

**Representations of  
Extractive Industries in Selected  
Fiction from Bolivia and Peru**

**Valentina Caruso**

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Department of Hispanic Studies  
University of Sheffield

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## ABSTRACT

The extractive industry is crucial to the economies of many countries in Latin America, particularly Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, Chile and Mexico. Whereas the study of this economic sector in the context of Latin America is well established in academia, cultural manifestations related to the exploitation of natural resources have not been sufficiently explored. This thesis examines the literary representations of extractive industries in two Bolivian and two Peruvian examples of fiction: *Aluvión de fuego* (1935) by Oscar Cerruto, *Canchamina* (1956) co-written by Víctor Hugo Villegas and Mario Guzmán Aspiazú, José María Arguedas' novel *Todas las sangres* (1964) and *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* (1986) by Mario Vargas Llosa. The focus on Bolivia and Peru is partly because these two countries share much in common: they base their economy on the development of extractive industries, they are characterised by the presence of the Andes and they have a high degree of cultural and social heterogeneity since they include different social, cultural and ethnic identities. Nevertheless, in spite of these similarities, they are distinctive from each other because of notable differences related to history, economy, social configuration and literature. Bearing this in mind, this study uses a comparative approach in order to show how the interpretation and the conceptualisation of extractive industries is culturally constructed and changes in these two countries. The thesis is composed of four chapters, each of which is based on the close reading of a single text. Its ultimate aim will be to discuss in which way and to what extent these novels contribute to the construction of extractive industry discourses in Bolivia and in Peru and engage with broader issues related to the expansion of extractive industries.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	1
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE .....	3
INTRODUCTION .....	5
The Extractive Industry in Bolivia.....	6
The Extractive Industry in Peru .....	15
Extractive Industry Fiction in Bolivia .....	21
Extractive industry fiction in Peru .....	23
The Andean Context .....	26
Corpus of Fiction and Critical Readings.....	31
Horizons of Expectations.....	37
Civilisation and Barbarism .....	45
Overall Approach.....	49
CHAPTER ONE.....	59
THE TIN EXTRACTION SETTING IN <i>ALUVIÓN DE FUEGO</i> : CONFIRMING AND NEGATING BORDER THINKING .....	59
Introduction.....	59
Historical Period .....	61
Oscar Cerruto: Political Militancy and Exile.....	65
The Mine as a Battlecamp .....	67
Mine and the Chaco Front as an Alterity .....	71
Parties: Alterity and Heterogeneity.....	76
Mines and the Chaco Front: Border Thinking Zones .....	84
Gender and Subalternity .....	92
The Hero(ine) Jacinta: A Stubborn Character?.....	97
The Hero(ine) Jacinta: An Assertive Character? .....	101
Disappearance of Jacinta .....	104
Disappearance of Mauricio.....	108
Survival of El Coto .....	110
Conclusion .....	112
CHAPTER TWO.....	117
EXPLORING LITERATURE AND SUBALTERNITY IN <i>CANCHAMINA</i> .....	117
Introduction.....	117
The Revolution of 1952 .....	119
Blended Text: Between <i>Testimonio</i> and Diary .....	123
Confirming and Challenging Authorship .....	127

Silence as A Weapon of Authorship.....	130
The Narrator and the Mineworkers: Between Proximity and Distance.....	134
Fenelón Aparicio and <i>Palliris</i> : Identification of Identities.....	144
Identification: Recognition and Misrecognition.....	149
<i>Testimonio</i> : Appropriation/Violence and Distance .....	159
Possession within Revolution.....	165
Literature as a Tool of Agency.....	169
Conclusion.....	172
CHAPTER THREE.....	177
MINING CONTACT ZONES IN <i>TODAS LAS SANGRES</i> : UTOPIA OR DYSTOPIA? .....	177
Introduction .....	177
Different Stages of Acculturation and The Anxious Dystopia.....	179
Change vs Stasis.....	186
The Descent into the Mine: The Death of a Dichotomy.....	191
The Birth of a New Hybridity .....	196
Birth: Passage from Marginal to Leading Position .....	205
The Detachment of the Engineer .....	210
Mining Space: A Destabilising Prostitute .....	212
The Ambiguous Position of <i>Mestizos</i> .....	217
Rendón Wilka: Between Modernity and Tradition .....	221
Rendón Wilka: From Real Social Subject to Legend.....	228
Conclusion.....	231
CHAPTER FOUR .....	235
¿ <i>QUIÉN MATÓ A PALOMINO MOLERO?</i> : THE MINE SPACE AND ITS PROXIMITY TO THE OTHER.....	235
Introduction .....	235
Continuity between Literary and Public Persona .....	237
Talara: Between Fiction and Reality .....	241
The Space of Talara.....	245
Challenging the Hierarchy: Between Writing and Speech.....	247
The Ambiguous Dynamic of Rumours.....	254
Silence and Fanaticism .....	256
Voyeurism and Imagination .....	259
The Inversion of Voyeurism and Imagination.....	261
Hybridity and Division in the Representation of Space .....	265
Animal Imagery.....	268
Pollution: Something Abject .....	271
Vargas Llosa: The Victory of the Author.....	276

Conclusion .....	278
CONCLUSION .....	283
WORKS CITED .....	291
Primary Sources .....	291
Secondary Sources .....	292
Online Resources .....	305





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## **BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

The final bibliography is divided into three sections. The first and second sections include the primary and secondary sources cited in the body of the thesis, and the third contains the online materials cited in this project.

All the works are listed in alphabetical order and according to the dates of edition used.



# INTRODUCTION

At the time of writing, the corruption scandal involving the company Odebrecht has affected almost twenty countries in Latin America. Odebrecht is a Brazilian corporation which operates in the field of construction engineering and extractive industry projects. It has been accused of paying bribes to Latin American industry managers, ministers and even presidents in exchange for concessions. Among the many influential figures involved in this case is Miguel Atala Herrera, who was manager of the Peruvian state-owned oil company *Petroperú* during the second presidency of Alán García from 2006 to 2011. This and a number of other recent scandals demonstrate the contentious nature of the state of the management of extractive industries in Peru and other Latin American countries. While such controversies have been both widespread and very much alive well into the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, the present thesis focuses on earlier periods and on two countries in particular, Bolivia and Peru. Moreover, its main object of examination is the literary representation of the extractive industry, concentrating on particular examples, in the shape of two Bolivian novels and two Peruvian novels. The main body of the thesis consists of four chapters, each of which is based on the close reading of a single text. The first two chapters examine *Aluvión de fuego* (1935) by Oscar Cerruto and *Canchamina* (1956) by Víctor Hugo Villegas and Mario Guzmán Aspiazú. The final two chapters focus on *Todas las sangres* (1964) by José María Arguedas and *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* (1986) by Mario Vargas Llosa.

Before proceeding to examine the selected texts for this project, an introductory chapter is provided and is formed of three parts. The first section gives an extensive overview of extractive industry development in Bolivia and Peru. After this contextual and historical background, this part delineates the main Bolivian and Peruvian novels related to the extractive industries. The second section explains the cultural peculiarity of

these two countries, the high concentration of Andean populations. Then, it introduces the texts selected for this analysis as well the main critical readings. The third section illustrates the dichotomy of civilisation and barbarism, an important interpretative framework for examining extractive industry novels both in Bolivia and Peru. Finally, it explains the overall approach used for this project.

## **The Extractive Industry in Bolivia**

According to Wallenstein, colonisation of Latin American countries was closely interlinked with the extraction of mineral goods, such as gold and silver, as well as the transfer of these materials from Latin America (the supposed periphery) to Europe (the supposed centre) (Wallerstein 1974: 41, 336).

The development of extractive industries in Latin America is explored in depth in the articles collected in *Social Conflict, Economic Development and the Extractive Industry: Evidence from South America* (2012) edited by Anthony Bebbington. The text provides a comparative study of this economic sector in Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia. The comparison between these three Latin American countries is mainly due to the fact that they are all similar from a geographical, political and historical point of view. Nevertheless, in spite of these affinities, they differ from each other in the way in which they promoted the development of the extractive industries: 'Even though they share Andean mountains, an Amazon basin and much colonial and republican history, geological resources and political economy dynamics have interacted in quite different ways in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia to produce three distinct resource-based development paths' (Orihuela and Thorp 2012: 43).

From this comparative research, it appears that Bolivia stands out amongst these countries in two respects: the more active role of the state in both managing extractive industries and diversifying the economy. These interventionist measures in the industrial

sector brought about the development of what Gray Molina calls the ‘political accommodation’, consisting of a more negotiated approach of the state towards popular interests (2005). Throughout Bolivian history, various episodes demonstrate how Bolivian political authorities had to accommodate popular claims and, in particular, the needs of miners. In 1937 miners’ mobilisations led Busch, the president at the time, to propose a Labour Code in the Parliament. This new law foresaw the right to strike and to create unions of workers (Lora 1977: 218).<sup>1</sup> Another example of political accommodation was the hunger strikes organised by four miners’ housewives during the repressive regime of Hugo Bánzer Suárez. The women who initiated this form of peaceful resistance asked for the removal of military posts in the mining sites, the return of the labour unions, the rehiring of the mineworkers who were fired and readmission of all political exiles. The result of this protest was very successful. The numbers of strikers rose up to twelve hundred, foreign organisations showed their solidarity with the miners; this strike along with other forms of protest obliged the dictator Banzer to call elections (Stephenson 1999:183).

By comparing the three countries, it can be ascertained that Bolivia is characterised by the most ‘conscious and politically articulate union movements’ (Crabtree and Crabtree-Condor 2012: 52). From the beginning of the Revolution in 1952 to the closure of the state mine in 1985, the FSTMB (Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia) has exercised substantial political influence, together with the COB (Central Obrera Boliviana) (Crabtree and Crabtree-Condor 2012: 52). According to J. Crabtree and Crabtree Condor, protests and conflicts have fostered more institutional transformations, mainly due to the strong role of these social movements as well as the negotiations

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<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the authorities’ concession of these rights to the mineworkers was not immediate; indeed, the promulgation of the Labour Code was delayed because of the opposition of the *rosca minera* (Roddick and van Niekerk 1989:133). Its definitive approval was only reached in 1942 following the violent protests in Catavi. During these demonstrations, miners demanded a pay rise and freezing prices in the mining shops. The Minister of Labour had to find compromises with mineworkers giving some concessions on food prices and finally enacting the Labour Code (Lora 1977: 218).

between the Bolivian state, community-based organisations and extractive industry leaders (Crabtree and Crabtree-Condor 2012: 62).

The main Bolivian areas in which natural resource deposits are concentrated are the *Altiplano* and the Chaco. The *Altiplano*, the widest Andean area in Bolivia, encompasses silver deposits at Cerro Rico near Potosí and various tin centres between Oruro and Uncía (Borsdorf and Stadel 2015: 234). On the other hand, the peripheral area of Chaco, which is close to Paraguay and Brazil contains numerous hydrocarbon reserves. The next sections will illustrate how the border region of Chaco has played a relevant role, both in the development of the extractive industries and in Bolivian history.<sup>2</sup>

From the colonial period to the first decades of the twentieth century, the main Bolivian mineral resource industry was the extraction of silver; later, from the twentieth century onward, the main productive extractive industry was based on the exploitation of tin. Indeed, around 1900, the tin economy led to the formation of a new Bolivian business class concentrated mainly in the northern regions of Bolivia. The most powerful families were: Simón Patiño in Cochabamba; the Aramayos, a family previously engaged in silver production; and Mauricio Hoshschild, a European Jew resident in Bolivia (Orihuela and Thorp 2012: 32). These producers of tin became representatives of a new political group, the Liberals, which gained more political influence than the pre-existing political grouping of Conservatives, mainly represented by silver producers and owners of haciendas. In 1899, they took hold of the government and decided to move the seat of government from Sucre in the south to La Paz in the North (Kohl 2006: 43-44). Along with tin production,

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<sup>2</sup> From Pre-Columbian period, the Chaco was populated by nomadic and semi-nomadic Indigenous communities such as Tobas, Weenhayek, Guaraní, Tapiete. The ethnic groups of this area have experienced episodes of violence, dispossession and marginalisation since the Republican period. In the first decades of 1900, the Bolivian government allowed foreign industries to explore the areas of Chaco. In particular, Standard Oil of New Jersey concentrated its search for oil in the Chaco areas, ranging from the department of Santa Cruz to the south of Tarija (Humpreys Bebbington 2012: 136). Following the Chaco War and the Revolution of 1952, the national oil industry supplanted the US industry and intensified extractive activities in the Chaco region by drilling 45 wells approximately. Later, at the end of 90s, the gas boom and the extensive privatisation of the hydrocarbon sector led to a radical transformation of this area: ‘the backward remote image of the Chaco Tarijeño was transformed overnight into an apparition of abundance of riches in the desert’ (Humpreys Bebbington 2012: 138).



the extractive industry also flourished through the development of oil production in the Chaco region of Tarija (Humpreys Bebbington 2012: 137).

In 1929, the tin market collapsed following a world crisis. Under these difficult economic circumstances, the Bolivian state tried to avoid the risk of a fiscal deficit by controlling foreign exchanges and imposing taxes on exports and profits (Dunkerley 2007: 231). Contemporaneously, Patiño set up a meeting which brought together the main Bolivian and international tin firms in order to cut production costs. Nevertheless, these agreements were not successful as they were not followed by most Bolivian companies. In late 1930, market conditions worsened considerably so that the government had to take direct control over production quotas (Klein 2011: 119-120). This period of economic crisis made the Bolivian political system unstable. In 1935, the Chaco War between Paraguay and Bolivia broke out. As is illustrated in the next sections, this conflict ended with the victory of Paraguay. The humiliation of defeat and the substantial loss of oil deposits in the Chaco region triggered a national crisis in Bolivia (Klein 2011: 177).

After the war, military regimes succeeded each other; some established new measures which had a notable impact on the Bolivian extractive sector. For instance, from May 1936 to July 1937, the military *junta*, presided over by General David Toro, was in power. In addition to the Labour Code already mentioned, it decreed welfare legislation, a minimum wage and primarily it confiscated the Standard Oil Company in 1937. For the first time in Latin America, a president nationalised an extractive industry (Hylton 2007: 71; Klein 2011: 190). The following government, the military regime of Busch, exercised more state control over tin company foreign exchange. In 1939, it approved a decree 'requiring all the large mining companies to lodge their foreign exchange with the Banco Central' (Dunkerley 2007: 228). Following this measure, the businessman Patiño expressed his dissent against Busch's politics: 'in a moderately organised country the burdens of a war and post-war period would have been equitably distributed, but in Bolivia

[...] all these burdens have weighed exclusively on mining' (Dunkerley 2007: 233). During the Second World War, tin production prospered. Nevertheless, tin profits in this period were notably lower than those during the First World War (Whitehead 1992: 133).

Another critical period for the tin market was the post-war economic depression. In fact, between 1947 and 1952 'Bolivian companies production was a fifth lower than in 1940-1946, and they were now earning less in real terms than in the mid-1920s' (Dunkerley 2007: 239). The difficult economic situation was a catalyst for social mobilisation. The years between 1947 and 1949 were a period of intense protests, some of which led to significant achievements by the Bolivian working classes (Hylton 2007: 75). For example, the Catavi massacre was the starting point of the emergence of the FSTMB (Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia), which later liaised with the political party MNR, Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Hylton 2007: 75). In 1952 tin prices were very unstable due to the terms imposed by the US on the world market (Dunkerley 2007: 241). These economic conditions brought about a stalemate in the Bolivian economy. During this period, the government of Urrigolagoitia had no choice but to exercise more state control over foreign exchange earnings. The subsequent president, Aramayo, felt obliged to follow the same economic measures as Urrigolagoitia, but, at the same time, chose to back the MNR in order to put into practice the key element of its political agenda: the nationalisation of Bolivian mines. On 9th April, MNR organised a march in La Paz; after seven days, Paz Estenssoro assumed the presidency. Thus, Dunkerley underlined the strong linkage between economic crisis and Bolivian Revolution: the MNR nationalised the tin industries but resorted to nationalist discourses which emerged after the Chaco War to mask this mere economic operation (Dunkerley 2007: 241). According to Khol, immediately after the Revolution, the MNR supported the formation of the trade union COB (Confederación Obrera Boliviana), one of the main

institutions which encouraged the MNR to nationalise the Bolivian mines. Moreover, in general terms, it played an important role in the reform agenda of the MNR (Kohl 2006:46).

In 1956, the MNR government under President Hernán Siles Suazo showed the first signs of decline, as it was faced with serious economic problems, such as ‘declining revenues, rampant inflation and a food crisis’ (Kohl 2006: 49). The economic situation worsened so much that the following president, Paz Estenssoro, had to resort to the IMF and the United States for financial help. The IMF programme settled certain conditions for Bolivia: ‘reductions in government spending and tariff protection, a unified exchange rate and deficit elimination in state-owned firms through the removal of price controls and subsidies’ (Dunkerley1984: 87). These economic measures exacerbated the tensions between the government and the labour movement but also gave more power to the most pro-business and conservative sectors. Moreover, during the Cold War the United States intervened more in Bolivian political and economic affairs in order to defeat the threat of communism in Latin America. This intrusion of the USA had negative consequences on Bolivian politics. In fact, the years from 1964 to 1982 are known in Bolivian history as a period of military regimes. In this cycle of dictatorships, there was only one short-lived progressive government, the presidency of Alfredo Ovando Candía from 1969 to 1971. This president is known in Bolivian history for the nationalisation of the oil industries. Indeed, on October 17 1969, the president ordered the police and army to occupy the installations of Gulf Oil and, some days later, nationalised the US company. It was taken over by the Bolivian national company YPFB (Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos) (Klein 2011: 226). During this period of military regimes, one of the most repressive was that of General Hugo Banzer, from 1971 to 1978. This president gained great support from the US and right-wing governments of Brazil, Chile and Argentina. He was also backed by the Asociación Nacional de Mineros Medianos, an elite mining organization which included the managers of three extractive companies EMUSA,

COMSUR and ESTALSA (Khol 2006: 52). During his dictatorship, Bolivia faced an economic crisis: the bubble provoked by the loan from petrodollars burst and, as a consequence of this, the public debts; increased and the extractive industries stagnated. Under these difficult economic circumstances, the illegal production of cocaine started to grow. Additionally, a high number of peasants' and miners' demonstrations were strongly repressed (Hylton 2007: 86). Because of his human right violations and his inability to contain the economic crisis, Banzer gradually lost support both internationally and domestically (Hylton 2007: 88). Finally, the hunger strike led by mineworkers' wives which has been described above was the final event triggering the collapse of Banzer's dictatorship.

After Banzer, the following four years were politically unstable as Bolivians saw a succession of eight governments amongst which it is worth mentioning the 'narco-military' dictatorship of General Luis Garcia Mesa from 17 July 1980 to 4 August 1981. (Hylton 2007: 89). Later, between 1982 and 1985, a leftist coalition under the leadership of Siles Suazo came to power. This political bloc was the first to lean towards an economic approach more centred on the free market and on the non-interventionism of the state in the industrial sector. In that period, the Bolivian economy was still struggling because of the increasing public debt; the only sector which was prospering was the cocaine production (Hylton 2007: 91; Khol 2006: 56-57) From 1985 to 1989, Ángel Víctor Paz Estenssoro ran for president again. He definitively put an end to the nationalisation of mines. Due to the economic crisis and the fall of tin prices, about 2000 miners were fired and some of them had to seek a job in cocaine production (Hylton 2007: 95; Khol 2006: 61). With the encouragement of the US, this president promoted the NET, a new programme of policies whose main objectives were cutting government's expenses, halting the hyperinflation and encouraging foreign investments (Hylton 2007: 91; Khol 2006: 61).

In the 90s, the IMF and the World Bank exercised more pressure on the Bolivian government and signalled the inefficiency of the state-owned industries like the national oil company YPFB. Faced with these criticisms, President Jaime Paz Zamora, who was in office between 1989 and 1993, decided to orient the political economy of Bolivia toward the privatisation of the industrial sector and the promotion of foreign investments. With regard to the extractive sector, he approved new laws aimed at 'shifting control of natural resources and other economic sectors from state to private — largely foreign — control' (Perreault 2006:156). One of the new measures was the 1990 Law of Investment, which had the main objective of protecting foreign investors against government interference in the market. Another was the Law of Hydrocarbons 1194 which allowed foreign private firms to sign contracts with the YPFB (Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos). This new policy led to an important change: the hydrocarbon sector was not exclusively national but it was opened to foreign investments (Kaup 2010: 126).

Nevertheless, the most radical policy was introduced by the following president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada in the mid-1990. Indeed, he ratified the Plan de Todos, a new plan of different reforms, among which some measures contributed to the end of state investment, the privatisation of various public sectors and the allocation of natural resources to transnational firms (Perreault 2006: 156). Through the law of capitalisation, the state sold majority shares in five state industries: electricity production and distribution, railroad and airline transportation, telecommunications and hydrocarbon extraction and distribution. As a result of this, these state-owned companies were privatised and became transnational firms (Kaup 2010:127; Perreault 2006: 156). Moreover, in order to attract more foreign investors, the state reduced royalty and taxation rates from 50 percent to 18 percent (Kaup 2010: 127).

This increasing privatisation of industries in Bolivia led to more social inequalities within the country and a growing discontent, especially when the privatisation of public

sectors increased. (Kohl 2006: 30-32). At the beginning of 2000, there were two large protests whose main claims were for national sovereignty over natural resources: the *Guerra del Agua* in Cochabamba in 2000 and the *Guerra del Gas* which took place in 2003 mainly in the *Altiplano* and in La Paz. The *Guerra del Agua* started when the government decided to privatise the public water services in Cochabamba by giving the water management to a transnational consortium called Aguas de Tunari (Perreault 2006: 150). There were various marches and road blockades, as well as a referendum, which ended with the majority voting against water privatisation. After this strong popular resistance, the government had no choice but to annul the contract with the multinational company Agua de Tunari (Perreault 2006:156-160). The *Guerra del Gas* began when a transnational consortium of energy companies called LNG, together with the Bolivian government, authorised the transportation of gas through a pipeline from Bolivia to a Chilean port, with Mexican and US markets as its last stop. This new business created controversy among different social actors. The Bolivian nationalist politicians and armed forces were against the transportation of gas to a Chilean port, reviving old tensions between Chile and Bolivia which have persisted since the Pacific War (1879-1883).<sup>3</sup> Additionally, a strong resistance was articulated by social movements involving miners and peasants in El Alto and the *Altiplano*, as well as middle-class activists and intellectuals in La Paz. These violent protests led to the resignation of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (Perreault 2006: 160-164). Perrault highlights the close linkage between these two different cases of protest. Both the *Guerra del Agua* and the *Guerra del Gas* were not mobilisations circumscribed within a particular region, but rather had national importance (Perreault 2006:151). Both manifestations support two key ideas: defending national

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<sup>3</sup> The Pacific War was fought by Chile against Peru and Bolivia. The reason for this conflict was Chile's attempt to possess the Bolivian and Peruvian coasts which were rich in nitrate, a profitable resource used as a fertilizer. The war ended with the victory of Chile over Peru and Bolivia. As a consequence of this defeat, Peru lost the Tarapacá department and Bolivia lost its unique coastline which was its outlet to the Pacific Ocean (Brewer 2006: 68; Bizarro 2017: 532).

sovereignty over national resources and opposing the power of transnational firms (Perreault 2006: 167).

In 2006, Evo Morales' presidency marked an important phase in the development of the Bolivian extractive industries. Indeed, the key ideas of his political campaign included: reducing trade relationships with USA; exercising more control over resource extraction; and preserving Indigenous rights. In 2007, he followed this political line when he nationalised the gas industries and approved the law of prior consultation. This new decree mandated that every extractive project must have been authorised first by local communities potentially affected by this exploitation of natural resources (Haarstad and Campero 2012: 83-84). Nevertheless, in the following years of his presidency, Morales' pro-Indigenous politics was contradicted by the measures that he took toward some Indigenous communities' protests. An episode which drew international media attention in 2011 was the building of a road as well as gas extraction projects in Isiboro Secure National Park and the Indigenous Territory nature reserve (Haarstad and Campero 2012: 83). Various protests and strikes led Morales to suspend this initiative. This event sheds light on the contradiction between Morales' pro-Indigenous discourses and his economic agenda, based on the national development of the extractive industries. According to Haarstad and Campero, this episode illustrates the way in which the relationships between national and local actors are often subject to extractive industry relations beyond the national scale. In the specific case of the protest in 2011, the road construction formed part of a wider project, involving different countries in Latin America (Haarstad and Campero 2012: 85).

### **The Extractive Industry in Peru**

In comparison with Bolivian institutions, the Peruvian state has exercised less control over the development of extractive industries. In this respect, the comparative

research completed by John Crabtree and Isabel Crabtree-Condor underlines that, particularly in the Peruvian highlands, ‘the functions of the state have been exercised not by the authorities in distant Lima but rather by companies or, more particularly, the families owning those companies’ (Crabtree and Crabtree-Condor 2012: 49). Therefore, the Peruvian state has not played a significant mediating role between society and these industries. As a consequence of this, social activism has been much weaker in Peru than in Bolivia. Moreover, the main difference between Bolivian and Peruvian social movements lies in fragmentation: ‘it remains the case that — especially in comparison with Bolivia — most social movements are fragmented forces that lack the power to influence state policy in any fundamental way. Peru has not seen the emergence of a strong ethnic solidarity that binds people and social movements together’ (Crabtree and Crabtree-Condor 2012: 54). The two authors assert that not only grassroots movements but also Peruvian socialist parties have had little influence over Peruvian society, since the leftist political forces were not powerful in the political panorama because they lacked a strong institutional base and also were not effective vehicles for the political aspirations of the working class (Crabtree and Crabtree-Condor 2012: 58).

As in Bolivia, the extraction of natural resources constitutes the core sector of the Peruvian economy. During the colonial period and for some decades after independence, the main extractive activity was the mining of silver. From 1900 onwards, the copper industries expanded much more than the silver ones (Contreras and Cueto 2007: 186). From 1900 to 1930, the Peruvian economy was marked by a massive increase in foreign investment in the extractive sector. These multinational enterprises had a gradually strengthening presence in Peru and contributed to the de-nationalisation of some Peruvian mining companies. For example, Lizandro Proaño, owner of Sociedad Minera Alapampa, was impelled to sell his company to the US firm Cerro de Pasco Mining Corporation (Contreras and Cueto 2007: 207-208). The main foreign extractive industries which settled



in Peru include: the Cerro de Pasco Mining Corporation, Standard Oil and Vanadium Company. The Cerro de Pasco Mining Corporation developed in Peru's central highlands and focused on the exploitation of silver, gold and copper reserves. In 1922, this company opened a big foundry in Oroya and bought the open pit mine Morococha from the family-run company, Pflucker. Moreover, the US company acquired a large number of reserves, such as Yauricocha, Julcani, Tintaya, Ferrobamba, Cerro Verde, Quellaveco, Antamina and Chalcobamba (Contreras and Cueto 2007: 208-210). Some decades later, foreign oil companies also expanded mainly along the Northern coast of Peru. The multinational company, International Petroleum Company (IPC), bought the oil deposits of La Brea, Pariñas, Zorritos and Negritos, some of which were previously exploited by the British company, London and Pacific Petroleum, and by the Italian immigrant Faustino Piaggio (Contreras and Cueto 2007: 210).

The years from 1963 to 1990 marked a rupture in the Peruvian economy based on a *laissez-faire* approach. Presidents of this period were more oriented toward state-led development. This new political economy consisted of more public investment, protective measures against competition from imports, and more active government intervention in the Peruvian economy. Fernando Belaúnde Terry was the first president who advocated state interventionism. He increased public investments, especially aimed at the construction of new roads. He was also determined to propose a new land reform and to reduce the power of the US oil company, IPC. Nevertheless, he was not able to fulfil most of his promises due to the opposition of the Peruvian elite and the IPC (Sheahan 1999: 132-134). Later, the left-wing general Juan Velasco managed to fulfil the political programme of Belaúnde Terry. He rapidly nationalised a wide range of industries, including the International Petroleum Company, which became the state-owned petrol company, *Petroperú*. In general terms, most of his reforms had the main objectives of reducing class conflict, reducing the power of the traditional elite and reinforcing the

country's economic autonomy (Sheahan 1999:133). However, the military regime of Velasco did not counteract effectively the negative effects of inflation. Indeed, it prevented the public industries from raising the prices of their products to cover their increased expenses. This led to indebtedness for most industries. One of the state firms affected by the crisis was *Petroperú*, which fell into deficit and had to request foreign loans in order to become solvent again (Sheahan 1999:137). The Peruvian economic problems were exacerbated later when Morales Bermúdez, and later García, were in office. The main causes of this economic crisis included the increase in inflation, the violent revolution of Sendero Luminoso, which brought impoverishment and isolation to the highland communities, and rising public debt. The interventionist approach of García led to a slight and brief improvement in the Peruvian economic situation. He exercised a strong control over prices, interest rates, exchange rates and wages, prioritised the growth of the agricultural sector and implemented new measures aimed at promoting private business. In spite of these initiatives, inflation increased considerably in 1988, as it reached seven times the rate of 1987. Industrial firms were negatively impacted by the government's decision to maintain fixed prices, regardless of increasing costs: *Petroperú* fell into an unsustainable deficit. Nevertheless, these economic problems were of a minor extent compared to those which Peru faced due to the increasing violence of Sendero Luminoso (Sheahan 1999: 139-142).

Due to the civil war, the crisis and the ineffective political measures of Alán García, a strong distrust for the traditional political classes emerged. As a consequence, the 1990 elections concluded with the triumph of Alberto Fujimori, a person of Japanese descent, coming from the lower-middle class, who had no ties with the previous ruling classes (Stokes 2001: 48). Fujimori's presidency was controversial for many reasons: at the end of his administration, he was accused of corruption and human rights violations (Bantekas and Oette 2016: 139). With regard to his economic policies, he introduced a series of

‘radical neo-liberal reforms’, one of which involved the amendment of the existing land reform. The change in this law was aimed at creating a distinction ‘between surface land rights and subsoil rights over the contents of the land, which were classified as “national heritage”’ (Coxshall 2010: 43). This alteration gave the peasant communities the right to occupy the surface of their land, but contemporaneously it authorised foreign mining-companies to exploit the subsoil of the same land (Coxshall 2010:43). Moreover, by setting below-average tax rates, he promoted foreign investment in Peru. As Coxshall says, Fujimori implemented new measures which ‘undersold the country's natural resources and undercut the communities affected by mining in Peru’ (Coxshall 2010:44).

