a fratricidal conflict. Celestino also confesses that he had to meet a killing quota—“Tuve que matar obligado” (195)—and admits that the Shining Path forced him to kill Ariel, who openly opposed them. However, he let Zancudo free because he identified with him: “Tú estabas como yo cuando los caminantes llegaron por primera vez a Chungi” (197). Similar to Zancudo, Celestino also had a family that was murdered during the conflict and felt that he needed to avenge their deaths. However, by reuniting with the Shining Path, he was forced to commit acts of violence to survive. He explains that, like Zancudo, he also has tried to escape the traumatic memories by relocating to Japan, but “[c]rucé el océano, llegué hasta aquí creyendo que así me libraría de todo, pero ya ves: no sólo tú me encontraste, sino que nada cambió” (196). As a result, Celestino has struggled with guilt<sup>159</sup> and determined that “Ese es mi infierno, esa es mi condena” (196). The testimony of Celestino takes on a confessional tone, and as Peter Brooks observes in many confessions, we can observe “a desire for punishment” but also a “plea for love” (46). He feels that he will have to live with guilt and suffer forever because he cannot

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often labeled as terrorists)” (76).

<sup>159</sup> Zehr explains, “[c]ontrary to popular belief, offenders often do feel guilt for what they have done” (49).

possibly confess to all the people he murdered. Celestino concludes with “[t]odo lo que dije es verdad [ . . . ] Yo sólo espero que un día me entiendas y me perdones” (198).<sup>160</sup> Celestino is not seeking immediate understanding and forgiveness but is hopeful that one day Zancudo will forgive him.

However, as shown before in the conversations with Masami, Zancudo does not know how to forgive or what forgiveness feels like, but I would like to argue that he does experience forgiveness. Zancudo looks at Celestino and thinks to himself:

Avejentado, herido, traumatado. Sentí pena. Mi pecho, mi alma, mis pensamientos aún estaban poseídos por el odio, pero ahora era un odio indulgente. ¿Acaso perdonar era sentir pena? ¿Acaso el perdón era dejar de sentir verdadero odio? Iba a decirle que si toda aquella historia era cierta, tenía mi perdón, pero no lo hice; yo nunca tendría la certeza de que aquel testimonio fuese cierto. Lo miré como si algo en mí supiera que nunca más lo volvería a ver en mi vida. (198–99)

Zancudo feels compassion and pity for Celestino. Even though he does not openly forgive Celestino and doubts the veracity of the story, he relinquishes the control “Renán” had over him. Zehr defines forgiveness as “no longer letting that offense and offender dominate” and emphasizes the importance of experiencing forgiveness: “without this closure, the wound festers, the violation takes over our consciousness, our lives” (47). To add to this, Jacoby explains that “[t]o forgive a real injury requires a conscious suppression of the instinct to make others suffer as we have suffered; to accept such forgiveness is to incur the guilt of having, in the most obvious sense, escaped our just deserts” (133). By the end of the conversation, even though there is only

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<sup>160</sup> Laplante questions discrimination in transitional justice and asks, “But what about discrimination based on guilt? That is, can reparations be denied to injured parties who are guilty of criminal wrongdoing, in particular wrongdoing associated with war or other acts of aggression, such as rebellion, terrorism and political violence?” (60). Zancudo discriminates against Renán because he has ties to the insurgency.

a glance and silence, Zancudo feels that Renán and Celestino will not appear to him in memories, thoughts, or nightmares. Zancudo is free of the revenge burden; he is not going to try to harm Celestino and he can move forward with his life.

The return to Samaylla further brings to light the theme of forgiveness as understood by RJ. Although Renán cannot return to the Andes, Zancudo makes the symbolic trip after experiencing forgiveness. In chapter 12, “El huerto,” Zancudo returns to Samaylla during the Day of the Dead. Dominique LaCapra the significance of mourning and ceremony:

Mourning involves a different inflection of performativity: a relation to the past that involves recognizing its difference from the present-simultaneously remembering and taking leave of or actively forgetting it, thereby allowing for critical judgment and a reinvestment in life, notably social and civic life with its demands, responsibilities, and norms requiring respectful recognition and consideration for others. (716)

In LaCapra’s terms, the trip home during this time of year allows him to finally mourn and accept the loss of his family. After a fifteen-year absence from Samallya, a “shitty” place to which he had sworn he would not return, he finds his homeland is Edenic: “los riachuelos llorones bajaban de las Alturas, se aunaban a la cuneta de la carretera y viajaban al lado del autobús con una danza ondulante y acompasada hasta introducirse en la boca de las alcantarillas” (211). More significantly, Zancudo constructs his home in two languages: “los bosques enanaos de *chilca*, los mechones de *ichu* y *tayas* bordeaban el camino con un cerco verde y marrón; las flores de *tutawiña* y *ccecco* salpicaban los cerros verde y azul” (211). The dominant tongue is Spanish, but he uses the local names for the plants. He uses the Quechua that he had set aside while defining his Spanish-speaking, Peruvian-Japanese subjectivity.

Zancudo comes to terms with his Andean identity when he arrives at the door to his

childhood home: “La casa de mis padres; su estuco de yeso ajado y percutido, sus paredes de adobe, las ventanas de Madera, el largo balcón del segundo piso de cara al patio. La entrada” (205). It as if by entering the home he accepts his Andean origin and the loss of his parents becomes real: “Me quedé en silencio frente a ella. Masami me frotó los hombros por detrás, y la tome de una mano” (205). As Zancudo is flooded with emotions and looks at the home of his family, he feels Masami’s hands on him, reassuring him: “Sus manos huesudas, callosas, cálidas me palparon los brazos como asegurándose de quién era yo” (205). He finally is at the door of memory of his family, and Mama Cenobia opens the door and invites him inside. Here he meets a sister-in-law of Nemesio. They all treat him with warmth and affection, and his presence reminds them of his father, Don Isaac. Then a dog appears: “El perro se adelantó como mostrándome el camino. Sentí el olor de la alfalfa recién cortada, el rumor del viento entre los eucaliptos, el cielo azul oscuro por el sol ya ausente” (207). In Andean thought, dogs guide their owners to the *Janaq Pacha*—paradise—and this dog symbolically guides Zancudo to a place to where he and Masami have a final conversation. He asks her, “¿Sabes qué significa Samaylla en español?” to which she replies, “No,” and Zancudo translates, “Descansa ya —dije—, Samaylla quiere decir: descansa ya” (209). Samaylla literally means “rest already.” Zancudo resolves the ambivalence by remembering the love he has for his family and community. He had denied himself rest, symbolized by Samaylla, and now is open to the future. Accepting trauma as a part of his identity has allowed him to reclaim his Andean identity. He can be at peace with his postconflict identity as a survivor; he can be with Masami in his beloved Samaylla.

### **Conclusion: Toward a Restorative Justice Model**

Both *Cuchillos en el cielo* and *Ojos de pez abisal* examine how complicated restorative justice becomes in the context of migration and diaspora. These texts depict a broken, outdated



social order and expose an urgent need to mend the fabric of the family, community, and nation. The internal conflict traumatized and stigmatized individuals and created diasporic communities symbolic of a broken nation. These texts, in the advent of diaspora, injustice, impunity, and social stigmatization, beg for an elusive, yet attainable, rest and inner peace in postconflict Peru.

The stories of the victim-survivors Milagros and Zancudo concurrently reveal the effects of unresolved trauma and their attempts to maintain their resilience in their diasporic contexts. Milagros will never confront her all rapists, whose whereabouts and condition will remain unknown, and who are a psychological threat to her well-being. Zancudo encounters and confronts his offender by mirroring his image. Vengeful and retributive processes bring Zancudo more pain than closure because he becomes vindictive and judgmental without understanding the root cause of his brother's murder. The offender's testimony releases the power the "monstrous" Renán had over Zancudo, and instead he recognizes and pities, the man suffering from guilt and remorse, Celestino. Zancudo no longer allows Renán to represent his fears and control his future. Instead, the return to the Andean highlands signifies that the exchange between the two in the Central Station had restorative value and has allowed Zancudo to recover his Andean identity.

*Cuchillos en el cielo* and *Ojos de pez abisal* seek to redefine the insurgent as a victim of the conflict that deserves rights, recognition, and protection. Together, the stories of Milagros and Celestino (Renán) can help us understand and feel compassion for ex-insurgents that have been released after serving sentences. Whether innocent, *engañado*, *concientizado*, or *arrepentido*, the internal armed conflict has left a stigma, symbolized by a visible and permanent mark, on these individuals in these texts. Offenders also need to heal from the crimes they committed, the guilt they feel, and the social retribution they suffer. Under the "Ley de arrepentimiento," Celestino, who had been branded with a condor symbol, can never return to his

community in the Andes; he can never confess or atone for his transgressions. Milagros has scars on her wrist from her attempted suicide while she unjustly was detained for being an ex-insurgent. Neither her immediate family nor the diasporic community wants to have her nearby, for fear that she may endanger their reputations. Years after the conflict, unlike the agents of the state, Milagros and Celestino cannot wash off the moral mark. They remain socially excluded.

In *Cuchillos en el cielo* and *Ojos de pez*, there are fragile attempts to restore justice. Juanita and Tía Cenaida attempt to help Milagros, but she probably leaves Lima because there is no space for her here. The “Ley de arrepentimiento” allowed for an identity change and the relocation of Celestino to Japan, but he can never return to Peru. The legal system and society encourage diaspora and discourage reconciliation and restoration. Milagros and Celestino have never expressed *their* needs for healing emotionally from the trauma and guilt of being a victim and, in the case of Celestino, an offender. For Celestino, however, chance provides him an opportunity to confess to Zancudo and possibly free himself from some of his guilt. For Milagros, it is acceptance and love for her daughter, a product of rape, and resilience against all the *cuchillos* in her path, and for Zancudo, it is compassion, forgiveness, and the restoration of bonds with his community. Together these texts call for a victim-centered approach and healing for both survivors and offenders in order to repair the wounded, diasporic, social body of Peru.

## Chapter 4

### Mother's Milk, Potatoes, and Song: Transgenerational Trauma and Resilience in *La teta asustada*

*La teta asustada* (2009),<sup>161</sup> written and directed by Claudia Llosa (b. Lima, 1976) engages the postmemory and postgeneration of the Peruvian armed conflict. *Postmemory* refers to the memory of the second generation; it is belated and displaced, a form of cultural memory—passed on through the generations—that is in tension with personal memory. Marianne Hirsch, who coins the term *postmemory* to discuss memory of the Holocaust, explains that “[t]he structure of *postmemory* clarifies how the multiple ruptures and radical breaks introduced by trauma and catastrophe inflect intra-, inter- and trans-generational inheritance” (“Generation” 111). Hirsch demonstrates that “less-directly affected participants can become engaged in the generation of postmemory, which can thus persist even after all participants and even their familial descendants are gone” (“Generation” 111). *La teta asustada* focuses on the transgenerational transmission of trauma through the breastmilk metaphor and the death of the symbolic victim of the armed conflict, the mother. Typically, mother’s milk is a powerful metaphor for culture related to how a mother passes on her heritage and language to her child. However, in the film the Quechua woman, Perpetua (Bárbara Lanzón), transmits a dark and degrading history of violence during the period of terrorism<sup>162</sup> to her child, Fausta Isidora Janampa Chauca (Magaly Solier).<sup>163</sup> As a consequence of suckling her breast as an infant and hearing her song as an adult, Fausta suffers from a syndrome the Quechua migrant community

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<sup>161</sup> *La teta asustada* won best film at the 2009 Berlin Cinema Festival and received an Oscar nomination in 2010.

<sup>162</sup> Most Quechua speakers refer to the 1980s and 1990s as *Sasachacuy tiempo*, “difficult times.” In *La teta asustada*, the point of the writer and director to refer to this period as *tiempo de terrorismo* emphasizes the systemic use of terror tactics, by both Shining Path and state authorities, to exploit fears of civilian populations.

<sup>163</sup> Anne Lambright notes the immense pride this film brought to Andean communities because “[t]he Quechua-speaking indigenous actress and singer who played Fausta, Magaly Solier, was found by Llosa in a rural Andean town near Huanta, when Llosa cast her first film, *Madeinusa*” (“Transitional Justice”).

names *la teta asustada* or “the milk of sorrow.”<sup>164</sup> Because Fausta has suckled the breast of her mother, who suffered the effects of the armed conflict in the Andes, a frightening and traumatic series of events, the Andean community believes Fausta’s soul fled from her body. The mother’s narrative of systemic violence against Quechua speakers takes place in the Andes during the 1980s, but the action of the film is set inside and outside the *pueblo joven*<sup>165</sup> of Lima: Manchay.<sup>166</sup>

As a representative of the postgeneration, Fausta struggles with the postmemory of her mother’s rape. The story of Fausta begins with several startling revelations. From Perpetua we hear the narrative about the murder and castration of her husband and her brutal rape while she was pregnant. Fausta claims to have witnessed the rape from inside the womb. Consequently, her mother’s narrative of trauma becomes hers; Fausta internalizes and relives the feelings of anguish and horror her mother felt. She walks around the streets of the capital city in fear and in a state of profound melancholy. In order to protect herself from rapists, Fausta buries a potato inside her vagina, which she refers to as her shield and protector. Despite having this barrier between her and potential rapists, she suffers from frequent nosebleeds, fainting spells, and anxiety attacks. After her mother passes, Fausta faints, and her uncle, Tío Lúcido (Mariano Ballón), takes her to a Lima hospital, where the doctor warns him about the dangers of the tuber becoming infected. Fausta resists the removal of the potato and struggles to mourn her mother. In order to save money for the burial, she takes a job as a domestic servant in the home of a wealthy

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<sup>164</sup> Andean communities do not use this term. The symptoms, however, do exist in highland and migrant communities. Eli Malvaceda cites an investigation conducted by P. Escriba in which Quechua speakers used the terms “*llaki ñuñu* (teta o leche con pena o tristeza)” (136). Anthropologist Kimberly Theidon uses the term *la teta asustada* to describe the symptoms mothers passed on to their children.