After Fujimori’s dictatorship, the next presidencies included proposals for attracting foreign investments in the extractive sector in their manifestoes. In 2006, Alán García became president of Peru again and approved various decrees aimed at developing the mining industries. His economic programme had the following priorities: formalising property rights, selling land, attracting large-scale investments and developing modern technologies (Bebbington 2012: 9). During his administration, the expansion of the extractive industries in the Amazon was the cause of different strikes and protests. In the Amazonian town of Bagua, a demonstration degenerated into violence: 11 civilians as well as 23 police officers died and 234 people were wounded. The repressive measures that the state used against these protests aroused intense controversies (Haarstad and Campero 2012: 84; Bebbington 2012: 9). This debate also escalated when Alán García described Amazon communities in derogatory terms and considered their rights to local land protection to be an obstacle to Peruvian development.

Estas personas no tienen corona, estas personas no son ciudadanos de primera clase, que puedan decir 400000 nativos a 28 millones de peruanos tú no tienes derecho de venir por aquí; de ninguna manera. Eso es un error gravísimo y quien piense de esta manera quiere llevarnos a la irracionalidad y al retroceso primitivo.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See Alan García y los ciudadanos de primera clase—Bagua Perú, Ricardo Marapi Salas, YouTube [online video].

Haarstad and Campero considered that this event illustrated the conflict between national development priorities and local community sovereignty over the areas in which natural resources are exploited (Haarstad and Campero 2012: 84). After this episode, there was an increasing interest in the right to prior consultation: the state should receive consent from local communities before allowing extractive industries to work in certain areas (Haarstad and Campero 2012: 84). The first *Ley Consulta*, that is, a Prior Consultation Law, was approved in 2012 (Haarstad 2012: 12).

Moreover, according to Haarstad e Campero, the violent episode in Bagua contributed to the victory of Ollanta Humala in the 2011 elections. Indeed, the new president gained wide support amongst the Andean communities because he defended a new political line which leaned towards leftist ideas and was more distant from neoliberalist ideas. For example, with regard to the extractive sector, he promised more restrictions and higher taxes on mining industries. Nevertheless, most of his promises were not kept. Some months after his presidency, he approved a gold mine project run by a US company, Newmont Mining Corporation, in Cajamarca. Immediately, there were new protests aimed at hampering this new industrial enterprise. The President declared the state of emergency, and only later decided to negotiate with the Cajamarca community (Haarstad and Campero 2012: 84). This event highlights an important aspect of extractive industry development: ‘tensions between local rights and national extractive strategies are not simply erased by a shift of power from the right to the left, or by installing the “indio” in the highest office’ (Haarstad and Campero 2012: 84).

## Extractive Industry Fiction in Bolivia

The literary depiction of the mining environment runs through a considerable subsection of Bolivian literature, reflecting how the extractive industry has played a significant role in the economic development of this country.

In Bolivia, one of the first examples of mining fiction is *En las tierras del Potosí* (1911) by Jaime Mendoza. This text displays features of social realism which refer back to the writing of the French author, Émile Zola. Another important novel is *Metal del diablo* (1946) by Oscar Céspedes. What is interesting about this book is that it presents itself as the biography of a mine businessman, Zenone Omonte. This character draws attention to an existing figure of the extra-linguistic reality; indeed, he can be identified with Simón Patiño, one of the most powerful and wealthiest extractive industrialists in Bolivia. Moreover, *Socavones de angustia* (1947) by Ramirez Velarde is worthy of consideration, as it revolves around the life of some marginalised characters such as the *palliris*, female workers who extract minerals from the rocks brought to the surface by the miners. Another example of mining fiction is *Mina* (1953) by Alfredo Guillén Pinto, which explores the complex relationship between the elite and marginalised people through the figure of a teacher. The protagonist of this novel is Alcedo, a teacher who moves from the city to the mine and experiences mineworkers' brutal working conditions first-hand. During his stay in the Santa Ana mine, Alcedo starts voluntarily to work as a mineworker and decides to participate in the protests. The text ends with the tragic death of this teacher, shot during a demonstration.

*El precio del estaño: una tragedia boliviana* (1960) by Néstor Taboada has interesting intertextual links with *Aluvión de fuego*, one of the novels chosen for this study. Taboada's novel narrates the Catavi massacre, the slaughter of striking miners which occurred on 21 December 1942. This episode is also called *La masacre de María Bazorla*, and takes the name of the heroic woman who led a protest, waving the flag of Bolivia

(Antezana 1986: 112). Keith Richards, who has explored the literary production of Néstor Taboada provides his analysis of the novel *El precio del estaño* (1960). He believes that the most interesting feature of *El precio del estaño* (1960) is the depiction of the characters and their linkages to the extra-linguistic reality. Indeed, the critic points out that most of the figures in the text refer to people who really existed in the Bolivian elite of the 40s: the owner of the mine takes his name from the real mining landowner Simón Patiño; the character Dr Balladares is the literary representation of Juan Manuel Balcázar who was the Employment Ministry Officer; General Pinillo has been interpreted as an allusion to the President of Bolivia, Enrique Peñarada (Richards 1999: 101-105). With regard to Simón Patiño, the critic says that, in contrast to Augusto Céspedes, Taboada Terán overcomes the simplistic description of this character as a devil and provides a more nuanced depiction of this figure (Richards 1999:100). Richards also highlights the ‘desapasionada objetividad’ of this novel which goes beyond the political factionalism of the previous Bolivian mining novels and depicts the mining social environment from a ‘perspectiva multifacética’ (Richards 1999: 106).

In the 1970s, the *narrativa minera* in Bolivia followed a new literary style. According to Antezana, these novels distance themselves from conventional social realism and attempt to produce something new. This change of literary tendency is described by Antezana as a shift from the *exterior mina* to the *interior mina*. The author uses this opposition to describe two different referents. The first is the environment outside the mine, which represents the socio-political and economic context, characterised by conflicts, protests, strikes and social injustices. The second is the space inside the mine, which metaphorically stands for the supposed inside view of mineworkers’ myths, legends and traditions, most of which are rooted in Indigenous and *mestizo* cultures (Antezana 1986: 121). Thus, the novelists who concentrate more on the *interior mina* rework Bolivian belief systems rooted in Christian and autochthonous cultures; additionally, they partly

abandon the factual and 'truthful' style of realism. Some examples of 1970s fiction are the short stories, *La khola* (1975) and *El paraje del tío* (1976), by the Bolivian author René Poppe (Antezana 1986: 121-126).

Finally, one of the most recent texts is Víctor Montoya's novel *El laberinto del pecado* (1993). It narrates the life of the young Manuel Ventura, a representative of the mining middle class, son of an Indigenous mineworker and a creole woman. This novel also deals with taboos connected with sex, in particular lesbianism, homosexuality, masturbation, adultery, and female sexual liberty. All these themes underline the depiction of the mining setting as a gendered space dominated by patriarchal ways of thinking.

In Bolivia, novels which revolve around mining encompass different narrative techniques, such as *testimonio*, documental report, biography and epic narration. Literary criticism tends to identify commonalities in this corpus of fiction mainly by focusing on their referential level. As a consequence of this, the most extensive bodies of work on *novelas mineras* provide a chronological overview of these texts (Morales Padrón 1983; Zayas de Lima 1985; Pacheco 2004; Márquez 2005). The article, *Rasgos discursivos de la narrativa minera boliviana*, is one of the first attempts to identify the main stylistic features and literary discourses of Bolivian literature related to mineworkers' lives. Here, Antezana points out that this corpus of texts has an essential feature, namely, the relationship of identification or distance between the narrator and the mineworkers, the social actors who are the object of representation (Antezana 1986: 111-126).

### **Extractive industry fiction in Peru**

Mining fiction has not emerged as a significant literary form in Peruvian narrative. Indeed, in comparison with Bolivian literature, a more limited number of texts present an extractive industry setting or solely make occasional references to this type of environment. One of the first texts related to mining was César Vallejo's novel, *El Tungsteno* (1931).

This novel is described by Kristal as a social report on the Peruvian working-class experience, which distances itself from Vallejo's hermetic poetry because it is characterised by a factual and realistic style of writing. The text epitomises the literary expression of the author's communist ideas as it denounces the economic exploitation of Peruvian Indigenous peoples (Gollnick 2005: 53). In spite of its militant tone, *El Tungsteno* (1931) reduces the marginality of Indigenous communities to working-class struggles and provides a superficial description of Indigenous cultures (Márquez 2005:146).

Another example of fiction which presents an extractive industry setting is *El mundo es ancho y ajeno* (1941) by Ciro Alegría. In this text, the representation of the mining space contributes to the dystopic description of modernity. This novel starts with an idealised depiction of an Andean community called Rumi and, later, portrays the gradual degradation of this population following changing economic circumstances. The text emphasises how different economic endeavours, which promote supposed modernity and progress, lead only to oppression and destruction; one of them is a mining project which appears in the text as a negative force, demolishing the traditional world of the Rumis. Indeed, one of the main antagonists in the novel is Don Alvaro Almenábar, the landowner who wants a cheap labour force for his mines, who deprives the Rumi people of their lands and encourages them to work in his mines (Shaw 2002: 49-51, Swanson 2005b: 21-22). Swanson believes that this pessimistic depiction of modernity and industrialisation is an inversion of Sarmiento's formula, civilisation versus barbarism. In *El mundo es ancho y ajeno*, the destructive force of barbarism is symbolized by the Western, the industrial (Swanson 2005b: 22). Both Swanson and Márquez highlight how the author provides a stereotypical and simplistic depiction of Indigenous communities, mainly because he is an outsider, a white middle-class intellectual who is distant from Indigenous cultures (Swanson 2005b: 23; Márquez 2005: 146-147).



In addition to the selected novel for this project, another text of José María Arguedas is *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (1971) which focuses on social issues related to the growth of the extractive industries. Indeed, its fourth chapter is centred on the experience of an ex-mineworker who tells his life story before dying. Cornejo Polar underlines how, due to his heterogeneous and varied experiences, the character, Esteban de La Cruz, epitomises a new social actor, the migrant who moves from the Andean highland to Lima or different mining centres to look for a job according to labour market demands (Cornejo Polar 1973: 290-295).

More recent texts which have a mining setting are two novels written by Vargas Llosa: *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?*, which will be examined in this project, and *Lituma en los Andes* (1993) which also follows the conventions of the detective genre. This novel has been an object of intense debate especially due to the negative description of the Indigenous and *mestizo* mineworkers (Márquez 2005: 150). In this text, a military officer called Lituma is sent from the coastal city of Piura to the Andes to investigate the mysterious death of three soldiers. At the beginning, readers think that the violent guerrillas of Sendero Luminoso are the cause of these disappearances. Unexpectedly, when the novel nears a conclusion, readers learn the outcome of this investigation: the mineworkers committed an act of cannibalism. Probably, like *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?*, this novel was also the author's reaction to the investigation of the Uchuraccay case. On January 23 1983, in a small village in the Ayacucho region, eight journalists were killed. In order to solve this case, Vargas Llosa was summoned by the Peruvian President, Fernando Belaúnde Terry, as a member of an Investigative Commission in Uchuraccay. This committee, composed of anthropologists, jurists, psychoanalysts, linguists and other distinguished Peruvian citizens, reported that the eight journalists were killed by the villagers of Uchuraccay who mistook them for members of the Shining Path. When Vargas Llosa commented on the results of the Uchuraccay investigation, he expressed his concern

regarding the violence that affected the local populations of the Peruvian interior, but at the same time, he was inclined to think that the problem was a consequence of difficult political and economic circumstances. He criticised the Peruvian political authorities who neglected the Andean population's needs. He also condemned Peruvian military operations that did not respect the human rights of the local peasants and, in this way, encouraged the local population to support the guerrilla movement. According to him, both Peruvian political authorities and military institutions had contributed to the creation of a social milieu which encouraged the growth of violence and the phenomenon of Shining Path terrorism. Following the Uchuraccay investigation, Vargas Llosa was subjected to defamation and criticism both in Peru and abroad. Some international newspapers like *The Times* of London and *Dagens Nyheter* of Stockholm stated that the eight journalists intended to report the presence of Peruvian Government paramilitary forces in this region and were murdered in order to prevent this news from spreading. They also asserted that Vargas Llosa collaborated with the Investigative Commission to uphold the government's cover-up of the affair (Kristal 1998: 151).

Finally, another example of a novel which has an extractive industry backdrop but has never been explored from the perspective of this setting is *Ximena de dos caminos* (1994) by Laura Riesco. This text narrates the experience of a five-year-old child, Ximena, whose father is the manager of a mining multinational. Most critical readings have overlooked the literary representation of the mining space in this text. Instead it has been considered as '*una novela de educación sentimental*', an example of female narrative and an autobiographical text (Ferreira 1997: 145; Márquez 2005: 153; Tisnado 1999: 535-547).

## **The Andean Context**

The sections above have indicated that the focus of this thesis is on the literary production of Bolivia and Peru. The choice of these two countries is for two particular

reasons. Both Bolivia and Peru base their economy on the development of extractive industries, and both countries are considered to be Andean countries (Crabtree and Crabtree-Condor 2012: 46).

These countries share in common not just the presence of highlands but also a large number of autochthonous populations, mainly concentrated in the Andean regions. Therefore, Bolivia and Peru have a high degree of cultural and social heterogeneity as they encompass different social, cultural and ethnic identities (Wood 2005: 21; Sanjinés 2004: 23). The compatibility between industrial development and diverse cultural substrata represents the main challenge for both nations. In both Bolivian and Peruvian cultures, extractive industries epitomise a Western vision of modernity conventionally related to technological and infrastructural development, a capitalist mode of production as well as an urban and cosmopolitan environment. Thus, the expansion of industries associated with a Western model of progress shapes and is shaped by these autochthonous cultures engendering ‘tremendous change and dislocation on territories and countries within which it occurs’ (Bebbington and Bury 2013: 5). According to Schilling and Vollrath, in Bolivia and Peru, the extractive industries, which mainly expand in rural areas, national parks or territories with a high level of biodiversity, have a strong impact on local communities (Schilling and Vollrath 2012: 128). Indeed, the exploitation of natural resources has serious impact on the environment and landscape; it overlaps or often clashes with the livelihood needs of peasant communities and it creates new cultural identities due to the migration of the labour force, the exposure to Western cultural models and the urbanisation of rural areas (Boelens 2015: 2). Moreover, as seen in the previous sections, the extractive industry projects involve negotiations and sometimes conflicts between different actors (the government, transnational companies and local communities) (Schilling and Vollrath 2012: 127-128). Thus, the extractive industry projects are the result of agreements between the state resource politics, the multinational companies’ interests and local communities’

‘self determination including self governance in matters of development and resource use’ (Penz, Drydyk and Bose 2011:142)

Despite the similarities between Bolivia and Peru, as has already been explained, the two countries are significantly different in terms of governance of natural resources, historical background and workers’ militancy. Another important difference lies in their Andean cultures. Indeed, although the adjective ‘Andean’ is used to denote a similar geographical configuration and culture, it stands in fact for three different cultural identities. Xalbé identifies the substantial differences between Peruvian, Bolivian and Ecuadorian Andean cultures (Xalbé 2004:18-37). As regards Peru, Andean cultures changed because of various political, social and economic events: some of them include massive immigration tied to labour demand, the construction of a highway connecting Lima with the eastern foothill of the Andes, and the arrival of highland people in Lima (Wood 2005: 25-33; Cornejo Polar 1973: 256). Xalbé explains how different migration waves in Lima led to the ‘erosion’ of the previous Indigenous identities and the emergence of new ones:

Not only is Lima a larger metropolis, with some eight millions of inhabitants, but it is also a city with significant cultural and social mixtures and in contrast with the main highland cities in the other two countries, it is physically distant from the points of migration. In order to survive in this new environment, highland migrants adopt a low profile strategy, which in the long term erodes previous identities. (Xalbé 2004: 33)

In this passage, the author points out the factors which influenced the shifts in Indigenous identities: the migrants’ adaptation to the urban environment, their acquisition of new cultural practices, and the direct contact with creoles or other migrants from other cultural and social backgrounds. As a consequence of this, there is a shift from the Indigenous to the urban plebeian. In connection with these changes, the sociologist Aníbal Quijano is the first to draw intellectuals’ attention to the word ‘*cholo*’, a term used to refer to Indigenous peasants who are perceived culturally as *mestizos* after immigrating to the city

(Quijano 1980: 65). Therefore, '*cholificación*' indicates the emergence of new social actors: the Andean peasants moving from the highland to the cities, who develop new identities linked to their original culture but also to their new life experiences in the urban environments (Quijano 1980: 65, Matos Mar 1986: 77; Ruz 2005:17; Boesten 2010: 22-23). From the 50s onward, the adjective '*cholo*' acquired negative connotations as it was employed derogatively to refer to the urban low social classes (Quijano 1980: 65; Mendoza 2000: 15). Mendoza claims that the use of this word was based on a wide range of social indicators and also adds that 'these indicators tend to cluster around preferences in language, clothing, economic activity and music and dance style' (Mendoza 2000: 15). Nevertheless, the word '*cholo*' was not always used with a negative meaning. Indeed, De la Cadena explains that in the 40s the Cuzco intellectuals used this adjective as a positive social marker to indicate that they belonged to the *auténtico cuzqueñismo* (De La Cadena 2004: 168). Thus, from the 50s onward, the word '*cholo*' gained racist and classist connotations and started to be differentiated from the word *mestizo*. Although both '*mestizo*' and '*cholo*' define the same concept, they are used to refer to two different types of cultural hybridity. '*Mestizo*' is associated with a higher level of education and a better social status. On the other hand, '*cholo*' is an offensive way to indicate urban migrants from different Andean backgrounds who live in disadvantaged conditions and who are not well educated (Mendoza 2000: 15). Due to these cultural changes, the adjectives 'Andean' and 'Indigenous' were no longer adequate to describe these culturally hybrid identities. Thus, the word '*campesino*' started to be used as a substitute for the word '*indio*' in order to describe the Indigenous inhabitants of the Andean region (Xalbó 2004: 20).

Moreover, since the twentieth century, the emergence of *indigenismo* has contributed to the elite construction of the Andean identity. The representative intellectuals of this cultural trend, who had a *mestizo* and creole background, developed a new cultural identity by appealing to the Inca heritage and Indigenous traditions.

According to Xalbé, this appropriation of the Andean had the consequence that the ‘Andean remaining identity was campesino’ (Xalbé 2004: 34). Similarly, the Cuzco elite shaped a new regional cultural identity tied to the Incaic glorious past. These cultural discourses affected the current perception of the Andean identity. According to Xalbé, there is still an increasing tendency to associate the Andean with the Incaic past. Nevertheless, he also notes that although Andean cultural manifestations, ranging from traditions to languages are still alive, they do not have full recognition in Peruvian culture (Xalbé 2004: 34-35). Besides *cholificación* and *indigenismo*, the lack of intercultural communication is one of the arguments used by Xalbé to explain the reason why Andean cultures are not fully recognised in Peruvian culture. In particular, he notes that Fujimori’s dictatorship did not promote cultural pluralism or the development of local Andean cultures (Xalbé 2004: 35).

This scholar dwells much more on the development of Andean identity in Peru as he believes that the Peruvian case differentiates itself completely from Bolivian and Ecuadorian ones. Indeed, in Bolivia, there is more emphasis on the cultural heterogeneity of the country. According to him, the different development of Andean identity can be attributed to political reasons:

Beyond the rhetorical emphasis the new governments in these new countries have placed on indigenous rights, social and institutional changes have fostered the notions of participation, dialogue and negotiation. (Xalbé 2004: 35)

Another relevant difference between Bolivian and Peruvian Andean cultures is the different conception of *mestizaje*. In both countries it means the racial or/and cultural mixing between the Andean and the creole. Although it has the same meaning, it has different connotations. On the one hand, in Peru the cultural phenomenon of ‘*mestizaje*’ is somehow associated with the Andean and the subaltern; on the other hand, in Bolivia it is related to the *criollo* and the elite. As has been pointed out above, in Peru the word ‘*mestizaje*’ is often used to describe the hybrid cultural identity of the Indigenous people

who move to the city. Instead, in Bolivia, '*mestizaje*' is a cultural discourse mainly promoted by the Bolivian *criollos*, as Sanjinés suggests: 'the paradigm of *mestizaje* is an upper-class letrado discourse whose purpose is to justify the continued domination of the mestizo-criollos' (Sanjinés 2004: 149). The cult of *mestizaje* was inspired by the Mexican ideology of the 1910 Revolution, according to which *mestizaje* is the national *raza* of México (Sanjinés 2004: 4). The Bolivian elite uses this paradigm to create a modern national consciousness (Sanjinés 2004: 4). Moreover, according to Sanjinés, *mestizaje* in Bolivia is not based on the reciprocal and harmonic union between the Andean and the *criollo*; rather it 'is constructed from an idea of sameness that relegates the other and the Indian to the system's exterior' (Sanjinés 2004: 30).

### **Corpus of Fiction and Critical Readings**

This project provides alternative interpretations of *Todas las sangres* (1964) and *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* by taking into account the literary representation of the mining setting. Both texts have been extensively examined from different perspectives. Nevertheless, most of the critical readings have overlooked the literary representation of the mine setting and have focused their attention on other aspects of these literary productions. The section does not aim to provide a definitive study of all the critical readings related to both texts.

In *Los universos narrativos de José María Arguedas*, Cornejo Polar considers *Todas las sangres* as a reflection of the social changes which affected Peru in the 60s (Cornejo Polar 1973: 256).<sup>5</sup> Indeed, he considers the text as an example of the *novela coral* (Cornejo Polar 1973: 190-191). He uses this term to refer to a novel characterised by a complex web of narrative voices. Most of these dialogues are between characters of

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<sup>5</sup> According to Cornejo, the main changes which affected Peru in the 60s were the crisis of the agricultural sector, immigration within the country, the expansion of Lima and the increasing development of the industrial sector (Cornejo Polar 1973: 256).

different social status and from different cultural backgrounds. According to Cornejo Polar, the author uses this strategy to provide a panoramic description of Peruvian society through the literary representation of ‘un discurso plural que en cada una de sus ramas, a veces estrictamente paralelas, postula también un sistema plural de verdades’ (Cornejo Polar 1973: 191). He also highlights how the text symbolises the gradual destruction of the creole society through the death of the character Don Andrés, the most powerful landowner in the village of San Pedro (Cornejo Polar 1973: 196). Additionally, he notes that the novel draws attention to the development of a new Andean consciousness through the character Rendón Wilka, a new social actor who stands out in the community because of his life experiences and his education (Cornejo Polar 1973: 233).

Conversely, Rowe focuses on the relationship between Arguedas’ novels and the references to Andean folklore, religious beliefs and songs. Regarding *Todas las sangres*, he examines the songs occurring in the text, some of which come from the traditional Indigenous musical repertoire, while others consist of transcriptions or adaptations of traditional *mestizo* songs. He underlines a crucial difference between these two styles of music: whereas Andean songs emphasise the harmonic relationship between humanity and nature, the *mestizo* songs express the exclusion of *mestizo* people who do not feel that they completely belong to either Andean world or creole society (Rowe 1979:163-173). Moreover, Rowe briefly tackles the representation of the mine in *Todas las sangres*. He remarks that most characters in the novel perceive the expansion of the mining industries as an event which engenders changes, disorder and conflicts in the traditional community of Cajamarca. He also claims that Rendón Wilka is different from all the other characters because he does not totally reject industrial development. Indeed, the character believes that progress is positive as it brings the accumulation of wealth as well as improvement in the material conditions of life. Nevertheless, he also reflects on the disadvantages of industrial progress, such as avarice, individualism and the loss of Indigenous traditions



(Rowe 1979: 144). In addition to these considerations about the mine, Rowe adopts a position which is quite similar to Cornejo Polar's concept of the *novela coral*. Indeed, he underlines the novel's attempt to depict the heterogeneous composition of Peruvian society: '*Todas las sangres es muy ambicioso. Como el título lo indica, trata de abarcar toda la sociedad peruana, incluyendo sectores sociales que Arguedas no había tocado antes*' (Rowe 1979: 177).

Similarly to Rowe, Lienhard explores Arguedas' literary production from an anthropological perspective by drawing more attention to the textual references to Andean cosmogony. His main contribution is the invention of a new concept, the *núcleos estéticos*. According to him, Andean religious codes underwent a process of *estetización* after the Spanish Conquest and the Indigenous clergy's decline. As a result of this, the Indigenous religious symbols were subjected to a notable loss of significance but, concurrently, they were used as aesthetic symbols in Peruvian artistic manifestations. This phenomenon is very similar to the *estetización* of Christian codes which occurred after Rationalism and Materialism. Therefore, he uses the word *núcleos estéticos* to highlight Andean or Christian religious symbols which have lost most of their original symbolic significance and have been creatively reworked by the authors. In the specific case of Arguedas, he believes that the *núcleos estéticos* have polysemic meanings as they are based on the confluence of different cultural discourses like Catholicism, Andean animism and the Western concept of progress (Lienhard 1990:12). Moreover, he uses the phrase *animismo industrial* to define images which are connected to the industrial but, at the same time, are described as religious symbols. According to Lienhard, an illustrative example of this concept is the pink smog in *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*. In Arguedas' posthumous novel, the city of Chimbote is polluted by the industries which produce powdered fish meal and the fog coming from this factory is depicted as a pervading pink smog. With regard to this scene, the critic notes that although it evokes the idea of industry

and pollution, it is presented in the text as a Pre-Hispanic *waka*, a Quechua term used to refer to an object, place or living being considered sacred (Lienhard 1990:165).

Finally, Vargas Llosa provides a negative review of *Todas las sangres* in *La utopía arcaica: José María Arguedas y las ficciones del indigenismo* (1996). Indeed, he considers Arguedas' novel 'una novela frustrada' on account of its ideological content connected with the 'tesis marxista elemental' and because of its 'adhesión a lo antiguo' (Vargas Llosa 1996: 255, 276). He uses the latter expression derogatively to refer to Arguedas' interest in Andean myths and folklore. For Vargas Llosa, Arguedas' nostalgia for Andean traditions entails the rejection of technological progress: 'La contrapartida de esta adhesión a lo antiguo como valor es el rechazo del progreso tecnológico' (Vargas Llosa 1996: 276). The incompatibility between Indigenous cultures and Western progress is the key idea through which Vargas Llosa interprets Arguedas' text in his book *La utopía arcaica* (1996).

The novel *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?*, by Mario Vargas Llosa, has also been explored extensively by other authors. Nevertheless, most of these critical readings have overlooked the extractive industry setting of Talara. Rather, they have attempted to situate this novel within the literary genre of detective novels or within broad literary trends like the Post-Boom.

In *Temptation of the Word: The Novels of Mario Vargas Llosa*, Kristal points out that Vargas Llosa's novels are reflections of the author's personal experiences (Kristal 1998: 27). For example, with regard to *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?*, Kristal highlights how this text is closely bound up with the investigation of the Uchuraccay case in which Vargas Llosa was involved. Indeed, he claims that this detective novel is 'by no means an attempt to reconstruct the Uchuraccay incidents' (Kristal 1998: 151). Moreover, he explores the connections between this novel and the detective genre by taking into consideration Karl Popper's ideas of conjectures and refutations. For example, he explains

how the investigation of colonel Silva follows conjectures which can be summarised in three key questions: who?, why? and how?. The logical procedure of this investigation is highlighted by this character's utterance: 'Pero, aunque algunos detalles estén todavía oscuros, creo que las tres preguntas claves están resueltas. Quiénes lo mataron. Cómo lo mataron. Por qué lo mataron' (Vargas Llosa 1986:153). Nevertheless, the 'rational' method of this investigation proves to be ineffective as it leads to no resolution: readers cannot find any information in the text to confirm the solution that the detectives found (Kristal 1998: 156).

Philip Swanson analyses this novel in relation to the Western literary genre of detective novels. He illustrates how the Latin American reworking of this fiction type is complicated further by the dichotomy between civilisation and barbarism, a concept which recurs not only in Peruvian thought but also in different Latin American discourses. This opposition is evident in the figure of the detective who investigates in order to bring about civilisation and order (Swanson 2005a: 218). Moreover, Swanson highlights the link between the investigation which is the main plot of the novel and Silva's infatuation with Doña Adriana, which is the sub-plot. In addition, Swanson says that the two linked plots have a similar ending: Silva's failure. Although he solves the case, Silva provides a version of facts which is not believed by the population of Talara. Therefore, he loses his credibility and authority (Swanson 2005a: 223). Contemporaneously, at the end of the novel, he loses his male authority as he is rejected and humiliated by Doña Adriana. Nevertheless, although the text questions the authority of this character, it also foregrounds the authority of Vargas Llosa as a writer. In particular, Swanson notes that the presence of intertextual references displays the writer's masterful control of the narrative structure (Swanson 2005a: 227).

Booker explores the connection between the detective story and Silva's sexual desire for Doña Adriana. The two linked story lines emphasise the link between sexual

desire and epistemological desire (Booker 1994:164). Moreover, he claims that this novel does not question the readers' expectations of detective novels. Indeed, like all the novels belonging to this literary genre, the text concludes with the resolution of the case: the killer is identified. Nevertheless, the novel does not completely fit into the detective formula: the comic-erotic subplot makes the mystery plot a farce and the closure of the investigation is very ambiguous. Indeed, evidence is not reliable and the rumours call into question the outcomes of the investigation (Booker 1994: 131-161).

Wesley and Weaver provide a psychoanalytical interpretation of Vargas Llosa's text and also of detective novels in general terms. This article cites the ideas of Pederson-Krag to explain the way in which detective texts are closely connected with traumas experienced during childhood. Readers reduce their feelings of guilt and repression by identifying themselves with the detective figure, whereas they channel their aggressive drives by identifying themselves with the criminal (Wesley and Weaver 1996:168-169). Weaver explores the sexual anxiety of the character Silva through an episode of voyeurism (Wesley and Weaver 1996: 174). The sexual impotence of the detective, which has been highlighted in the voyeuristic episode, has been confirmed at the end of the novel: after Doña Adriana's rejection, Silva appears castrated and humiliated. Additionally, according to Weaver, the defeat of this character can be interpreted as the author's attempt to denounce the quintessentially patriarchal and oppressive figure, the dictator. Hence, the anti-hero character of Silva is an indirect allusion to the Peruvian dictatorship of the General Manuel Odría in the 50s (Wesley and Weaver 1996: 175-176).

In comparison with the two Peruvian novels, *Canchamima* and *Aluvión de fuego* are not internationally recognised. Moreover, while the two Peruvian texts have been extensively investigated, the two Bolivian novels have not received significant critical attention, even though *Aluvión de fuego* has been considered as a classic of Bolivian literature. This text has not been labelled as a *novela minera* by scholars, probably because

it encompasses a diverse range of settings, motifs and literary discourses. Despite its strong extractive industry context, the mining setting in this novel has been rarely explored. So far, the literary analysis of this novel has focused on its references to an important event in Bolivian history, the Chaco War (eg. Khan 2009 and Garcia Pabón 1998). Antezana provides a brief interpretation of a scene from *Aluvión de fuego*, the mineworkers' protest in which the protagonist Jacinta dies. Antezana examines this scene by focusing on the analogies between this fictitious event and a Bolivian legend. The murder of the character Jacinta evokes the death of the legendary figure Maria Bazorla who was shot while leading the protest (Antezana 1986: 112).

On the other hand, *Canchamina* has received very little attention from readers and scholars. Indeed, it has been published just once and has not generated much interest from other publishing companies; it is out of print and is available only in a limited number of libraries. Macleod considers the novel as 'one of the most deliberately ugly Bolivian novels' mainly because of its documentary style (Macleod 1971: 356). According to Zayas de Lima, the text received little recognition probably because it transmitted leftist ideas which came into conflict with the decline of the Revolutionary ideology in the last years of the 50s (Zayas de Lima 1985: 85-86).

## **Horizons of Expectations**

The previous sections have demonstrated how the literary representation of the mining space has manifested itself differently in both countries. In Bolivia there is a stronger literary tradition of novels related to the extractive industry. Indeed, critics more frequently employ the label *novela minera* to refer to a type of narrative bound up with a mimetic depiction of mineworkers' conditions and a lack of stylistic embellishments.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Pacheco highlights the connection between mining fiction and the mimetic representation of mineworkers' conditions. He also suggests that the factual style of these novels and their lack of stylistic adornments are the result of this literary adherence to 'reality': 'El ánimo de reflejar una realidad y la intención de que los relatos sean espejos del acontecer minero inducen a que los narradores reproduzcan

To date, scholars have tended to emphasise the link between this fiction and its extra-linguistic context: allusions to real episodes of injustices; characters corresponding to people who really existed; and descriptions of mineworkers' marginal social conditions (Morales Padrón 1983; Antezana 1986; Pacheco 2004; Zayas de Lima 1985).<sup>7</sup> In general terms, Antezana thinks that Bolivian literature is characterised by an adherence to real facts and therefore, compensated in this way for the lack of social scientific input: 'el discurso literario boliviano, en general, ha ejercido una especie de suplencia cognoscitiva, en la medida en que las ciencias sociales no estaban, por así decirlo, bien constituida por estos lares' (Antezana 1986: 115).

Moreover, Bolivian literary criticism has been inclined to highlight how Bolivian 'novels of the mine' mainly aim at denouncing social injustices and communicating an ideological message.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, it is also important to clarify that the writers' political

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en sus obras un mundo desprovisto de ornamentos idealizantes, mesiánicos y utópicos. Tal es la realidad minera y tal es la imagen que refleja su narrativa. Apartarse de la praxis del reflejo literario significaría escribir una narrativa sin referentes históricos y sin la posibilidad de transformar la materia social y humana en producto literario' (Pacheco 2004: 228). Similarly, Smith says that the references to real events characterise most Bolivian mining novels: 'Certainly the mining novel is inextricably bound up with the actual events it portrays: the close link between political reality and fiction has long characterised the Bolivian novel and it will be interesting to see what will result, in cultural as well as social terms, from the waning importance of the mine' (Smith 2000: 67). Morales confirms the link between mining fiction and an unvarnished style when he considers Oscar Cerruto's prose as not conforming with the conventional mining fiction style: 'Oscar Cerruto, boliviano, edita *Aluvión de fuego*, de prosa lírica, impropia para el tema' (Morales Padrón 1983: 178).

<sup>7</sup> The Bolivian mining novels are generally perceived as social reports. This general assumption can be inferred from critics' reviews of different texts. Roberto Leiton's novel, *Los eternos vagabundos* (1939) has been defined by Zayas de Lima as a 'novela de reportaje' (Zayas de Lima 1985: 57). *Metal de diablo* (1946) by Augusto Céspedes has been described as a biography of an actual historical figure, Simón Patiño, one of the wealthiest Bolivian mine-owners (Morales Padrón 1983: 178; Zayas de Lima 1985: 61; Balderston 2000a: 320; Pacheco 2004: 225; Clayton 1984: 73). Similarly, Zayas de Lima observes that the novel *Socavones de angustia* (1947) does not contain explicit references to mining companies which really existed. Nevertheless, he states that: 'Antes de comenzar el relato se aclara que los nombres de minas y empresas que figuran en esta novela son imaginarios. No por evitar la susceptibilidad de determinadas compañías mineras, sino más bien porque el autor cree que todas deberían darse por aludidas' (Zayas de Lima 1985: 79). In broader terms, Antezana says that the continuity with the extra-linguistic reality is an essential characteristic of Bolivian mining fiction: 'hay una cierta continuidad referencial que le sirve de tela-de-fondo: suceden los hechos, sucede la narrativa' (Antezana 1986: 112). Also Antezana's reading of *Aluvión de fuego* demonstrates this tendency to identify hard facts in mining novels. An episode of mineworkers' protest has been interpreted in relation to an event, the Catavi protest 1942. Here, it is interesting to note that, although this real event occurred some years after the publication of the text, it is used as a reference *a posteriori* to analyse this passage (Antezana 1986:112).

<sup>8</sup> René Poppe comments on social denunciation in his anthology *Narrativa minera boliviana* (1983): 'constante y robusta columna vertebral de todas las narrativas bolivianas. También por intermedio de

engagement has been identified as a quintessential feature of Bolivian novels in general. Both Márquez and Smith believe that Bolivian narrative is characterised by political factionalism, parochialism and the use of novels as a tool of social denunciation (Márquez 2005: 156; Smith 2000: 69). According to several scholars, the ideological tendency in Bolivian literature is the result of its political, social and cultural context. In particular, they claim that the Chaco War has been the historical event which has had an impact on the development of Bolivian identity: the general discontent following the defeat underlies the need to forge a new political consciousness.<sup>9</sup> This event will be explored in Chapter One. Nevertheless, here it is worth mentioning how this change reflects itself in literature through the emergence of a more socially and politically engaged fiction:<sup>10</sup>

La escuela vernacular, surgida contra la guerra del Chaco, se aparta diametralmente del periodo anterior; busca la exaltación de lo propio, la temática de lo social, el nacionalismo literario. Su actitud de insurrección es hondamente sincera. Estos jóvenes quieren que una literatura intrínsecamente boliviana, sea el primer paso para ir a la nación, surgente, orgánica y consciente de sí misma. (Zayas de Lima 1985: 50)

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sus géneros literarios, atrapa y denuncia la base permanente de la suerte y vida del pueblo de Bolivia' (Poppe 1983: V). Likewise, Armando Soriano Badani says that the *narrativa minera* mainly aimed at narrating injustices and highlighting miners' rights. This purpose of dissent is described as 'acento lastimero, conmovedor y de protesta reivindicativa' (Badani in Pacheco 2004: 219). In addition, Morales thinks that Bolivian mining novels tend to criticise the dependence of Bolivian economy on Western technological expertise and multinational extractive industries (Morales Padrón 1983: 183-190). Márquez describes the *novelas mineras* as novels that examine the socioeconomic conditions of Indian peasants who migrate to become miners. Also, he highlights the political discourses underlying these novels: 'novels that tend to reflect the ideological position of their authors, from the Positivist point of view of Jaime Mendoza, the first mining novelists in *En las tierras del Potosí* [...] to Roberto Leitón's Marxist stance in *Los eternos vagabundos*' (Márquez 2005: 158)

<sup>9</sup> The defeat of Chaco generated a sense of distrust for the ruling classes which were considered as being responsible for the war. This event also led to the emergence of the Chaco generation; ex-officers in the Chaco front, university students and the sons of the elite who did not identify themselves with the traditional politicians organised themselves into new political parties. Some of them formed the core of *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (Hylton 2007:70; Klein 2011:177; Dunkerley 2007: 225).

<sup>10</sup>Rivera Rodas highlights the link between the pragmatic value of Bolivian literature and the political changes following the Chaco War: 'The Chaco War was surrounded by a sense of anguish, which was projected in a realist-naturalist cultural expression, a pragmatic relationship of marked importance that allowed the authors to give free play to their frustrations and to provoke impressive effects in the reader regarding the horrors and absurdities of war and the uselessness of national institutions. The undeniable pragmatic value of this literature is implicit in its documentary quality, which has been useful to historians in the analysis of the period. To cite just one example, Klein has converted this literature into a rich source of information essential to his research on the origins of the national Bolivian Revolution' (Rivera Rodas 2015: 83)

The advocacy of an ideological cause is also due to the involvement of authors in politics. Bolivian history contains concrete examples of alliances between the Bolivian intelligentsia and miners. Some examples are César Lora and Filemón Escóbar, Miguel Alandía and Andrés Lora belonging to the Trotskyist party. These leftist intellectuals representing the Bolivian upper-middle class were active supporters of mineworkers' rights and moved to Bolivian mines to promote their ideas amongst mineworkers (Sándor John 2009:163-166). Another example is the author of the novel *En tierras del Potosí*, Jaime Mendoza, who worked as a doctor in the mining towns of Uncía and Llallagua (Zayas de Lima 1985: 33).

As discussed in the previous sections, Peruvian literature contains fewer examples of *novelas mineras* in comparison with Bolivian literature. Not only is there a limited number of Peruvian texts related to this literary theme, there is also a lack of critical attention toward these texts. For example, Salazar Espinoza mentions fourteen *novelas mineras* which have been published in a limited print run in the regions of Cusco, Huancavelica, Ayacucho, Ancash, Huánaco, Junín, Cajamarca, Arquipa and Moquegua and which have never been examined before in academia (Salazar Espinoza 2006: 26). As discussed previously, other novels related to extractive industries have been studied but have been analysed from other perspectives. Moreover, in contrast to Bolivian literature, there is no mention of the literary label 'novels of the mine'. Instead, handbooks of Peruvian or Latin American literature illustrate the texts related to extractive industries by locating them within broad literary trends. Most of the novels have been regarded as expressions of *indigenismo*; others have been considered as examples of *regionalismo*<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> The novels considered as *indigenistas* are the following: *El Tungsteno* (1931) (Wade and Archer 1950: 212; Zegarra 2011: 49; Higgins 2002: 126; Márquez 2005: 146) *El mundo es ancho y ajeno* (1941) (Prieto 1996:148; Swanson 2005b: 23; Higgins 2002: 129; Shaw 2002: 48; Márquez 2005: 146) *Todas las sangres* (1964) (Huamán 2004: 45; Prieto 1996:151, Zegarra 2011: 49, Higgins 2002: 129, Márquez 2005: 147); *Ximena de dos caminos* (Ferreira 1997:145). Conversely, novels related to *regionalismo* include *El mundo es ancho y ajeno* (1941) (Swanson 2005b: 23; Higgins 2002: 133); *Tungsteno* (1931) (Higgins 2002: 126)



As highlighted earlier, there is a critical consensus towards Bolivian mining fiction: a tendency towards social denunciation, references to the extra-linguistic reality, scarce preoccupation with the style and its claim to authenticity. With regard to Peruvian texts, critics underline how *indigenismo* is often associated with these texts. Indeed, Zalazar writes of the difficulty in differentiating the *novelas mineras* from *indigenismo*:

Los estudios literarios sobre la novela minera en el Perú aún son escasos, emparentarlos o diferenciarlos de la tradición literaria indigenista es una tarea que intentamos realizar y que se consolidará posiblemente en los próximos años. (Salazar Espinoza 2006: 26)

Mariátegui uses the term *indigenismo* to refer to a form of artistic production which ‘tiene fundamentalmente una reivindicación del autóctono’ (Mariátegui 1992 [1928]: 333). With regard to *indigenista* fiction, Mariátegui remarks that an essential contradiction characterises this narrative: those writers who try to represent the Indian experience are themselves members of the Peruvian middle class intelligentsia who live in an urban environment (Mariátegui 1992 [1928]: 335). This discrepancy between writers and their object of representation is also underlined by other critics (Márquez 2005:143; Swanson 2005b: 22; Shaw 2002: 47; Zegarra 2011: 50) and is described by Cornejo Polar as ‘heterogeneity’ (Cornejo Polar 1989: 12-28).<sup>12</sup>

Peruvian mining fiction should be situated within cultural debates which have had strong influences on the development of Peruvian national identity and have had significant consequences on *indigenismo*. According to Cornejo Polar, a ‘historic

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<sup>12</sup> Cornejo Polar introduced the concept of heterogeneity to describe the diverse configuration of Peruvian society. He also resorts to this idea to illustrate how Peruvian literature reflects the coexistence of different societies and cultures. According to him, literature is a process composed of different socio-cultural signs (the production, the resulting text, its referent, and the system of distribution and consumption). The heterogeneity of some literary works lies in the fact that the production, the text, its consumption correspond to one cultural universe whereas its referent corresponds to a distinct and even opposing one (Cornejo Polar 1989: 17-18). In this respect, he provides some examples of heterogeneous literature like *indigenista* novels. In these texts, heterogeneity is the cause of imbalances. The producers and the readers are not Indigenous; rather they represent the white middle classes. They adopt European forms of literary production and consumption like the novel. This Eurocentric system of production and consumption imposes its mode of expression on the referent, in this case, the representation of the Andean world and provides a simplistic representation of it (Cornejo Polar 1989: 19-26)

deformation' characterises Peruvian national identity (Cornejo Polar 2013: 127). With this derogatory term, he proposes a simplistic understanding of Peruvian nationhood based on irreconcilable polar opposites. This binary opposition dates back to the eighteenth century when the Peruvian national vision was identified mainly with *criollismo*, the culture of the Peruvian white elite.<sup>13</sup> González Prada was the first Peruvian intellectual who included the Indigenous people in the national project but he also defined the Peruvian nation in terms of dichotomies: *indio* versus *criollo*, *costa* versus *Andes* (Wood 2005: 23). Therefore, he suggested a rigid geographic definition of the country which corresponds with a rigid social and racial stratification: the coast, inhabited by the *criollo* and white elite, contrasts with the Andes, mainly occupied by Indigenous marginalised populations (De la Cadena 1998: 146).

This opposition also persists in the *indigenismo*, although it is expressed in an inverted way. *Indigenismo*, which attempts to challenge the hegemony of *criollismo* over the Indigenous and *mestizo* cultures, promotes a gendered version of this binary: the male Andes opposes the feminine Lima and the coast (Cornejo Polar 1972: 278). In order to understand this gender-inflected rhetoric, it is worth considering Pratt's ideas about the relationship between nation and gender. According to her, colonial, postcolonial and Indigenist consciousness, on which different concepts of nationhood are based, share the common ground of androcentrism and the representation of the female as other. Despite their divergences, these ideologies identify the female with the other to be warded off in order to re-establish a stable national identity (Pratt 1994: 27-47). As a consequence of this, in both colonial and postcolonial consciousness, the supposedly European or North-Western civilisation is conceived as male whereas Latin American autochthony is

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<sup>13</sup> After the independence, the cultural hegemony of *criollismo* was a consequence of different political, economic and social circumstances. Some include the limited access of Peruvian population to books printed primarily in Spanish (which was, in turn, due to illiteracy and the high concentration of Quechua speakers) and the hierarchical structure of Peruvian society based on the oligarchic families based in Lima (Wood 2005: 22).

associated with the female and with nature. Similarly, indigenist consciousness appeals to a gender-inflected rhetoric: the highland, Indigenous traditions and the Pre-Columbian heritage are represented as the male whereas the coastal landscape, creole culture and modernity mediated by Western countries are identified with the female. Despite the presence of this gender opposition, the intrinsically heterogeneous character of *indigenismo*, in particular its ability to combine the European with the Andean, brought more attention to the cultural phenomenon of *mestizaje* (Wood 2005: 23). The association of these novels with *indigenismo* suggests that these discourses come into play in the process of writing and reading this narrative.

As explained above, some of the Peruvian novels related to extractive industries are also considered as *novelas regionales*, or in other words, *novelas de la tierra*; *novelas telúricas* (Swanson 2005b: 23). The most representative Peruvian example of this fiction is *El mundo es ancho y ajeno* by Ciro Alegría (1941); other classic texts are *La vorágine* (1924) by the Colombian author José Eustasio Rivera and *Doña Bárbara* (1929) by the Venezuelan writer Rómulo Gallegos (Swanson 2005b: 23; Shaw 2002: 53). *Regionalismo* was the dominant literary phenomenon in the first four decades of the twentieth century. The novels belonging to this literary trend contributed to the construction of a collective national project as they attempted to grasp the quintessential national identity of a country by depicting its interior along with local traditions and identities. The main aim of these novels was to raise national awareness of all the geographical and cultural realities in the peripheral regions of a country which were unknown to urban readers (Swanson 2005b: 24; Shaw 2002: 15). Moreover, the texts were very closely bound up with the cultural discourse of civilisation and barbarism, a notion which will be explored further in the following section (Swanson 2005b: 24).

The contextual background in which the mining texts are located is useful to understand the main cultural discourses which may have influenced the production and

the reception of these texts to a greater or lesser extent. In this respect, Montrose says that literary texts are implicated in an ‘interplay of culture-specific discursive practices’ (Montrose 1986: 7). He also believes that, rather than recovering objective, authentic, or stable meanings in the text, a literary critic should explore how these cultural discourses interact with a text. The way in which the mining novels were reviewed generally in both countries is also useful to identify the ‘horizon of expectations’ which these texts conventionally evoke (Jauss 1970: 37). Through the expression ‘horizon of expectations’, Jauss seeks to describe a dynamic of literary reception through which a literary text ‘is received and judged against the background of other art forms and life experiences’ (Jauss 1970: 34). Indeed, the sections above demonstrate that there is a common critical consensus towards novels related to extractive industries in Bolivia and Peru. There is a tendency to interpret Bolivian texts as faithful descriptions of marginal social realities, while Peruvian novels are associated with the literary tradition of *indigenismo* and *regionalismo*.

The comparison between Bolivian and Peruvian literature enables readers to recognise substantial differences between Bolivian and Peruvian extractive industry narratives. But despite the differences, these texts usually share a core of literary motifs: the description of extractive industry towns as marginal environments, the hints of the hierarchical social structure of these communities based on the hegemony of multinationals and creole oligarchy, and the description of workers as migrant labourers coming from the countryside (Morales Padrón 1983: 175). This continuity of themes is partly due to the horizon of expectations associated with these texts, and is also related to the referent which these texts intend to point out. In this regard, Gaskin claims:

No matter how “difficult” or abstract a work of literature may be, and no matter what the obstacles in the way of paraphrasing it might be, if it employs words which refer to entities in the world, it will perforce make, or at least imply, true statements about the world. (Gaskin 2013: 65)

Therefore, independently from the level of abstraction, extractive industry novels have a connection with an extra-linguistic reality (or a strong connection with referentiality). For example, the social, political and economic context of extractive industries in Bolivia and Peru partly justifies the fictitious description of the mineworker as an Indigenous or *mestizo* ex-peasant. Indeed, the previous sections have illustrated how extractive industries in both countries recruited workforces from Indigenous and *mestizo* populations coming from the countryside. Additionally, the history of extractive industries in Bolivia and Peru is somehow connected with the literary representation of the extractive industry environment as a hierarchically-stratified space. Indeed, in the previous sections, we have seen that the industrial sector in Bolivia and Peru was monopolised previously by powerful creole oligarchic families and later by multinationals.

### **Civilisation and Barbarism**

As explained previously, the extractive industry settlements are mainly located in the highland regions or in peripheral areas which are at some distance from the capital. In some of the selected novels, the authors seek to understand the social configuration of these areas by challenging, confirming or complicating the dichotomy between civilisation and barbarism. Thus, although this concept is a commonplace exhaustively explored in Latin American literature, it remains very important to examine this corpus of fiction.

The discourse of civilisation and barbarism is closely connected with the process of Latin American nation building projects and also with the definition of independent Latin American identities. In particular, this dichotomy emerged in the period in which Latin American countries obtained their autonomy from Spain and defined themselves as independent nations (Pitman 2013: 116). After the independence, the creole elites of Latin America encountered great challenges: they had to envision a new future for their societies which had undergone experiences which had no precedents in Europe, such as colonialism,

slavery, colonial tribute and feudal missionism (Pratt 1992: 176). Latin American creole ruling classes resorted to the binary of civilisation and barbarism to face their main concerns: creating a sense of order, progress and modernity (associated with the Eurocentric ideas of positivism and with the emerging cities) and reducing the menace of the supposed wild and chaotic masses in the peripheral areas of the country (Swanson 2003: 69).

In particular, the roots of this discourse lie in Argentina with the work *Facundo: civilización y barbarie* (1845) by the Argentinian author Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (Swanson 2003: 69, Fishburn 1997: 204). This text was written during the wars which involved the conservative and liberal factions from the 1820s to the 1870s. The conservatives, also called *federalistas*, represented the traditional landowning oligarchy and strove for a model of state based on semi-autonomous provinces. Conversely, the liberals, also known as *unitarios*, aspired to a centralised system of state run from Buenos Aires and defended an idea of progress based on British and French models. *Facundo: civilización y barbarie* is a literary reflection of these liberal ideas: it praises the cosmopolitan and sophisticated environment of Buenos Aires closely connected with European customs and Enlightened ideas; it depicts the Argentinian provinces, in particular the vast Argentinian *llanos*, as backward areas that must be civilised through the adoption of city values and European ideas (Swanson 2003: 70, 77)

Civilisation and barbarism has its foundations in Europe. Pitman points out that the words respectively date back to the Latin word *civis*, in other words, someone who lives in the city, and the Greek word *barbaros*, which refers to a foreigner who does not speak Greek, the supposedly civilised tongue (Pitman 2013: 115). Additionally, the dichotomy of civilisation and barbarism is linked with European thought as it is closely tied up with Positivism and the ideas of the French philosopher Auguste Comte (Swanson

2003: 76).<sup>14</sup> In Swanson's words, Civilisation and barbarism encloses a 'tension between Latinamericanism and outside influence' (Swanson 2003:79). This dualism mirrors the complex process of the self-definition of Latin America, which forges its own consciousness through the lens of European and North American values (Swanson 2003:80).

As discussed above, the notion of civilisation and barbarism is present in *regionalismo*. It is a seminal concept which recurs in various examples of Latin American fiction as it has been confirmed, questioned and reworked by a wide range of authors. (Pitman 2013: 116-117; Swanson 2003: 79; Shaw 2002: 6; Swanson 2005b: 4; DeVries 2016: 183). With regard to the regionalist novels, Swanson points out that these texts reflect 'a heady mix of anxiety and attraction' (Swanson 2003:76). These writers, mainly creole intellectuals from the cities, were fascinated by the interior lands of their countries as they consider these peripheral regions to be endowed with an 'authentic' energy on which a decolonised model of nation can be built. Conversely, they see these areas as chaotic areas which might endanger the political order of the nation (Swanson 2003: 81).

These contrasting feelings towards the native surface in the regionalist novels and in other Latin American works through the feminised representation of nature. Magnarelli examines the negative description of female figures in two regionalist novels, *Doña Bárbara* (1929) and *La voragine* (1924). The aim of her analysis is to demonstrate how women and nature function in these works as mutual reflections of each other and how the correspondences between the natural and the female can be explored under the framework of civilisation and barbarism (Magnarelli 1985: 38). According to her, civilisation is a process by means of which there is a schism between the centre and the periphery as well as between the self and the other. This separation is associated with 'value judgments': the centric cultures are glorified whereas the peripheral cultures are debased (Magnarelli 1985:

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<sup>14</sup> Auguste Comte's idea, which had a major impact on the Latin American intellectual milieu, was the concept of historical progress which will be explained in Chapter Three.

50). This split between the self and other is reflected in the regionalist representation of nature through the demarcation between natural world and human domain. Nature becomes an example of barbarism in these texts as it is depicted as separated from mankind and it is viewed as the other hindering civilisation (Magnarelli 1985: 50). At the same time, nature is identified with the female which is conventionally considered as other, threatening the male self (Magnarelli 1985: 53). Thus, this anxiety for the native has the appearance of castration fear in these regional novels. Indeed, the Latin American woman is extremely attractive as it is an overwhelming and primitive beauty that cannot be defined according to the Western canons. Simultaneously, she is fearsome as she incarnates a barbarism which challenges the patriarchal order (Swanson 2003: 76-77). The most popular example is the character Doña Bárbara who is 'algo de salvaje, bello' but also 'terrible' (Gallegos 1982: 36).

Pratt highlights an interesting relation between the representation of nature in the early-twentieth century novels and the depiction of the South American continent in the work of the geographer Von Humboldt (Pratt 1992: 112). In his writings, the Prussian explorer describes Latin American territories as overwhelming and extraordinary landscapes as well as untainted and timeless spaces deprived of cultures and history (Pratt 1992: 126) The texts of this traveller differentiate themselves from the travel diaries of the British entrepreneurs who explored Latin America in search of resources to be exploited in the early decades of nineteenth century. Whereas Von Humboldt resorts to a more aestheticising and emotive language in his works, British travellers tend to use a profit-oriented and technical language in their writing. Moreover, the British explorers differentiate themselves from Von Humboldt as they do not emphasise Latin American beauty; rather, they attempt to draw readers' attention to the supposed backwardness of these areas in order to justify capitalist interventionism (Pratt 1992:148-152).



Von Humboldt was the main mediator between Europe and Latin America as his works constitute an important foundation of Latin American identities (Pratt 1992: 112). Indeed, Euroamerican writers draw their inspiration from the Prussian explorer's definition of Latin America to assert a new identity in relation to Spanish and Anglo-Saxon cultures (Pratt 1992: 175). Von Humboldt's construction of the Latin American is the starting point for new creole imagery (Pratt 1992: 182). Indeed, the regionalist writers partly reproduce his mode of representation: Latin America is identified with timeless and exuberant nature in which there is a complete 'erasure of the human'. However, they distance themselves from his writing when they depict nature as threatening, by combining description of its beauty with images of chaos, violence and death (Pratt 1992: 188). According to Pratt, this contradictory representation of nature is the creole elites' attempt to define their identities. By following the path of Von Humboldt they assert their hegemony in relation not only to the old Spanish domination but also to French and English imperialism. By depicting the native as barbarian, they define their privileged position in relation to the democratic claims of the subordinated *mestizo*, African, and Indigenous peoples (Pratt 1992: 188).

Given this contextual background, it can be inferred that civilisation and barbarism encloses other polarities: city/periphery; progress/tradition; nature/human world, the female/the male. In some of the selected novels, the subjective representation of the extractive industry versus nature can be interpreted under the frame of civilisation versus barbarism as well as through the opposition male versus female.

## **Overall Approach**

This thesis builds upon theories of different scholars in Psychoanalysis, Latin American Studies and Subaltern Studies. This section is aimed at providing just a brief overview of the theories which will be extensively explained in the next chapters.

Psychoanalytical theories are helpful resources to explain authorial anxieties and fears. Indeed, the thesis includes Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, an expression meant to indicate a childhood phase in which the ego is formed through identification with the other, that is the mother (Lacan 1968:72). This moment of human development is closely bound up with the following phase, the oedipal complex, in which the ego misrecognises this identification with the mother and compensates its separation from her by internalising the law of the father (Lacan 1977: 199). Both the mirror stage and oedipal complex are cultural and social constructions on which the patriarchal symbolic system is based (Lacan in Grosz 1990: 70). As a result of these two processes, men are endowed with authority whereas women are seen as threatening others evoking the male fear of castration or, in other words, the terror of being deprived of the phallus. These ideas serve as a conceptual framework to illustrate the way in which authors confirm and negate their identification with the subaltern characters. In fact, in the novel *Canchamina*, the two authors highlight their connection more with *palliris*, the female scavengers at the mine site, and underline their social and cultural distance from the male mineworkers. Lacan's theory provides a good basis for explaining why the gendered relationship between the writers and these female characters point out the questionable character of the identification between the intellectuals and the subaltern. Moreover, Lacan's ideas allow analysis of a complex mechanism underlying the *testimonio* discourses, that is, the contradictions between writers' elite status and the subject matter linked to subalternity. Similarly, Lacan's thought accounts for the fear running through *testimonio* fiction. In this respect, it has been useful to connect Lacan's theories with Joanna Bartow's exploration of testimonial novels. In her book, *Subject to Change* she highlights the undercurrent of anxiety characterising testimonial texts: writers search for a connection with the subaltern but at the same time, they mark a distance from these marginal people as they see their privileged positions threatened (Bartow 2005: 87). The psychoanalytical approach is also adopted in *¿Quién*

*mató a Palomino Molero?*. Here, the notion of abjection is used to interpret the images of pollution related to extractive industries. The term ‘abject’ is coined by Julia Kristeva to refer to the quality of substances such as liquids, blood, rotten food which evoke liminality, that is, which are between the borders of the self and the other. The ‘abject’ does not describe just the quality of some objects but also the feelings ranging from fascination and repugnance which the ego experiences when faced with these abject things (Kristeva 1982: 2). Through this concept, the images of pollution are explored in depth and are connected with Vargas Llosa’s concern for *mestizaje*. Additionally, psychoanalytical film theory is useful to examine the depiction of *mestizo* and Indigenous characters in two novels, *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* and *Aluvión de fuego*. Mulvey’s article ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’ allows the exploration of voyeurism, a process in which men escape from the fear of castration by projecting their gaze at woman who become the passive objects of desire (Mulvey 1999: 65). The visual theme, recurring in various forms across the texts, is inextricably connected with the historical construction of Latin America, seen as a feminised exuberant landscape and as a threatening other.