<sup>165</sup> Literally means *young town*, but *shantytown* is the more common translation.

<sup>166</sup> Migrants established the *pueblo joven* in the 1980s and currently about 70,000 inhabitants reside in Manchay (Lambright, “Transitional Justice”). *Manchay* in Quechua means fear; and despite the desert scenery, the hills and long steps to the community are reminiscent of the Andean highlands. Peruvians say, I have heard, that the Andes begin here.

pianist, Aída (Susi Sánchez). Thus begins the journey of Fausta to return the body of her mother to the Andes and heal the legacy of trauma passed on to her.<sup>167</sup>

Since I have briefly discussed Fausta's condition and the plot, I would like to elaborate on the origin and significance of the term *la teta asustada*<sup>168</sup> in the film by Llosa. The award-winning film is inspired by *Entre prójimos: El conflicto armado interno y la política de la reconciliación en el Perú* (2004) by Theidon. However fictitious *la teta asustada* may sound, it has been recognized as a pressing problem afflicting mothers and their children in communities in the Andes. In *Entre prójimos*, Theidon first presents and explains the theoretical concept of *la teta asustada*:

Queremos examinar la transmisión intergeneracional de las memorias tóxicas, en un sentido literal. Hay una teoría elaborada respecto de la transmisión al bebé del sufrimiento y del susto de la madre, sea esta transmisión en el útero o por medio de la sangre y la leche. (77)

Theidon puts a name to the result of “massive sexual violence that characterized the internal armed conflict in Peru” and acknowledges “the profound injustice of both rape and its narrative burden” (“The Milk of Sorrow” 9). This culturally bound syndrome delineates the real experiences of rape victims and their fears of breast-feeding their infants during the internal conflict of the 1980s and 1990s. After the release of the film, Theidon translated the term to the “Milk of Sorrow” and expounded upon why she coined the term in *Entre prójimos*. Reflecting on her fieldwork, Theidon expressed, “when I remember the many women who feared breast-

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<sup>167</sup> Lambright eloquently notes the emphasis on identification: “The viewer is asked to stand by Fausta, to accompany her as she resolves her own issues and takes control of her own life. It seems the movie suggests that rather than a hierarchical mobilization of emotion that leads to an act of altruism, perhaps solidarity is all that we can really offer and still respect the human dignity of the other” (“Transitional Justice”).

<sup>168</sup> Despite inclinations of film viewers to translate *teta* as *tit* or *boob*, in the context of film, the word *teta* is a colloquial term for ‘the breast of a mother.’ *Asustada* (frightened, scared, worried) is the feminine adjective for the noun *susto* (fright, shock, or scare). This syndrome became contagious (transgenerationally) during the 1980s and 1990s in the Andean highlands.

feeding their babies and transmitting their ‘milk of sorrow and worry’—it seems to me they offer an eloquent example of how painful memories accumulated in the body and how one can literally suffer from the symptoms of history” (9). In recognizing the suffering and worries of mothers, Theidon created a quintessential compound metaphor for non-Andean audiences, describing the effects of trauma on future generations.<sup>169</sup>

This metaphorization of symptoms experienced in the Andes allows us to understand that the mother is a house of mourning and site of cultural memory and trauma. There was a conspiracy of silence concerning rape, and during the fieldwork of Theidon in Ayacucho, she observed that “[c]ommunal authorities—all male—routinely denied that the women in their communities had been raped. I was unanimously informed that of course there had been *abusos*—but always somewhere else, an index finger pointing in the direction of some neighboring community” (“Gender in Transition” 459). Despite efforts made by the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission to expose these atrocities and the perpetrators, Alan García downplayed the severity of the military’s torture tactics and opposed the construction of a Memory Museum (“The Milk of Sorrow” 14). Although the commission’s publications challenged official discourse and exposed institutionalized sexual violence, there were denials, excuses, and national amnesia. This silence affected not only victims but also their descendants, to whom they bequeath a haunting legacy.

The research carried out by Theidon also imparts how a generation born during the armed conflict suffers the effects of the traumatic experience of their parents. In interviews with women

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<sup>169</sup> I acknowledge that in Andean and other world cultures (like Middle Eastern, Afghan, and Irish) people believe that breastmilk can transmit worries to a child. In a lecture on *La teta asustada* for a class at the Center for Peace and Justice at Eastern Mennonite University, students from different countries expressed to me, “We have this illness in my country.” We must remember that the words *la teta asustada* are not coined by Andean communities and Theidon creates a metaphor to describe a real affliction in the Andes in order for non-Andean people to understand this postconflict problem. Additionally, in a meeting with Carl Stauffer—expert on narratology, transitional justice, and postwar reconstruction and reconciliation—he revealed to me the importance of creating a language to communicate indigenous myths and beliefs and make them accessible to outsiders.

suffering from PTSD, she discovers how, in truth, women feared passing on their worries and angst to their children and did not want to remember their violent rapes. For example, in a testimony from Salomé Baldeón, a native of Accomarca, she describes her traumatic rape and the effects of her angst on her daughter:

That's why I say that my daughter is still traumatized about everything that happened—everything passed through my milk, my blood, my worries. Today, she can't study. She's 17 years old and is in fifth grade. She can't progress—every year she fails. She says she has a headache, that her head burns. What is it—fear? She's always been like this. (“The Milk of Sorrow” 9; *Entre Prójimos* 77)

In this case the effects of trauma have not only affected the mother’s way of life but have also prevented her daughter from living a successful and full life.<sup>170</sup>

Clinical studies on Brazilian children of Holocaust survivors have demonstrated that parents may experience PTSD and pass on to their children their narratives and trauma but also their resilience. According to researchers, symbolization functions as a way to make sense, avoid, or displace the traumatic experience. Symbolization is the ability “to gain psychological distance from raw (internal or external) experience” (Freedman and Lasky 1) and form an abstract narrative that allows one to explore feelings that cannot be seen if the traumatic experience is seen literally.<sup>171</sup> Researchers note that “When symbolic resources for symbolic working over fail or are lacking, trauma and its transgenerational transmission may lead to

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<sup>170</sup> The novel *La hora azul* (2005) by Alonso Cueto also contains a similar story and themes. Rape victim Miriam and her child born of rape are key figures in the transgenerational transmission of trauma. Miriam experiences severe symptoms of PTSD ranging from depression, rage, and suicide attempts. Despite her efforts to ensure her son is brought up well, he is a quiet, lonely child failing school.

<sup>171</sup> The film *Life of Pi* (2012) (an adaptation of the novel by Yann Martel) directed by Ang Lee exhibits the process of symbolization and desymbolization. Pi symbolizes his experience as a castaway in order to cope with the harsh reality of survival at sea. Significantly, he is aware of both the real and symbolic narratives. After telling the symbolized version, he desymbolizes it, but the writer publishes and audience—I believe—prefers the fantastic version of his trauma narrative.

several psychopathologic disorders and somatization” (Lorens Braga, Feijó Mello, and Paulo Fiks n.p.). When there is a failure to symbolize the trauma, a person or his or her child may experience psychological or physical symptoms. This study, however, noted that groups tended to have more resilient outcomes when they were able to use humor, create fiction or art, or visit sites (like concentration camps) to symbolize the experiences, allowing parents and children to cope with trauma narrative (n.p.).

With regard to the cultural trauma of Andean communities, haunting legacies have been passed down from one generation to the next but also adaptability, strength, resilience. As a review by Tina Escaja attests, “*La teta asustada* se insinúa como fábula, como lección acaso contra el engaño y la invisibilidad a que ha sido sometido un pueblo históricamente explotado, marginado y sentenciado al silencio” (281). It is true that, historically, people from the Andes have undergone transformative experiences from the time of the conquest and colonization to the armed conflict. During this time, they have developed discourses of trauma like dreams, myths, and syndromes. Despite exploitation, marginalization, and genocide, these cultures have negotiated their cultural identity, transformed, and survived. I would argue that many of these discourses of trauma function as symbolizations that help communities cope with trauma narrative and thus allow space for cultural resilience.

If a mother’s milk is a metaphor for culture and memory, then a close reading of its use in narrative is crucial to developing an understanding of transgenerational trauma and resilience. The metaphorization of the symptoms afflicting mothers in the Andean highlands is an interpretation that creates a bridge between Andean and non-Andean beliefs. Culture-bound syndromes, such as *susto* or *la teta asustada*, are discourses of cultural trauma. By examining the mother’s milk and potato and song metaphors, I would like to deal with the way in which the



postgeneration conceives postmemory. In this chapter, I first draw upon understandings of culture-bound syndromes and then analyze the Lima doctor's misunderstanding of Fausta's condition. Then I turn to the role of the primal scene of violence in the identity formation of Fausta. Even though Fausta has heard the trauma narrative frequently, her mother has also passed on the gift of song, and I demonstrate her journey to resilience in scenes of song, mourning, and weddings. Over time, she symbolizes, a task Perpetua did not fully complete, the trauma of her mother in song and burial. Last, I draw on research conducted by Regina Harrison pertaining to the potato as an Andean cultural metaphor; in the context of the film, I would like to add resilience to the reading done by Harrison. Thus I hope to offer a more nuanced understanding of Andean cultural trauma and the effect of trauma on the postgeneration as well as fathoming how suffering generations overcome the blows of memory and learn to cultivate resilience in the postmemory period.

### **From *Susto* to the “Milk of Sorrow”**

In medical terms, *la teta asustada* is a culture-bound syndrome similar to *susto* because it is a discourse of trauma. These types of syndromes are specific to certain social or cultural groups and often involve psychosomatic symptoms. Generally, *susto* is related to experiencing trauma, a frightening event, and reliving the fright in other contexts. Consequently, someone afflicted with *susto* will exhibit psychological and physical symptoms of depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, or some mix of those. According to the “Glossary of Cultural Concepts of Distress” provided by the American Psychiatric Association:

*Susto* is an illness attributed to a frightening event that causes the soul to leave the body and results in unhappiness and sickness, as well as difficulties functioning in key social roles. Symptoms may appear any time from days to years after the fright is experienced.

In extreme cases, *susto* may result in death. There are no specific defining symptoms for *susto*; however, symptoms that are often reported by people with *susto* include appetite disturbances, inadequate or excessive sleep, troubled sleep or dreams, feelings of sadness, low self-worth or dirtiness, interpersonal sensitivity, and lack of motivation to do anything. Somatic symptoms accompanying *susto* may include muscle aches and pains, cold in the extremities, pallor, headache, stomachache, and diarrhea. Precipitating events are diverse, and include natural phenomena, animals, interpersonal situations, and supernatural agents, among others. (*American Psychiatric Association*)

This description of *susto* focuses mainly on adult indigenous populations in Central America, chiefly Mexico and Guatemala. This definition has not only geographical limitations but also social and cultural ones. It does not mention that children primarily receive this diagnosis and that community members give the diagnosis and can heal a person. The definition emphasizes the symptoms but does not fully explain that *susto* is rooted in the loss of the soul. *Susto* is a complex syndrome that transcends physical and psychological symptoms.

Medical anthropologist Libbet Crandon Malamund (1947–1995) is renowned for her contributions to understanding Andean cultural-bound syndromes in their dynamic cultural, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical contexts.<sup>172</sup> She researched *susto* in the Andes by interviewing Aymara and Quechua community members in Bolivia and analyzing data regarding this syndrome in Peru. The main problem she discovered was that researchers tended only to define *susto* and did not address physiological and psychosocial circumstances surrounding its diagnosis in a community (Crandon 154). Crandon proposed a three-tiered model for examining *susto*: “what is it; why is it or what is it’s meaning; and why is it or what is the relationship

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<sup>172</sup> Anthropologist Hans A. Baer recognizes and lauds Crandon’s contributions to the understanding of *susto*. He reaffirms that infants, young children, and typically poor and marginalized peoples contract this syndrome (49).

between its meaning and its sociocultural context” (165). Theidon also acknowledges that during the 1980s and 1990s in a community in Ayacucho, Peru “children were always getting sick, particularly with *susto* because there was so much violence” (“Gender in Transition” 461). Summarizing the work of Crandon and others, Baer notes, “Much of the research on *susto* recognizes that it emanates from stressful social conditions, an inability to carry out role expectations, and even the stigma of Indian ethnic identity” (49).

Instead of focusing on what *susto* is Crandon, Baer, and Theidon focus on what *susto* means. According to Crandon,

*Susto* says that the victim, be it child or adult, is spiritually vulnerable, susceptible to personal deprivation, and will be given familial care to provide the support for personal strength and rehabilitation [ . . . ] [T]he diagnosis of *susto* is related to the community’s perception of the patient; it indicates how the illness will be treated, what resources will be mobilized, and how the patient, the patient’s family and other diagnosticians involved perceive of the patient’s identity and the relationship of the patient’s illness event to the patient’s community responsibility. (164)

Crandon underscores that the prime characteristic of *susto*, like trauma, is loss and that the malady reveals more about relationships in a community than about the individual.

Furthermore, Crandon observes that the model for *susto* remains the same from place to place but recognizes that political, social, and economic environments change. For Crandon, “The question remains: how does *susto* change in space and time?” (165). To begin to answer this question, I believe the research conducted by Theidon and its visual representation in *La teta asustada* address how a cultural-bound syndrome mutates or adapts in different spaces and times. For example, Crandon observes that communities in the Andes recognize that diseases such as

tuberculosis or measles are infectious (161), but she never mentions whether communities perceive *susto* as contagious.