Additionally, this thesis benefits from Subaltern Studies theories. Some key ideas of Beverley have been helpful to explore the discrepancy between a subject matter linked to subalternity and the high cultural capital associated with literary production. In his book *Subalternity and Representation*, this critic thinks that literature and academic knowledge sustain the hierarchical relationships between the elite and the subaltern people and confirm the social and cultural distance between them. As a consequence of this, Beverley highlights the intellectuals’ difficulty in fully apprehending and representing the subaltern experience (Beverley 1999: 39-40; 71). These ideas allow us to understand how the complex interplay between subalternity and literature manifests itself in different aspects of the text *Canchamina* and also unveils the contradictions underlying testimonial writing. The hierarchical relationship between power and knowledge is also examined in the same

Bolivian novel through Foucault's historical construction of madness. According to this critic, a nonsense utterance is not due to its content but the division between reason and non-reason which was conventionally constructed from the Renaissance onwards. This schism leads to the opposition included/excluded: mad people do not produce true discourses as they are excluded from the locus of power (Foucault 1989: xi-xiii). Foucault's conception of madness allows us to interrogate the reasons why the characteristic of madness is ascribed to the Indigenous characters in the novel *Canchamina*. Indeed, the connection between exclusion and madness enables us to understand how the author sees these social actors in relation to the mineworkers and the intellectuals. This research is also based on the article 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988) by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, another representative of Subaltern Studies. Spivak's utterance 'the subaltern cannot speak' summarises a key idea emerging from the analysis of *Canchamina*: subalterns are not able to denounce their abuses because of their marginal conditions and their lack of education. Conversely, intellectuals are able to use the powerful tool of writing to denounce injustices and promote political militancy (Spivak 1988: 310). Moreover, the role of writing is also complicated by Derrida's ideas contained in his work *Dissemination*. According to him, writing opposes speech as it is characterised by absence, death and loss (Derrida 1981: 79).

Conversely, in *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?*, writing is related to elitism, in particular to the managers and engineers of extractive industries. In this respect, Cornejo Polar's book *Writing in the Air*, which examines the legendary encounter between Atahuallpa Inca and Father Vicente Valverde, is useful to describe the role of writing in Peruvian culture and to illustrate the reasons why writing is often associated with law, authority and order (Cornejo Polar 2013:13-30). Moreover, in both Peruvian texts, extractive industry communities occupied by the working-class labour force are depicted as areas in which the *cultura popular*, in particular mass-consumed music, emerge. In this

respect, Wood's book *De sabor nacional: el impacto de la cultura popular en el Perú* (2005) is relevant to understand the relationships between writing, the hegemonic cultural production associated with creole elite, and the *cultura popular*, the culture related to *pueblo* which has speech as a main vehicle of expression. In his work, David Wood explains how the mutual influences between writing and *cultura popular* in Peru has led to the formation of a more heterogeneous nation (Wood 2005).

The extractive industry settlements are depicted in some of the selected novels as spaces in which new social actors converge and, therefore, different voices interweave with each other. The result is that these social environments appear as spaces dominated by gossip. In this regard, Bakhtin's ideas of centrifugal/centripetal forces provide a useful insight for exploring the narrative confluence of voices.

While it is not the main focus of this thesis, the gender dimension can also be taken into account to analyse some recurring themes related to gender. We have already seen that the issue of gender has been tackled through psychoanalytical theories such as Lacan's exploration of the mirror stage and Laura Mulvey's examination of voyeurism. Additionally, Pratt's article 'Women, Literature, and National Brotherhood' has been helpful to highlight the androcentric nature of Latin American political and cultural discourses such as *indigenismo*, *criollismo*, colonial and postcolonial consciousness (Pratt 1994: 29-31). According to her, the reproductive role of women is seen as a threat to the modern conception of nation as their capacity to procreate leads to the expansion of national community and, therefore, defies the finite borders of countries (Pratt 1994: 29-31). Her ideas allow us to analyse the indigenous and *mestizo* female figures in *Aluvión de Fuego*, *Canchamina* and *Todas las Sangres*. These characters whose identity is characterised by the intersection between womanhood and ethnicity, symbolise the social groups which are not completely included in the Bolivian and Peruvian nations. Moreover, Pratt's notion is central to understanding the reasons why immigration to the labour space

is associated with prostitution: both social phenomena are seen as factors destabilising the modern nation. Gender is also particularly important in the textual depictions of the extractive industry environment: in most of these novels, the extractive industry settings are described as hierarchically-stratified gender spaces. These gender hierarchies have a strong connection with the Bolivian and Peruvian extra-linguistic reality. In this thesis, social and economic studies, focused on the gender inequalities in this economic sector, illustrate how extractive industry settlements in Bolivia and Peru are male dominated spaces (Ward 2011: 5, 27; True 2012: 87; Tallichet, Rendlin, Harris 2006:193). The gendered depiction of extractive industry space manifests differently in this corpus of fiction. In *Canchamina*, the extractive industry setting challenges or conforms with the spatial paradigm of two divided spheres, a concept illustrated by Jane Rendell: a dominant male space aimed at economic production is opposed to a female gendered space which is domestic, aimed at sexual reproduction (Rendell 2000: 103). In *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?*, the depiction of Talara confirms or defies the dichotomy industry versus nature which is closely related to the discourses of *civilización y barbarie*: the extractive industry environment symbolises the male civilised world and is depicted as a space separated from a feminised nature. Nevertheless, at other points of the novel, the boundaries between nature and industry blur. In *Todas las Sangres*, the mining setting shows a connection with the indigenist discourses according to which urban environments are seen as female and the highland is seen as male. Finally, the gender dimension provides us with a good insight into the dynamics of *testimonio* writing. In this respect, Joanna Bartow's book is crucial in highlighting the connection between the idea of rape and *testimonio*. Bartow's ideas help us to demonstrate how the rape motif in *Canchamina* hints at an issue of authorship: the writers also appropriate the mineworkers' experience to define their authority as writers or perhaps, to assure their prestige as intellectuals (Bartow 2005:142-143).

Additionally, the selected works allude to the extractive industry as an economic and social phenomenon. Indeed, this economic sector is closely intertwined with other important issues, such as: the settlement of immigrant communities consisting of mineworkers, engineers and business people; the internal social mobility following the development of transport and the demand for labour; casual or long-lasting contact between people from different social and cultural backgrounds. The relationship between fiction and these phenomena is examined through cultural theories which are specifically applicable to Latin American societies and cultures. One of them is the concept of a 'contact zone' provided by Mary Louise Pratt to refer to a space in which people from different cultural and social backgrounds converge (Pratt 1992: 6). The thesis makes use of this concept to describe the social and ethnic diversity of the extractive industry communities. Moreover, Mignolo's concept of 'border thinking' is particularly suitable to describe the areas of extractive industries as politically active environments. The critic uses this term to mean 'thinking in exteriority', that is, producing new ideas which are delinked from an epistemologic centre (Mignolo 2011: 282). In particular, this theory is relevant to describe the brothel, a space which is central to the depiction of the extractive industry setting in *Todas las sangres* and *Aluvión de fuego*. The promiscuous space of the brothel which conventionally symbolises the alterity in Western cultures, turns into a centre in which new thinking arises. Moreover, the transgressive and cheerful atmosphere of the brothel is examined through Bakhtin's historical construction of the Carnival festival as a locus in which non-official ideologies emerge (Bakhtin 1968: 1-20).

The social configuration of extractive industry communities is also examined through the ideas of Kevin Foster. In his book *Lost Worlds: Latin America and the Imagining of Empire*, the critic examines the Anglophone perception of Latin America in different genres like literature, film and in printed media. He also explains how the British representations of Latin America refer to the first contacts between Britain and Latin

American countries. The first British entrepreneurs travelled through Latin American countries mainly because they had economic interests in these territories. As a consequence of this, they were not interested in becoming familiar with the local communities; they tried to understand these foreign cultures through their prejudices or their first impressions, and in doing so they contributed to the stereotypical perception of Latin American cultures (Foster 2009: 11). His description of the first British business people in Latin America has much in common with the description of the engineer in *Todas las sangres*. This character moves to the mining space for professional reasons and is not keen to engage with the local Indigenous communities.

This thesis has recourse to terms which are highly relevant in Latin American studies: ‘cultural hybridity’ and ‘transculturation’<sup>15</sup> are used to refer to cultural models which are reciprocally transformed following the prolonged contact with each other; ‘heterogeneity’, in the terms of Cornejo Polar, has been employed to describe the diversity of Bolivian and Peruvian culture and society. As explained previously, this project makes use of concepts which are central for understanding the Andean cultural identity and the literary tradition of these two countries. Some of them include the *mestizaje* discourse, civilisation and barbarism, and the Latin American perception of nature as female. With regard to *mestizaje*, Marisol de la Cadena’s theory of silent racism provides a good basis for explaining the hierarchy within this discourse. According to her, in Peruvian society, the emphasis on educational achievement is a form of tacit racism, through which *mestizo* intellectuals distinguish themselves from *cholos*. In *Todas las sangres* these ideas are useful to understand Arguedas’ elitist vision of *mestizaje* (De la Cadena 1998: 143-164).

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<sup>15</sup> Ángel Rama borrowed the concept of ‘transculturation’ from the Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz and applied it for the first time to Latin American literature. (Swanson 2005b: 124, Freye 2012: xvi; De Castro 2002: 6) This term indicates a process according to which cultures are reciprocally transformed following prolonged contact with each other. As explained above, this term is used to emphasise the idea of mutual cultural changes and has been preferred to the word ‘acculturation’ which implies a one-way transition from one culture to another (Swanson 2005b: 124; De Castro 2002:6).



The selected texts have been chosen to follow a geographic criterion. Two Bolivian texts and two Peruvian texts have been chosen in order to illustrate how the literary representation of extractive industry is culturally constructed and develops in these two Andean countries. The previous sections have illustrated how novels related to extractive industry have taken different forms in Bolivia and Peru. It has been seen that the features which are conventionally related to Bolivian mining fiction are: a 'realistic' form of writing; ideological factionalism; and political engagement. In Peru, however, these texts are more closely associated with *indigenismo* and consequently, with the cultural debates which characterise this literary tradition. Some of them include coast and highland, urban environment and countryside. The comparative approach between Bolivian and Peruvian history shows also that there are substantial differences between the two countries with regard to the economic development of extractive industries, the political mobilisation of mining communities, and the social integration of Andean populations. It can be inferred that the differences between Bolivian and Peruvian extractive industry fiction are symptomatic of a different economic, political, social and cultural context. Therefore, the choice of two Peruvian and two Bolivian texts is aimed at comparing these texts and identifying the different cultural discourses embedded in them.

In regard to the Peruvian texts, *Todas las sangres* and *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* have been chosen as they allow the exploration of *mestizaje*, a socio-cultural phenomenon which, as explained previously, is closely connected with immigration, industrialisation and expansion of urban areas. The authors have different points of view regarding the growth of the extractive industries and the cultural changes associated with it. Nevertheless, a close reading of these texts shows that although the authors epitomise two opposite perspectives, they have something in common: they see *mestizaje* or in general terms, cultural hybridity, as challenges that need to be overcome. Conversely, *Canchammina* and *Aluvión de fuego* have been chosen because they tackle political

discourses connected to the development of extractive industries: the emergence of a politically conscious working class, the relationships between intellectuals' political engagement and mineworkers' political militancy. Although these texts were not written in the same period, they show the construction of these discourses after two significant moments of Bolivian history: the final stage of the Chaco War and the aftermath of the 50s Revolution. Besides these reasons, *Canchamina* was also selected as an object of study to give critical attention to a text which has been out of print since its initial publication and has received very scant literary criticism. Although this text did not reach a wider public, it can be seen from its analysis that it actively engages with the Bolivian political debates related to extractive industries.

In addition to these main divergences, these texts differ from each other because they include a wide range of literary techniques. As explained earlier, *Todas las sangres* shows the new experimental techniques of *novela coral*. Moreover, other literary devices recurring in this corpus of text include the convergence between testimonial writing and the diary genre; literary themes related to the detective genre; the intertextuality with other fictional texts; the literary motif of the *manuscrito encontrado*; references to popular culture and the old-style traditional realism combined with more vanguard techniques such as the literary collage.

Finally, the overall methodological approach will be grounded on the close reading of the selected texts. This mode of analysis is different from the methodology employed so far which was mainly aimed at cataloguing the texts in a chronological order and summarising their content. The final aim of this study is to identify the ways in which these novels contribute to the construction of extractive industry discourse in Bolivia and in Peru and to gauge the extent of their impact.

## CHAPTER ONE

# THE TIN EXTRACTION SETTING IN *ALUVIÓN DE FUEGO*: CONFIRMING AND NEGATING BORDER THINKING

### Introduction

Mining spaces epitomise heterogeneous environments in which people from different social and cultural backgrounds converge. This aspect is evident in the novel *Aluvión de fuego* written by the Bolivian author Oscar Cerruto in 1935. Moreover, in this text, the depiction of the mine *Espíritu Santo* works as an interface with the description of another space, a Bolivian military headquarters in the Chaco region during the war against Paraguay which lasted from 1932 to 1935. Both settings symbolise semiotic systems which the author creates by confirming and questioning the social and cultural expectations related to these two referential realities. Here, the characters interact with each other and negotiate their identity in these social milieus. A close examination of these environments is useful to explore the important dynamics underpinning the construction of Bolivian identity and to understand the complex social climate characterising Bolivia in the first decades of the twentieth century.

The text is mainly based on the adventures of Mauricio, a teenager belonging to a wealthy La Paz family. The novel consists of three long chapters; each one of these focuses on a specific setting. The chronological sequence of these chapters describes the gradual growth of the protagonist, Mauricio. Moreover, the psychological development of this character is closely related to his displacements from one area to another in the Bolivian *Altiplano*. The first part narrates Mauricio's adolescence in La Paz and his relationship with his family. From the beginning, the protagonist displays his first signs of rebellion and disobedience; indeed, he seems very hostile to his uncle who is in charge of his

nephew's education. Mauricio is encouraged by his family to leave the city and to move to his relative's property in the countryside. The second chapter is the starting point for the character's initial maturation. He witnesses the brutal abuses of peasants and the cruel rape of an Indigenous woman. After this experience in the countryside, he comes back to the city where he accidentally finds himself in a parade supporting the Chaco War. After being present at this demonstration, he decides to enlist in the army. However, he never does arrive at the Chaco, the region which is the crucial area of the conflict; instead, he will stay in a remote town in the Bolivian *Altiplano*. Here, he is responsible for a mutiny and as a consequence of this, he is obliged to leave the trenches together with his fellow soldier El Coto, and the mixed-race women Jacinta and Eulalia. These characters hide themselves in the mine, *Espíritu Santo*. Finally, the third chapter of the novel is centred on the experience of the four characters in the mining site. The novel concludes with a violently repressed protest in which Jacinta and Mauricio die.

This chapter consists of two main sections. After a detailed examination of the historical period, the first part focuses on the similarities and differences between two main settings: the mine *Espíritu Santo* and the Chaco front. It also looks at the connections between these two environments and other settings in the text. Bakhtin's insights into the Carnival theme can be used to examine some essential characteristics of the mine space and the military headquarters: the emphasis on the feast motif and the references to Bolivian musical repertoire. Moreover, Bakhtin's thought is complicated by Mignolo's theory of 'border thinking' (Bakhtin 1968: 1-20; Mignolo 2011: 282). The main aim of this analysis is to demonstrate that the text challenges the traditional configuration of Bolivian geography, in particular the geographical dichotomy between the backward and peripheral Andes versus the cosmopolitan and modern cities. Conversely, the second part looks at the way in which the gendered relations between the characters have a relevant function in the literary representation of the mine setting and play a key role in the complex

construction of Bolivian identity. It will pay special attention to four characters: El Coto, Mauricio, Jacinta and Eulalia. It will be explained that the disappearance of some characters and the survival of others symbolise the predominance of some world views over others. Some authorial decisions, like the death of some characters, reflect the author's prediction about the development of an independent Bolivian identity.

### **Historical Period**

The year in which *Aluvión de fuego* was published is also a significant date in Bolivian history. In June 1935, representatives of Bolivia and Paraguay convened in Buenos Aires to negotiate terms of peace and to secure the definitive armistice of the Chaco War (Klein 1969: 187; Hylton 2007: 70). The exploration of this long and tragic conflict provides a significant lens for close reading of the text. The war broke out in May 1932 when Bolivian troops took possession of *Laguna Chuquisaca*, a watering spot in the Chaco, which was already a Paraguayan position. The Bolivian army justified its actions dishonestly, saying that the area had not previously been occupied by Paraguayan soldiers. After this declaration, the president of Bolivia, Daniel Domingo Salamanca Urey, decided to break diplomatic relations with Paraguay and announced the start of Bolivian attacks in the Chaco region (Klein 2011:174). Following their exploration of the causes of the Chaco War, Klein and Hylton conclude that this territorial dispute was a minor clash between Paraguay and Bolivia. In reality, they believe that this episode was very similar to dozens of other incidents which had occurred previously on the border between Paraguay and Bolivia (Klein 2011: 174; Hylton 2007: 67).

In fact, the beginning of this war was due to a complex combination of different factors. The roots of the conflict can be found in the economic, political and social turmoil that occurred in Bolivia in the 30s. The international recession of the 20s had destabilising effects on Bolivia. Tin production, on which the economic growth of the country was

based, declined drastically because of the global financial crisis. In particular, the market conditions which undermined the development of the Bolivian extractive industries were lowering prices and raising stocks (Klein 1969: 118; Hylton 2007: 67). In order to cope with this period of stagnation, the producers from the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Bolivia agreed to put into action a similar production restriction plan (Klein 1969: 119). In spite of these arrangements, the situation worsened, to the extent that the Bolivian Ministry of Finance had to enact radical economic measures. On 23 September 1931, the government decreed the suspension of gold payments and the inconvertibility of paper money on a temporary basis, while empowering the central bank to issue emergency credit (Klein 1969: 137).

The Bolivian political scene of the 30s was likewise chaotic. Hylton notes that, at the same time as the Chaco War, there was an internal war which strongly destabilised the government (Hylton 2007:69). In the mid-1930s, a military *junta*, under Sánchez Bustamante's direction, oversaw the development of a political coalition between the three conservative parties: *Partido Liberal*, the *Partido Republicano Genuino* and *Unión Republicana Socialista*.<sup>16</sup> From this political bloc, members of the new government were elected: Daniel Salamanca Urey received the presidential nomination and José Tejada Sorzano the vice-presidency (Klein 1969: 115; Hylton 2007: 67). From this election, it can be seen that the traditional political forces supporting the interests of the white oligarchy were still very powerful in the Bolivian political arena. However, dissident political forces

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<sup>16</sup> These three political factions reflect the interests of the Bolivian oligarchy based in La Paz. The *Partido Liberal* defended the interests of the elites from the regions of Oruro and La Paz; it had close connections with the family-run tin industries. The Liberals are defined by Hylton as 'the first centralizing nation-builders' as they promoted the construction of a unifying nation by overcoming 'the colonial legacy of regional fragmentation' (Hylton 2007: 53-58). The other political groups, *Partido Republicano Genuino* and *Unión Republicana Socialista* arose from a split within the *Partido Republicano* in 1921 following the presidency of Bautista Saavedra. The *Unión Republicana Socialista*, founded by the President, defended the interests of *paceña elite* but at the same time, established strong alliances with the urban middle class and artisan classes. The political party of *Genuinos* was formed by Daniel Salamanca and José María Escalier to build an oppositional coalition against the socialist alignment of Saavedra (Klein 1969: 66-68).

were established in Bolivian society, including anarchists, communists affiliated to the Third International, the *Partido Socialista Revolucionario* and the *Partido Socialista* made up of old *Laboristas* and new leftist intellectuals (Klein 1969: 124-125). Another leftist group was the *Grupo Tupac Amaru* formed by the left-wing intellectuals exiled by the previous president of Bolivia, Hernando Siles Reyes, in 1927 (Klein 1969: 125-126). These refugee intellectuals, including the same author of this novel, played a significant role during the Chaco War as they wrote pamphlets and propaganda texts which were widely discussed abroad (Hylton 2007:69). Moreover, due to the wide diffusion of Marxist thought and the circulation of Mariátegui's *indigenismo*, there was an increasing political awareness amongst students and young intellectuals. The first student riots began in 1930 with the election of Salamanca as President (Klein 1969:126-127).

Although they still lacked a formal and unitary party organisation, labour movements also emerged. The strike organised by the National Postal, Telegraph and Telegraphic Radio Union in early April 1931 was a decisive moment in mobilisation (Klein 1969:133). This act of rebellion, which was strongly repressed by President Salamanca, indicated an increasing discontent amongst Bolivian labour groups (Klein 1969:133). In fact, from the beginning of his presidency, Salamanca openly expressed his concerns regarding the 'communist menace' and took an intransigent stand towards every form of leftist dissidence. He attempted to enact a *ley de defensa social* which would have given the government more power to repress any type of political opposition (Klein 1969: 139; Hylton 2007: 67). However, the president had to withdraw this law because of the powerful mass protest led by the *Federación Obrera de Trabajo* (FOT), *Federación de Estudiantes*, *Saavedristas*, and other leftist groups (Klein 1969: 139). In addition to this social disorder, there were notable political tensions within the Bolivian Congress, between two main parties: the *Genuinos* and the Liberals, mainly due to the radical economic measures applied by the finance minister Canelas (Klein 1969: 140). This

contextual background explains Klein's interpretation, according to which Salamanca decided to declare war against Paraguay mainly to compensate for his frustration:

Completely defeated in internal politics, forced to surrender political leadership to the Liberals, frustrated on the communist issue, and unable to stop the economic crisis which was destroying his government's stability day by day, Salamanca turned toward the international scene where he believed that all his personal glory and promise of future greatness could at last find unfettered expression. (Klein 1969: 152)

Besides the political and economic crisis, Cote believes that one reason for the conflict was the government's plan to diversify the economy. After the crisis of 1920s and the decline of tin extraction, President Salamanca decided to orientate Bolivia towards the extraction of other natural resources, and he turned his attention towards the unexplored oil reserves in the Chaco area (Cote 2016:158). Cote explains that before and during the Chaco War, the relations between Bolivia and the Standard Oil of New Jersey were very tense: the company refused to pay the increased taxes imposed by the government. As a consequence of these frictions, the multinational did not help Bolivia during the conflict; indeed, it did not even increase its production to meet Bolivian energy needs during the war (Cote 2016: 163). Nevertheless, in Bolivian political debates there was a general opinion that the Standard Oil triggered the Chaco War. Many Bolivians thought that this company and Royal Dutch Shell were competing with each other for Chaco oil areas. Because of this, they believed that Standard Oil instigated Salamanca to bring about the war. This narrative has been questioned by Cote and Klein, because, as previously explained, Salamanca had a poor relationship with Standard Oil of New Jersey. Moreover, the multinational oil company Royal Dutch Shell interfered in the conflict by backing up Paraguay only in the last year of the Chaco War (Klein 1969: 153; Cote 2016: 164).

After exploring the main causes of this conflict, it is worth considering the significant changes that this event brought about in the history of Bolivia. The war concluded with a tremendous defeat for Bolivia which had to cede thousands of square kilometres of land to Paraguay. The tragedy of this defeat was also due to the loss of



soldiers: 52,400 died, over 20,000 were captured, 10,000 deserted (Dunkerley 2007: 225; Hylton 2007:68).

The conflict led to the transformation of the Bolivian political landscape. Hylton believes that: ‘The nationalism that grew out of the Chaco fiasco was neither xenophobic nor anti-Paraguayan, though it was strongly inflected with anti-imperialist accents’ (Hylton 2007: 68). The tragic outcome of the war highlighted the incompetence of the Liberals, Conservatives and Salamanca; that is, the President and the main political parties which encouraged the war against Paraguay (Sierra 2016: 44, 52; Klein 2011:177). According to Sierra, the defeat led to the rise of new political forces which were previously ‘at the fringes of politics’ (Sierra 2016: 54). A new elite, mainly composed of left-wing intellectuals and veterans of the war, gained a greater visibility in the political arena and dominated the Liberal and Conservative political blocs (Hylton 2007: 70; Sierra 2016: 54). As discussed in the Introduction, some years after the war, these new political blocs were the main protagonists of the Revolution of 1952. They contributed to the construction of a more inclusive Bolivian national project by promoting new political and social reforms and they based their politics on alliances with Bolivian subaltern social groups like working classes and peasants (Sierra 2016: 47). Nevertheless, according to different historians, the cause of these political changes does not reside exclusively in the Chaco War. According to them, the political turmoil preceding the war shows how the old oligarchic political system was already in decline and how new political forces became gradually empowered before the conflict (Whitehead 1981: 344-345; Sierra 2016: 45-46).

### **Oscar Cerruto: Political Militancy and Exile**

Oscar Cerruto’s life is closely connected with the Chaco War. It is not a coincidence that this writer has been considered by different critics as the main representative of the Chaco Generation, a movement emerging after the Chaco War, which

was focused on the effects of this conflict and the construction of a new Bolivian identity (Villa Gómez 2000: 317; Richards 1999: 112; Foster 2015: 78).

This author was actively involved in Bolivian political life at the beginning of his literary career. He was a member of the *Partido Laborista* and he worked as a journalist of the Trotskyist newspaper *Bandera Roja* whose main political agenda was to create connections between different social groups within the Bolivian working class and to oppose the government's political, social and economic policies (Lora 1977:141-142; Khan 2009: 85). This periodical was banned by President Salamanca in 1928. Lora and Pabón recount that police burst into *Bandera Roja's* office and arrested most of the journalists except Oscar Cerruto, who managed to escape (Lora 1977: 143; García 2000: 284).

In 1932, Cerruto left Bolivia to work as a diplomat in Chile. His residence abroad was clearly not only for professional reasons. Rather, it might be interpreted as a kind of 'voluntary exile' or as a stratagem for not going to war. García Pabón, who wrote Cerruto's biography, says that the author was supposed to be going to war. However, the critic also points out that the writer was elected consul of Bolivia in Chile and was sent to the city of Arica some months before his departure to Chaco. During his stay at Arica, he wrote his first novel *Aluvión de fuego* (García 2000:286).

After two years, he moved to Buenos Aires where he lived for many years working as a journalist and a diplomat. In Argentina he met various authors like Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Eduardo Mallea, Pedro Enríquez Hureña and Alfredo Cahn (García 2000: 288). According to García Pabón, he was exposed to the new Argentinian literary tendencies and, as a consequence of this, he distanced himself from the literary tradition of social realism by writing the collection of stories *Cerco de penumbras* in 1958. Compared with *Aluvión de fuego*, this text is not politically engaged, it resorts to more complex narrative strategies and presents marginal characters such as mad or ill figures (Antezana 2000: viii-

xvi). Besides this anthology, he published mainly poetic works such as *Cifra de las rosas y siete cantares* (1957), *Patria de sal cautiva* (1958), *La transparencia y su sombra* (1971) (García 2000: 229). In addition to being a writer, he occupied different diplomatic positions in Uruguay and Argentina. He died on 10 April 1986 (García 2000: 281-300).

### **The Mine as a Battlecamp**

The idea of heterogeneity is reflected in the overall structure of the novel. The text consists of three main parts. The last two sections differentiate themselves from the first one as they assemble various geographical settings and also combine different literary discourses. In the first part, the action takes place mostly in the same location, a provincial city which is Mauricio's birth place. The only change of settings corresponds with the episodes set in a rural area of the Bolivian highlands. Conversely, the second and third sections are characterised by shifting settings. In the second part, the geographical location of the episodes ranges from a provincial city to the capital La Paz, as the narration follows the different exploratory stages of the Bolivian army on the Chaco front. In the last section, although the main narrative thread is set in the mine *Espíritu Santo*, it is often interrupted by other episodes happening in La Paz and on the Chaco front.

In the last two sections, this change of settings is also accompanied by extra-textual references to different literary discourses. Indeed, from the second part onwards, the heterodiegetic narration is interrupted by the inclusion of various literary texts, such as the Spanish translation of an Indigenous manifesto, private letters from different characters, footnotes and songs. This literary collage creates a text which includes different levels of discourse and initiates a dialogue with different audiences. For example, epistolary literary forms suggest a type of writing connected with the private sphere, spontaneity and intimacy; it is also considered as a type of 'self-representation' and dialogic interaction between two people (Dossena 2012: 4-5). Moreover, Khan provides

useful ideas to understand the author's decision to combine the old style traditional realism with vanguardist forms of manifesto. She points out that Cerruto's objective is to create a disjointed narrative which responds to the cultural semiosis of Latin American society (Khan 2009: 94). By connecting with Mignolo's ideas of 'border thinking', she believes that the disruptions of narrative coherence reflect the 'cracks and fissures, where the conflict (of different knowledge systems) originates' (Mignolo 2000:17). Thus, according to Khan, this fragmented text, which is based on the heterogeneous combination of discourses, mirrors the intertwining between a creole concept of modern nation and other nationalistic worldviews (Khan 2009: 95).

Amongst these different environments, the text focuses its attention upon two main settings: a town in Oronuevo where the Bolivian troops were installed during the Chaco War and the *Espíritu Santo* mine, which is located on the *Altiplano* highland. The text emphasises constant connections between these two main settings in the novel: the Chaco front and the *Espíritu Santo* mine. A common denominator is the precariousness of life. As soldiers in the Chaco are exposed to the dangers of war, miners risk their lives because of accidents or brutal work conditions. At this point of the novel, the description of an accident in the mine contrasts with a character's utterance: '¡Peor sería que estén en el Chaco, expuestos a morir de un balazo el momento menos pensado!' (189). Here, a manager of the *Espíritu Santo* underestimates the bad working conditions of mineworkers by making a comparison with the Chaco War. Despite the ironic effect of this sentence, it is interesting to note that it uses the Chaco War as a point of reference to describe the precarious conditions in the mine. Another common characteristic is that both spaces are depicted as socially heterogeneous, as this quotation suggests:

Caras de forasteros, caras nuevas; blancas, lustrosas, las caras delicadas de las gentes de la ciudad; caras ennegrecidas por el viento crudo de la puna; caras de piel amarillosa y sin salud, la piel del minero habituado a respirar el aire confinado de los parajes; caras alegres, sonrientes, ingenuas de los novicios; caras inexpresivas y tímidas de los campesinos indígenas, que han

abandonado sus collados; y predominando entre todas, el dibujo precursor de la muerte: las caras de los afectados por *el mal de mina*. (189)

In this passage, hints of different facial characteristics serve to describe the mine as a concentration of people from different social and cultural backgrounds. In particular, the various skin colours allude to the different life experiences of these social groups. For example, white is associated with the supposedly comfortable life-style in the cities, whereas black is connected with the apparently outdoor life-style of the Bolivian rural areas. Although the face motif is used mainly to point out different geographical origins as well as different habits, it can be interpreted as an indirect reference to different ethnicities. Thus, the link between skin colour and social groups implicitly refers to a social stratification correlated to ethnicity, race and geography (Rivera Cusinanqui 1993: 31). The depiction of the mine *Espíritu Santo* appears as a socially diverse space also because it coincides with Pratt's definition of a 'contact zone': areas in which 'peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict' (Pratt 2008: 6). Similarly, from this description it can be seen that the mine is described as a space which transcends social, cultural, geographical borders. Therefore, the cultural and social configuration of the *Espíritu Santo* space can be explained through the concept of 'deterritorialization', formulated by Deleuze and Guattari and then examined by Mignolo. This idea refers to 'the dissolution of the supposedly natural link between a geographical territory and cultural practices, experiences and identities' (Jacquemet 2010:52). It describes the result of a process through which cultures previously located within certain geographical boundaries develop themselves in other areas and intertwine with cultures coming from outside.