Retuning to *La teta asustada*, in Lima—as represented by “modern” medicine—there is a lack of understanding Fausta’s condition, and no one wants to see the potato beyond its natural properties.<sup>173</sup> At the hospital, Tío Lúcido and the doctor are in an office sitting across from each other. Throughout the scene, the camera cuts to medium shots of both these figures, simulating dialogue. Uncle and doctor never enter the same frame, demonstrating their opposing views about Fausta’s symptoms, illness, and the potato. While Tío Lúcido interprets her symptoms as the illness *la teta asustada*, the doctor addresses her nosebleed and fainting separately. The doctor speaks first and explains that he has seen similar cases in older women who had placenta previa: “El caso es bastante raro [ . . . ] Fausta tiene un tubérculo en la vagina, un papa para ser más exacto. Ella no ha dejado que la intervengamos de ningún modo. Está bastante alterada.” Then the camera cuts to a medium shot of Tío Lúcido, who is sitting on the other side of the desk, foregrounded by stacks of manila folders on either side of him. He explains to the doctor that his niece suffers from *la teta asustada*:

Ella, pues, estuvo en el pueblo en la época muy dura. Con el terrorismo nació Fausta y su madre le transmitió el miedo por la leche. La teta asustada, así le dicen a los que nacen así como ella sin alma porque del susto se escondió en la tierra. Una enfermedad así como eso, ¿no hay por acá? ¿no, doctor?

The uncle explains that Fausta was born during the time of terrorism, drank her mother’s milk, and in consequence, her soul fled from her body. Tío Lúcido describes the soul of his niece like a potato in the ground. Implied in the statement is that Fausta is not the only migrant suffering

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<sup>173</sup> In her work on Andean culture more generally, Regina Harrison notes, “The lowly potato serves as a sign, albeit a more tangible one, of the problem of cross-cultural interpretation” (194).

from this syndrome, and his question reveals that this syndrome has not been present in Lima until now. The doctor, who is not concerned with *la teta asustada*, the loss of soul, or the time of terrorism, says, “Yo me refería a si usted estaba enterado de que su sobrina tiene una papa en la vagina.” Tío Lúcido, who is uncomfortable talking about his niece’s vagina, deflects, “Se le debe haber metido ahí solito. A veces hay mucha comida en la casa.” As the doctor insists, Tío Lúcido raises his voice, “Así nació, nada de papas. ¿Dónde se ha visto cosechar papa de una vagina?”

Neither Tío Lúcido or the doctor can find the language to bridge the gap between Andean syndromes and Western medicine. Instead, the doctor invalidates the Andean beliefs by affirming that there is no such thing as the milk of sorrow: “No hay ninguna enfermedad que se llame teta miedosa, asustada, o lo que sea, y mucho menos que se transmite por la leche maternal.” Using his years of study and medical knowledge, the doctor explains that Fausta has an inflamed uterus and a tuber growing inside her vagina that could cause an infection. As Lambright suggests in her interpretation of the scene, “[t]he two are clearly unable to communicate because of a cultural impasse” (“Transitional Justice”). It seems as if there is only tension between Andean and non-Andean thinking.

However, by focusing only on *lo andino* and the “dominant culture’s desire to dismiss Andean cultural values” (“Transitional Justice”), philologist Anne Lambright does not take into account the gap between the experiences of men and women during and after the armed conflict. During this part of the conversation, the lens focuses on Fausta listening outside the office, and leaves the doctor and Tío Lúcido in frame but out of focus as they debate her illness. Fausta remains in silence and does not move as she hears the doctor recommend to her uncle that he look into other forms of birth control for his niece. This final shot of Fausta, who is in focus, reveals the distance between the experiences of men and women but also those who witnessed

violence, passed on their worries to their children, and those who did not.

In a medium shot of Tío Lúcido and Fausta on a crowded *mirco*, Fausta reveals the error of the doctor and her uncle. Fausta explains to her uncle: “Tío, ese doctor no sabe nada. No es método de natalidad. Yo ya sé que es. Ni que fuera ignorante. Prefiero eso que otra cosa. Por favor no le diga nada a la tía si no va a entender. Y usted debe respetarme.” First the doctor misinterpreted the potato sign as a contraceptive when in reality it is a *contrarape* method.<sup>174</sup> Fausta explains, “Mi mamá me contó en tiempo de terrorismo una vecina lo hizo para que ni uno ni otro le viole. Daba asco, dice. A mi me pareció que era la más inteligente [ . . . ] no tuvo que convivir con ningún violador.”<sup>175</sup> *Los doctores de Lima*, a phrase common throughout Theidon’s interviews in Ayacucho,<sup>176</sup> reiterates the idea that Western authority, represented by Lima, is superior to Andean thought. Fausta would rather have the doctor believe she was ignorant than for him to assume the potato is to prevent pregnancy—he is the idiot. Even Tío Lúcido, who left the highlands before the most violent part of the conflict, does not understand why Fausta has a potato in her vagina. On the bus Fausta reminds him, “Usted se vino tempranito, tío. Mi mamá me contó.” She reminds him that he did not witness the violence that his sister, Perpetua, saw and brutally experienced; he cannot understand the fear of rape. After this conversation with Tío Lúcido, Fausta sings to her mother in voiceover: “El tío no me entiende, ma. Yo llevo esto como protector. Yo vi todo desde tu vientre. Lo que te hicieron, sentí tu desgarró. Por eso ahora llevo esto como un escudo de guerra, como un tapón. Porque sólo el asco detiene a los asquerosos.”

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<sup>174</sup> Theidon’s interviews with women in Ayacucho reveal that during this time women admitted to using pregnancy as a rape deterrent: “Other women told us how they had padded their skirts with wadded up clothing, pretending to be pregnant in hopes of dissuading potential rapists. Still others smeared blood on their underwear, hoping their bloodied state would dissuade the soldiers. And still others resorted to ‘strategic pregnancies’ to exercise some form of control over their bodies” (“Gender in Transition” 465).

<sup>175</sup> Preservation of honor is important to women in Andean and Hispanic cultures. After the conflict, some women married their rapists. To Fausta, the idea of living with a rapist is horrifying.

<sup>176</sup> Theidon quotes a person from Cayara that said, “Entonces, ¿los doctores de Lima piensan que pueden venir acá y decimos que tenemos que reconciliarnos?” (*Entre Prójimos* 254). In this quote, there is resentment that the dominant class is always imposing its beliefs on people who live in the Andes.

Fausta continues the tradition of protecting herself from rapists because she *witnessed* her mother's rape and *felt* her anguish from inside the womb. The doctor and Tío Lúcido are here emblematic of the inability of the dominant patriarchal culture to understand symbolized discourses of trauma, *la teta asustada*, or transgenerational trauma, represented by the potato. The doctor fails to engage Fausta in a discussion about the potato and instead talks to her uncle; Tío Lúcido himself cannot empathize or resolve Fausta's need for security. Both represent a failure to understand and promptly address the needs of the postgeneration.

For Fausta, the potato is meant to prevent future violence, and the language Tío Lúcido uses to explain Fausta's fainting, sorrow, and frequent nosebleeds characterize her problems as a culture-bound syndrome that describes life after catastrophe. Fausta is a passive, introverted individual, and her uncle does not know how to convince her that this not a way of living. For instance, trauma theorist Gabriele Schwab acknowledges how "violent acts cause soul murder and social death" (3). Although *la teta asustada* can possibly result in death, in the Andean understanding, the soul can be recovered and one can be reintegrated into the community.

With relation to *la teta asustada* and the community, I would like to demonstrate that it is contagious and airborne in the film. First, in the embalming scene, there is a medium shot in which the deceased Perpetua rests in the middle of the bed, surrounded by women who are helping with the preservation process. Her aunt remembers the time of terrorism as she rubs the embalming ointment on the corpse: "Bastante gente hemos ayudado para conservar sus muertitos. Y como habíamos de demostrar su existencia a las autoridades, si ni foto teníamos [ . . . ] no había prueba de que habíamos nacido menos que nos habían matado." As Fausta's aunt continues to embalm the dead mother, she asks Fausta to rub the ointment on her mother's breast: "A ver hija, pásale en los senos. No vaya ser que a mi me contagie con su pezón." This

scene illustrates how the mother's breast carries memories and contagious trauma. The aunt begins to remember the time of terrorism as she rubs the body of her sister-in-law. The scene emphasizes memory and forgetting, and the fear of returning to and dwelling in terrible memories.

Secondly, *susto* (or *la teta asustada*) can also be an airborne disease. When talking about her village in the Andes, Fausta offers insight about the effects of trauma. In a conversation in Quechua with Noé (Efraín Solís), she describes a *tuta puriq* or *jarjacha*,<sup>177</sup> a type of haunting of souls that have unfinished business to resolve on earth. She had a brother who did not walk close to walls to protect himself from these wandering spirits. The symptoms she describes are similar to *susto*: these souls infected her brother, gave him stomachaches, and he died. During this conversation, Noé walks along a concrete wall with Fausta and watches her as she looks both ways and scurries across to the safety of her home. Eager to avoid her brother's fate, Fausta protects herself not only from rapists but also from deadly, lost spirits of those who were offenders or experienced violence and loss.

The community, represented chiefly by Tío Lúcido, his wife, and the gardener Noé,<sup>178</sup> struggles to reintegrate Fausta. Throughout the film, her uncle communicates a sense of futility and frustration; he does not know what to do with his niece, whose soul fled and who seems stuck in the period of terrorism. Fausta's aunt finds her a job so she can earn enough money to

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<sup>177</sup> Theidon's study of Andean villages has illuminated the discourse of evil spirits: "Also common, in my interviews is the term *tuta puriq* (those who walk at night), which stems from long-standing fears about the condemned (*jarjachas*) who walk this earth, inflicting their revenge upon the living. *Jarjachas* are human beings who have assumed animal form as part of their divine punishment for having sinned. They walk the *puna*, searching for the unfortunate individual who crosses their path" ("Reconciling" 104).

<sup>178</sup> Noé is an older man and seems to be the missing father figure for Fausta. Suzanne Fields postulates that "a father's imprint can mark a woman's identity for all time, affecting her sense of self, her work, her love relationships, and her understanding of the sexual difference. His effect varies at different stages of her life, but the important qualities of psychological development are strongly influenced by the first man in a woman's life" (29). In the absence of an understanding father figure, Fausta is insecure and not sure as to how to have relationship with a man.



bury her mother, and despite the fact that Fausta fears walking the streets alone, she accepts the job in the old colonial house of the pianist Aída. The family makes sure that she is not alone, and they accompany her to and from work.

Above all others, the gardener, Noé, notices that she needs comforting more than anything: “Necesitas consuelo. Hay geranios, hortensias, jazmín y tu agarras margaritas.” Noé suggests that she should not pick daisies but confine herself to other plants. It is important to note that none of these flowers are species native to the Andes, although geraniums, hydrangeas, and jasmine often decorate balconies and gardens in the highlands. In Christian folklore, daisies are said to have sprung from the tears of Mary Magdalene. For Keats, daises represent death. Goethe’s *Faust*—Fausta’s name is a reference to the play—immortalized the daisy as a flower of love through the saying “he loves me, he loves me not.” Although their meaning is not clear, Noé seems to associate these flowers with negative feelings or unknown outcomes, which may very well be sadness, death, and chance. In contrast, the other flowers seem to suggest daylight, happiness or love, rest, and hope. Eventually, as a result of these conversations, Fausta begins to regain trust in men and allows Noé to walk her home. With Noé, she shares her story about life in her village and the losses she has suffered. She begins to replace her loss of soul and family with a friendship and trust, but it is a difficult journey.

Fausta resists Noé’s attempts to discuss her syndrome and feelings. A medium shot zooms in on Fausta as she first listens at the wall protecting Aída’s home. She has a suggestive red tiger lily in her mouth as she walks to the electronic door and opens it. In a close-up wherein she sees Noé, the flower falls to the ground. Clearly, she has feelings for the gardener but is incapable of following through with them. In the next scene, in a close up of their hands, Fausta runs away when Noé gives her a present, a few candies. As Noé puts them in her hand, he tries to

graze her hand with his. She pulls away, dropping the candies, and runs. Immediately after this scene, they have a passive-aggressive argument in the garden. In Quechua, Fausta says in an upset tone, “En el jardín hay geranios, camelias, margaritas, cactus, camote, todo menos papa. ¿Por qué?” He replies with a question: “¿Y tú por qué tienes miedo a andar sola por la calle.” She does not acknowledge that he did not answer her question, but rather replies, “Porque sí.” He also says that there are no potatoes in the garden, “Porque sí.”

The soul of Fausta is buried alive like a potato in the ground, and Noé helps cultivate her resilience. As a walking phantom of her mother’s trauma, Noé probably knows Fausta keeps the tuber in her vagina: indeed, most of the community is aware she suffers from *la teta asustada*, and he tells her he finds no reason for growing potatoes in the garden. While the potato is her protector, it is also what is keeping her from moving forward and establishing a relationship with Noé. Her melancholy clouds all the joyous events she attends and she reminds others of the time of terrorism, placing her in a metaphorical limbo. In her community, she is at the age where she should marry, have children, and peel potatoes for her family, not seclude herself from others.

### **The Primal Scene of Violence: The Raped Womb**

Given the nature of the Peruvian conflict and the massive physical, structural, and sexual violence characterizing the Shining Path and the authoritarian state from 1980 to 2000, generations born during this time and future generations may experience symptoms of transgenerational trauma. My analysis aims to explore how subsequent generations handle violent legacies. Even though the conflict is over, the metaphor of mother’s milk demonstrates that the primal scene<sup>179</sup> of the father’s castration and the mother’s raped womb continues to

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<sup>179</sup> For Sigmund Freud, the primal scene is witnessing parents engaging in sexual intercourse. In the case of the “Wolf Man,” Freud recounts the experience of a young man, who as a boy saw his father upright and his mother bent over, and how this image of perceived violence transformed into dreams about a wolf that cause him to awake with anxiety (“Wolf Man” 412). The primal scene marks a traumatic event that affects the psyche of the survivor

wound and scar the postgeneration.

In anthropological fieldwork, Theidon observed that women's voices were lacking during interviews with Andean communities and that women were hesitant to talk about rape: "Overwhelmingly, women refused to speak about rape in the first person" ("Gender in Transition" 458). Women would often talk about rape as if it happened to someone else, or they claimed that rapes did not happen in their village but in some other one. In *La teta asustada*, the song by the Quechua woman breaks the silence and vocalizes an all-too-common experience shared by woman in the Andes during the 1980s and 1990s. In this way, *La teta asustada* genders the Peruvian conflict by establishing a national primal scene of violence in which the mother is a victim, witness, and survivor who passes the legacy on to her child.

In the case of *La teta asustada*, soldiers representing the state rape the mother and the child inside her, but we never actually see this take place. The film begins with a song in Quechua sung by a woman. She vocalizes the primal scene of the Peruvian internal conflict: her rape when she was pregnant. There are no images during the first half of the song, adding a sense of anonymity. Only a blank screen provides the background to a narrative about murder, violent rape, and forced cannibalism.<sup>180</sup> With regard to the effects of the blank screen, Cisneros indicates that "[e]l hecho de que la prolongada oscuridad de la pantalla sea lo primero que el espectador enfrenta resulta clave para su ubicación, o desubicación, pues si no es quechua-hablante, se sitúa fuera del espacio cultural del cual proviene la voz" (56). Viewers, and perhaps most Peruvians, are outsiders to the primal scene and the enduring effects of its narrative.

*La teta asustada* emphasizes the need for the effects of this primal scene to be heard and

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and witness, often resulting in fears of aloneness and vulnerability. The hope is that through talk-therapy, one can begin to rationalize the traumatic event and begin healing.

<sup>180</sup> The part of the narrative concerning the mother being forced to eat her husband's penis is only mentioned at the beginning of *La teta asustada*. Fausta censors the incident and the horror is never mentioned again in the film.

known by Peruvian and international audiences. For Cathy Caruth, trauma can lead “to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another’s wound” (8). The Quechua mother, Perpetua, narrates this primal scene in the first, second, and third person:

Quizás algún día tú sepas comprender lo que lloré, lo que imploré de rodillas a esos hijos de perra. Esa noche gritaba, los cerros remedaban, y la gente reía. Con mi dolor luché diciendo...A ti te habrá parido una perra con rabia . . . Por eso le has comido tú . . . sus senos. Ahora pues trágame a mi, ahora pues chúpame a mi cómo a tu madre. A esta mujer que les canta esa noche le agarraron, le violaron no les dio pena de mi hija no nacida. No les dio vergüenza. [*The blank screen cuts to close-up of Perpetua with her eyes closed, who continues to sing.*] Esa noche agarraron, me violaron con su pene y con su mano, no les dio pena que mi hija les viera desde dentro[.] Y no contentos con eso me han hecho tragar el pene muerto de mi marido Josefo. Su pobre pene muerto sazonado con pólvora. Con ese dolor gritaba, mejor mátame y entiérrame con mi Josefo. No conozco nada de aquí.

Viewers hear the melody in Quechua but read the subtitles in Spanish about a raped pregnant woman. Unknown perpetrators<sup>181</sup> raped and also forced the woman who sings to eat her husband’s penis. She shares these memories with an anonymous “tú” who she wishes would understand how she cried and begged not to be raped. Initially the apostrophe is directed at the viewer, but we soon ascertain she also is singing to her daughter, Fausta.

Through a variety of rhetorical techniques the opening song in *La teta asustada* also allows the Quechua speaker, Perpetua, to narrate her experiences literally and symbolically. The

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<sup>181</sup> The perpetrators seem to be soldiers sent by the state in the counterinsurgency. As the film progresses this become clear when we see Fausta’s terrified reaction to a photograph of a soldier.

dying mother temporarily switches identity from victim to observer as she retells the experience. This illeism, use of the third person by the singer-victim-survivor, allows her to symbolize the event, creating distance between her and the violent acts inflicted upon her. Her song is an external perspective on something she felt but could not see. In the subtitles translated into Spanish, she switches between preterit and imperfect tenses (*agarraron, violaron, gritaba*), demonstrating how the crimes committed in the past have an ongoing effect. In consequence, the present-perfect and present tenses intrude (*me han hecho tragar, no conozco*) showing how trauma is re-experienced. The state had its hand and penis inside her womb. Her eyes remain closed as she sings about her adversity, and she also insists upon her rape being remembered in the present day.

As Perpetua continues narrating, viewers learn that her shrieks went unheard. The indignity the mother experienced is further exacerbated because her rapists felt no shame and raped her while she was pregnant. The mother's attempt, or hope, to protect herself and her fetus is in vain. The soldiers laughed, which further exacerbated her humiliation. Later, feelings of shame transformed into anger. Her attackers made her a "bitch."<sup>182</sup> She animalizes and describes herself like a rabid female dog, whose breasts her infant suckled. In the same way, the singing woman desires that the listener suckle her words. The song becomes a metaphor for mother's milk, which contains memories and, in this case, a legacy of trauma that the mother does not want to fall into oblivion.

In response to the song that Perpetua sings, Fausta enters the close-up shot of her mother as if to whisper in her ear. Out loud, Fausta makes a simple observation and sings in response, "Cada vez que te acuerdas, cuando lloras mamá, ensucias tu cama con lágrimas de pena y sudor." In a way, she is wondering why her mother chooses to remember and sully the clean

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<sup>182</sup> The English captions of the film translate *perra* to "bitch."

sheets with sadness and distress. Fausta would like her mother to eat, and Perpetua says, “Comeré si me cantas, y riegas esta memoria que se seca. No veo mis recuerdos, es como si ya no viviera.” Fausta’s role in her mother’s life becomes clearer; she has kept her mother alive to some degree.<sup>183</sup> Fausta sings, “Estás tirada como un pájaro muerto” and then begins speaking, “Voy a arreglar la cama un poco.” Her mother dies.

In this song-dialogue between mother and daughter, the Quechua mother agrees to eat if her daughter will sing to her. This establishes the idea that Fausta’s song can be exchanged for something and that her mother nourishes herself with her daughter’s words. They feed each other; the mother fed her infant memories and her worries through her breast milk; Fausta sings so that her mother will eat and live. Most significantly, before dying she urges Fausta to water, to nourish these fading memories. Does the mother suggest that Fausta water them to make them grow? Or does the mother suggest a metaphorical cleansing? Fausta is the last witness to her mother’s torment during the rape and in death, and the immediate consequences are symptoms of PTSD, causing her to relive the traumatic memories of her deceased mother.

In *Studies on Hysteria*, Freud and Breuer connect the anxiety attacks experienced by a young woman, Katharina, to the traumatizing effects of witnessing a sexual act, the primal scene. Katharina witnesses her uncle lying on top of her cousin through a window. She describes her reaction as being unable to breathe: “Everything went blank, my eyelids were forced together and there was a hammering and buzzing in my head” (Freud and Breuer 128). These anxiety attacks were also brought on by unprocessed memories of the uncle’s sexual advances on the girl as well as witnessing the sexual and incestuous relations between uncle and niece. Freud and Breuer conclude: “the impressions from the pre-sexual period which produced no effect on the child attain traumatic power at a later date as memories” (133). In *Interpretation of Dreams*,

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<sup>183</sup> This echoes the relationship between Milagros and Noemí in *Cuchillos en el cielo*, which I explored in chapter 3.

Freud further notices how the primal scene could be a concrete experience or a fantasy. He includes the dream of a young man who watches his parents copulating while he is in the womb (410). In these cases,<sup>184</sup> the young people associate the sexual act with the potential castration of the male or the violence that the male figure inflicts on the female.

The fetus witnessing the penis raping her mother is a visual crucial to the theme of transgenerational trauma and the formation of Fausta's identity. Whether this event is real or imagined, Fausta is convinced she is a witness and even is unsure about her own virginity. Her personal memory is intertwined with that of her mother, and she sees herself as a victim. At the hospital, the nurse asks Fausta whether she is a virgin. She responds, "No sé," suggesting that soldiers may have raped Fausta in this intrauterine fantasy. Freud remarks, in a footnote from 1909, that inherent in the womb fantasy is both fear and possibility:

They contain an explanation of the remarkable dread that many people have of being buried alive; and they also afford the deepest unconscious basis for the belief in survival after death, which merely represents a projection into the future of this uncanny life before birth. (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 411)

Freud is optimistic about "phantasies of intra-uterine life" because they seem to focus on "existence in the womb and [on] the act of [(re)]birth" (410).

In *La teta asustada*, the primal scene shapes Fausta's attitudes toward sexual relationships and men and inhibits her from leading a full life. Her mother's traumatic experiences are a burden that metaphorically bury her alive. Despite the initial negative interpretation of the womb fantasy in *La teta asustada*, there is the possibility of being reborn and emerging from darkness to light, as Freud suggests. In the film there are two scenes of a round fluorescent light on the ceiling in the hospital. In the first appearance of the light, Fausta is

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<sup>184</sup> And in the case of the Wolf Man mentioned in note 19.

in the hospital for the first time, and there is a shot of the fluorescent light flickering. One wonders whether it is flickering on or off.<sup>185</sup> With her mother's bequeathal of *watering* the memories of the primal scene, Fausta is on a journey to discover how she can do this and emerge from the darkness to live a full life.

### **The Gift of *Sami*: "I Sing Because I Am Resilient; I Am Resilient Because I Sing"**

Given the nutritive properties of mother's milk, there may be space to suggest how a mother not only passes on trauma but also may transmit resilience to her descendants. In Catherine Allen's fieldwork in Sonqo, she has demonstrated understanding of "an inherent, internally generated liveliness or power," in Quechua called "*samiyuq* (*sami* plus possessive suffix-*yuq*), possessing the *sami*" (50). In this particular community, a *sirena* ("siren") endows instruments with the *sami*, a nourishing spirit and the energy of life. I would like to argue that *La teta asustada* is exemplary in demonstrating resilience across generations. Perpetua's milk not only transmits trauma to her daughter but her siren-mother also bestows upon her *sami* with a way to cultivate resilience through song. In this section I examine the voiceovers of Perpetua and Fausta singing<sup>186</sup> as well as the pivotal moment when Fausta sings out loud for another person, Aída. Throughout the film, Fausta continues singing in both Quechua and Spanish, and the majority of her songs are voiceovers. She suffers great emotional distress as she voices the trauma narrative she heard from her mother and kept silently to herself but she also symbolizes her mother's experiences.

As exemplified in the voiceover of Perpetua, Fausta learned to sing from her mother and

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<sup>185</sup> At the end of the film, after Fausta has the potato removed from her vagina, there is a final shot of this same light fixture. This time the light does not flicker and shines brightly.

<sup>186</sup> Llosa explains the process of creating Fausta's voice: "I wrote the lyrics for the songs [in Spanish] in the film, and Magaly put the melodies. This is how we started to find the voice of Fausta. It was the moment that she connected with Fausta on a deep level and found her in herself. Singing and dancing and music and the creative expression that comes from the Andes are so important for that culture. It's the only way that they can talk about what they don't understand or how they feel. It's a cathartic process, so it was very important for me to use singing as the only way that Fausta can connect" ("Claudia Llosa").



continues her mother's journey of resilience. Despite her identity as a rape survivor, the mother has been able to leave the area of conflict, have her need for safety met, and raise her daughter in Lima. As Tío Lúcido tells the doctor, there is a lot of food in the home and, judging from the number of events for which they contract services, the family's wedding business is successful. Returning to the embalming vignette in the final close-up of the deceased Perpetua, the lens focuses on women wrapping her in a white cloth and a blue blanket. There is a voiceover of a singing woman who sounds like Perpetua. The woman sings about going to heaven and watering flowers: "¿Adónde estás yendo? Me estoy yendo al cielo a regar flores, a regar flores." The use of the present progressive suggests that death is a journey, and that there is life after death. After singing the verse three times, the woman lets out a moan and the camera cuts to Fausta with her aunt, walking through the busy market to her new job. The song suggests that there is resurrection after death; there is resilience after trauma. In Andean thought, the *Janaq Pacha*—paradise—is thought to be full of flowers and joy.

After the mother sings about heaven, the camera lens follows Fausta through the mansion. On her first day, Aída is trying to hang a portrait of a soldier on the wall. She calls her new servant to the master bedroom, so she can hold the drill. After the bell rings twice, the camera lens follows Fausta out of the kitchen. The movement of the camera emphasizes that she is on a journey. Fausta walks slowly, hesitating. Significantly, she passes by a piano, a stained glass of doves around a red flower, and a painting of the Madonna. This recurring *mise en scène*—doves, the mother with baby, and, as we will see, a mirror and pair of scissors—corresponds to her journey to cultivate resilience and create her own identity. When she enters the room, Aída calls her "Finita, coge acá" and she tells her that she is *Fausta Isidora*.<sup>187</sup> In a medium shot, the camera lens focuses on a black-and-white portrait of a young soldier from the

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<sup>187</sup> From this point on Aída calls her Isidra, and Fausta does not correct her.

neck down. In the reflective glass, Fausta nervously holds the drill like a gun pointing upward. When Aída asks Fausta to hand her the portrait, Fausta, in inexplicable terror, has a nosebleed, drops the drill, and runs to the kitchen. As she runs the water and cleans her face, she sings out loud in Quechua: “Cantemos, cantemos. Hay que cantar cosas bonitas para esconder nuestro miedo.” She uses the first-person plural to describe her and her mother’s dread of soldiers. It is as if she and her mother are one. Her song is a coping mechanism, a displacement, used to calm herself down after a fright. In this case, music replaces the frightening experience of seeing the photograph of the soldier. She feels she must hide these feelings of fear from Aída and cover them with sweet words. The camera lens cuts to a shot of Aída watching by the door and leaving promptly, allowing the door to swing.

Next, the camera lens cuts to a medium shot of Fausta sitting on her bed in Aída’s house. She looks at the mirror lying on the bed. On top of the mirror is a pair of scissors that she picks up. She sings out loud to herself: “Cantemos, cantemos, cantemos cosas bonitas, para disimular nuestro miedo, esconder nuestra heridita. Como si no existiera, no doliera.” As she sings, she struggles to cut, painfully, the potato root growing out of her vagina. In a close up of her feet, she cuts the root, which falls on the carpet. Fausta, using the grooming tools Aída has provided for her servants, begins to regularly cut the root representing the inherited legacy of her mother.