Similarly, the Chaco front symbolises a space in which social groups which are geographically separated concentrate. There are also more indirect hints at this social

heterogeneity. Throughout, the text highlights the fact that the Chaco War is a tragic event involving different Bolivian social groups. In the following passage, some women head to an office in La Paz in order to find out whether their relatives are on the list of missing people. Regardless of their social status or their ethnicities, all face this same distressing situation:

Salía y entraba la multitud a la oficina de informaciones de guerra. [...] Juntas acudían la señorona y la chola, la campesina de pie desnudo, y la *birlocha* de la clase media. Todas niveladas, apretujándose, ansiosas, [...] olvidadas de sus rencores y sus diferencias. [...] Igual pregunta en sus labios. La misma sal en su amargura. Idéntico resplandor de esperanza en la piel de sus mejillas. (199)

The expression ‘todas niveladas’ suggests that the war is an egalitarian experience which leads to a levelling of social and, economic differences. Nevertheless, it is a negative equality, a collective regression towards brutal and precarious life conditions. This idea of degeneration is highlighted in other points of the text, but not all. On the one hand, the text includes patriotic discourses which justify the war as an important national project; on the other hand, it emphasises mainly how the war is a worthless event whose outcomes might be disastrous.

The text highlights that both the Chaco region and the *Espíritu Santo* mine enclose a contradiction. Although they symbolise socially heterogeneous areas, they present a rigid social structure. In the *Espíritu Santo* mine, the highest social ranks, of whom the main representatives are the administrative officers in the mine, are socially, culturally and economically distant from the mining labour force. Here, immediately after the accident in the mine, the managers and the engineers drink the typical Bolivian liquor *singani*. By doing so, they seem indifferent to this catastrophe and emotionally distant from the mineworkers’ life conditions:

En eso llegó el Intendente, don Ruperto Limari, acompañado del médico de Bajadería, el doctor Lizandro Vila, del juez parroquial, doctor Florencio Ramos, y de su secretario, Telésforo Avendaño. [...] Gandarias les explicaba el accidente, entre sonrisas y palmaditas, sin concederle importancia. Es mejor que vayamos a la administración. Allí estaremos más cómodos. [...] Tenemos ahora un *singani* legítimo –decía Gandarias, mientras se alejaban. (187-188)

Similarly, social hierarchies are shown to be even more prominent in the spatial depiction of the Chaco area in the novel. The arrangement of troops closely depended on social inequalities in Bolivia. In the text, the private letter of Clotilde to Mauricio is a demonstration of this. Here, the woman admits that, thanks to the intercession of Don Rudecindo, Mauricio was not sent to the Chaco front, but rather, to a safer area in Oronuevo: ‘No habría sido lo mismo si marchabas al Chaco. Pudimos impedirlo a tiempo. Don Rudecindo se interesó por ti, y es él quien lo ha conseguido’ (114). This favouritism sheds light on social discrimination, which had a notable impact on the development of the Chaco War. Klein explains how, for the Indians, the Chaco War was an ‘even more dangerous form of servitude’ than they had known before. The most marginal groups, mostly Indians, were enlisted as front-line common soldiers, whereas the most privileged, like for example, *mestizos* and whites, assumed functions of command (Klein 1969: 188-189).

The parallel between these two spaces are even more complex if they are examined within the conventional geopolitical configuration of Bolivia.

### **Mine and the Chaco Front as an Alterity**

The parallel between the Chaco front and the *Espíritu Santo* mine can be explained through Mignolo’s theoretical paradigm of coloniality and ‘border thinking’.

The literary depiction of these two spaces both confirms and challenges the way in which the geography of Bolivian territory reflects a rigid distribution of epistemologies. The link between space and epistemology is a key concept of Mignolo’s theory and can be defined through the term ‘geoculture’. In his book, *Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking*, he uses this concept to question the universality of Western thought. The hegemony of Western knowledge is the result of historical circumstances, as well as the consequence of a certain spatial distribution of people (Mignolo 2000:38). Some

'knowledges' prevail over others as they develop in areas which are politically and economically powerful or in regions in which the intelligentsia is concentrated. By the same token, some 'knowledges' are considered as 'subaltern', as they are produced in areas which occupy a marginal status within the 'modern world system' (Mignolo 2000: 55).<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the link between geohistorical location and theoretical production implies that the universality of reason, which was a key concept of Western thought, is a historical construction (Mignolo 2000:189).<sup>18</sup>

Mignolo focuses on Latin American cultures and explains how their geo-cultures hinge on the 'coloniality of power' (Mignolo 2000:16). According to Mignolo, Latin American 'geoculture' is closely related to 'Occidentalism', 'the overarching metaphor of the modern/colonial system imaginary' (Mignolo 2000: 23) which was initially rooted in Christianity and lately has come to be based on the cultural legacy of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution (Mignolo 2000: 21, 94). The metaphor of 'Occidentalism' has, as an ideological facade, the ideas of modernity, logocentrism and linear history contrasting with its dark side, the structure of 'colonial power' and the notion of subaltern knowledges (Mignolo 2000: 20). Indeed, this epistemological paradigm implies the inclusion of Latin America as part of the modern/colonial world system but also positioned as a margin of the West (Mignolo 2000: 327). In other words, 'Occidentalism' conceives Latin America as an 'inheritor and daughter' of Europe but also as 'its subaltern same' (Mignolo 2000: 328). The geopolitics of knowledge based on 'Occidentalism' and the

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<sup>17</sup> Mignolo uses the notion of 'pluritopic hermeneutics' to describe the contemporaneous production of different knowledges and memories in different places. Moreover, he employs Foucault's notion of subjugated knowledges and Darcy Ribeiro's subaltern knowledges to explain the hierarchy between some knowledges considered as universal and others regarded as particular. Nevertheless, he resorts these ideas as a starting point to demonstrate how the 'dilemma universal/particular' is closely related to colonisation (Mignolo 2000:18-19).

<sup>18</sup> 'Asking about the location of theories implies, first, historicizing any claim about the universality of reason and certain forms of knowledge and not others relegated to object (primitive, barbarian, oriental knowledge) and second, analysing the belief that theoretical is unattached to linguistic and geohistorical locations' (Mignolo 2000:189).



structure of 'colonial power' are further complicated by the fact that 'Occidentalism' implies a massive 'subalternisation' of cultures. Indeed, Amerindians and Afro-Americans' cultures were left outside of this epistemological framework (Mignolo 2000: 328).<sup>19</sup> According to Mignolo, the main reason is because 'Occidentalism' is constructed in terms of similarities and differences. According to this principle, a homogenous cultural totality is defined on the basis of similarities and resemblances, whereas different cultural practices are relegated to a negative alterity: 'Western civilisation has been constructed (relegating the differences to the barbarian, the savages, the cannibals, the primitives, the underdeveloped, etc)' (Mignolo 2000: 202).

Thus, from the illustration of Mignolo's ideas, it can be inferred that the Occidentalism and the consequent subalternisation of cultures is manifested in Latin American cultures through the opposition of civilisation and barbarism. As discussed in the Introduction, this conceptual paradigm accounted for the subalternisation of the native to the creole. It also justified the geopolitics of Latin American countries in binary terms: the city, in which the European-influenced creole elite is concentrated, contrasts with the peripheral areas, which is occupied by native communities, and is the main location of subalternised cultures and traditions. Nevertheless, Mignolo explains that this rigid geopolitical arrangement has changed in Latin American societies, owing to internal migration and globalisation. From the twentieth century, 'colonial difference' is everywhere, 'in the peripheries of the center and in the centers of peripheries' (Mignolo 2000: ix).

Therefore, bearing these considerations in mind, Bolivian geopolitics can be located in this large picture of Latin American societies. It is not a coincidence that Rivera

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<sup>19</sup> 'The situation was further complicated by the fact that in the rearticulation of the geopolitics of colonial power, Amerindians and Afro-Americans, with their diversity in the Americas, were left out of the picture of an updated Occidentalism' (Mignolo 2000: 328).

Cusicanqui uses the concept of internal colonialism to describe the connection between the ‘coloniality of power’ and ‘geoculture’ in Bolivian society.

Modalidades de colonialismo interno que continúan siendo cruciales a la hora de explicar la estratificación interna de la sociedad boliviana, sus contradicciones sociales fundamentales y los mecanismos específicos de exclusión-segregación que caracterizan a la estructura política y estatal del país y que están en la base de las formas de violencia estructural más profundas y latentes. (Rivera Cusicanqui 1993: 31)

According to Mignolo, Rivera Cusicanqui resorts to the idea of ‘colonialismo interno’ in order to emphasise an inherent characteristic of Bolivian society: the intersection between social classes and ethnicities. Since independence, Bolivian territory has been characterised by a rigid spatial and social configuration defined by the geographical arrangement of social classes and ethnicities. On the one hand, the hegemonic imaginary corresponded with the ideology of the La Paz elite, who are mainly creole and partly mixed-race. On the other hand, ‘subalternised’ cultures corresponded with the myriad of ethnically diverse communities who occupy mainly the Bolivian highlands (Sanjinés 2004: 33).

Therefore, the literary representation of the Chaco front and the *Espíritu Santo* mine is more ambiguous if it is examined in terms of Mignolo’s ideas and Sarmiento’s formula. Some passages illustrate how the depiction of the two spaces confirms the conventional understanding of the periphery as a backward area and untainted landscape deprived of history and culture. They also show how both the mine and the Chaco front are defined in relation to the city. For example, the last part of the novel starts with the following description of the mining space:

Una noche pegajosa y húmeda se arrastra por las galerías. [...] No se ve el fondo, pero se presiente el abismo, que lanza un vaho espeso y cálido, vaho de monstruo. [...] Penados de la noche, los hombres pasan, y arrastran los pesados grilletes de su miseria. Agobiados, resignados, sin pasiones, se deslizan consubstanciados con la noche, hundidos en la noche como en un infortunio, primitivos habitantes de un mundo que no ha visto aún nacer la luz. Pero la noche no es su aliada. La noche que es alcahueta en las alcobas y mendiga obscena en las ciudades, aquí enseña un colmillo de bestia y gruñe. Brilla su ojo duro y mineral; vigila. El hombre roe la veta, arranca pedazos de

estaño, respira con dificultad, vuelve a la tarea; y siente al mismo tiempo roer a la bestia en sus entrañas. Su sangre, allí dentro, cae gota a gota. Es la mina. (183-184)

In this passage, the idea of backwardness is conveyed through the expression ‘primitivos habitantes’. The comparison between the city and the *Espíritu Santo* mine is highlighted by the night theme which is the linking thread between these two environments. The night in the city is associated with mundanity, frivolousness and transgression. By contrast, the night in the mine is described as an aggressive beast which is prepared for its attacks. The animal image recurs with the expression ‘bestia en sus entrañas’. Due to the polysemy of the word ‘entraña’, the expression might suggest that there is a beast inside the mine or inside the mineworker’s body. In this context, the reference to the beast image might be interpreted as a hint at mineworkers’ brutal work conditions. On the other hand, the animal referent might also evoke the dichotomy civilisation/ barbarism and might allude to the idea of primitive, uncivilized or in other words, the threatening other. According to Magnarelli, the concept of bestiality, which originates from the divide between nature and human kind, is ‘the quality which pertains to the other’ (Magnarelli 1985: 50).

The description of the Chaco region also confirms the connection between primitive environment and wild nature:

Era el primer choque fuerte del habitante de la ciudad, asignando a este término la representación de todos esos hábitos de una vida superior, limpieza, confort, seguridad, con un mundo que comparten las alimañas, la mugre y los elementos violentos, un mundo en toda su primitividad. [...] La naturaleza se abre aquí bárbara e intacta. La naturaleza de la selva es opresora. (238-239)

This passage is a letter written by Sergio Benavente, Mauricio’s childhood friend. Like the protagonist, this character is also a middle-class *mestizo* coming from La Paz. This passage unveils the lens through which the *mestizo* urban elite would see the Chaco area. As in the previous passage, the city is the main parameter on the basis of which Chaco is depicted as barbarian and wild. The image of the oppressive jungle again brings to mind the traditional description of the barbarian as exuberant landscape and powerful nature.

## Parties: Alterity and Heterogeneity

The text creates an implicit interface between two similar social situations which take place in two different settings. Indeed, it emphasises a contrast between the mine's tavern, called Las Vidalitas house, and a reception room in La Paz. The main difference between these two places is the different combination of characters involved: if Vidalitas' house brings together people from different social and cultural backgrounds, the party in La Paz gathers people with the same political orientation and with the same social status.

With regard to the event in the capital, the main guests epitomise the main representatives of the Bolivian liberal oligarchy, including: the Bolivian President, who is ironically called *el vejete* because of his decrepit appearance; Don Rudencindo, Mauricio's uncle, who is also a Bolivian officer; other ministers, business people and women accompanying these influential figures. In the text, the environment is described through the recurrent use of foreign words whereas the characters are depicted through the enumeration of terms related to both luxury goods and parts of the body.

Cerca de la medianoche se levantan todos de la mesa y se desparraman por los salones resplandecientes bajo las placas esmeriladas de la luz indirecta y lechosa, que hace resaltar el prestigio de los tocados de las señoras, sus peinados complicadamente sencillos, el fuego de los ojos, las cascadas dulces de los hombros, o de la espalda; la seda entrevista de las piernas. Los hombres se agrupan en los ángulos, junto a las columnas del *hall*, o en el *fumoir*, y hablan gritos y manotean envueltos en la neblina de los habanos. [...] Las señoras han restaurado el rojo de sus labios, la mano de polvos y vuelven al salón, inundan los pasillos, se deslizan en grupos brillantes iluminados por sus joyas y sus sonrisas. Los fracs y las casacas militares las rodean, se inclinan sobre ellas, giran como mariposones, en torno a su fulgor. (255)

The large number of words referring to consumer goods and luxury objects can yield to different interpretations. They might allude to the characters' uncritical emulation of Western values and, at the same time, they can be said to portray these characters as empty figures exclusively covered by fashionable and expensive commodities. This literary style, which echoes modernist aesthetics, is used in other Latin American texts to describe the

privileged sectors of societies.<sup>20</sup> For example, according to Magnarelli and Swanson, Blanca, the protagonist in *La Misteriosa desaparición de la marquesita de Loria* (1980) evokes the emptiness which characterises ‘the social milieu to which she belongs’ (Swanson 1995: 96). In the same vein, the hints at different body parts suggest an idea of fragmentation. According to Lurecio Pérez Blanco, the fragmented description of Donoso’s character and then its disappearance symbolises the loss of an authentic Latin American identity: ‘si Blanca, símbolo de Hispanoamérica, desaparece y no se encuentra rastro alguno suyo, es porque la descomposición no deja rastro del propio ser. El mestizaje de sangre que pide un comportamiento coherente y distinto, se destruye, se descompone por falta de coherencia’ (Pérez Blanco in Swanson 1995: 97).

Returning to the passage described above, these figures undertake conversations which mainly revolve around their immediate and superficial interests. The business people talk about the difficulties they are facing in importing women’s underwear items or sporty cars. Similarly, women have flirtatious conversations with some gentlemen or gossip with each other. Also, the dialogue between Doctor Ramos and Don Rudencindo revolves around their personal gains. From these different scenes, it can be seen that the description of this environment seeks to highlight the frivolousness and individualism of these characters. Moreover, the superficial behaviour of these figures manifests itself through their indifference toward political issues: ‘¡Pero bebamos señores! En su afán de

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<sup>20</sup> *Modernismo* is a literary phenomenon which has to be distinguished from the European and Anglo-Saxon modernism (Shaw 2002: 33). This literary tendency arose in Latin American literature between the late nineteenth century and the second decade of the twentieth century (Jrade 1996:7). It was considered by critics as the expression of the *fin de siècle* pessimism, a crisis of faith closely connected with the emergence of new philosophical ideas from Europe, for example, Schopenhauer and Hartman’s ideas which put into question religious systems and the Positivist ideas of progress (Shaw 2002: 38, Swanson 2005b:39, Jrade 1996: 12) Inspired by French Parnassian and Symbolic verses, this literary trend manifested itself mainly through poetry; the main representative *modernista* work was *Prosas profanas* (1896) by the Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío (Swanson 2005b: 39; Gies 2004: 500). The most quintessential characteristics of *modernismo* included escapism, exoticism, importance of beauty and rupture with referentiality (Swanson 2005b: 39, Shaw 2002: 33; Jrade 1996: 8). Some peculiar stylistic aspects were the extensive use of adjectivisation and the proliferation of non-functional words (Swanson 1995:96).

hacer sociología, ustedes le están cansando el cuerpo al trago' (264). Apparently, they express patriotism and solidarity toward their compatriots in the war by banning people from dancing. Nevertheless, Don Rudecindo's words clearly uncover the hypocrisy of this gesture: 'De seguro que mañana salen diciendo que el gobierno da bailes y se divierte, mientras el pueblo se sacrifica en los campos de batalla' (262). Moreover, the conversations which take place amongst the dominant classes lead to the acceptance of the *status quo*, as this quotation suggests: 'Cambiar el mundo [...] ha sido y será como Dios lo hizo, como la naturaleza quiso que sea' (263).

Vidalitas' house seems completely opposite to the elegant party in La Paz. First of all, this environment is the background to animated political conversations. The text emphasises how substantial conversations have started just before the scene set in the Vidalitas' house. Indeed, while heading towards the bar, Mauricio and other deserters start a passionate conversation about the role of art in society. When they enter this place, the ex-soldiers meet different characters, drinking beer. Eulalia and Jacinta's house is depicted in the text as a place where people gather from different areas of Bolivia who belong to different cultural backgrounds. The ex-soldiers who also come from different regions in Bolivia have the opportunity to interact with miners, two prostitutes coming from the *Altiplano* and two legal consultants of the mine, Florencio Ramos and Rudecindo Dalence.

The music of *huaynos* is the background for the interactions between these figures. Music is also used in the text as a motif to express the way in which the heterogeneous configuration of this place maintains, somehow, a sense of unity. Indeed, all the figures are depicted singing in chorus but also following their own rhythm: 'En seguida se le asociaron los demás, y todos cantaban, aunque manteniendo cierta independencia de ritmo' (219).

The dialogue between these characters is triggered by a toast. In particular, the ironic words of Mauricio mark the passage from frivolous chats to serious conversations

about the Chaco War: ‘¡Y porque cese la estéril sangría!’ (220). Indeed, his exclamation opens a chaotic concentration of different voices. There are some characters who applaud Mauricio enthusiastically. Amongst them, an unidentifiable voice intervenes to condemn the war but also to express his ideas about anti-imperialism: ‘¿Quién gana la guerra...nosotros...los paraguayos? ¡No señor! ¡Los vendedores de armamentos; los capitalistas extranjeros, que nos toman el pelo...se enriquecen a costa nuestra...!’ (220). Conversely, Florencio Ramos and Doctor Canseco, who can be considered as the Bolivian liberal elite, support the war. Nevertheless, the two figures have slightly divergent opinions. Although Doctor Canseco is in favour of the war, he does not reject his catholic values. Doctor Ramos, on the other hand, appears as a spokesperson for a more patriotic ideology by expressing his ideas about the superiority of Bolivia over Paraguay. The discussion covers other topics which are connected with the Chaco War in various ways: the patriotic propaganda which the Paraguayan government promoted to support war; the miserable conditions in which most Bolivian and Paraguayan people live; the crimes which Paraguayan soldiers committed against Bolivian civilians; the effects which the outcome of the war will have on Bolivian politics. Finally, this debate provides these figures with the opportunity to defend their ideologies: Canseco says that communism is a European concept which is not completely adaptable to the Bolivian context; another character, Juan de la Cruz quotes a sentence from Papini, a Fascist philosopher; and an unidentifiable character shows his support for the development of economic imperialism in Bolivia. Later, this long discussion arouses enthusiasm which results in a fight. The brawl is triggered by a futile reason: Doctor Ramos throws some wine in Estanislao’s face. From this insulting gesture, the tension grows and provokes gunfire. However, this violent episode unexpectedly turns into a dance.

The comparison between these two scenes suggests that, despite their similarities, they present themselves as two opposite social situations. The main difference is that, in

the luxury party in La Paz, no political discussion arises, whereas in the tavern, an intense political argument takes place and degenerates into a fight. The divergence between the two episodes is problematised by the fact that the political debate occurs in a dissolute and convivial environment, 'el zaguán de las Vidalitas' (215). This space presents characteristics of both a tavern and a brothel. Indeed, it is occupied by women and it is run by two prostitutes, Eulalia and Jacinta. The social and cultural value of this setting is relevant to understanding the tension between the two scenes. The brothel is conventionally an amoral environment which foregrounds 'unnatural' desires. In this respect, Swanson describes the way in which Western culture tends to consider as 'natural' and 'necessary' desires only the sexual desires associated with family formation and reproduction. As a consequence of this, only 'functional' and 'useful' desires are natural; in other words, they are socially accepted as they guarantee the social order (Swanson 1999: 36). Moreover, 'el zaguán de las Vidalitas' is a social space which questions the principles on which Anderson's modern notion of nationhood is based: the limited, the sovereign and the fraternal (Pratt 1994: 30). The main reason is because the brothel space is closely associated with the conception of woman as reproducing body. Pratt's article, 'Women, Literature, and National Brotherhood' is helpful to understand the relationship between woman, other, nation and brothel. According to her, the reproductive role of women is seen as a threat to the modern conception of nation as their capacity to procreate leads to the expansion of national community and, therefore, defies the finite borders of countries (Pratt 1992: 29-31). On the basis of these considerations, the brothel is also a social space which threatens the Western concept of nation by evoking the idea of promiscuity and consequently, the unpredictable effects of reproduction (Pratt 1992: 31). The exploration of the brothel as a cultural space is useful to understand the readers' expectations of this space. Indeed, the Vidalitas' house can be regarded as a space on the fringes of society. In Mignolo's terms, it can be inferred that the house of Vidalitas



symbolises the exteriority, that is, the space that ‘the self-narrative of modernity invented as its outside’ (Mignolo 2011: 282). Nevertheless, the text overturns these general assumptions as it depicts the marginal place of Vidalitas as the major social arena for political debates.

Mignolo’s thought allows for an in-depth understanding of the contradictions underlying the literary representation of this space. According to Mignolo, geopolitics is closely connected to ‘de-colonial’ epistemology: dwelling on the border, occupying a geopolitical position which is external to the Western centre, is the main condition to develop a ‘de-colonial awareness’ (Mignolo 2011: 277). Thus, the development of ‘de-colonial awareness’ requires ‘border thinking’. This term is used to refer to ‘thinking in exteriority, in the spaces and times that the self-narrative of modernity invented as its outside to legitimize its own logic of coloniality’ (Mignolo 2011: 282). Moreover, he explains that the key processes of ‘border thinking’ are ‘the epistemic disobedience’ (Mignolo 2011: 282) and the consequent action of ‘delinking from Western thought’: ‘delinking from capitalism and communism, that is, from Enlightenment political theory (Liberalism and Republicanism-Locke, Montesquieu) and political economy (Smith) as well as from its opposition, socialism-communism’ (Mignolo 2011: 275). Therefore, on the basis of Mignolo’s ideas, political debate occurring in the brothel serves to mirror an alternative geo-political distribution of knowledge. The brothel, a place which conventionally symbolises alterity, turns into a centre in which the discussion of ideas takes place and, potentially, paradigmatic changes occur. Thus, the political discussion in the brothel hints at the necessity of delinking from the epistemological centre represented by the Bolivian oligarchy or, in more general terms, the need to develop an independent Bolivian identity which distances itself from the Western cultural matrix. This sense of discontent and desire for change might unveil Cerruto’s outlook on Bolivian society or probably his hopes for its future. It might also refer back to the Bolivian social climate

during the war. Despite its negative outcome, the Chaco War contributed to the development of an independent Bolivian identity. It constituted a rupture with the liberal thought of Bolivian oligarchy and the starting point for a new paradigmatic change. Indeed, Klein says: 'The war shattered the traditional belief system and led to a fundamental rethinking of the nature of Bolivian society' (Klein 2011:177).

Returning to the two passages, it is also worth noting the opposition between the homogenous social milieu of the Bolivian elite and the heterogeneous environment of the mine's tavern. On the one hand, the party in the capital can be considered as an example of a homogeneous space because it brings together people from the same social, political and economic background. On the other hand, the mine's tavern coincides with Pratt's definition of contact zone as it puts together a diverse range of characters coming from different geographical areas and belonging to different social classes (Pratt 1992: 6). It also fits into Pratt's concept because of its emphasis on social interactions. Indeed, the peculiarity of contact zones points to the importance of social relations; some of them are 'copresence, interaction, interlocking understanding and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power', as well as 'intractable conflicts' (Pratt 1992: 7-8). On this basis, the brothel of Vidalitas is the place in which the convergence of different people encourages the social relationships between the characters as well as a haphazard exchange of ideas.

While the social space in the Bolivian capital is depicted as a non-violent environment, Vidalitas' house is presented as a precarious and conflictive environment. In the party in La Paz, the characters are reluctant to be part of any type of confrontation and they are pleased with their *status quo*. Indeed, it is not a coincidence that the only violent episode which interrupts this elegant party is the unexpected announcement that a protest was happening in the *Espíritu Santo*. Conversely, in the brothels, all figures are more inclined to use violence as they defend passionately their points of view. Therefore,

this chaotic exchange of opinions degenerates easily into a brawl. In Pratt's terms, the collective enthusiasm of the brothel, which can give rise to a dance and a fight, underlines 'the violence and the terror of the "contact zone"' (Pratt 1992:185). In other words, it dramatises the social and cultural intertwining of the contact zones which fosters the dialogue between different social actors but also incites conflict.

So far these discussions have illustrated how the brothel reflects issues which are closely related to the problematic development of Bolivian nationhood. Indeed, the combination of different voices transmits an image of society based on social interactions and pluralism; additionally, the brothel, shifting from the margin to the center, suggests an inclination towards an alternative epistemology. Both aspects can be interpreted as an aspiration to formulate an alternative conception of nation. Despite its connection with heterogeneity and alterity, however, the brothel space has its limitations. In the confusion of overlapping voices, it is possible to identify some voices which graphically reproduce non-standard Spanish phonology: 'Para qué's la vida, dirá uste'ps, doctor' (218), '¡Hasta cuándo'ps, Dios mio, van a hablar!' (224), '¡Cálmese'usté! ¡Cálmese'usté!' (225). Most of these voices coincide with Eulalia's voice. In the whole episode, this female character minimally intervenes in the discussion. The only times in which she speaks are not to express ideas but to please the guests or to invite them to speak less animatedly. To a certain extent, the pluralist character of this environment is questioned by the exclusion of the character from the conversation. Additionally, the title of this episode, 'La danza de los doctores', makes the scene more problematic. The term, *doctores*, sheds further light on the main protagonists of these debates: well-educated and high-status professionals. Therefore, this social environment in which different actors can participate in the conversation, just favours the protagonism of a few intellectuals.

## **Mines and the Chaco Front: Border Thinking Zones**

From the previous sections it can be inferred that the text moves in two opposing directions. Some passages suggest that the two spaces, the Chaco front and the *Espíritu Santo*, evoke the conventional expectations of the periphery as barbaric zones on the edge of the colonial system. Conversely, other passages question the simplistic configuration of the mine and Chaco frontier as ‘barbarian lands’ by depicting these environments as contact zones, halfway between the centre and the margins as politically active areas in which ‘border thinking’ arises.

The link between political discussion and these geographical areas is a key aspect which marks a definitive rupture with the stereotypical representation of the two spaces as barbaric and remote regions. In fact, in Mignolo’s terms, these two spaces look innovative, as they are presented as a ‘locus of enunciation’. This term has been used by Mignolo to highlight the linkage between ‘geohistorical location’ and ‘theoretical production’ (Mignolo 2000: 115).

Mignolo’s notion, ‘locus of enunciation’, acquires more importance in the text if it is examined in relation to the concept of ‘border thinking’ and in connection with a recurring motif in the text, the feast. In the text, the feast epitomises the main social situation in which conversation about political issues takes place. In the sections above, the festive atmosphere manifests itself as an essential characteristic of the brothel and as a favourable moment for political debates. Similarly, the whorehouse, not just in the mine but also in the Chaco region, is described as a cheerful environment which forms the background to political discussions.

The feast is characteristic of other passages which are set in the Chaco frontier. Here, the soldiers laugh, drink and listen to music while being around the fire. In this lively atmosphere, the campfire conversation revolves around mainly political issues. It is the moment in which the polemic and the ‘choque de ideas’ reach their climax: ‘El grupo iba

creciendo en torno a la polémica, y tanto como el fuego de la hoguera [...] atraía a los curiosos ese fuego no menos fascinante que surgía del choque de las ideas' (96).

In all these episodes, the linking thread between these social gatherings is the music. In the bonfire scene, the transcription of some songs is interposed between the characters' utterances. Furthermore, there is an allusion to a traditional song from the Andean region of Cochabamba. Similarly, the passages, which are set in the two brothels, contain references to different styles of music, such as the *cueca* and *huayños*, and include transcriptions of songs which disrupt the dialogues between the characters. In the same vein, the description of a small town in the Chaco region focuses on its rich musical production:

Noches de ponches y de charangos era la noche. De todas partes, [...] salían culebreando las melodías de las cuecas y de los huayños. La cueca zigzagueante, cortada en arcos de lujuria, mojada de fiebre, piel en fuga a la locura. Y el huayño trémulo, lírico, desfalleciente; con un lirismo que sólo el alcohol hace arder sobre los pulsos. (121)

The cultural diversity of these spaces is emphasised by the references to *cuecas*<sup>21</sup> and *huayños*<sup>22</sup>, musical genres which brings together Amerindian, African and Western rhythms. Thus, as they combine different cultural elements, they can be considered as quintessential examples of *mestizaje cultural*.

The feast motif is recurrent in European literature and it is often explored through Bakhtin's cultural and historical examination of the Carnival in the Middle Age. In his book, *Rabelais and his World*, he defines some quintessential features of these cultural manifestations: the erasure of social hierarchies; the references to the human body and its

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<sup>21</sup> A style of music and dance which derives from the Chilean music *zamacueca*. It is also very popular in Bolivia, Peru and Argentina (Gonzalez 2000b: 917).

<sup>22</sup> *Huayno* is traditional Andean music. It is also played by pipes and flutes. Its more sophisticated variants include other instruments like the *charango*, a Peruvian adaptation of the Spanish guitar (Padilla 2000: 743). *Huaynos* change according to the areas. Some versions fuse with more urban rhythms and sounds (Romero 1999: 388-389). Moreover, it is not just a song and a dance but also a form of popular poetry. *Huayno* lyrics generally talk about family, nostalgia for the homeland or for a lost love. The songs, whose main theme is love, use recurrent metaphors which compare the beloved with birds, flowers, and elements of nature (Romero 1999:389).

basic body functions; the motifs of death and renewal; and, the parody of official discourses and folk humourism (Bakhtin 1968: 1-20). Moreover, an aspect of his thought which is worth considering for this analysis is the link between the folkloric, the festive atmosphere of carnivals and the emergence of non-official ideologies. Bakhtin uses the expression 'folk carnival humour' to refer to 'the boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations' which 'opposed the official and serious tone of the medieval ecclesiastic and feudal system' (Bakhtin 1968:4). From this, it can be inferred that he considers cultural manifestations related to Carnival as expressions of non-official ideologies. Therefore, in this context, Bakhtin's theory can be useful for considering how, in this text, the feast motif is associated with subaltern cultures and new ideologies which are alternative to the dominant ones. The significance of Bakhtin's ideas is that they take into consideration the hierarchical structure within cultures and consider folkloric festivals as cultural spaces in which unofficial ideologies emerge. Even so, his ideas are not entirely adequate for understanding Latin America as they do not take into account the phenomenon of colonialism. In this respect, Mignolo provides useful insights to create an interesting link between the feast motif, music and 'border thinking'. He uses the term 'local histories' to refer to 'knowledges which are connected with a certain geohistorical location' (Mignolo 2000: 185). The combination of local histories (some of which emerge as 'global designs') is an essential characteristic of 'colonial difference'. This latter expression is used to describe 'the space where local histories inventing and implementing global designs meet local histories, the space in which global designs have to be adapted, adopted, rejected, integrated, or ignored' (Mignolo 2000: ix). He further defines the concept of 'colonial difference' as 'the physical as well as imaginary location where the "coloniality of power" is at work in the confrontation of two kinds of local histories displayed in different spaces and times across the planet' (Mignolo 2000: ix). Thus, the concepts of 'local histories' and 'colonial difference' are closely related to Mignolo's

concerns about ‘colonisation’ and ‘Occidentalism’. Indeed, he describes colonisation as a process of European ‘civilisation’ which leads to the subordination of other cultures. For this reason, he coins the expression ‘the coloniality of power’ to explain a form of power brought about by colonisation, which legitimises ‘the subalternisation of knowledges and the subjugation of people’ (Mignolo 2000: 16).<sup>23</sup> In colonised areas such as Latin American countries, this structure of power creates moments of tension between two local histories and knowledges, ‘one responding to the movement forward of a global design that intended to impose itself and those local histories and knowledge that are forced to accommodate themselves to such new realities’ (Mignolo 2000: 17).

Therefore, Bakhtin’s and Mignolo’s ideas are useful to examine the feast motif from the perspective of popular folklore and in relation to the ‘colonial difference’. In this case, the references to music play a relevant role. In the text, the celebration is the social situation which gives more expression to subaltern knowledges. These subordinated cultures manifest themselves through popular music rooted in the Indigenous and African cultural heritage but also aimed at mass consumption. The music epitomises the cultural space in which the encounter between different local histories surfaces. On the one hand, Amerindian and African musical traditions symbolise the local histories which have survived colonisation and have developed themselves by blending with European and Western cultural practices. On the other hand, Western modern rhythms exemplify Western local histories which have turned into hegemonic imaginary or global designs. Thus, the convergence of local histories and global designs manifests itself in the music through the phenomenon of *mestizaje cultural*, that is, the intertwining of different cultural models.

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<sup>23</sup> ‘My understanding of coloniality of power presupposes the colonial difference as its condition of possibility and as the legitimacy for the subalternization of knowledges and subjugation of people’ (Mignolo 2000: 16).

The close connection between music and ‘colonial difference’ is emphasised at other points in the text. For example, in a letter to Mauricio, his friend narrates an unusual experience he had on the Chaco front. He and other Bolivian soldiers were attracted by the music coming from the Paraguayan trenches, so they dared to go to their enemies’ emplacements. After having observed each other, they had a party together. Nevertheless, after some hours, this festive atmosphere was followed by a bloody war:

Recuerdo así que una noche, en medio de un fuego de hostigamiento, sonaron en las trincheras enemigas, a cincuenta metros de la nuestra, los bordoneos de una estudiantina. Una polka paraguaya, y de seguido un vals, un vals vienés cualquiera, lánguido y evocador. Sin acuerdo mutuo cesaron de martillar nuestros fusiles. [...] Sin saber cómo nos hallamos fuera de la trinchera, sobre el pajonal; allí estaban también los paraguayos. [...] Estábamos casi extrañados de hallarnos frente a hombres iguales a nosotros. Les preguntamos si a ellos les sucedía lo mismo. Rieron regocijados. ¡La verdad purita! . [...] . [...] Cambiamos provisiones: galletas, café, yerba mate, cigarrillos, charqui; cambiamos también algunos obsequios “como recuerdo” [...]. Cuando nos retiramos a nuestras respectivas posiciones, después de habernos abrazado con sincera simpatía, estábamos hondamente conmovidos. [...] Empezaron nuevamente a traquetear las ametralladoras, como con desgana; más tarde la artillería, con furia cada vez más creciente. [...] A los cuatro de la mañana, poco antes del alba, recibimos orden de atacar a la bayoneta las trincheras enemigas. [...] Ocupábamos ahora las trincheras desde donde la noche anterior nos habían ofrecido los paraguayos su serenata. Y he aquí que un soldado corre por el lodo enrojecido de la posición enarbolando una guitarra que ha ensartado medio a medio con la cuchilla de su fusil. (240-242)

Here, the soldiers approach each other through the shared experience of music. These musical styles are highly significant as they provide clues to interpret the episode. The Paraguayan *polka* is a type of music which takes its name from the well-known European musical genre. Nevertheless, its stylistic features do not coincide fully with Western dance.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the *Viennese waltz* was introduced in Latin America by German and Austrian immigrants. It is also an example of culturally *mestizo* music as it blends with local rhythms (Balderston 2000b: 1580). Besides the references to Latin American

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<sup>24</sup> The Paraguayan *polka* is a type of music which takes its name from *polka*, a Polish musical genre. From the mid-1840 onward, this type of music was brought by European immigrants to some Latin American countries like Chile, Argentina and Paraguay. It blended with local rhythms and became more lively in performance — an example of this is the *Paraguayan polka* (Gonzalez 2000c: 1169).



rhythms, the importance of the music motif is highlighted by the image of a guitar broken by a bayonet.

This passage offers multiple meanings. The music can allude to the soldiers' need to suspend the brutality and violence of the war. However, the most striking feature of this episode is that music brings together enemies from two different Latin American countries. Therefore, music suggests a sense of territoriality which clashes with the modern model of nationhood. This is mainly because music hints at the 'colonial difference', the clash between 'global design' and other 'local histories'. Indeed, music creates another sense of community in which people identify with each other because of the same customs (the use of *mate* or *charqui*) or because of similar musical traditions. Additionally, it establishes a social bond between peoples who share the same memories from their experiences of 'colonial power', in other words, from the 'subalternisation' of their cultures due to colonialism. More specifically, the last image, a guitar broken by a bayonet, manifests the conflict between different local histories. The weapon evokes the Chaco War, a conflict whose causes are closely related to a modern idea of nationhood, a demarcation of a frontier between Paraguay and Bolivia. Conversely, the guitar symbolises the cultural space of music which creates social and cultural communities whose geopolitical boundaries do not coincide with the modern national frontiers.

To sum up, the literary motif of the feast can be interpreted partly through Bakhtin's ideas but it also has to be approached from a post-colonial perspective. Indeed, Bakhtin explains that the literary representation of folk festivals such as carnivals has been used in European literature to challenge official ideologies and hegemonic cultures. Similarly, the feasts in the mine and on the Chaco challenge the hegemonic Bolivian imaginary which identifies itself with the creole, urban and Western culture. In the text music gives expression to local histories and knowledges to which the 'coloniality of power' confers a subaltern status.

Mignolo's and Bakhtin's theories are helpful for understanding why the festive setting always frames political discussion. The text is quite contradictory. It depicts the Chaco region and the mine centre as barbaric and remote regions. Conversely, it suggests that these areas have great potential for change and creativity. In the previous sections it has been seen that the text describes two different festive gatherings, one taking place in the supposedly peripheral areas and another one occurring in the capital. Besides the parallel between the two episodes, the sophisticated urban party establishes a contrast with the other communal celebrations set in the mine and the Chaco region. This opposition is firstly due to the music: the reception in the city appears as a Eurocentric, Western-influenced environment also because it is animated by foreign classical music such as *The Blue Danube* by Strauss. The music, along with other aspects examined in the previous sections, contributes to depicting the creole elite as a social group which fanatically emulates European culture. Moreover, it is not a coincidence that this social event is marked by a frivolous and indolent atmosphere: its participants have trivial conversations and do not show any interest in current political issues. This contrast seeks to depict the periphery of the Chaco region and the *Espíritu Santo* mine as politically committed environments. This aspect represents the innovative feature of this text. In Bolivian literature, Andean areas which were conventionally presented as backward and barbaric are areas which the urban and middle class Bolivian intellectuals explain, describe or, turn into their object of study. In comparison with the traditional literary representation of Andean areas, the remote areas of the *Altiplano* and Chaco are described as 'loci of enunciation', areas in which peoples discuss with each other and in doing so, might generate new ideas.

Returning to the feast motif, the celebrations set in the mine and in the Chaco region are characterised by the 'colonial difference'. As a consequence of this, they epitomise the places in which 'border thinking' occurs. This concept, which has been

already illustrated in the previous sections, deserves further explanation: 'it is a fractured enunciation in dialogic situations with the territorial and hegemonic cosmology' (Mignolo 2000: x). According to Mignolo, 'border thinking' can be used interchangeably with other expressions coined in the field of Latin American Studies, which include 'new mestiza consciousness, double vision, and, borderlands theory' (Mignolo 2000: 87). All these terms refer to 'another thinking which breaks away from a 'eurocentrism as epistemological perspective' (Mignolo 2000: 87). 'Border thinking' is situated in areas in which there is 'colonial difference' or places in which 'the modern/colonial world presents fractures due to 'the intersection of local histories and global designs' (Mignolo 2000: 25).<sup>25</sup> Moreover, 'border thinking' is not just closely connected with the concept of 'colonial difference' but also with the issue of subalternity and *mestizaje cultural*. Indeed, Mignolo provides an alternative definition of 'border thinking': 'a powerful and emergent gnoseology absorbing and displacing hegemonic forms of knowledge into the perspective of the subaltern (Mignolo 2000:12). Therefore, the feast in the mine and the Chaco frontier epitomises the social situation in which the dialogue between local histories and global design is more evident. In particular, this cultural interaction manifests itself through the references to music styles rooted in Andean cultural heritage.

Within this theoretical framework, it can be inferred that the text emphasises the location of political discussion in these social settings for a particular reason. It attempts to point out social, political and cultural changes which occurred in Bolivia as a consequence of the Chaco War. In particular, the novel suggests the decline of the dominant creole and urban ideology on which Bolivian political and social order was based, but, at the same time, it foregrounds the emergence of new discourses which come from the supposedly peripheral areas. Therefore, the text is a picture of the social turmoil

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<sup>25</sup> The word 'fracture' is used regularly by Mignolo to refer to the 'fractures of the geoculture of the modern/colonial world system when it enters into conflict with the diverse geocultures of the world' (Mignolo 2000: 42).

during the Chaco conflict. Indeed, the events of the conflict foreground the isolated Andean areas.<sup>26</sup> The text unveils the gradual process through which ‘what has been subalternized and considered interesting only as object of study becomes articulated as new “loci of enunciation”’ (Mignolo 2000:13). It problematises the conventional understanding of the peripheral Andean areas as remote and backward regions. In fact, it describes them as territories which are politically active and which might be the focal point for significant changes.

### **Gender and Subalternity**

In the text the gender dimension is closely connected with the political dimension. The way in which the brothel space is depicted as a centre of political discussions has already been illustrated; additionally, it has been explained that the gender implications associated with this particular setting contribute to a deeper understanding of Bolivia’s political scenario in the 1930s. In *Aluvión de fuego*, gender inequality is a predominant theme throughout the narration. It not only characterises the social relationships of the two main settings, the Chaco front and the mine, but also marks the interactions between the main characters. The emphasis on gender is meant to mirror other important questions: the incomplete development of Bolivian identity; the complex interactions between intellectuals’ privileged status and some social groups’ marginal conditions; the complex interplay between ethnicity, social class and nationhood.

On the Chaco frontier, the main victims of rape are shown to be Indigenous women. The realistic description of these scenes is aimed at denouncing Bolivian soldiers’ abuses against the Indigenous civilian population. In addition, this theme evokes literary discourses related to the Conquest of Latin America. Indeed, in her essay ‘Women,

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<sup>26</sup> Klein points out that the defeat stimulated a political debate on different issues: ‘The indian question, the labor question, the land question, and the economic dependency on private miners became the new themes of national debate rather than the old issues of civil government, honest elections and railroad construction’ (Klein 2011: 176)

Literature, and National Brotherhood', Pratt provides a deep exploration of the rape motif in Latin American literature. By analysing different texts, she demonstrates how the sexual appropriation of Indigenous woman by the Spanish invader can be interpreted as a decolonised reworking of the Conquest ideology (Pratt 1994: 37-41). Similarly, the episodes set in the mine have recurrent scenes of women who are mistreated and beaten by men. In this case, the gender hierarchies characterising this space reflect readers' expectations, related to the environment of extractive industries. Indeed, according to Sloan, more women were employed in the mine during the Chaco War because of the male labour shortage. Nevertheless, in spite of this, they represented only 10 per cent of the miners (Sloan 2011: 114). Different economists have highlighted the economic marginality of women in the Bolivian mining sites: due to the lack of job opportunities, women have to carry out domestic tasks or gain small incomes from informal economic activities (Tallichet, Rendlin, Harris 2006:193)

Returning to the novel, it is worth considering the episode in which a mineworker beats his wife so hard that he wounds her seriously. The main reason for this argument is that their son comes back from the war without a leg. The female character is more concerned with the family finances and wants to send the son to work in the mine, while the male character wants to honour his son and treats him as a war hero. He wants to prevent his son from experiencing the adverse work conditions in the mine. In this scene, it is worth noting that the two characters have opposing worldviews. The male character is a mouthpiece for patriotic discourses; considering soldiers to be heroes. Conversely, the woman seems to give more importance to family maintenance than to national discourses of heroism and patriotism:

¡Es mi hijo...de mi primer matrimonio! ¡Es un héroe! La guerra me lo devuelve así...y aura yo...¡Señor! Estábamos discutiendo con esta — y señala a su mujer — [...] Quiere que el chico trabaje en la mina; yo digo que no. ¡Pa eso yo trabajo, tengo brazos! (245)

The description of these gendered spaces has a particular function within the overall structure of the novel. Indeed, it creates a crescendo of violence which leads the readers to the tragic end of the novel: Jacinta's death during the mineworkers' protest.

The gender issue is also crucial to analyse the main characters in *Aluvión de fuego*. Although the text emphasises the social heterogeneity of the Chaco front and the *Espíritu Santo* mine, it arranges the protagonists symmetrically in two pairs. Therefore, the tendency of the text towards heterogeneity is counterbalanced by a dualistic structure. These couples contrast with each other mainly because of gender: on the one hand, there are the two male intellectuals El Coto and Mauricio; on the other hand, there are the two sisters from Cochabamba, Jacinta and Eulalia. In spite of this significant opposition, the four figures are linked to each other, as they share the same experience of being emigrants. They move to the mine for different reasons, but all take this decision in the hope of living in better conditions. The novel highlights that, in different ways, this migration experience has an impact on these characters' lives and their identities. The changes which some characters undergo are closely related to gender relationships. Before examining this aspect, it is necessary to describe the similarities and differences within each pair.

With regard to the two male characters, El Coto and Mauricio are similar to each other in some aspects but completely different in others. For example, they embrace similar political beliefs. Both are against the war and share the same experience of being deserters. However, they are opposed to each other as regards their relationship with women. The text emphasises the contrast between El Coto's sexist and abusive behaviour and Mauricio's egalitarian and respectful attitude towards women. However, although Mauricio is depicted as a naive and sympathetic character, he appears quite ambiguous at some points of the novel. In the second section, Mauricio is invited by El Coto to rape two Indigenous women. While rejecting this invitation, he nurtures hidden desire to commit this act of sexual aggression. In fact, the text emphasises how Mauricio is quite jealous

that El Coto dares to attack the two women: ‘Mauricio admiraba la resistencia física de su compañero; no sin cierta envidia lo miró alejarse animoso, ardiendo ya en el fuego de su inminente oblación a esos dioses violentos que amparan el amor sin ternura’ (103). Despite these ambiguities, the relationship with women marks an opposition between the two male characters. This is particularly clear in this passage in which El Coto explains why he does not approve of the relationship between Mauricio and Jacinta. He thinks that love is a value which is in conflict with communism:

Y tú...por supuesto, debo ser franco: procedes aún conforme a tu estructura pequeñoburguesa, concedes demasiada atención a tu vida íntima [...] Lo que no es concebible en un hombre que ha resuelto entregarse en cuerpo y alma al servicio de los trabajadores, de la sociedad, de la humanidad, como tú quieras. [...] Hay épocas, y la nuestra es de esas, que no permiten ni las más legítimas alegrías, que restringen lo humano en beneficio de sus objetivos. (195-196)

Therefore, according to El Coto, loving someone means being individualistic, disengaged from social problems. Because of that, intellectuals should not give importance to having private relationships; rather, they must be completely committed to collective interests and political action in order to achieve their objectives. Antezana uses the expression ‘ascetismo revolucionario’ to explain El Coto’s ideas about the incompatibility between love and his teleological vision of history: ‘el deseo no está volcado hacia una imbricación total con la “vida propia” – que es el caso de Mauricio y Jacinta – sino el caso de Estanislao el Coto, su deseo está dirigido hacia la “revolución” futura’ (Antezana 2011: 156). In this episode, Mauricio clarifies that he is a politically committed intellectual and does not take an escapist stance. He insinuates that El Coto’s communist beliefs hide his androcentric ideas of women as a danger, and he also hints at his friend’s social or racial prejudices. He thinks that El Coto does not trust Jacinta as she is a prostitute and because she is an Indigenous woman.

Lo que tú temes, más bien, probablemente, es que esta muchacha me pierda para nuestras convicciones. Descuida, yo sé lo que hago. [...] Para aquellos que tienen en su alma demasiado lastre de educación burguesa, probablemente la mujer es un alcohol demasiado fuerte, un tóxico más. El verdadero

revolucionario no hace literatura de la mujer. La mujer es para él nada más, y nada menos, que un ser humano: una compañera. [...] En ti se afirma el prejuicio pequeñoburgués al desconfiar a fardo cerrado de una mujer como Jacinta. [...] Si yo fuera un obrero tal vez vería más claro; sólo lamento no poder arrancarme del todo este sello de lo que soy. (195-196)

The dialogue examined above illustrates the two male characters' different approach towards women, but also, by extension, the characters' different opinions about marginal people. El Coto's prejudices about Jacinta contrast with Mauricio's sincere trust in the woman.

With regard to the female characters, Jacinta and Eulalia resemble and, at the same time, differ from each other. Besides being sisters, they run a brothel in Oronuevo and they decide to move to the *Espíritu Santo* mine together with Mauricio. An essential characteristic which the two female figures share is men's objectification of their bodies, which is evident in the only passage in which the two characters are present together:

Las Vidalitas eran dos hermanas, Eulalia y Jacinta. [...] Había oído mentarlas con frecuencia a sus camaradas de batallón, que exaltaban sus encantos y alababan su trato y sus favores, con la misma ingenuidad golosa con que los días sábados ponderan por adelantado el postre de arroz con leche que prestigia el menú de los domingos en el rancho de cuartel y que luego es el mismo desabrido potaje que defraudó las ilusiones de su paladar el domingo anterior. La fantasía de los soldados [...] las desnudaba para vestirlas con los atributos entrevistados de todas las mujeres bellas que desearon en las novelas, en el cinematógrafo, en las ciudades. Y la imagen de las Vidalitas, estrujada entre los brazos ardientes, bajo el latigazo de la contenida lujuria, en el silencio nocturno de los dormitorios, tenía así las piernas finas de Greta Garbo, los flancos de la Crawford, senos duros de tarjeta postal y la voz de aquella muchacha amiga de La Paz. (123)

Here, some images contribute to the mere physical description of Jacinta and Eulalia. For example, they are comparable with a delicious dessert. The allusion to food emphasises not only the close linkage between sexuality and the senses but also reinforces the image of these figures as tangible and enjoyable objects. The objectification of the body is further underlined by the references to cinema actresses: the two women are regarded as a spectacle which men feel pleasure in looking at. Laura Mulvey applies Lacan's thought to Film Studies and explores widely the connection between the objectification of the female



body in Hollywood cinema. She uses the term ‘to-be-looked-at-ness’ to describe female representation in most US films: woman has no active role in the development of the plot, rather, she is just ‘looked’ at and ‘displayed’ (Mulvey 1999: 62-65). As a consequence of this conventional exhibitionist role, the female figures work as ‘erotic objects for the characters within the screen story and as erotic objects for the spectator within the auditorium’ (Mulvey 1999: 62-65). The outcome of these films is to reinforce the ego of the male audience. It identifies with the male characters and it shares with them the ‘active power of the erotic look as well as the control and the possession of the woman (Mulvey 1999: 63).

Bearing in mind Mulvey’s analysis of visual pleasure, the two female characters are depicted as erotic objects at the beginning of the narration. However, they evolve differently within the text. Indeed, Eulalia is mostly absent from the novel. El Coto mentions her very briefly when talking to Mauricio: ‘Abandonaron Oronuevo, ella y su hermana, simplemente por conveniencia: para alejarse de la peligrosa vecindad de los indios y porque el negocio en las minas es ahora más provechoso’ (194). Moreover, as illustrated in the section above, this female character does not express any relevant idea to the discussion when she has a voice in the political debates. Conversely, Jacinta will become one of the key characters on whom the development of the plot depends. Her more assertive personality is contrasted to Eulalia’s relative anonymity. The next section will explain how the representation of Jacinta’s death contributes to the way in which the author interrogates the issue of Bolivian nationhood.

### **The Hero(ine) Jacinta: A Stubborn Character?**

As explained above, Jacinta is a prostitute who runs a brothel first in a remote town in the *Altiplano*, then in the mining city of *Espíritu Santo*. The character can be considered as the female equivalent of a certain social subject, the peasant who goes to the mine to

work. The text emphasises the fact that she comes from a remote and rural region of the *Altiplano* and comes to the mine to improve her work conditions. Jacinta's condition of being a migrant is a hint at cultural, economic and social changes which occurred in Bolivia following the mining industry boom of 1900. The growth of extractive industries brought about the creation of new towns, such as Oruro e Potosí, as increasing labour demand encouraged the internal migration of peasants from rural areas to mining centres. Although Klein indicates an increase in industrialisation and urbanisation since 1900, he also believes that Bolivia 'remained traditional in its social makeup' (Klein 2011: 160-161).

Jacinta is presented in conventional terms, involving an identification between woman and nature, which is particularly recurrent in the Latin American *novelas de la tierra* (Swanson 2003:80). A clear illustration of this literary tendency is the episode of *Aluvión de fuego*, in which Jacinta and Mauricio dance together for the first time: 'Jacinta pescó una mano de Mauricio. [...] y lo arrastró a su vorágine' (126). Here, the word 'vorágine' can be read as an intertextual reference to a well-known example of Latin American regionalism, *La vorágine* (1924) by the Colombian José Eustasio Rivera, in which nature is presented as 'a devouring monster' and as something inseparable from the character's psyche. (Swanson 2005b: 32).

A more detailed description of Jacinta can be found in the passage in which she does not accept Mauricio's proposal. After picturing this event in his mind, Mauricio describes the woman:

Retrocedió en su pensamiento y repasó de nuevo aquel instante de crisis espiritual que dio muerte a Mauricio Santacruz. [...] Y no por gratitud, sino por moral, su nueva moral, decidió hacer de Jacinta su compañera. Jacinta se puso sería un instante, y asimismo seria, rió. No, no, no. [...] Insistió él. [...] Jacinta pertenecía al ambiente mágico de la picantería, a su aire de guitarra y de huayño, y a los movimientos de su bailecito de la *tierra*, pausado, de ritmo subterráneo, y en el que embozan, juntos, lo ingenuo secular de lo intransferible criollo y la cazurrería actual con bastón electorero. Pertenecía a su sabor picante y abrasador de aguardiente o de *rokoto*, de sexualidad o de sangre. En ese ambiente turbio había crecido ella, respirándolo por todos sus

poros; en esa atmósfera se había elaborado su vida, la vida de sus padres; la de los padres de sus padres, la de múltiples generaciones pretéritas, que gravitaban sobre su inconsciente y regían las oscilaciones de su alma. [...] Tenía la molicie de sus desfallecimientos y el violento arrebatado de sus querellas; la mordacidad de sus *jalpahuaikas* y el dulce aroma de sus *chijchipas* [...] Fuego, pasión, abandono, embriaguez de olvido, aturdimiento, sensualidad, abnegación. Risa y sonrisa, emotividad y también insensibilidad. Ese era su clima. En esas aguas se nutrían raíces. Trasplantarla, arrancarla de allí, equivalía a matarla. Esa fue, al menos, su conclusion. (249)

In this passage, all the metaphorical images serve to portray the woman as attractive but also slightly perturbing. The character's strong sexual appeal is highlighted by the liberating effect of some alcoholic drinks, such as *aguardiente*, or underlined by the aphrodisiac power of some spices, like *rokoto*. Similarly, her ambiguous and contradictory personality is evoked by the hints at culinary herbs, some of which are bitter and others sweet. Moreover, at the end of the passage, the enumeration of abstract terms has the function of confirming the literary representation of Latin American woman as 'other': 'pasión, abandono, embriaguez de olvido, aturdimiento, sensualidad, abnegación' (249). Most of these words allude to passion, irrationality and, instinct, all features viewed by androcentric societies as primordially female characteristics (Swier 2009: 21). Finally, the sentence 'Trasplantarla, arrancarla de allí, equivalía a matarla' highlights how the woman is so intimately bonded with her birth region. She is presented as a telluric force closely attached to this environment, as she is described as a plant deeply rooted in her place of origin. The reference to her ancestors hints at the heritage of cultural beliefs and practices which are inherited and transmitted from one generation to another. The image of the air entering through her pores illustrates even more this character's symbiotic relationship not only with the landscape of her birthplace but also with the autochthonous culture rooted in this environment. Hence, this long description is aimed at explaining the main reasons why Jacinta does not want to marry Mauricio: her bond with her culture of origin and her attachment to her birth place. Nevertheless, the sentence 'transplantarla [...] equivalía a matarla' is quite incongruous if it is examined in relation to the previous events

of the novel. It is worth noting that, at this point in the narration, the female character has already had the experience of ‘eradicating’ herself, as she had to leave her place of origin to move to the mine. This ambiguity further demonstrates the telluric description of this character: there is no dividing boundary between her identity, her cultural heritage and her native geographical locus. Although she moved to the mine, she is still faithful to her cultural specificity. The sentence ‘Transpantarla, arrancarla de allí, equivalía a matarla’ alludes metaphorically to the fact that the woman does not want to give up her identity.

The text emphasises the stubborn resistance of this female character, especially when she refuses to be married even though her partner shows his good intentions. Indeed, at different points of the narration, Mauricio reiterates his ideas of egalitarian love transcending race and class differences: ‘Ya sabes que para mí no hay diferencias de clases. Te lo he explicado varias veces. Tú eres tan mujer como otra cualquiera. Te quiero; tú me quieres...’ (248). Conversely, despite Mauricio’s attempt to persuade her, Jacinta is still very sceptical about his words: ‘Qué sería de mí si te creyera. ¡Ay Señor! Pero, pronto te cansarás...buscarás una de tu clase...Medios de arreglar tu situación militar no te han de faltar. Ustedes, los decentes’ (248).

Nevertheless, Jacinta’s reaction to Mauricio’s proposal is much more problematic. Indeed, it is essential to take into account the marriage theme from a wider perspective. The matrimony between Mauricio and Jacinta not only symbolises the union between the two characters but also the encounter between two different cultures. Mauricio is a creole *mestizo* from an urban and middle class background, whereas Jacinta is an inhabitant of Bolivia’s most remote and rural areas. Although the ethnicity of this female figure is not explicitly indicated, it is suggested by the fact that the character comes from the Bolivian region with the highest proportion of Indigenous people (Sanjinés 2004:17). The rejection of Mauricio’s proposal reflects the *mestizo* intellectuals’ attempt to understand and explain the complex social reality of the Bolivian communities occupying the *Altiplano*. This hints

at the resistance of these Bolivian communities, which are considered to be faithful to their traditions and reluctant to change.

Moreover, the gender relationships between the characters give an additional insight during the episode, so that what might appear as an example of resistant behaviour can be understood as an assertion of independence.

### **The Hero(ine) Jacinta: An Assertive Character?**

There is a particular connection between the geographical origins of this character and her reaction to Mauricio's proposal. As explained above, the character has lived for most of her life in her birth place, a rural area in the *Altiplano* highlands. This extra-linguistic 'reality' generates certain expectations in the mind of the audience. In order to understand the complex interplay between this character and the geographic location, it is necessary to understand the social exclusion of Indigenous populations occupying the *Altiplano* in the Bolivian nation. Since the first decades of the 1900s, the Bolivian intelligentsia, like most Latin American elites, promoted the paradigm of civilisation versus barbarism to conceptualise a modern national project: Indigenous populations were seen as backward peoples who had to be tamed and subjected to the logic of order and progress (Sanjinés 2004: 33).