Despite the fact that Fausta is a broken and a sickly person, she still possess *sami* and sings beautiful notes. One morning, Fausta explains in Spanish to Noé when he arrives to work, “el piano se cayó.” Noé replies in Quechua, “Este piano está roto pero sigue cantando, ¿lo oyes?” Noé seems to be referring to the *sami* that an inanimate and broken object, like the piano or Fausta, can possess. The evening prior to the piano falling out of the window, Aída reveals that she is buying a new piano because the other one had an accident. Her son sarcastically says, “se

cayó solito por la ventana” and Aída curtly answers, “Sí.” She leaves the bedroom and goes to sit next to Fausta in the kitchen to watch television. Aída asks Fausta to sing, but she does not respond: “Ayer estabas cantando una canción. Cántala otra vez. Ayer te escuché. No te hagas.” Finally Fausta says, “No sé, señora.” In the home of Aída, Fausta is trying to repress her fear of soldiers and the trauma her mother experienced; her song is hers and is private.

The songs that Fausta invents and sings are her way of working through the memories of her mother. After she discovers the kids playing in the pool, she goes to rest with her mother and stroke her hair. She sings in Quechua: “A ver si la gente no te reconoce cuando llegemos al pueblo. Te llevaré cargada como un bebé. Mi papá ya no va a estar solito con los gusanos . . .” She drops the first-person plural and expresses her hopes to take her mother back to her village. In a gesture that inverts the roles of mother and daughter, Fausta takes responsibility (albeit through words) for taking care of her mother and reuniting her with her father.

Singing allows Fausta to tell the traumatic event from her perspective and work through the trauma. In another voiceover, this time in both Quechua and Spanish, Fausta sings to herself:

Palomita, perdido, te has corrido del susto y tu alma se ha perdido, paloma. [*Switches to Quechua*] Seguro que durante la guerra, tu madre te dio a luz, tal vez con miedo tu madre te parió. [*Switches back to Spanish*] Si acaso ahí te hicieron el mal no sería para caminar llorando, no sería para caminar sufriendo. Búscate, búscate tu alma perdido en tinieblas, búscate. En la tierra, búscate.

She addresses her illness, *la teta asustada*, in Spanish and uses personification to talk about herself as a dove that has lost its soul. When returning to the war, she uses Quechua to describe the act of being born in a time of fear. The code-switching to Spanish relates to her present condition and her attempts to cultivate resilience. Her soul can be found in the ground like the

potato. The verses seems to suggest hope as opposed to fear and fragility. She is able to voice her sadness and loss, and begins rejecting tears and suffering. This apostrophe to the dove reveals just how Fausta is trying to regain contact with her lost soul and find a path outside the darkness. Like in the scene in the hospital with the flickering light, Fausta seems to be flickering between past darkness and present light. As the voiceover concludes, the camera lens shows her reaching down to cut the root of the potato—her hands are out of the lens’s view—and then lying back in bed.

In one pivotal moment, however, the voiceover of a song about a siren erupts into Fausta singing passionately for Aída. Allen reminds us that “[s]amiyuq connotes a kind of genius or ebullient spirit” (50). In the context of the film, Fausta releases her *sami* through song. As Noé had intuited, even a broken and wounded piano can be heard if one listens. Aída sits with her back to the camera and hears Fausta sing, “pero mi madre dice dice dice que la quinua difícil de contar es y la sirena se cansa de contar. Y así el hombre para siempre ya se queda con el don.”<sup>188</sup> The interpretation of Vitelia Cisneros is that the song reveals the circumstances in which Fausta finds herself: “La letra narra la historia de una sirena atrapada, quien debe contar granos de quinua antes de ser liberada en el mar; será esta canción la que unirá a empleadora y empleada en una situación de apropiación y abuso” (57). I would like to recognize the contribution of Cisneros and offer an alternative interpretation of these lyrics. In my reading of resilience, when Fausta begins reading out loud, she references the mother figure and explains that the siren is tired of counting. Like the siren, Fausta is also tired of being trapped in mourning and not being able to let go of her mother. In Aída’s mansion she is able to recover her voice and these

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<sup>188</sup> The song’s lyrics are as follows: “Dicen en mi pueblo que los músicos hacen un contrato con una sirena, si quieren saber cuántos durará, durará el contrato con esa sirena. De un campo oscuro tienen que coger un puñado de quinua para la sirena ya si la sirena se quede contando dice la sirena que cada grano significa un año. Cuando la sirena termine de contar se lo lleva al hombre y la suelta al mar pero mi madre dice dice dice que la quinua difícil de contar es y la sirena se cansa de contar. Y así el hombre para siempre ya se queda con el don.”

feelings, even if it means making a pact with the devil herself, Aída. Fausta will sing for Aída in exchange for pearls. Fausta sings out loud because she wants to be heard; she is beginning to lose her fear by sharing her *sami* with Aída—who, in a creative standstill, lacks this gift.

Song and the symbols in *La teta asustada* are examples of resilience. Pearls incidentally begin as grains of sand that wound a mollusk, the mother of pearl. The iridescent inner shell is resilient and despite the trauma, creates a perfectly round and coated jewel. While the dove represents her fragility, at the same time, it also symbolizes her capability for cooing and flight. The presence of the Madonna seems to echo her relationship with her mother and even her future as a mother with a child. Even though Fausta, like the piano, is broken, the siren has given her *sami*. However, the scissors emphasize the need to cut herself from her mother's trauma and let her siren, her mother, go back to the sea so she that can be the independent pearl.

### **True Mourning, Several Weddings, and No Funeral**

As long as Fausta lives in the past, she cannot move forward: she is stuck in time. The research by Schwab on death and mourning teaches us how a shared sense of time is annihilated after a traumatic death (3). For Fausta, the death of her mother shatters past and present, and her uncle is brought up to date with the fact that his niece has a tuber in her vagina, one of the many *contrarape* methods women in the highlands. After the visit to the hospital, Fausta confesses that her mother told her “en tiempo de terrorismo” women would protect themselves from rape by inserting a potato into the vagina. Tío Lúcido replies, “Ahora es otro tiempo.” Fausta experiences difficulty living during this *otro tiempo*. The *tiempo de terrorismo* suggests mourning and melancholy, while *otro tiempo*, as seen in the imagery of the film, suggests weddings and celebration. Fausta remembers, interiorizes, and relives the trauma of her mother during a time meant to redefine life and move forward. The death of her mother puts her in a difficult position

and she embarks on a journey to be part of a resilient migrant community.

The theories of Jacques Derrida are useful for understanding Fausta's cultivation of resilience particularly during the difficult part of the journey. By turning to *Memoires*, Jacques Derrida's lectures following the death of Paul de Man in which the French critic dialogues with the Belgian's concept of true mourning, we can see how grief can be a process. Derrida emphasizes that the dead live in or inside the mourner as a text composed of portions of both the living and the deceased parties. Derrida questions how in mourning one may interiorize the dead and allow them to live in one's self "as in a the tomb or the vault" ("Mnemosyne" 6). He further explains the process by which someone or something becomes part of one's mental or spiritual being: "[u]pon death of the other we are given to memory, and thus to interiorization, since the other, outside us, is nothing now" (34). The latter matter concerns failure to mourn by not accepting his or her death and locking the memory inside the body (the tomb). Both suppositions reveal the problems in the mourning process and dealing with death.

For Derrida, "true mourning" is not possible because one makes or works at mourning, and interiorization never leads to closure ("Mnemosyne" 31). In this case, mourning will never be successful because it is something one works at continually. This discussion of interiorization leads to the concept of introjection. Schwab adds some clarity to these concepts:<sup>189</sup>

under normal circumstances a person mourns a loss by *introjecting* the lost person or object. Introjection facilitates integration into the psychic fabric. By contrast, a person who refuses to mourn *incorporates* the lost object by disavowing the loss, thus keeping the object "alive" inside. Incorporation is a defensive operation based on a denial of the loss. (1–2)

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<sup>189</sup> Derrida explains, "I pretend to keep the dead alive, intact, *safe (save) inside me*, but it is only in order to refuse, in a necessarily equivocal way, to love the dead as a living part of me, dead *save in me*, through the process of introjection, as happens in so-called normal mourning" ("English Words" xvi)

In *La teta asustada*, Fausta at first incorporates the lost object, her mother, by pretending she is alive and interacting with her as if she were a real person, and finally introjects her. The potato in her vagina further echoes the Derridean concept that she keeps her dead mother *inside* of her as if she (Fausta) were a crypt. I would like to examine the concepts of incorporation and introjection in the film by analyzing how Llosa juxtaposes scenes of mourning and inability to bury her mother with joyful scenes of matrimony. This paradox of mourning is present in *La teta asustada* because Fausta has no money for the burial, works at wedding receptions, and attends her cousin's wedding preparations. The notion of Fausta saving up to bury her mother by working at joyful events (literally) resembles the Derridean concept of working at mourning and the impossibility of true mourning. Three types of scenes correspond to the impossibility or work of mourning or the "true mourning" Derrida describes, sometimes literally. The first type is evidenced in Fausta's attempts to make the arrangements for the burial of her mother as she continuously seeks out affordable options. The second happens with Fausta resting with the deceased Perpetua, whose body begins to decompose. However, the third scene type contains burial imagery.

Although one could argue that the external circumstances do not allow her to bury her mother, both financial and emotional obstacles play a role in the incorporation of her mother. In the first types of scenes, there are financial constraints. First, the coffin, services, and transport to her mother's province are too expensive. The second funeral home has cheaper coffins that are decorated according to the personality of the deceased. The third place suggests that they can rent a plain white coffin, unbury it after the service, and find a cheaper place to rebury the body. None of these options are viable and her mother remains "alive" on the bed in the family home.

While the first and third funeral home scenes emphasize social class and purchasing

power, the second funeral home has colorful designs that speak to national identity and symbolization mechanisms in the postconflict period. The woman directs them through the many hand painted coffin choices for different types of people in Peru:

Este es para los fanáticos, mira, para los deportistas. Aquí para los patriotas, “por Dios y por la patria.” Este es para los que añoran sus tierras. Mira, purito roble. Hay gente que trae la foto de su amada para que se vayan juntitos. Y este es el que trae la paz. Este es el mar pacífico donde alivian sus cargas y lavan sus penas.

This scene illustrates how people self-identify and may symbolize, move on, or remember the armed conflict. They may choose to forget by focusing on their devotion to Peru’s national pastime: soccer. In this case the coffin is of the soccer team La U: the name of the team, a giant U, is inside the mouth of what appears to be a jaguar with large fangs. Others may rewrite their role in the military and justify their actions as what was best. Fausta looks away briefly while the woman points at the coffin designed for patriots. The white lettering on the top of the coffin reads “HASTA el ULTIMO CARTUCHO”; below is the image of a man in a suit who never gave up the bloody fight, captioned—in pink letters—“POR DIOS Y POR LA PATRIA.”<sup>190</sup> The pink lettering conjures the women that soldiers victimized during the conflict in the name of the counterinsurgency. These images suggest male desire, identity and symbolization of the conflict. There is no coffin to symbolize her mother’s experiences.

After these masculine and violent images is a gender-neutral seascape that represents those displaced by the armed conflict. This last coffin that the woman describes captivates Fausta. In a medium shot, Fausta faces three horizontal coffins with her back toward the camera. The top coffin, which she gazes at, is a seascape. This reminds us of the song about the siren and

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<sup>190</sup> In the first funeral scene, there is also another masculine coffin. Fausta stares at a child-size blue coffin. There is a little boy stretched out on the ground next to it.



the need to return her to the sea. The sand is brownish yellow, the ocean is blue and calm, and the sun is bright and either setting or rising. There are two silhouettes of birds on the left side and three on the right side. This appears to be a moment of self-reflection. Will the Pacific Ocean coffin cleanse the memory of her mother and alleviate her burden and sorrow? Will she bury herself with her mother? Or will she be able to begin living?

Directly below this soothing and peaceful scene, however, is a coffin with a provocative design, a woman in a bathing suit surrounded by red and yellow flames. Again, male desire and identity surround a gender-neutral scene. At first, Fausta does not notice this coffin. Her cousin is excited by this imagery and reads, “‘Arde papi,’ guau, esa esta buenaza para cuando yo me muera.” The torso of Fausta covers the woman from head to midsection, preventing the viewer from seeing the face and breasts of the figure. Fausta purses her lips and frowns. In this frame, she appears to be the male object of desire. There are no coffins that represent women or the identity of women during the postconflict. There is no place for her mother but alive on the bed and inside her, as represented by the potato, because her mother never fully symbolized her trauma. Her mother mostly likely retold the story of her rape to Fausta and never was able to attain closure, justice, or a safe psychological distance from the events that harmed her. Instead, her daughter experienced secondary traumatization and has to figure out what to do with her mother and traumatic memory. In the process of selecting a coffin, Fausta seeks to symbolize her mother’s trauma and her personal need for healing but cannot afford any type of symbolic coffin or burial.

In the second type of scene, we can see the Derridean paradox of true mourning in which one is unable to grieve. Fausta lies next to Perpetua and interacts with the decaying corpse. Adding to Derrida’s theory, Schwab explains that “[w]here there is no grave, one cannot mourn

properly; one remains forever tied to a loss that never becomes real” (3). In a medium two shot, Fausta rests in bed next to her dead mother. A blue blanket with a white flower pattern covers the face and body of the mother. Fausta uncovers her mother and places her head on her shoulder seeking comfort. In another sequence, there is a close-up of the mother’s hair, and the lens moves towards Fausta, who is singing and tearful as the hair she strokes comes off her mother’s head. In another shot, we can see the pillow on the bed that reads, “No me olvides.” Since there is no grave, Fausta visits, caresses, and sings to her mother and thereby rejects the loss.