As previously illustrated, the Chaco War represents an important turning point in Bolivian history. This conflict favours communication between different social groups: at the battle camp, soldiers from different social and cultural backgrounds fight together in the name of the Bolivian nation. Despite the negative outcome, the war raises debates on different issues, the main objects being the major inclusion of the Indigenous peoples who played an important role during the war, and the inadequacy of the current national project, which does not incorporate the different cultural specificities of the country. 1935, the year in which the novel was published, coincides with the last phase of the Chaco War

and the period in which the difficulties of the conflict created more social and political divisions (Klein 2011:176). In the last years of the conflict, the progressive elite from La Paz and young military officers returning from the Chaco War found themselves obliged to reflect on a new image of Bolivian nationhood. They questioned the liberal oligarchy's ideology, which assumed Indian racial inferiority. At the same time, they promoted a new nationalist discourse based on populist ideas and were more prone to favour the social inclusion of Indigenous groups. Indeed, in 1935, the emergence of this new consciousness marked the beginning of populist and military governments such as those of David Toro e Germán Busch. These presidents' action was mainly aimed at establishing alliances with Indigenous peasants. However, while they found great support amongst Quechua peasants in the Cochabamba valleys, they found resistance from Aymara groups in the Bolivian *Altiplano* (Sanjinés 2004:18).

Hence, this political and cultural context, which is approximately contemporaneous with the publication of this text, problematises the depiction of Jacinta's character. Indeed, it is not a coincidence that Jacinta is a prostitute coming from *Altiplano*. Thus, the failed proposal can be interpreted as a literary representation of a social problem: the lack of collaboration between the urban ruling class and highland peasant communities. Similarly, Jacinta's diffidence might hint at these communities' reluctance to engage in a dialogue with the Bolivian political elite.

The text presents other ambiguities. Although Mauricio defends his ideas of equal love, he also confirms the existence of social divisions between himself and his partner. When he talks about getting married, he says that he would give her all his financial support. By doing so, he makes subtle allusions to gender inequalities between them:

Ya te he dicho que cuando tú lo desees, dejas a tu hermana y te vienes a vivir conmigo. Trabajaré para los dos; si tú quieres, también te ocupas en algo. Así te convences de la seriedad de mis sentimientos. (248)

Here, from the sentence ‘Trabajaré para los dos; si tú quieres, también te ocupas en algo’, it can be inferred that, whilst he defends an equal model of relationships beyond social and cultural borders, he implicitly advocates a hierarchical relationship of men over women. Indeed, he supports an androcentric vision of marriage based on a clear-cut allocation of roles: the man is mainly responsible for the family’s financial management while the woman has an ancillary role.

In this case, Sanjinés’ ideas can also be useful for understanding the connection between gender and *mestizaje*. In order to explain the development of the *mestizo* consciousness in Bolivia, Sanjinés appropriates a central idea of *Katarismo*, a Bolivian political movement in the 70s. Its leaders, who promoted the recovery of Aymara cultural identity, argued that *mestizo-criollo* sectors in Bolivia always supported an idea of modernity based on ‘the single eye of reason’ (Sanjinés 2004:11). He uses the expression ‘the oculo-centrism *mestizo* thought’ to refer to a process of cultural hybridity which seeks just a limited inclusion of Indigenous cultures in the Bolivian national consciousness (Sanjinés 2004:11). He resorts to this concept to illustrate the way in which, since the early 1900s, the process of *mestizaje*, promoted by the Bolivian ruling classes, presented its limitations. Indeed, although *mestizaje* is grounded on equal cultural negotiations, it confirms the colonial relations of power: ‘it leaves unchanged the power relations between those who are in a position to include and those who are supposed to passively accept being included’ (Sanjinés 2004: 10). Moreover, *mestizaje* also reveals itself as a form of cultural assimilation, because it is rooted in a ‘monocular’ vision of modernity based on quintessentially Western concepts, such as the teleological conception of history and progress, the rational optic based on Cartesian perspectivism, and the idea of a unitary and homogenous nation (Sanjinés 2004:11). According to Sanjinés, hierarchical relations also explain why the project of *mestizaje* was successful in the Andean valleys of Cochabamba whereas it failed in the Aymara regions of *Altiplano*. The Bolivian highlands were

organised into communities rather than haciendas; thus, Aymara populations were not used to the hierarchical relation of *gamonalismo* and they were less inclined to the dependent relations related to *amestizamiento* (Sanjinés 2004:17).

Hence, the gender relationship between Jacinta and Mauricio reveals the same relation of power characterising *mestizaje* discourse. Apparently, although the *mestizaje* is supposed to constitute a mutual interaction between cultures, it reveals itself to be a unidirectional and hierarchical exchange from one culture to another. Similarly, Mauricio's egalitarian views about love relationships paradoxically coexist with his paternalistic vision of marriage. Bearing this in mind, Jacinta's refusal to marry him might be considered to be an example of socio-cultural assertion and independence, rather than reluctance and obstinacy.

### **Disappearance of Jacinta**

The last part of the novel, *Las muchedumbres mueren deslumbradas*, breaks the dualistic structures of the characters. In the last pages of the text, just one character from each couple survives, namely Eulalia and El Coto. This section analyses the passage in which Jacinta's death is narrated. Indeed, the most straightforward impression of this scene is that it describes a proletarian protest and provides symbolically loaded images rooted in Communist ideology. In reality, it is much more complex as it evokes important issues underpinning the development of Bolivian identity: the complex interplay between nationhood, gender and indigeneity.

Before examining the scene of Jacinta's death, it is worth considering an event which takes place previously in the narrative. The mine supervisor prohibits the mineworkers from using a banner or a flag during a protest. Here, the mine inspector and the mine supervisor look through the window and notice a large group of mineworkers moving towards their office. They are surprised by the fact that the mineworkers are using



a flag. However, looking at the crowd more carefully, they notice that what seems to be a flag is in reality Jacinta dressed in red clothes.

Detrás de las ventanas de la prefectura, el inspector Aldazosa y el intendente Limari sienten el rumor de la multitud que se acerca, luego la ven reventar por las bocacalles y derramarse en la plaza.

— ¿Qué es eso colorado que traen al medio?

— Es una bandera. Vienen en son de desafío.

— ¿Bandera? No señor; yo se lo he prohibido...

— Parece un disfrazado...

Risueña, segura, Jacinta avanza delante de la manifestación; vestida enteramente de rojo, llamea, en efecto, como una alegre bandera.

Los soldados echan una rodilla a tierra. Apuntan las carabinas. La multitud se detiene desconcertada. Alguien agita las manos, avanzando; los demás retroceden. Una descarga cerrada retumba ruidosamente, y, en medio de la plaza, Jacinta se derriba como una gran mancha de sangre. (275-276)

From the passage, it can be easily understood that the female character is a hint at the well-known icon of Communist ideology, the red flag (Petrov and Ryazanova 2015: 149). This object is closely related to leftist revolutionary ideas because it evokes a particular moment of Cerruto's life. As seen previously, *Bandera Roja* is the name of the Communist newspaper in which the author worked (Lora 1977:141-142; Khan 2009: 85). Moreover, the connection between this passage and the Bolivian labour movement is highlighted by Antezana in *Rasgos narrativos de la narrativa minera boliviana*, who states that this episode had a strong impact on the social imagery and led to 'reality' imitating literature in the Catavi protest which occurred on 21 December 1942 (Antezana 1986: 112). As explained in the Introduction, this event became a milestone of Bolivian history. The violent repression of this demonstration is remembered in the collective imagery as *masacre de Maria Bazorla*. It takes its name from a mineworker's wife, Maria Bazorla, who was shot while guiding the demonstration and carrying the Bolivian flag. Regardless of whether or not this event actually took place, it underpins an iconic tradition deeply anchored in Bolivian proletarian literature (Antezana 1986: 112-113).

Although it has connections with Communist ideas, the element of the flag makes this passage even more problematic. It is important to remember that the flag symbolises

conventionally the unification of a country; additionally, it is considered as an emblem closely connected with the notion of the modern nation state. Moreover, the description of Jacinta's death contains hints of the Modern and European national imagining, as it appears as an ekphrastic translation of a well-known French painting from the eighteenth century: *Liberty leading the people* (1803) by the romantic painter Delacroix. In this work of art, a woman stands on a pile of corpses and leads a group of soldiers. Here, the female figure is represented with her breast half-uncovered and holding the national French flag. Despite these affinities, the episode and the painting are distinct in one respect: Jacinta dies during the protest whereas the Delacroix' character survives in the Revolution. This substantial difference raises significant questions: does Jacinta's death attempt to communicate a particular message? Does it have any connection with the complex development of Bolivian nationhood? Through these extra-textual connections, the author probably aims to highlight the death of modern nationhood; that is, the European model of nation on which Bolivian identity was based. Some decades before Bolivian independence, the creole elite became inspired by the European ideas of modernity, logocentrism, progress and nationhood, seeing it as an opportunity to mark a rupture with the Spanish crown and to forge an independent and decolonised Bolivian consciousness. This passage reflects the crisis of the modern political model of the nation (Sanjinés 2004: 11).

Wood explains that the modern concept of nation is not suitable for the heterogeneous Peruvian society due to its characteristics of being unitary, homogenous and monolithic. Wood's considerations can be applicable to Bolivia, which has many affinities with Peru in terms of social heterogeneity and cultural diversity. In this respect, it is not a coincidence that a character in the text criticises the traditional model of nation and refers to features which are similar to those illustrated by Wood:

¡Claro! Y así se explica que nuestros sabihondos políticos estén amurallados en conceptos anticuados que se empeñan en hacer calzar en la armazón del

Estado, como quien toma la piel de un asno y quiere vestir con ella el cuerpo indócil y elástico de un cóndor. ¡Eso es la constitución arcaica que nos rige: una piel de asno! (100)

In this case, the character refers to ‘donkey skin’ to underline the inadequacy of the current political model and, in particular, to describe its characteristics in negative terms: compactness, rigidity, uniformity. Conversely, he or she mentions the condor, an animal which is described as a less sedentary and more elastic animal. Probably, he alludes to this bird to suggest that the traditional political model is too rigid and is not capable of adapting to the mutable and diverse Bolivian society.

The character of Jacinta is crucial for giving another key to the interpretation of the passage. As explained above, Jacinta is a prostitute who lives in a rural area in the Bolivian highlands and then moves to the *Espíritu Santo* mine hoping to find better living conditions. She has an autochthonous background as she comes from Cochabamba, a region with a high concentration of Aymara peasantry (Sanjinés 2004:17). Therefore, the main characteristics of this figure — her autochthonous identity and her womanhood — problematise the scene of her death. The ambiguity of this passage can be examined through Pratt’s ideas about nationhood, gender and Latin American identities. In her essay, she focuses on famous female figures who are depicted both as heroes and as icons in the modern national discourses. She mentions different examples, some related to Western cultures, such as the Statue of Liberty, the Britannia and the Marsellaise, others associated with American cultures like La Malinche, Pocahontas and the Virgin of Guadalupe. She points out that, although these emblematic characters are described as similar to soldiers, they are reduced to an objectified body, and therefore, to an icon. This representation unveils the androcentrism on which national discourses are based. These figures, which are in between socially active agents and icons, illustrate the ambiguous position of women in modern nations: contemporaneously, they are seen both as part of the nation and as other (Pratt 1994: 31-32). Thus, on the one hand, she is described as an active character

who leads the masses and contributes to the fight against the mine's oligarchic power. On the other hand, she is devalued as mere body, as red clothing and also as a flag. The objectification of this female figure is a key theme also at the end of the text. A close reading of the final episode will demonstrate that the dynamic of inclusion and exclusion characterises not only the complex description of the female protagonist but also the ambiguous conditions of autochthonous peoples in Bolivia.

### **Disappearance of Mauricio**

The dualistic structure of the characters disappears completely in the last pages of the novel, when Mauricio dies during the mineworkers' protest. The description of his death contains symbolically loaded images which provide important clues to interpreting the overall text:

Casi al borde del despeñadero agonizaba Mauricio. Una bala que lo alcanzó en el vientre lo había tumbado, medio roto en dos pedazos sobre la punta de una roca. Se mordía levemente el labio inferior, como si la mitad de una puteada se le hubiera quedado en la boca [...] Algunos mineros se agruparon sobre el moribundo como tratando de evitar que se apagara la débil llama de su destino. (280)

Here, Mauricio is shot at the battle camp. While he is dying, he bites his lips, as if he has something in his mouth. Nevertheless, the sentence 'la mitad de una puteada se lo hubiera quedado en la boca' is a metaphorical attempt to communicate other ideas. Indeed, the text depicts the character as having a 'puteada' in his mouth. This colloquial word is commonly used in Bolivia to express a reprimand.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the idea of an interrupted action is suggested by the representation of the reprimand as a tangible object which the character's mouth was about to expel. Moreover, the expression 'morderse los labios' can allude to passive-aggressive behaviour. The verb 'to bite' refers generally to the action of eating but

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<sup>27</sup> In order to understand the colloquial use of this word, it has been necessary to ask about the meaning of this term to native speakers of Bolivian Spanish. Moreover, it has been useful to verify this information on the online Latin American slang dictionary AsiHablamos [online]

can also evoke ideas of violence and aggression. For example, in Spanish the sentence ‘alguien está que muerde’ means that someone is angry. Bearing in mind the denotation of this word, this action suggests the idea of an aggression against him.

Probably this episode hints at the fact that the character’s desire to protest has been violently repressed. This scene can lead to this interpretation if it is related to other passages in the novel. In a letter to Clotilde, Mauricio says that he has changed much after his experience in the mine.

Con verdadera vida, es decir con los ojos abiertos a luz de eso que los filósofos llamaron obscuramente la verdad, y que no es sino realidad palpable, pulpa con sangre de humanidad; con el oído atento a las pulsaciones de los hechos y de los hombres, más de los hechos que de los hombres; con la boca llena de palabras calientes de protesta y justicia. (252)

Here, he uses the senses of hearing and speaking to describe his new intellectual stance, that is, his major engagement with political and social issues. In particular, his utterance ‘con la boca llena de palabras calientes de protesta y justicia’ suggests that he uses his voice and his words as tools to denounce abuses and to defend his own sense of justice. The author’s autobiographical experience is relevant to this episode. Indeed, as discussed before, he wrote this novel while having served as a consul in Chile. It has been pointed out also that this diplomatic mission probably masked the author’s voluntary exile from Bolivia. Because of this, the sentence quoted above might refer to Cerruto’s intellectual stance. Indeed, the author was aware that he could express his ideas freely abroad but probably not in Bolivia, where the leftist opposition was repressed by Salamanca’s government (Klein 1969: 139).<sup>28</sup>

Finally, in this passage, it is worth noting the proxemic relation between Mauricio and the mineworkers: the protagonist is surrounded by other characters. Some lines later, the text describes El Coto climbing to the top of a rocky hill and looking at the characters

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<sup>28</sup> Moreover, some Bolivian leftist intellectuals, some of whom were exiled by President Siles and others by Salamanca, created new political movements against the war. Some of them include *Grupo Tupac Amaru*, *Izquierda Boliviana Kollasuyo* and *Exiliados* (Klein 1969: 195)

from this high point. The text seems to emphasise a contrast between these two characters, as their different locations are significant if considered within the overall narration.

### **Survival of El Coto**

Immediately after Mauricio's death, the text moves its focus to the character, El Coto, who ascends to the top of a hill. From this high point, the figure observes the Chaco at a distance:

Saltando con sus largas piernas entre los riscos, Estanislao, El Coto, fue a instalarse en la punta más alta del peñasal. De cara al cielo, su figura desmesurada se destacó como encendida sobre el fondo luminoso del amanecer. [...]

— Allí está el Chaco — pensó El Coto — donde se abaten para nacer de nuevo, nuestros hermanos.

Creyó ver rayos de luz en el corazón de la tormenta.

Arriba, el sol flameaba ya como una bandera. (280)

As explained previously, El Coto occupies the most elevated position, whereas the protagonist Mauricio is in a lower position, at the same level as the mineworkers. This can be regarded as an allusion to the idea of hierarchy. The different proxemic relationships between the two characters and the mineworkers can be interpreted as an allusion to two different intellectual stances and two different types of political militancy. El Coto standing above the mineworkers epitomises the intellectuals who affirm their authority as political leaders and who want to organise the marginalised masses from above. Conversely Mauricio, located on the same horizontal line as the mineworkers, embodies the intellectuals who establish equal and reciprocal relationships with marginalised groups. As shown previously, these different points of view are manifested in other passages in the text in the gender relationships between these characters and marginalised female figures. Indeed, as illustrated in the previous section, Coto's violent and disrespectful behaviour towards the women symbolises his paternalistic and authoritarian attitudes.

In addition to these considerations, this scene deserves particular attention, as it offers a panoramic view of the Chaco region. According to Pabón, the top-down

perspective in the text is connected to the narrator's need to confer totality and consistency on the diverse social and racial components of Bolivian society:

En este sentido el papel del narrador cerrutiano es determinante, pues, utilizando el Chaco como piedra fundamental de integración, intenta recomponer los fragmentos de la sociedad boliviana y devolverle la coherencia que parece estar perdiendo. Para ello adquiere un punto de vista que es celestial y solar, espacio arquetípico del poder y del estado con el que se abre y se cierra *Aluvión de fuego*. [...] Desde ese punto de vista solar-estatal, espacio narrativo a la vez que posible espacio de Estado nuevo, se puede abarcar la totalidad de las diversidades sociales y territoriales de la nación como entidad única. (García 1998:155-156)

Nevertheless, this scene can be interpreted in other ways. Indeed, the location of the high rock and the top view of a landscape can be considered to hint at perspectivism, on which the modern way of seeing is based, referring to 'a form of representation by which the parts of an object are construed and presented as if seen from a given point of view' (Graumann 2002: 25). Sanjinés explains that perspectivism has contributed to the dominance of the visual in modern Western culture. Additionally, he points out that it is not just a visual model but also an epistemological one based on Cartesian ideas of subjective rationality (Sanjinés 2004: 28). Additionally, he believes that perspectivism underpins the dominant *mestizo-criollo* view of the nation in Bolivia:

Perspectivism — the visual discipline that became the basis for outside in epistemology— provides the dominant mestizo — criollo view of the nation. First, in this arrangement the nation is a natural political and territorial unit centered in La Paz, the site of the government. Second, the nation is believed to be fundamentally urban, with its business conducted in the cities, and with nonurban sectors as the object of this business. Third, despite the libertarian and egalitarian rhetoric of revolutionary nationalism, the truth is that the nation remains deeply stratified, with mestizo — criollos at the top of the social scale. (Sanjinés 2004: 28)

Thus, just as in perspectivism the presentation of an object or a scene depends on the position of one vanishing point, so the specific geographical arrangement of Bolivia is based in the centre of La Paz. Therefore, from this final scene, it can be inferred that the overall text goes in two opposing directions. On the one hand, it suggests ideas of heterogeneity and de-centrism through the description of its main settings, the Chaco front

and the *Espíritu Santo* mine. On the other hand, it highlights ideas of homogeneity and centrism through the dualistic structure of the characters and the hints of perspectivism.

Finally, the last sentence ‘Arriba el sol flameaba como una bandera’ refers back to other passages in the novel. The word ‘bandera’ creates intra-textual connections with the description of Jacinta before her death: ‘Jacinta avanza delante de la manifestación; vestida enteramente de rojo, llamea en efecto, como una alegre bandera’. The depiction of Jacinta as a flag unveils the complex relationship between gender, indigeneity and state. As examined on page 107, female figures have been used as national icons throughout history, which reveals an ambiguous dynamic, namely the inclusion and exclusion of women within national logic. The objectification of this female figure suggests the ambiguous position of Bolivian autochthonous people, partly included and excluded from the Bolivian nation. The identification between the female figure and the flag implies that Indigenous peoples are part of the Bolivian nation; notwithstanding, the association between the female character and an object also suggests that autochthonous peoples do not have a fully participative role in the construction of a national consciousness. This ambiguous literary representation of Jacinta reflects the controversial debate on Indigenous people which emerged in Bolivia after the Chaco War. The Bolivian defeat was partly due to the massive coerced enlistment of peasants in Bolivian Andean areas. Despite this negative outcome, there was a growing awareness that Indigenous people were a constitutive part of national identity (Klein 1969: 188-189).

## **Conclusion**

Antezana explains that Bolivian critics define *Aluvión de Fuego* as a representative text of the Chaco War. Indeed, he thought that the novel does not just revolve around the problems related to this conflict, but also portrays a national crisis (Antezana 2011: 153). A close reading of this text confirms Antezana’s opinion. As illustrated before, some



contradictions within the novel highlight the cultural and political turmoil triggered by the war. In that period, new political ideas emerged to destabilise the political hegemony of the liberal oligarchy; additionally, the marginality of Indigenous peoples becomes an issue of political debate.

These incongruities manifest themselves in the text, especially in the way in which the main two settings, the mine and the Chaco front are described with respect to the conventional arrangement of Bolivian territory. The geopolitics of Bolivia was based traditionally on a rigid polarisation between the capital La Paz, mostly inhabited by the creole oligarchy, and the highland regions, mostly populated by Indigenous people. The expectations related to these extra-linguistic realities are of notable importance in the depiction of the two environments in the novel. The *Espíritu Santo* mine and the Chaco front are conventionally regarded as peripheral and remote regions as they are located in the *Altiplano* of the Andes and are geographically far from the centre of La Paz. As explained previously, the text confirms and negates these expectations. While the mine and the Chaco front are described as barbaric and backward areas, they are presented as centres fostering political discussion and potentially propagating new ideas. The depiction of these areas as politically active challenges the political dominance of La Paz. It also questions the hegemony of *mestizo-criollo* discourses.

A close reading of the text examines the reasons why the brothel is presented as a political arena. As illustrated above, the brothel challenges the Western vision of sexuality and, somehow, epitomises the margin of Western culture. Therefore, the text describes the development of a political discussion in this transgressive environment to highlight the emergence of new discourses which have an external epistemological stance. Thinking outside the epistemological centre is seen in the text as a necessary step to create new epistemologies. Similarly, a critical distance from dominant discourses is suggested by the feast motif. Bakhtin's theoretical framework is used to demonstrate how the festive

atmosphere is a literary motif conventionally associated with non-official ideologies. In this respect, Bakhtin's ideas are complicated by Mignolo's theories of 'border thinking'. In particular, the references to Bolivian musical repertoire are examined in relation to the ideas of Mignolo. The emphasis on music seeks to evoke the heterogeneous combination of hegemonic and subalternised knowledges. Hence, it contributes to the depiction of the mine and the Chaco front as environments outside the hegemonic imaginary. Thus, the novel seems to suggest that thinking from these 'fractures' of 'hegemonic knowledges' has the potential to create a distance from the dominant *mestizo-criollo* paradigm (Mignolo 2000: 42). This seems to unveil the cultural and political crisis which affected Bolivia during and after the Chaco War. Under these difficult circumstances, the new progressive intelligentsia feels the need to change and build a new identity. Moreover, the hint at a distance from an epistemological centre also has a connection with the author's autobiographical experience. As explained previously, he was overseas during the war and probably left the country voluntarily, thus creating distance from the dominant *mestizo-criollo* consciousness, like the patriotic propaganda of the war and the ruling class' discourses.

In summary, the main message of the text might appear to be the need to change and to build a new independent Bolivian identity. Nevertheless, the text is open to diverse interpretations. For example, the image of a heterogeneous and decentred Bolivian society coexists with an understanding of the country as exclusive and contradictory binaries. Indeed, the text emphasises the diverse combination of characters who occupy the *Espíritu Santo* mine and the Chaco front, through narrowing its attention to two pairs of characters. On the one hand, Mauricio and El Coto epitomise the *mestizo* leftist intellectuals. On the other hand, Jacinta and Eulalia exemplify the Indigenous population of the Bolivian highlands. Moreover, the last page of the novel coincides with the representation of a landscape seen from a single and elevated viewpoint. This scene further questions a

decentred and heterogeneous vision of Bolivia, as it evokes a unified and centralised model of nation.

Finally, the gender dimension of this novel is worth considering. The description of women's marginality confirms the readers' expectations about the two main settings represented. For example, the rape motif evokes the literary discourses of the Conquest and in particular, the recurring myth of Indigenous women kidnapped and violated by Spanish colonisers. In the mine setting, the abuse of the women confirms the secondary role of woman in the economic development of the extractive industries. In addition, the gender issue is also suggested by the textual emphasis on the physical appearance of the main characters. The importance of these figures' physicality is mainly due to their role as prostitutes, as well as making a comparison between their bodies and those of Hollywood actresses. Both the episodes of discrimination and the corporeal depiction of some figures always involve Indigenous women. In this analysis, it has been explained that the identification between womanhood and indigeneity is closely connected to Western discourses on nationhood. Pratt's ideas illustrate the ambiguous position of women within modern national logic: they are included, but at the same time, are considered as other in relation to nation. Finally, this sense of gender discrimination leads to the final climax: the death of the main character Jacinta. She is compared to a red flag when she heads the mineworkers' protest and, brutally, she is shot. Her violent death and her role of flag stresses the objectification and the exploitation of this character. The linking thread between autochthony, ethnicity and gender lead the reader to interpret this episode as an allusion to the exploitation of Andean peasants during the Chaco War. Similarly, the connection between these ideas highlights the position of Indigenous people within the modern concept of the Bolivian nationhood: they form part of the Bolivian nation but, at the same time, they are considered to be outsiders.

The gender relationships between the characters are of significant importance for the final development of the novel. With regard to the two female figures, it is worth noting that the more assertive one dies, whereas the more reticent one survives. Indeed, in comparison with Jacinta, Eulalia is completely absent in the novel. She appears in the text through the voices of other characters who just mention her name occasionally or who praise her physical appearance. Therefore, the name of the character plays as a signifier which masks a void within the text. In her book, *The Lost Rib*, Magnarelli explains how the word *bruja* in *El obsceno pájaro de la noche* (1970) by José Donoso is the linguistic substitute of an ellipsis, that is, an omission of information. This term shifts readers' attention from what is missing, 'what is not said, what is concealed, is ultimately what is vital to full comprehension' (Magnarelli 1985: 159). Returning to the text, this idea of absence can be interpreted as a further hint at the ambiguous position of Indigenous people in the Bolivian national project. The negative outcome of the Chaco War raised the problem of the Indigenous within the Bolivian intellectual milieu. In the same way that Eulalia is a topic of conversation amongst the characters, Indigenous people were also the object of discussions in the political debates. In the same way that the name Eulalia covers up an emptiness within the narration, the word 'Indigenous' also highlights a void within the Bolivian political arena: due to their marginal social conditions, most Indigenous people were absent in these political dialogues. Similarly, the survival of El Coto is significant in the text. The last passage, which has El Coto as a protagonist, serves to highlight the limitations of the Bolivian revolutionary intelligentsia: although it expresses its egalitarian and revolutionary ideas, it sees Bolivian society as a highly stratified system with *mestizo-criollo* intellectuals at the top.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EXPLORING LITERATURE AND SUBALTERNITY IN *CANCHAMINA*

#### **Introduction**

The discrepancy between authors' elite status and subject matter linked to marginality has always been a crucial object of studies and debates. Indeed, the interplay between literature and subalternity constitutes the key idea of Subaltern Studies. John Beverley formulates the main assumption on which this area of studies is based: 'almost by definition the subaltern, which will in some cases be a component of their own personal identity, is not, and cannot be adequately represented by literature or in the university, that literature and the university are among the practices that create and sustain subalternity' (Beverley 1999: 71). Similarly, Ángel Rama has highlighted the elite character of Latin American literature. The title of his book *La ciudad letrada* (1984) efficaciously communicates his main message: literature is the most important expressive vehicle of the educated Latin American elite, coming mostly from cities. In this book, Rama calls into question how Latin American literature is the main cultural space in which popular voices can find their greatest expression.

This chapter provides a close reading of the Bolivian text *Canchamina*, co-written by two Bolivian authors Víctor Hugo Villegas and Mario Guzmán Aspiazu in 1956. This analysis seeks to examine the way in which the contradiction described above is reflected in this text. Indeed, the aim of this study is to explore the interface between two writers and their object of representation. Moreover, this allows for reflections on other issues such as authorship, gender inequalities within the mining space, and discursive mechanisms inherent in *testimonio* and diary. In particular, some passages will be analysed

to answer these ultimate questions: do authors relinquish their authority as writers in order to favour subaltern people's voices? Do authors efface their identity in order to build alternative forms of collective identity based on marginalised communities' experience? Do authors use their writing to focus on others rather than themselves?

Before examining the novel in depth, it is worth briefly explaining the plot. *Canchamina* starts with an introductory episode set in an unidentified tavern. Here, the two authors meet a person who has worked as a storekeeper in the Bolivian mine, Supay-Kollo. After introducing himself as Fenelón Aparicio, the character says goodbye to both authors and gives them a personal diary which will be the core material of the whole novel. In this text, the character narrates seven days of his life in the mine Supay-Kollo. Fenelón Aparicio's account revolves around two main story lines. The first is the narrator's report describing injustices and deprivations which the Supay-Kollo mineworkers suffer on a daily basis. In particular, it focuses on the life of a mineworker, Gumercindo Urpiales. A digression in the novel explains how this character was the first person who discovered the mine deposit of Supay-Kollo but was unfairly dispossessed of these resources by the powerful landowner, Alcántara. At the beginning of the narration, the mineworker has tuberculosis and is about to die. Alcántara takes advantage of Urpiales' illness to take complete possession of the mine: he leads the mineworker far from Supay-Kollo and pushes him off a cliff. The plot ends with the revolt of the Supay-Kollo mineworkers who claim Urpiales' body back. Nevertheless, the second story line is centred on Felenón Aparicio's private life. In this text, the narrator communicates his more intimate thoughts but, in particular, he admits to having an obsessive sexual attraction to the Indigenous female miner, Ángela.

The analysis that follows consists of three broad sections. The first part outlines the social political and economic context in which *Canchamina* was written. The brief overview of this historical period is relevant to consider the text as closely related to the

complex configuration of Bolivian society. What follows is the analysis of *testimonio* and diary, the main intertextual references embedded within this text. The focus on these literary discourses is the starting point for understanding some themes running through the text. It also aims to problematise some apparently clear-cut dichotomies: the author's control of the narrative discourse versus the author's withdrawal from the narration, self-referential writing versus writing based on another's life experience. The second part focuses on the main character of the novel, the male narrator Fenelón Aparicio. It will be demonstrated that the narrator represents the fictitious reflection of the two authors' concerns and anxieties. Furthermore, this section will use the ideas of proximity and distance to describe the relationship between this male character and the mineworkers. The third part brings special attention to the characters of *palliris*, an Aymara word which refers to female workers who extract minerals from the rocks brought to the surface by the miners. It will be explained how the text gives less attention to the relations between the male narrator and the male mineworkers; rather it emphasises more the relationship between the male narrator and the *palliris*. In order to understand these gender relationships, the concepts of proximity and distance will be elaborated through the lens of Lacanian psychoanalytical theories. This theoretical framework allows a deeper exploration of discursive mechanisms underlying testimonial discourses. The ultimate end of this analysis is to illustrate how this text contributes to the overall construction of an alternative Bolivian collective identity.