The third scene type emphasizes the grave-digging motif. Sounds of digging interrupt the former scene of Fausta and the deceased Perpetua. Fausta rises to investigate, only to find Tío Lúcido digging a hole. The first time this happens, she goes outside to tell him that she needs to take her mother to her village as if she were alive. However, throughout the film, the hole becomes bigger, large enough to fit a body, as demonstrated by a long shot of the grave. The camera lens zooms in on the uncle standing with a shovel and a hand on his hip. There is a worn wooden ladder in the cavity. The shot cuts to Fausta running toward the hole with a devastated expression on her face. As she looks closely, she (and the viewers) misread the situation. Her uncle is making a pool lined with a blue plastic tarp for the children of the family to swim. The blue blanket on the bed and the blue tarp, however, remind us that the body needs to be buried properly.

In order to obtain the money to bury her mother and return her to the Andes, Fausta obtains a job as a domestic servant in the home of Aída, which literally emphasizes the idea of working at mourning. In one scene, Fausta sings as Aída listens and waters the garden, which symbolically waters and unburies memories. Aída unearths a childhood doll, and as she looks fondly at it, she says, “Me dijeron que si la enterraba, luego la tierra se la llevaba, y ya nunca la

encontrarás. Mentirosos.” Aída experiences some sort of unspoken shock as her face expresses consternation. Old memories come back, yet she does not vocalize them. This intimate scene between the two reveals a class structure in which the dominant whites and marginalized migrants know little about each other’s pasts. To Fausta and the audience, Aída’s story remains unknown. The dead and trauma cannot be buried; both haunt and are unspeakable. One must work at healing and mourning, and be prepared for the return of intrusive memories.

Juxtaposed to scenes of “true mourning” and “working at mourning” are scenes involving wedding preparations and festivities celebrating brides and grooms. The first scene follows the death of Fausta’s mother. In a long shot of her cousin Máxima in a wedding dress, Máxima begs her father (Tío Lúcido) to pay for fabric to add to an already excessively long train. The next two scenes depict the catering/favor business of her aunt. In these scenes, her aunt decorates a cake filled with doves and carry wedding favors through a market. Other scenes include the couple (Hector and Hermelinela) taking their first dance, followed by photographs with family members, a banquet, music, and dancing. (Fausta and Tío Lúcido work as servants during these receptions.) In a vignette of a collective marriage involving one official and a dozen couples, the misery of the individual is juxtaposed with collective bliss. During these joyous occasions, Fausta usually ends up sitting outside the festivities. Her uncle goes to comfort her but ultimately says he does not want to see death or frowns on the day of Máxima’s wedding.

In a medium shot, Tío Lúcido sits next to Fausta under a fruit and vegetable stand. They are outside the wedding reception of Hector and Hermelinela. A purple cloth in the shape of an X crisscrosses the screen. On one side is Tío Lúcido, with his head resting on his fist and one hand on his knee. He asks her about the paycheck advance at her new job, and Fausta explains that Aída will not pay her until the end of the month. He responds, “Yo no quiero ver muertos ni

recuerdos tristes en la boda de Máxima. Tienes que llevarte a Perpetua antes del matrimonio.”

On the other side of the X, Fausta holds something in her hand. She crushes the object slowly and does not respond. Tío Lúcido adds, “Sino la entierro solito, ya sabes.” He gets up and leaves her sitting there alone. It seems as the family is trying to coerce Fausta into bury her mother, and if she does not do it, he reminds her that he will have to take care of the arrangements himself.

The upcoming wedding of Máxima and Marcos becomes a crucial narrative thread in the film that communicates “the impossible affirmation of mourning” (Derrida 32). In an engagement ceremony and celebration sequence, Máxima peels a potato. There is an extreme close-up of her hands, a medium shot of her peeling the potato, and another extreme close-up of her feet as the peel falls to the dirt. As we learn, this (fictional?) tradition<sup>191</sup> proves she is worthy of Marcos, because his family selected a very difficult potato for her to peel. Tío Lúcido takes the potato skin and interprets it as a sign: “Está enterita y muy fina. Será una vida larga, llena de amor y esperanza.” This cultural exchange concludes with Marcos placing the engagement ring on Máxima’s finger and a kiss. Because of the wedding rituals, there is no space for Fausta to attend to her psyche, making it a time of impossible mourning.

Following this engagement ritual are two scenes that best exemplify the relationship between true mourning and weddings. First, there is a two shot of Amadeo (Daniel Nuñez), who speaks on Marcos’s behalf, with Fausta’s cousin. Her cousin tells Amadeo that Fausta suffers from *la teta asustada*, but Amadeo smiles and says, “Yo se las veo bien sanitas.” Then, he goes to romance Fausta but his comments end up sounding like harassment, “mamacita rica, si el

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<sup>191</sup> On a personal note, this is a very familiar scene. In my family we used to have contests while peeling potatoes for *llapingachos* or apples for pie. The winner was able to peel the skin of the tuber or fruit in one long, thin strand conserving the fruit. Usually my grandmother or my mother would win, since they were the expert cooks passing on their skills and knowledge to my sister and me. My mother also told me in a conversation that Mamita Miche, my great-grand mother, would call the young lady that did not produce one long peel a *carishina*, which in Quechua essentially is an epithet for a tomboy and refers to a woman that is inept for the kitchen. Mamita Miche also told my mother that breaking the peel is a sign of bad luck.

color rojo es de la pasión, báñame con tu menstruación.” He expresses sexual interest in Fausta by implying that men, in general, flirt with her and generally offers to protect her “porque tú me dices, yo le saco la mierda.” In effect, Amadeo seeks to replace the potato as her protector, causing Fausta to leave the celebration and head for the room where her mother died.

Then, there is a brief medium long shot of a wedding dress resting on a bed with the blue blanket that was used to wrap Perpetua during the embalming scene. The windows in the room are covered and the highlighting focuses on Máxima’s gown. Fausta leaves the room and goes to speak to Tío Lúcido. The camera cuts to a long shot of the party; her uncle sends her to someone else who gestures to the room. We infer that Fausta is distraught because she does not know the location of her mother. Next, is an overhead shot of the gown that fills the entire screen. The white dress sits elegantly on top of the blue blanket with a flower pattern. The camera does not shift, but Fausta, off screen, moves the bed, revealing the mother’s head and shoulders wrapped in rags and a an off-white cloth. Uncannily, the bodice of the dress lies perfectly as if upon Perpetua’s body for a few seconds before Fausta “takes the dress off,” so she can sit by her.

This symbolic scene demonstrates how Fausta disavows her loss by pretending her mother is alive. Diana Fuss discusses how identification is part of the work of mourning. On the matter of children seeking their mother for oral gratification, Fuss explains, “identification attempts to conjure up an original object by restaging in fantasy the child’s infantile relation to the mother, a relation of need and demand based upon oral gratification” (38). Although as an adult Fausta does not seek out her mother’s milk, she does continually go to talk and sing to her mother. She has a desire and hunger for her mother’s words, comforting, and understanding because no one in the community truly understands why she is so melancholy. For Fuss, “[l]ike the return of the living dead, the repressed maternal resurfaces to remind us that, when we

mourn, it is the impossible return of the lost maternal object” (38). The corpse with the dress communicates the oxymoron, the living-dead mother, and the removal of the dress stresses the materiality of the dead mother, which illustrates Fausta’s denial of the lost maternal object.

The climax of the film is Máxima’s wedding and the moment when Fausta confronts all her deepest anxieties. After the wedding, a medium shot captures the release of a red Chinese lantern, often used during weddings to represent happiness and good luck. Then, the camera lens follows the floating lantern that disappears into the night sky. This long shot cuts to a close-up of Fausta sleeping on a table. The lyrics “Eres el sol que brilla en mis ventanas” play. In the background and out of focus, a man approaches her and covers her mouth. It is Tío Lúcido, who is extremely drunk. First he covers her mouth and nose and holds her down, suffocating her, and then he lets go and rambles to Fausta in Quechua about how she is alive and breathing: “¡Ya ves cómo respiras! Ves cómo quieres vivir. ¡Tú quieres vivir pero no te atreves! Respira. ¡Respira! ¡Fausta! ¡No te vayas!” Although this scene can be perceived as sexually aggressive behavior, because of her reaction, my reading is that there are no sexual intentions on behalf of her uncle. We can, however, identify with the terror Fausta feels when suddenly grabbed while sleeping peacefully. Tío Lúcido is frustrated and he cries: he wants his niece to live, emphasizing this by “burying” her momentarily so that she does not continue to live life like a phantom. The repetition of her name as she flees may indicate his remorse for his drunken actions.

Fausta is terrified and leaves the room, but she does not retreat into solitude nor go to her mother. The next scene cuts to Fausta walking with a hand on the walls to protect herself from lost souls and walking through a busy market. Curiously, she ends up at the home of Aída. In an extreme close-up of a black and white photograph of the man in military uniform (from the shoulders down) in Aída’s bedroom, Fausta’s reflection comes into view. She appears to be the

same size as the man in the photograph as she walks toward him. In effect, she goes to confront this soldier, symbolic of the rapist that attacked her mother. Fausta bends over to pick up the pearls on the floor quietly as Aída's hand hangs limply over the edge of the bed. By picking up the pearls, Fausta begins to let go of the fear that trapped her in the trauma narrative of her mother. The pearl is a product of a trauma, a wound inflicted on the inside of a mollusk, which becomes coated with strength and brilliance.

In the same manner, the potato, a symbol of the incorporated trauma, can flourish and blossom outside of it if she lets it go. The pearl scene cuts to an extreme close-up of the right side of her face as she walks away from the house. Her eyes are teary as she opens the garage door. She faints, and the camera lens is left with a blurry image of the house in the background, which then cuts to her hand on the cobblestone. A man with a bicycle approaches. The gardener Noé<sup>192</sup> finds her, fixes her dress so it covers her breast, and picks her up into his arms. Fausta cries for the first time in the film. For Derrida, weeping represents “what happens to us when everything is entrusted to the sole memory that is ‘in me’ or ‘in us’ [ . . . ] of an other who is greater than them, greater than what they or we can bear, carry, or comprehend” (33). She no longer wants to incorporate her mother *inside* of her. She wants “it,” the burden to be taken out: the fear, the sorrow, and the potato. She says to Noé in Quechua, repeating these words three times, “Que me la quiten. Que me la quiten de dentro.” Noé then carries her on his back through the market to the emergency room, so she can be treated and heal, and symbolically begin to *introject* her mother. The shot of her in the hospital bed is similar to the shot of Perpetua during the embalming scene. She is in the same position as her mother; her feet are in the forefront of the shot. However, the cream-colored blankets are like bandages covering Fausta, her face is

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<sup>192</sup> The name *Noé* is an allusion to the biblical story of the great flood. Noé saves Fausta and then gives her a potato plant representing regeneration.

exposed, and the fluorescent light shines. She is alive and healing.

In the last scene, Fausta is near the ocean, the place to which the siren needs to be returned, in a pickup truck with her family. There is a shot of the road, and the camera is on a vehicle that goes through a dark tunnel. We are moving from a journey of darkness into the light. At the end of the tunnel is a small ship that conveys the idea of a shipwreck, reiterating that things on land remain, but the sea is powerful enough to wash things away. Sand dunes surround a dirt road. From the back of the pickup truck, she asks Tío Lúcido to stop abruptly; it seems that this is an unexpected stop. Fausta shortens the journey of her mother from the Andes to the sea. A gas truck drives by hurriedly. Her mother is returned to the sea like in the song about the siren: “cuando la sirena termine de contar, se lo lleva al hombre y la suelta al mar.” Fausta lugs the body on her back, like Noé carried her, in a long shot across the dunes and takes it to the seashore. Fausta is resilient; after reliving her mother’s fear and trauma, she is healthy and strong. She sings in Quechua to her mother: “Mira el mar, ma. Mira el mar.” She has found the courage to bury her mother—not in the earth but by returning her to the sea, the ultimate symbol of death and cleansing. After all, according to Manrique’s famous metaphor *Nuestras vidas son los ríos que van a dar en la mar, que es el morir*, and this journey and action exhibits her acceptance of her mother’s passing. While the earth returns things, the sea swallows objects, allowing Fausta to finally introject Perpetua, love her and say goodbye, instead of incorporating her mother and trauma inside her body. Even though the mother who carried her in her womb suffered a trauma, Fausta is now free to be a healthy, beautiful pearl.

### **The Potato Metaphor: Resilient Cultures**

The potato metaphor in *La teta asustada* speaks to the rich cultural history of people from the Andes. As a symbol of identity it is one that throughout history in Latin America (and the



world) has been renegotiated or appropriated. Regina Harrison conceptualizes the history of the potato as one of acceptance of and resistance to difference, and one that represents a separate reality (172, 195). The potato epitomizes Andean knowledge handed down to Fausta Isidora Janampa Chauca<sup>193</sup> by women during a period of terrorism. While singing to herself, Fausta calls it her “escudo de guerra” and “tapón.” As a shield, it represents resistance from impending blows. As a coat of arms, the potato bears her Andean identity and a history of systemic violence against Andeans and their thought as well as their resistance. Her maternal surname further emphasizes her strength: the variation *Chauca* conjures the legend told by the Inca Yupanqui about the fierce warriors from Chanca, who waged war on Cuzco against the Incas, the dominant culture.<sup>194</sup> In the Huarochirí manuscript, a testament of ancient Andean beliefs, *Chanca* means second born (Salomon and Grosboll 46). This reminds us how Fausta experiences her mother’s trauma secondhand. Her paternal surname *Janampa* refers to Hanan Pacha, or the world above, and signifies a capability for flight: “El día que asciende al cosmos, Hanan Pacha, se transforma en arcoíris, después de superar y evolucionar el mundo de la materia, y fecunda a la Madre Tierra con plantas, peces, aves y animales, regalando a los hombres los colores” (Reyes Spindola n.p.). Her inherent capability for flight or growth as represented by the recurring imagery of doves and the potato plant (at the end of the film), demonstrates her transformative nature to recover and shed beauty on the earth. As Harrison suggests, the potato is a complex cultural metaphor for the Andes, which represents resourcefulness, resistance to violence, the ability to adapt and grow in any type of environment and, ultimately, the ability to survive. Fausta takes

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<sup>193</sup> This is a common name in the Andes according to Frank Solomon and Sue Grosboll (46).

<sup>194</sup> In *Suma y narración de los incas* (c. 1551) by Juan de Betanzos, he summarizes the content of chapter 6: “En que trata de cómo había muchos Señores en la redondez del Cuzco, que se intitulaban reyes y Señores en las provincias donde estaban; é de cómo se levantó de entre estos un Señor Chanca que llamaron Uscovilca, é cómo hizo guerra él y sus capitanes á los demás Señores, é los sujetó, é cómo vino sobre el Cuzco, teniendo noticia de Viracocha Inca, é de cómo Viracocha Inca le invió á dar obediencia, é despues se salió Viracocha Inca á cierto peñol, llevando consigo todos los de la ciudad” (20).

this knowledge of Andean resistance to Lima, where it marks her difference from the dominant society, represented by the medical community, and even from the changing Quechua migrant community.

Schwab poses a significant question about obstacles to recovery: “How do we deal with a haunting past while simultaneously acting in the present, with its own ongoing violence?” *La teta asustada* engages this question by revealing Fausta’s journey to resilience. Fausta does not only deal with the trauma of her mother, but she also has to confront contemporary violence. Her syndrome makes her a passive and dependent individual. Family or friends often accompany her when she goes to work because they know she is afraid to walk the streets alone. She does not speak and buries her desires and other emotions within her. This makes her vulnerable while working at the mansion. For example, Aída calls her Isidra,<sup>195</sup> and Fausta<sup>196</sup> does not correct her error. Aída also breaks her contract with Fausta and does not give her the pearls in exchange for her song. The primal scene impedes her from reacting towards the ongoing systemic violence of a class culture. By the end of the film, however, Fausta awakens, literally and metaphorically, to take action against injustice by taking the pearls that belong to her. The treatment of Quechua migrants in Lima, as exemplified by the relationship between Aída and Fausta and the potato metaphor, represents the ongoing exploitation of Andean migrants and their resilience.

In *La teta asustada*, the potato metaphor expands our understanding on the trauma suffered by indigenous peoples. The potato represents Andean diaspora and a struggle to cultivate resilience. Harrison has discussed the many varieties of potatoes in the Andes and the cultural significance or insignificance it has taken on throughout history. She notes how Guaman

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<sup>195</sup> *San Isidro* is the patrón saint of farmers, and is therefore a subject below Aída.

<sup>196</sup> *Fausta* is the name of Roman empress, and also a figure from a German legend in which the protagonist makes a pact with the devil. On other hand, the name *Aída* is the title of Verdi’s opera and name of central character, who is a princess. Both readings demonstrate how she cannot be named Fausta in Aída’s home because Aída is the ruler’ and how Fausta makes an agreement for her song she will be given pearls.

Poma infrequently draws potatoes but does have many images of corn: “Guaman Poma reflects the ideology of the potato as food for every day, for the masses, and not as a special, privileged food such as corn” (Harrison 175). Even in Quechua narratives, the Huarochirí dresses like a pauper, indicating his position at the bottom of the hierarchy and only eats potatoes, poor people’s food (175). Potatoes are bottom-feeders, dirty, and stigmatized.

This hierarchy that positions potatoes as inferior is also evident in *La teta asustada*. Noé possesses insight on flowers, as previously discussed. In the scene where Fausta has a disagreement with Noé, she is upset because there are no potatoes in the garden. He reiterates the notion that potatoes are cheap and ugly—“La papa es barata y florece poco”—and therefore not worthy of being in the garden.

Despite discourses of inferiority, Harrison notes the manner in which the potato has been cultivated and cared for in the Andes and how modern agriculture has much to learn from this tuber. In Harrison’s reading of “In Praise of the Potato” she interprets the potato’s strength and transformative properties from a root to a flower: “The symbolism of the esthetic, symbolized flower lingers in the poem and dissolves our (human) destructive tendencies shown in both eating the fruit of the plant and also waging war” (193–94). This analysis of the potato by Harrison is crucial to understanding the last scene in *La teta asustada* in which Fausta beholds a flowerpot with the flowering potato plant. This “ugly” tuber has sprouted a simple but pleasant flower; she no longer has to keep it inside herself and trim its roots, and she can observe the blooms and the starchy crop from the outside. The war waged by the Shining Path, the Peruvian military, or even Aída can trample the potato and prevent it from blooming and living.

According to Harrison, “The story of the potato is one of increasing tolerance; the Old World overcame its prejudice against the “lusty” tuber, consumed vast tons of potatoes, and,

because of the potato's starchy nutrients, experienced enormous population growth" (194). In this sense, we can observe in the film *Aída*'s mere tolerance for Fausta, especially when asking Fausta to hold the drill prompts an emotional reaction. *Aída*, for her part, does not react or say anything; throughout the film, she does not show signs of acceptance. As *Aída*'s potato, she takes Fausta into her home, cleans her, gives her a uniform, and expects her to be a certain way.<sup>197</sup> Fausta is an object of consumption, while *Aída* produces nothing original and is so frustrated, she throws her piano out of the window. She takes possession of and voraciously consumes Fausta's song, and as a result of its bountiful properties, receives applause, recognition, and wealth on the night of the recital. In the dressing room, Fausta (ironically) blows out *Aída*'s hair. While *Aída* set the grooming standards initially, Fausta is now grooming *Aída*. This increasing mere tolerance, allowing Fausta into private space, ceases when Fausta tells her something ironic on the car ride home: "¿Les gustó no?" The audience did not even know they metaphorically were eating potatoes, yet they enjoyed *her* song.<sup>198</sup> Feeling challenged, *Aída* disposes of her bad potato and does not compensate her with the promised pearls. In consequence, Fausta enacts her own moral code: she has to steal what she rightfully earned in order to bury her mother and move on with her life. Therefore, the potato metaphor reiterates the reality of exploitation occurring in modern-day Lima yet, at the same time, evokes agency, natural beauty, and the hope of regeneration.

In the last shots of the film, Fausta's niece is teaching a young boy how to dance *el zapateo andino* on the roof. Upon seeing someone at door (who does not come into the shot), she calls out to her aunt, "Fausta te llaman." In a medium shot, Fausta opens the door. She discovers

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<sup>197</sup> The head housekeeper leads Fausta into a room with personal hygiene and grooming items. She warns her to keep her nails trim and clean, or otherwise, the lady of the house will become upset.

<sup>198</sup> *Aída* ignores the narrative about the siren or the Quechua that Fausta originally used in the song. *Aída* only plays the melody Fausta created.

no one is there, but a gift awaits her. The camera cuts to a whitish-yellow flower. Fausta's face enters the shot as she bends down to smell the bloom. The camera lens moves down to the stem to the black flowerpot. In the dirt there are two potatoes. The camera cuts to the credits and a song from the 1960s, "Elsa" by Los Destellos, plays. The song is also a subgenre of *cumbia* called *chicha*, a fusion of Afro-Peruvian, Andean, and rock rhythms. Often these types of songs are about love and express the hardships faced by Andeans. In this particular love song, a line that particularly relates to the film is "Elsa que Elsa que Elsa . . . que quita el zapato que ya no puedo más." In Hispanic literature, the shoe ("*romper zapatos*") has often served as a euphemism for sexual intercourse. The singer wants Elsa to take her shoe off and dance because he can no longer wait for her. The shoe, like the potato, is a protector and barrier against intimacy.

Furthermore, the final imagery and music affirm the interpretation of a romantic relationship between Fausta and Noé. Although Noé initially rejected the idea of growing potatoes because they do not flower prettily, he grew one for her. Presumably, he left her the flowerpot as a meaningful surprise to show how he listens to and cares for her. Perhaps she is one potato and he is the other. After all, in appropriate growth conditions, tubers grow together, not alone. Potatoes do not stay buried in the soil but emerge when they are ready to harvest. The last scene suggests that this may be the beginning of a happy courtship and future marriage.

## **Conclusion**

Reading this national allegory *La teta asustada* through the lens of trauma theory allows for new interpretations and understandings of cycles of violence, the relationship between trauma and Andean identity, and how trauma affects past and present generations. The mother's milk metaphor in *La teta asustada* engages postmemory and the postgeneration by emphasizing how trauma is internalized, silenced, narrated and passed on from generation to generation. This

diaspora transports traumatic experience to urban centers, which may not know or identify with the generations who fled the armed conflict in the Andes and their children who heard these narratives. Indigenous cultures may codify and express trauma and resilience in different terms, and nonindigenous peoples may misinterpret these signs and dismiss them as unimportant or foolish beliefs. Instead of labeling people from the highlands as victims, the use of song and potato metaphors reveal a legacy of cultural resilience and (re)negotiation of identity after traumatic experiences. *La teta asustada* is a trauma and resilience narrative of postmemory that validates and symbolizes investigations conducted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as the testimonies of survivors collected by Theidon. The film suggests that society need not *incorporate* this trauma into the body of the nation, but *introject* the trauma by exhibiting an increased awareness and intercultural understanding of how the Andean highlands experienced the internal conflict and how the violence affects the postgeneration.

## Concluding Remarks

### Abandoning the Serpent Eating Its Own Tail: *Lo Andino* as an Object of Study

*My anthropological perspective blinded me from seeing the historical processes that were occurring at the time [ . . . ] I was unable to see clearly the degree to which that process would lead to such widespread violence against the peasantry because I did not place the events of the ten years that I studied Chuschi into a proper global historical perspective.*

—Billie Jean Isbell, *Defending Ourselves*

Orin Starn critically examines why anthropologists to quote the title of his controversial article “missed the revolution” in the Peruvian Andes: “no anthropologist realized a major insurgency was about to detonate, a revolt so powerful that by 1990 Peru’s civilian government had ceded more than half the country to military command” (63). Carlos Iván Degregori calls Starn’s article “caustic and controversial” but also agrees that “the conflict not only happened under the noses not only of North American anthropologists but also of Peruvian social scientists in general” (52). Starn introduces to North American academe a critical stance on *lo andino*, which he refers to as Andeanism. He argues that the concept is analogous to Edward Said’s *Orientalism*:

Andeanism has a similar logic. It dichotomizes between the Occidental, coastal, urban, and mestizo and the non-Western, highland, rural, and indigenous; it then essentializes the highland side of the equation to talk about “lo andino,” “the Andean world-view,” “indigenous highland culture,” or, in more old-fashioned formulations, “the Andean mind” or “the Andean Indians.” The core of the “Andean tradition” is presented as timeless, grounded in the preconquest past. Words like “indigenous,” “autochthonous,” “native,” and “Indian” are attached to modern peasants. (66)

Due to these preconceived notions in academe, Andeans are often represented “outside the flow

of modern history” (64). This connection between natives and their natural habitat or emphasis on their worldview communicates determinism and eliminates their participation in a complex system of human interaction. This discourse leaves little room for plurality of the human experience in the Andes and allows for ethnic generalizations about people from the Andes. Furthermore, Starn notes that the proliferation of the Andean has grown “during the 20th century to become a central motif in the writings of novelists, politicians, and travelers as well as the visual depictions of filmmakers, painters, and photographers” (64). He notes that Andean imagery has changed very little since the conquest and that cultural production persists in static representations of the Andean (64). Nonetheless, this begs the question: are cultural producers (re)producing dichotomies, or are cultural interpreters reading them as dichotomies? In ethnographic work, according to Starn, “Andeanist anthropology did not recognize the explosive pain and discontent in the highlands” (79). This suggests that there is a problem with the way we are reading this diverse space and peoples. Starn observes that which I observe in literary criticism: the narrow, monological scope of *lo andino*.

I have intentionally distanced myself from *lo andino* because it is too narrow to understand the Peruvian internal conflict and its future implications. Instead, I have proposed an emphasis on that which paradoxically rips people apart and pulls them together: human suffering and resilience in the face of adversity. This dissertation has traced cultural production that remembers the armed conflict of the 1980s and 1990s and the enduring consequences of traumatic memory. We have seen how the texts examined mark an ideological shift in representation of the violence and focus on the construction of cultural trauma, as outlined by Alexander and his colleagues. I have argued that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission created the space for narratives addressing the aftereffects of the conflict that emphasizes the



terrorism of the authoritarian state. The texts in this dissertation demonstrate how the armed conflict has problematized identity reformulation, solidarity, and moving forward. I have argued that these texts not only contain discourses of trauma but *are* narratives of cultural trauma that identify the offenders of the internal conflict and that communicate an injured sense of identity. The texts selected for the dissertation have focused on the indelible mark the armed conflict left on Peruvian identity and the ways in which they seek to cry out and to build solidarity around a painful but healing wound. These texts either actively question resilience or portray how people, despite the merciless blows of history, can move forward with their lives.

Initially, as we saw in the first chapter, “The Moral Imagination of the Peruvian Armed Conflict: Spaces of Death in *Lituma en los Andes* and *Rosa Cuchillo*,” narratives of violence have been read through an Andeanist lens as texts that implicated or exonerated the indigenous peasants or *mistis* and focused on the Andes and the terrorism of the Shining Path. In the works of Vargas Llosa and Colchado, we saw the ideological debate between *criollo* and Andean authors but also were able to observe points of contact between the two writers. Although *Lituma en los Andes* was thought to be an indictment of the Andean peasant, we found that Naccos represents a third space, neither *criollo* nor Andean, an imagined space of death created by internal armed conflict in which the villagers learned to kill their brothers and had to face the consequences of living with this “truth.” *Rosa Cuchillo* has been read as a text that vindicates the peasantry and validates the Andean cosmos; to an extent this is the case, but the text also underscores the failure of the multicultural nation, the fratricidal nature of the conflict and the fact that actors on all sides have committed transgressions that do not go unpunished. Neither *Lituma en los Andes* and *Rosa Cuchillo* can conceive of a nonviolent Peru. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission play *Rosa Cuchillo*, however, revises the violent conclusion of

novel. It reminds us of the sorrowful mothers—Antigones—who turned over corpses to find their children, and how this journey of discovery, reconciliation, and purification persists even after the conflict. In *Lituma en los Andes* and *Rosa Cuchillo*, this “gift of pessimism,” to use Lederach’s words, prompts us to reconsider the difficulty of building trust and the challenges of fomenting reconciliation in postconflict Peru.

At the advent of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, contemporary cultural producers questioned or revised the moral imaginations of these works from the 1990s. In chapter 2, “Exposing Truths in Detective Fiction: (De)Constructing Discourses of Trauma in *Abril rojo* and *Mientras huya el cuerpo*,” I emphasized the ways in which cultural producers after the commission differ from those who came before, and the ways in which they have carried over earlier practices. The new generations of writers, who may have indirectly experienced the conflict, assume the pen to write metaphysical detective fiction that speaks to a legacy of violence. Roncagliolo and Sumalavia set themselves apart from discourses of *lo andino* by portraying the traumatic effects of physical, sexual, and systemic violence on Peruvian citizenry. Both texts reject *criollo* and Andean ideological stances: *Abril rojo* is a bridge novel that has the guise of reinforcing stereotypes of the conflict but, in the space of the thriller, completely subverts the pro-military and *fujmorista* discourses. Similarly, Sumalavia seeks to address the armed conflict through an evasive detective short story about an ex-Peruvian Investigation Police Officer named Apolo. The narrator deconstructs it in his metafictional commentary to reveal the consequences of living in an authoritarian regime, and he questions overcoming the traumatic effects of violence on the body politic. The metaphor of the body has been prominent in my analysis of these texts. Both narrators map violence onto several bodies and expose the shame of the bystander-offender alongside the victims and pawns of the authoritarian state. The insanity

and sickness of the characters render healing or moving forward impossible under said conditions. These texts, as we have seen, demythologize the conflict and suggest that the armed conflict left not only a mark on indigenous and peasants populations but also what Roncagliolo would identify as the *mestizo* majority of Peru.

In chapter 3, I argued that *Cuchillos en el cielo* and *Ojos de pez abisal* reveal individuals' resilience after conflict and how the injustice in the rule of law persists in inhibiting their full recoveries. I have demonstrated that these texts portray Peru as a diasporic nation that needs to make a hospitable space for victim-survivors and ex-offenders. Socially accepted forms of revenge, as we saw, are insufficient in the transitional justice period, and these texts advocate for a restorative justice model. Punitive and symbolic measures alone do not address the needs of victims, survivors, and offenders. In contrast to the belief system of established state and legal institutions and communities, victims and offenders have common needs, like letting go of feelings of guilt and revenge, building self-esteem and image, telling their stories, and reestablishing secure bonds with their community. Offenses committed in the "fog of war" or "under orders" must provide healing for both victim and offender. Despite the existence of an adversarial and retributive criminal justice system, one cannot disregard how the internal armed conflict disrupted the interconnectivity of Peruvian communities and the need to reintegrate those accused (rightly or falsely) of being ex-insurgents and those living with troubling memories of their past. A complete paradigm shift is necessary in the Peruvian social conscious in order to incorporate victim and offender into the future of the nation.

The last chapter, "Mother's Milk and Potatoes: Transgenerational Trauma and Resilience in *La teta asustada*," focused on the postgeneration and the postmemory of the Peruvian internal conflict. I have argued that the internal conflict created a primal scene of violence in the

collective memory. We saw how the figure the mother has passed on trauma and resilience to her unborn child, and how her death raises the question of what one does with the bequeathal of an unspeakable burden and a legacy of violence during *otro tiempo*, which was meant for happiness. Through music, the pearl, Fausta, works through her mother's trauma and begins to formulate her own identity separate from Perpetua, the mother of pearl. *La teta asustada*, as we saw, could also be read productively as creating a particular kind of indigenous subjectivity that amplifies a general idea of what it means to be Peruvian in the postconflict period. This new Peruvian identity, symbolized by the Quechua migrant community, is adaptable, hardworking, dynamic, and resilient.

In examining different types of Peruvians in different contexts interacting with a diverse group of people, I have focused on commonalities between writers from different regions and symbolic characters in these texts. The approach most closely allied with my own has been exemplified by Marisol de la Cadena. By highlighting the contributions to the field by José María Arguedas, she critiques the “academic ideas and field practices” in the study of the Andes and the assumption that knowledge flows from North to South. Although some critics have dubbed Arguedas's perspective Andeanist, de la Cadena presents a liberating aspect of his work: the concept of *interculturalidad*. She explains that *interculturalidad* is a political project—a movement and concept seeking the recognition of plurality, a network of diverse actors—proposing the need for bilingual education, a dialogue among different cultures, and the production of new knowledge and frameworks (“The Production” 216–17). She sums it up as “a new social relationship” that takes into account plurality and interaction as well as hierarchies of gender, race, class, and ethnicity (217). Ultimately, de la Cadena illustrates how “anthropological knowledge is a dialogical process of translation” (221) in which many discourses coexist and are

all constantly informing each other. A dialogical analysis of contemporary cultural production helps elucidate the tension and conflict and appreciate how this “new social relationship” is unfolding.

The chapters of the dissertation exploring narratives of cultural trauma and resilience lead to one principle conclusion. It has been said that the *ouroboros*, the image of serpent eating its own tail, often symbolizes self-reflexivity or cyclicity—essentially something that is always recreating itself. While the symbol can communicate an idea similar to that of the phoenix, which regenerates from its ashes, it also symbolizes futility and circularity of thought. The serpent goes in circles, as if condemned to repeat the same pattern forever. Art historian Natalie Adamson interprets the *ouroboros* as a metaphor of frustration and uses it to describe a deficit in original artwork. In a similar way, the criticism dealing with *indigenismo*—or, more specific to the area of focus, *lo andino*—typically critiques representations of the Andes or Andeans and comes to the same conclusion about the oppression of the imagined indigenous subject by the racist, hegemonic culture. These conclusions are problematic in themselves because they take away agency from indigenous subjects as well as discredit writers that may be striving for social change.<sup>199</sup> I invoke the *ouroboros* to talk about *lo andino* because we need to break this pattern of criticism that focuses on the construction of difference and that fuels antagonism between those who are perceived to be *andinos* or non-*andinos*. As an object of study, *lo andino* makes something intangible tangible and thereby distances us from the subject we intended to understand. Instead of problem solving, *lo andino* perpetuates dichotomized identities in the minds of researchers, fixating them on patterns of civilization and barbarism and ethnic

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<sup>199</sup> See “Maíz, papas y carroña: la ‘identidad’ alimenticia del ‘indio’ de *Huasipungo*” by Gustavo V. García for monological criticism on *Huasipungo*. This article makes universal assumptions and judgments about the food in the Ecuadorian Andes and alleges that Jorge Icaza does not know the Indian and justifies their exploitation and extermination.

essentialism. *Lo andino* is an *ouroboros* because we keep revisiting the same tired arguments from the indigenism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that propose no solutions or models of reconciliation; we keep examining the poverty of the indigenous subject while tying it to a colonial or pre-Columbian past and not looking into its implications for the present and future. The Peruvian conflict has altered many identities, and with this consideration in mind, we must leave behind dichotomized, monological categories.

We can observe the emergence of *interculturalidad* and a *new social relationship* in the years following the Peruvian internal armed conflict and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The place of Peruvian citizenry in the memory and postmemory of the conflict has become the subject of much contemporary cultural production. The internal conflict destabilized the Peruvian highlands and marked a new wave of migration to urban centers. I also acknowledge that the armed conflict had devastating effects on communities in the Andean highlands: the testimonies and needs of victims from the Andes are paramount in transitional Peru. In the postcommission period, however, there is a new way of engaging Andean subjectivities and the way in which they are complicatedly tied to the whole of Peruvian identity.

This conclusion cannot be the final word on postcommission Peruvian narrative—or *lo andino*—but I hope that it is the beginning of more careful research and dynamic criticism. The subject of the Peruvian armed conflict is inevitably going to be on the minds and in hearts of cultural producers for generations to come—who may or may not take part in the ideological debate surrounding *lo andino*. There are other authors such as Daniel Alarcón and José de Piérola that narrate events about internal conflict. There are also texts such as the film *Las mala intenciones* (2011) by Rosario García Montero, the novels *El último cuerpo de Úrsula* (2009) and *Vergüenza* (2014) by Patricia de Souza, and *La memorias de Manú* (1997) by Silvia Mirando

Levando that invoke the memory of the armed struggle. This alerts us that the novel has been a male-dominated genre in Peru, yet women are becoming cultural producers, and their work has been unexplored in Peruvian literary criticism.

Contemporary cultural production is creating a dialogical process, and as critics we need to read the presence of people from the Andes as if they were inside history because they *are* inside history. Violent conflict reformulates identities and redefines social relationships. Instead of fomenting antagonism, can we as cultural critics be peacebuilders who agitate for reconciliation? Instead of constructing difference or accusing authors of prejudice in academic criticism, let us examine interactions between cultural groups and commonalities. If for a moment we choose to read a text as one that does not solely engage *lo andino* but approach it differently, could we find plurality and similarities between cultures represented in these texts? And, if these representations seem offensive, can we discard monological thinking and dichotomized identities and look into other reasons why we are offended? Can we instead employ dialogical thinking that reflects the complexity of human interaction? Can we examine the work written by those who do not take up the *criollo/andino* ideological debate? If not, we may fail to see important developments in cultural production in postcommission Peru.

### **Coda: After Trauma, Cuisine as a Sign of Resilience**

*Conocimos a don Cucho, que nos enseñó las virtudes de su inagotable peruanidad, y abrazamos a doña Sonia, que nos enseñó como nadie las delicias de la humildad. Recorrimos el Perú como quien destapa una olla escondida en un cuarto de atrás y descubrimos los tesoros de nuestra cocina regional. Descubrimos que por cada plato que uno podía añorar, surgían más de veinte que a uno le faltaba probar. Que por cada ingrediente que a uno le podía faltar, surgía más de cuatro que siempre lo podían superar.*  
—Gastón Acurio, *Perú: Una Aventura Culinaria*

*If the term “resilience” bothers you, then substitute one that allows you to imagine what it is that permits people to get up in the*

*morning and believe—despite all evidence to the contrary—that there might be a better day ahead of them and a future for their children.*

—Kimberly Theidon, *Intimate Enemies*

During the summers of 2009 and 2010, I gained a deep admiration for Peruvians and I also indulged in the gastronomic revival of Peruvian cuisine. I learned that chef Gastón Acurio has a celebrity status typical of soccer players and is renowned for defining Peruvian cuisine and bringing it to the attention of national and international audiences. He is an eloquent example of a person working to cultivate cultural resilience by instilling pride and uniting, in the kitchen, foods from all regions of Peru. At his world-famous restaurant *Astrid y Gastón*, my taste buds came alive with the spicy *ají* atop the *ceviche* and the meaty texture of fresh tuna topped off with a coconut foam. For dessert, I ate alfajores, *dulce de leche* sandwiched in between two shortbread cookies. On the street I devoured *tejas*, chocolates with pecans, raisins, and caramel, and the famous *anticuchos*, grilled beef hearts. In Pichanaki, a jungle town, I tried for the first time *el cerdo de la selva*. For lunch, my colleague and I would regularly feast on *pollo a la brasa*, *arroz con pato*, or *lomo saltado*; we often found ourselves at a local *chifa* (Chinese restaurant), too. After a long week of work, we would sip *pisco sour*, a *cuzqueña* beer, or *chicha*. In Cuzco, I ordered a hamburger only to discover it was ground alpaca meat with a refreshing mango salsa. At a hacienda in Tarma, I watched as our chefs baked with hot stones in the ground: they were creating the *pachamanca*, a Peruvian dish that consists of potatoes, *habas* (lima beans), *cuy* and trout. In Picoy, we ate a hearty milk-based breakfast drink with barley. For our trek, the people of Picoy gave us dozens of egg sandwiches and bananas that we could not possibly finish and ended up sharing with people we met along the way. In VES, I learned that migrants were given fruit trees to grow on their plots of lands, that every day a glass of milk was provided to each child, and that collectives of mothers take turns providing lunch to the children



in the community. Until that point, I had not realized the significance of the meals I shared with people that I encountered on my journeys and their relation to resilience.

In the epigraphs above I have cited chef Acurio, an example of an eloquent person working to cultivate cultural resilience, and Kimberly Theidon, who observed the resilience of communities in the Andes. Instead of finding hell or a paradise lost, and without resorting to discourses of cultural superiority and inferiority, they both emphasize Peru's cultural diversity and quotidian traditions. After conflict and trauma, life moves forward; we must remember our resilience and must return to our customs and rituals, listen to music, and nourish ourselves with art and food to survive. Cultural production, as we saw Camila explain to Zancudo in *Ojos de Pez abisal*, is the motor that keeps people going. For this reason, I would like to underscore that food also has a realistic and metaphorical function in the texts examined in the dissertation. *Lituma en los Andes* and *Rosa Cuchillo* share yet another commonality in that both texts depict characters, the drunken *serrucho* and Rosa, who cannot eat. The trauma they have experienced produces a sickness in their stomachs that the villager attempts to soothe with alcohol, and Rosa, who is unable to find her son's body, rejects any sustenance and dies of sadness. Similarly, in *Abril rojo*, Félix thinks about how delicious *anticuchos* are but the ongoing investigation brings him nausea that prevents him from eating at a restaurant in Ayacucho. Apolo, in *Mientras huya el cuerpo*, desires something sweet, but the hot cocoa he drinks aggravates his ulcer. In *Cuchillos en el cielo* family meal time is like walking around on eggshells, yet Milagros and her daughter make the best of their circumstances by literally picking the meat off the market floor, cooking it, and eating it together. Zancudo does not mention Japanese food; however, he nostalgically remembers the harvest, the celebrations, the music, and the customs associated with Huancayo and Samaylla. *La teta asustada* eloquently communicates that even though a mother may nourish

her infant with trauma, she also passes on the food of resilience to her kin. After trauma, even though one's identity is forever changed, the norm is to bounce back into life's customs and rituals that give us a sense of who we are and that build solidarity within the community. The cuisine metaphor is a hopeful reminder of the need to reformulate identities after violent conflict and to redefine social relationships in a reconciliatory manner.

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