## **The Revolution of 1952**

The contextual background, in which this novel has been written and published, provides new insights into the political discourses underlying this text. The novel was published some years after the Revolution of 1952, whose the main protagonist was the political party MNR (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario). This political bloc

involved representatives from the working class, peasants and progressive middle class forces. Such a period of significant social change had a strong impact on Bolivian history since a main outcome was the end of powerful mine-owning families such as the Patiño, Hoschschild and Aramayo also known as *roscas mineras* or *superestado minero* (Hylton 2007:77).

The origins of this political and social turmoil refer back to the beginning of the 1930s as a consequence of politicisation and empowerment of new grassroots social forces. According to Hylton and Thomson, in the areas of Sucre and Potosí, Indian caciques, radical intellectuals, as well as organised labour forces, started to form new social coalitions to undermine the oligarchic social order (Hylton 2007: 63-67). Moreover, another trigger event was represented by the Chaco War. As explained on pages 39 and 65, despite its negative outcome, this historical event brought the protagonism of new political forces which had previously constituted just a radical minority and, additionally, it promoted the emergence of a new national ideology (Hylton 2007: 68).

Dunkerley and Hylton locate the causes of the Revolution of 1952 in the socio-political conflicts which occurred in the mines (Dunkerley 2007: 230; Hylton 2007: 75). Indeed, over the course of the 40s, political consciousness within rural communities, and proletarian activism, became stronger. On pages 10 and 105, it has been explained that the tragic repression of the Catavi protest in 1942 left indelible traces in the miners' political consciousness and contributed to an increase in new forms of mobilisation and organisation. Indeed, following this event, two years later, a congress which took place in the mining centre of Huanini brought the establishment of the first mineworkers' trade union, FSTMB, Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros (Hylton 2007:75).

Dunkerley argues that the causes of this revolution can also be found in the economic stalemate following the post-war period. As explained on page 10, these difficult economic conjunctures led the Bolivian government to exert more control over



Bolivian tin production and to back the MNR political agenda, in order to provide an ideological justification for his new economic measures (Dunkerley 2007: 240). 1951 marked the official beginning of the revolution when the MNR gained a majority in the presidential elections and its leader, Víctor Paz Estenssoro, became the president of Bolivia. On 11 April 1952, the party acquired full power when the military forces surrendered in La Paz (Klein 2011: 212).

The revolutionary measures of the MNR party brought about significant social changes. In addition to the mine nationalisation, it is worth mentioning some key reforms. In 1953 an Agrarian Reform Decree officially put an end to the feudal landowning and peonage system. In the same year, the revolutionary MNR government approved the Universal Educational Law to extend the right of education to Indigenous and rural communities. In 1956, the MNR created a new electoral law which guaranteed the vote to all Bolivian citizens over 18 years of age, regardless of gender, race, education, class and economic status (Morales 2011: 134-135).

Having discussed the overall development of this revolution, it is important to review the main debates on this political and social turmoil. According to Morales, despite significant reforms, the MNR revolution was primarily a moderate revolution of middle-class intellectuals (Morales 2011: 134-135). Other historians have highlighted the similarities between the Bolivian Revolution of 1952 and the Mexican Revolution of 1910. For example, Hylton explains that both revolutions were led by middle class reformists opposed to the powerful oligarchic families. He illustrates how the success of both revolutions was due to the alliance of middle class intellectuals with workers and peasants. Indeed, the convergence of these different social groups formed a solid political bloc which undermined the Bolivian oligarchic forces. However, he also points out that this apparently strong political coalition was marked by tensions and contradictions. For

example, the relations between miners and peasants were often problematic because of the cultural and social distance between these social groups (Hylton 2007: 76-78).

After the Revolution of 1952, the progressive and anti-oligarchic ideology of Revolution gradually declined. As discussed in the Introduction, in 1956 Bolivia faced difficult economic circumstances due to the inflation, the decline of the mining industry and the food crisis. Because of this, the government of Paz Estenssoro started to accept US and IMF economic, food, and development aid. Hence 1956, the year in which *Canchamina* was published, corresponded with the end of the leftist revolutionary fervour. The MNR lost its political influence and experienced a considerable political fragmentation. The interference of the US became stronger. Indeed, the IMF along with the US government incited an economic stabilisation plan which brought about a reduction in workers' wage increases, as well as a notable decrease in state subsidies and investments. Additionally, the US promoted the reformation of the Armed Forces to take control of internal protests. This shift toward Pro-American liberalism, US interventionist politics, empowerment of military forces and divisions with the MNR resulted in the imposition of a military dictatorship in November 1964. With the aid of US army colonel and CIA Chief Edward Fox, General René Barrientos assumed power (Hylton 2007:80-82).

This historical examination shows that *Canchamina* reflects this complex period. Indeed, the text can be considered as an outline of the post-revolutionary social climate, which was torn between nostalgia and disenchantment. It mirrors a desire to return to the past and, in particular, to the revolutionary period which was full of hopes and expectations. At the same time, it reflects the realistic acknowledgement that the high aspirations of revolutionary social changes did not come true. This pragmatic acknowledgment is accompanied with the need to analyse retrospectively the contradictions of Revolution.

## **Blended Text: Between *Testimonio* and Diary**

The literary discourses of *testimonios* and diary, which are interwoven in this text, provide the straightforward impression that the two authors have withdrawn from the narration. However, a close reading of the text complicates the immediate idea of the two authors effacing their presence in the narration.

Before delving deeper into the analysis of the text, it will be necessary to explain concisely what is intended for a testimonial writing and a diary novel. With regard to *testimonios*, Sklodowska questions the distinction between *testimonio* and testimonial fiction by highlighting *testimonio*'s kinship to literature: 'testimonial texts are a peculiar mixture of experience, creation, manipulation and invention, more akin, perhaps to a novel, than to a scientific document' (Sklodowska 2001: 256). Besides the debate about the literary nature of *testimonio*, it is worth explaining that *testimonio* is based on a process of negotiation between an author who is also called the transcriber and a person from a marginalised background who is called the informant (Bartow 2005: 11-27). The relationship between the two characters is grounded on mutual legitimacy: authors have the power to access publishers, in order to make people listen to marginalised people's voices, whereas informants offer a reason why the transcriber's work should be published (Bartow 2005: 33). With regard to diary novels, Trevor Field draws attention to the elevated variety of literary discourses considered under the umbrella of diary novels. Although he recognises the wide spectrum of this literary genre, he appeals to Gerald Prince's definition of a diary novel: 'the diary novel is a *roman personnel*, an *Ich-Roman*, a first-person novel in which the narrator is a protagonist in the events he records' (Prince in Field 1989: 1). Additionally, Field identifies some important features of diary fiction: a first-person narration, the references to the physical process of writing, the use of dates, the author's self-awareness.

For this analysis, the introduction is one of the key passages in the text as it more clearly reveals the convergence of *testimonio* and diary discourses. This prologue stands out in the text because it also has an *ex-abrupto* opening. Indeed, it starts with a character drinking alcohol in a tavern. He looks very drunk and he is described as having teeth damaged by the consumption of coca leaves. After having been recognised as Fenelón Aparicio, he commences his story about the lives of the Supay-Kollo mineworkers. Before leaving the place, he gives a handwritten text to the supposed authors of this narration. This text reveals itself to be the written material on which the whole novel is based: a diary in which Fenelón Aparicio reports his experience in a remote mine called Supay-Kollo.

From this introductory episode it can be seen that there is a potential link between this text and testimonial discourses. The two writers introduce a fictitious character, Fenelón Aparicio, in order to shift their voice to a third person who witnesses some facts. They then apparently relinquish their authority to this character by publishing his personal diary (Bartow 2005: 50). The figure of Fenelón Aparicio plays an ambiguous role which is halfway between the informant and the transcriber in testimonial discourses. He appears as an informant as he testifies, in the first person, to abuses, social injustices and miserable living conditions; as a consequence of this, he has the main role of denouncing this experience of marginalisation. Since the character also reveals himself to be the main narrator of the text, he can therefore also be considered as the transcriber of this text. There is a hidden connection between this character's first person narration and the theme of distance. The presence of a gap is signalled by the fact that the authors narrate the mineworkers' marginal experience through a fictitious character, the vicarious identity of Fenelón Aparicio (Bartow 2005: 79-88). The inclusion of this voice creates an effect of discursive distance, at two levels. There is a first discursive level in which two narrators identify themselves with the real authors. In the second discursive level the narrator

corresponds with the character Fenelón Aparicio. Thus, two discursive layers suggest that there is a wide distance between the authors and the object of representation.

Other literary aspects of the text do not conform to the expectations of the testimonial discourse. Despite this, they contribute to the overall impression that the authors efface their presence in the text. For example, Fenelón Aparicio is ambiguously in-between a transcriber and an informant as he is not a marginalised person strictly speaking. Even though he experiences the brutal life-style of the Supay-Kollo mineworkers, he is not the typical representative of this social group. He does not completely fit into the category of the voiceless as he received a formal education; therefore, he is able to communicate his horrendous experience through writing. The ambiguous character of this figure is also suggested by the initial description. His physical appearance shows evident traces of decay such as the bad condition of his teeth. Nevertheless, his behaviour makes the figure seem to be an intellectual immersed in his thoughts and overwhelmed by his existential malaise as the text suggests:

Estaba ebrio aquella noche. Bebía a tragos largos, escrutando lejanías que no cabían en los límites del tenducho. [...] sus dientes mostraban el rastro verdeamarillo de los mascadores de coca. Puesto de codos sobre la mesa, tenía la actitud del que está tronchado por el peso de la vida. (1)

Another substantial difference between this text and conventional testimonial discourses sheds further light on the strategy of authorial effacement. *Testimonios* are generally based on a process of negotiation: informants and a writer agree with each other on the material to write. Owing to the informants' low level of literacy, *testimonio* negotiations consist of oral discussions. The informants orally communicate their marginal experiences while writers put into writing the informants' oral account. The introduction of this novel suggests that this kind of negotiation is completely absent. First of all, the interaction between the two writers and this character is presented as a fortuitous encounter which gives rise to a superficial conversation. The two authors clarify that they did not

understand what the character said at that moment; they also say that they have just a vague memory of this encounter. Secondly, *Canchamina*'s writers do not play the *testimonial* writers' conventional role, of translating some orally recounted experiences into writing. Indeed, the two writers pretend to have not directly intervened in the writing process; rather, they claim to have only published a text already written by a third person. This fictitious discovery of a text is a literary device which can be found in different literary works, for instance in one of the most important Spanish classics, *Don Quijote* (1605) or in the stories written by the Argentinian writer José Luís Borges, *Tlön Uqbar Orbis Tertius* (1940) and *El inmortal* (1949). Besides intertextual links between *Canchamina* and other fictional texts, the found text theme further emphasises how two writers wish to efface or minimise their presence in the text. It suggests that the novel has not been written by the two writers; rather, it is someone else's work (González 1999: 13).

The absence of negotiation and the authorial disappearance can be better understood through the text's relationship with a diary. For example, the text displays a short distance between the temporal locus of narration and the action of writing. The *hic et nunc* of writing suggests that the narrator provides spontaneous and immediate impressions of facts he personally experienced (Field 1989: 6). The text is not the outcome of an agreement between two people; rather, it is the result of an individual's independent work. This central feature of writing illustrates that the novel is not the final product of a prior dialogue between informants and writers; rather it is a private expression of an individual's experiences.

In conclusion, the overall introduction gives the illusion that the authors minimise their presence in the text. However, the intertextual references described above hint simultaneously at two different tendencies. On the one hand, they make the two authors less visible in the text. On the other hand, they reveal the strong presence of the two authors who are behind the writing processes and skilfully resort to these literary devices.

## Confirming and Challenging Authorship

Apart from the intertextual link with *testimonio* and diary discourses, there are some literary motifs which shed further light on the issue of authorship. In particular, the dichotomies, *gritar/escibir* and *gritar/silencio* play a relevant role for understanding the two authors' stances within the text. Before analysing some passages in the text, it is worth noting that the dichotomy *gritar/escibir* is used instead of the more generally conventional one, *hablar/escibir*. Whereas the word *hablar* has a more neutral meaning, the word *gritar* has many more connotations. The semantic richness of the word *gritar* is, for instance, evident in its dictionary definition: 'Expresar una persona su descontento, disconformidad o disgusto con gritos'.<sup>29</sup> From this dictionary entry, it can be seen that the word does not solely denote the oral communication of a message but also expresses other concepts such as the intensity of voice, communicative strength and expression of strong emotions. After having examined the semantic features of the two words, it is worth illustrating the way in which the problematic relationship between cry and writing is underlined in the text:

Urpiales y su historia están pidiendo a gritos el libro de la usurpación minera. Que otros traten de escribirlo. Yo solamente aprieto renglones con la verdad de lo que esta noche relató el minero enfermo. (22)

In the passage above, the narrator modestly states that he cannot provide a truthful and comprehensive report of the mineworkers' marginalised life. He delegates this task to other writers, in this way diminishing the value of his diary as a faithful testimony of this social 'reality'. The sentence 'Yo solamente aprieto renglones' suggests how writing can only provide an incomplete view of mineworkers' experience, which is painful, brutal and intense. On the one hand, the mineworkers express great rage and aggressiveness when they denounce the abuses they suffer daily. On the other hand, the narrator communicates

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<sup>29</sup>'gritar' in *Diccionarios. com* [online]

this rage in a more moderate way as a result of expressing these feelings through the constraints of writing. Moreover, the statement hints at the gap between crying and writing and also draws the readers' attention to the loss of emotional connotations.

The concept of loss can be further analysed in relation to Derrida's ideas regarding the problematic interplay between writing and speech. He describes the relationship between writing and speech through an ancient Egyptian myth about the origin of writing. Theuth is a god who invents many arts, such as arithmetic and geometry and gives to his son Thamus, as a final art, writing. Derrida's exploration of this mythical account focuses on how the parental bond between Thamus and Theuth reflects the relationship between writing and speech. Thamus is the father of Theuth; similarly, a "speaking subject" is the father of its Logos (speech). However, although speech has always, as a father, a speaking subject, writing is orphaned from the father (Derrida 1981: 75-84). As a consequence of this, speech is described as 'an organism or a living being' whereas writing is characterised by a 'cadaverous rigidity' (Derrida 1981: 80, 114). On the basis of his ideas, writing can be described as a process through which the lively utterances of speech are converted into rigid and lifeless graphic signs. Thus, writing can be considered as a linguistic code marked by absence, death and loss.

The concept of loss hints at the inherent differences between writing and speech: writing does not have the same emotional intensity as these people's cries, thus it does not efficaciously express the mineworkers' abuses. Nevertheless, the notion of loss is also linked with the social, political and economic differences between the author and mineworkers. Hence, the narrator gets closer to mineworkers' life but is somehow distant from these people's brutal conditions. The narrator is not compelled by the same needs as the mineworkers; thus, he is not driven by the same resentment and combative attitude. The linking thread between crying, writing and loss reveals an inevitable contradiction, which is one of the key ideas in *Subaltern Studies*: even though intellectuals speak for and



seek solidarity with marginal and dispossessed people, they cannot completely identify themselves with them (Beverley 1999: 39-40).

This continuity between crying, writing and loss has particular significance when considered in the light of the Latin American context. The problematic relationship between writing and speech is an essential characteristic of the Bolivian context. In the Introduction, it has already been explained that Bolivia is a culturally and linguistically diverse society, with a high percentage of Indigenous population. Spanish, which is considered as the hegemonic and official language, coexists with Indigenous language groups such as Aymara, Quechua and Guarani which are spoken by almost 20 percent of the population (Morales 2014: 244). As a consequence of this, literature, which is the main expression of Spanish language, coexists with oral cultural manifestations which are the main expressive media of Indigenous and *mestizo* languages. In addition Bolivian culture is based on continuous interactions and multiple influences between different cultural systems. Indeed, Bolivian literature draws from a rich substratum of oral and popular culture; thus, it is highly heterogeneous (Rocha 2002: 222). It can be inferred that the textual reference to writing/crying partly alludes to the interaction between writing and speech which characterises Bolivian culture. Furthermore, the text emphasises the idea of loss to problematise the interplay between writing and speech in Bolivian culture. In this respect, Wood believes that when it is expressed through writing, popular and oral culture acquires prestige and authority but also loses originality and spontaneity (Wood 2005: 84).

So far it has been shown that the text draws the reader's attention to the continuity between the concept of loss and the dichotomy between crying/writing. The links between these ideas highlights why writing is a more limited means of expression than speech, but, it also emphasises how the narrator is inadequate when faced with the mineworkers' brutal experience. Generally speaking, these themes reveal the narrator's scepticism regarding

the relationship between reality and writing: reality is so complex, contradictory and ambiguous that it cannot be easily captured in writing.

### **Silence as A Weapon of Authorship**

The contradiction between crying and writing is mainly based on the assumption that the mineworkers' experience is so harsh and miserable that it cannot be completely communicated through a written text. The inability to provide a comprehensive view of this experience not only undermines writing as a powerful means of expression but also the authority of both authors as guarantors of truth. However, what follows demonstrates that other passages in the text refer back to the opposite concept, that is, the authority of Villegas and Aspiazu as writers. In particular, this section focuses on the theme of silence; it also examines how this motif is closely connected with the issues of subalternity and authorship.

The silence motif is highlighted in the chapter '25 de mayo' (3-23). After listening to Gumercindo Urpiales' report of his life, the narrator decides to put this story into writing. The whole passage alludes to the fact that the mineworker was living in very poor physical conditions, therefore he was not able to dwell too long on his life experience. The text also emphasises how this oral story, which might be much longer, is actually written in just a few sentences:

Dicha entre accesos de tos y salivazos, la historia pudo ser larga; escrita con fondo de silencio en la montaña, cabe apenas en unos renglones. Es una breve historia de injusticia y de despojo. (19-20)

This passage can be interpreted in different ways. It can be considered as a hint at the previously-explained issue: an oral account can be only restrictively represented in written form. Even so, it can simultaneously refer to another idea. Before introducing this new concept, it is necessary to examine the syntactic structure of this quote. The syntax of the first sentence consists of two symmetrical parts, in which each of the words logically

connect with each other. The past participle 'dicha' is opposed to 'escrita'. The subordinate clause 'dicha entre accesos de tos y salivazos' contrasts with 'escrita con fondo de silencio en la montaña'. The opposition between the two clauses is due to their divergent meaning. The first one describes the difficult circumstances under which the mineworker narrates his experience of abuses and injustices. In contrast, the second one outlines the quiet and intimate moment in which the writer puts this oral account into writing. Finally, there is an antonymic link between the adjective 'larga' and the clause 'en unos renglones'. From all these logical connections it can be seen that the sentence seems to transmit a straightforward idea: what is narrated orally is much longer than what is written. Nevertheless, this symmetrical sentence is much more complex. It appears as a set of two tangled structures: the opposition between two concepts is placed within another opposition. First of all, the sentence is based on the major contrast between what has been said and what has been written. Each part of this contrast, speech and writing, encloses another polarised structure. The first opposition is between what the mineworker might potentially communicate and what he actually narrates. In contrast, the second opposition is between what the narrator might express and what he really puts into writing. This series of oppositions aims to highlight a pivotal idea: the text is the result of intermediate processes through which information is transmitted, selected and also partially lost. Thus, as a final outcome, the text provides just a partial view of the mineworkers' real experience owing to the loss of some information.

In addition to the loss idea, this sentence is significant as it compares the mineworker's omission of information and the narrator's omission of information. Other passages in the text are useful to explore these two different ways through which information is omitted. In the novel, the lack of some information is closely related to the idea of silence.

Throughout the narration, the idea of silence negatively describes the mineworkers' inability to denounce the injustices they suffer daily. Their impotence, in particular, is described as their inability to speak and is also depicted as a consequence of cold, hunger and their debilitated constitution. This resignation involves all the mineworkers but especially the mineworker women. As they represent the most subordinate social group in the Supay-Kollo mine, they are depicted as the most silent characters.

Se alínean las mujeres de los mineros. Veo el rostro impasible de la mujer de Pedro Arispe y esa cara enjuta de la de Octavio Luna. [...] Las mujeres entablan el diálogo cortado sobre su hambre. (35)

El albo sudario amortigua todos los ruidos del campamento. Hoy se habla menos y se pisa con un paso leve los pedregales; hay una sordina para el grito del hambre. (87)

Generally speaking, the concept of silence also has particular resonance in the debates about subordinate classes. For example, Subaltern Studies resorts to the idea of silence to highlight the complex interplay between subalternity and representation: subaltern people are silent and vulnerable as a consequence of their marginal condition or their lack of education. Indeed, they cannot autonomously represent themselves through literature. As a consequence of this, they have to appeal to intellectuals' authority in order to claim their needs and to break the silence.

Differing from other *Canchamí* passages, the symmetric sentence, mentioned above, confers a positive connotation to the idea of silence. In fact, the description of a silent setting is aligned with the literary expectations of diaries. In diarist discourses, background information such as a quiet environment or a late-night setting symbolises the best moment in which writers can express their thoughts (Field 1989: 161). The positive connotation of the word 'silence' acquires more significance if it is connected with the previously illustrated idea of distance. Indeed, this term indicates the narrator's privileged condition. Unlike the mineworkers, the narrator is free to decide whether to be silent or

not. Thus, he is silent not because of his bad physical condition but because of his own choice.

From what has been explained so far, it can be seen that the different connotations of silence problematise the previously explained concept of omission. The literary conventions of diaries portray moments of silence as appropriate moments for writing. Thus, the fact that, despite this favourable moment, Fenelón Aparicio is just able to write a few lines is quite ambiguous. Readers can interpret the narrator's concise style in different ways. On the one hand, it might suggest that he lacks creativity or perhaps that he cannot fully express the mineworker's oral account through writing. On the other hand, his concise way of writing might suggest that the character is not driven by any of these causes; rather, that he makes the voluntary decision to omit some information. This deliberate choice to not provide some information completely overturns the issue of authorship in the text. Omission might not just be a consequence of the writer's inadequacy or negligence. Rather, it might be considered as an example of reticence, a literary strategy which confirms the power of both authors as writers. Indeed, it highlights his liberty of editing his text and adding or omitting new information.

The link between authority and omission is reinforced by another episode in the text. In the chapter '28 de mayo', the mine owner goes to visit the dying mineworker, Gumercindo Urpiales (51-61). While describing this encounter, the narrator openly reveals his perspective. He insinuates that most of the dialogue he heard is not significant. This is because, according to him, Alcántara's words, whilst appearing to show compassion and humanity, are deceptive. Rather, his gaze and his behaviour reveal his real plan to kill the mineworker. Through the facial and bodily expression of his emotions, he transmits his cynicism and his cruelty.

He trasladado lo mejor que puedo ese diálogo trunco. Después, más tarde, ahora que releo una por una las palabras estereotipadas en mi mente, empiezo a comprender. [...] esas palabras prometedoras que no son las del Alcántara que entra seguro de sí y desafiante. No. José de Alcántara, no me engaño.

Ellos que te conocen mal, sí, pueden engañarse. [...] Yo ni siquiera preciso detenerme en los diálogos quebrados de esta tarde. Me saca de quicio el lenguaje del látigo en la bota de Alcántara porque hubo mucha elocuencia en esa sinfonía de restallidos. [...] ¿Y la mirada final? Duró lo que un relámpago detrás de una nube negra; sin embargo, yo la vi. [...] El fulgor de la mirada de esta tarde en el rancho de Urpiales, es una página abierta al que la lea. (32-33)

In this quotation it is not important to question whether the narrator's account of the overall scene is truthful or not. Rather, it is essential to consider that the narrator openly declares that he has omitted a part of the dialogue. The omission of the dialogue is the direct consequence of how the narrator interprets the facts. Because of this, he deliberately focuses on some experiences rather than others. For example, he describes the encounter between the two characters favouring more proxemic and kinesic communication rather than verbal communication. This last episode is another example in which the narrator displays his control of the text. By omitting some of Alcántara's utterances the narrator implies that he does not only testify to these events but also evaluates them. Although the narrator is exposed to a wide variety of experiences, he selects just those which are significant for him or which conform to his interpretation of events.

### **The Narrator and the Mineworkers: Between Proximity and Distance**

The convergence described above between diary and *testimonio* challenges straightforward readings of the text. From one perspective, *Canchamina* appears as a social report of mineworkers' marginal experience. From another perspective, the novel presents itself as a private diary written in the first person by the main character of the novel, Fenelón Aparicio. This character plays an important role in the text. He comes from an unknown Bolivian city and moves to the Superkollo mine, working as a storekeeper. Throughout the narration, he always points out that he lives in the insalubrious environment of the mine not to secure a means to sustain himself but to alleviate his own interior malaise. This deliberate choice to live in the mine is one of the

reasons why the narrator reflects on the gap between his privileged status and the subaltern conditions of mineworkers.

In the novel, the relationship between the mineworking characters and the narrator is characterised by the dynamics of proximity and distance. In this section, the words 'proximity' and 'distance' are not merely used from a spatial point of view; rather, they are used in a more abstract sense to confirm or negate the relationship of solidarity between mineworkers and the narrator. Proximity is intended to illustrate how the mineworkers and the narrator are metaphorically close. Indeed, the text emphasises how they build trusting and cooperative relationships with each other or they share a common ground of experiences, such as living in the insalubrious and inhospitable environment of the mine. On the other hand, distance aims to express how they are metaphorically distant from each other. Unlike the mineworkers, the narrator or rather the storekeeper is not engaged in work that requires as much physical strength as mining work and he does not suffer the same material conditions of poverty, disease and hunger. Additionally, he distinguishes himself from the mineworkers because of his different socio-cultural background. Whereas most of the mineworkers come from rural areas of the Bolivian *Altiplano* and the Andes, he comes from the city. His different socio-cultural background is due to his educational level: in contrast to the mineworkers, he is educated as he received formal education.

In the chapter '29 de mayo', the narrator talks to the main mineworker, Octavio Luna, about the lack of food in the mine (63-86). The mine owner, Alcántara, decides to suspend the food provision because he does not get enough profit from the mine exploitation. The text illustrates how communication is mostly adequate but, at the same time, can give rise to some misunderstandings. Two speakers, the storekeeper and the mineworker, do not fully understand each other and therefore, do not completely exchange all information because they do not share the same interpretative framework (Talbot 1992:

263-264). This fracture within the communicative exchange is due to the social, political and economic differences between the two characters. The storekeeper considers the problem of not having food in more abstract terms. For him, the food shortage, which mineworkers face that moment, is only contingent. In reality, this problem is a consequence of two forces dominating the world; one protects the most powerful, such as Alcántara, whereas the other strengthens the most disadvantaged people, such as mineworkers.

Luna: más allá de esto, donde has nacido y vives, existe una fuerza invisible que va destruyendo todo lo que quisiéramos ser tú y yo. Es una fuerza que protege a Alcántara; sus hilos se mueven en toda la tierra. Y también, en otras partes, destruye los sueños parecidos a los nuestros. [...] Vivimos una lucha entre ambas fuerzas. [...] Octavio, ¿qué harías matando a Alcántara? Primero hay que dinamitar esa otra fuerza; entonces, Alcántara se vendrá al suelo. (73)

From the quotation, it can be seen that Fenelón Aparicio's argument is so abstract that it can be interpreted either as a deep reflection on his existence or as a comment with political or social implications. Indeed, it might refer both to the existential injustice inherent in the human condition and to systemic injustice related to a social order in which the most powerful takes advantage of the weakest. In comparison with the previous statement, the mineworker's reply is much more pragmatic: 'Sí, te estoy entendiendo. Pero, ¿nos vamos a dejar morir de hambre, carajo...?' (74). This communicative misunderstanding mirrors the unsolved contradiction between proximity and distance. The idea of proximity is suggested by the characters' attempts to communicate with each other and to cooperate to solve a common problem. Conversely, the idea of distance is hinted at by the failed communication mainly due to the characters' different conditions. Whereas the narrator gets distracted by more abstract thoughts about injustice, the mineworker is concentrating on practically sorting out the problem of food shortage. This different approach to the issue is a direct consequence of the characters' different status. The narrator is not really concerned about Alcántara's measure of reducing food because, as a storekeeper, he has the privilege of guaranteeing food for himself. However, the mineworker, Octavio Luna,



is completely aware that the mine owner's decision might have, as a devastating effect, hunger among mineworkers. Hence, he is more prone to figuring out a more pragmatic solution to this problem, such as killing the mine owner. The contrast which manifests itself in this conversation is further evident in the following section of the chapter. After talking to Octavio Luna, the storekeeper has dinner in his shop. The connection between this description and the previous conversation draws the reader's attention to how, in contrast to the mineworkers, the narrator can satisfy the primary need of eating. On the basis of this contradiction, the *pulpero's* utterance 'no tengo apetito' (75) stands out in the text and appears quite ironic.

Additionally, the conflict between proximity and distance is much more evident in the chapter '30 de mayo' (87-103). Here, Fenelón Aparicio, along with the mineworker Melanio, ventures for the first time into the mine galleries. In order to explore this episode deeply, it is important to take into account that the descent and the return from the underworld is a theme that can be found in different cultures and is closely related to the ideas of death/birth (Garry and El-Shamy 2005: 15). In this passage, the idea of death is suggested by the narrator's action of suspending his privileged status of storekeeper. Going into the mine, he gets close to the mineworkers' experience. Conversely, the concept of birth can be found in the final part of the passage in the explicit reference to baptism, a Christian initiation rite usually concerning young people: 'Sé de esa tragedia y la comprendo; pero me faltaba el bautizo de fuego del socavón' (95). The idea of birth metaphorically stands for the narrator's evolution towards a new identity which is much closer to the mineworkers' experience. Indeed, the literary motif of exploring mines is used in this passage to express the narrator's psychological development. In different myths, the descent into the underworld is presented as a psychological journey. According to Washburn, the descent into the underworld is an expression of archetypal imagination and symbolises the complex process through which the ego falls into the unconscious and

emerges as a person reborn. By exploring its self, the ego experiences the disintegrative encounter with the unconscious and eventually, reconciling with these shadow aspects of human consciousness, it recovers its psychic wholeness (Washburn 2003: 55). Rooted in this long mythical tradition, this episode symbolises a psychological process through which the narrator attains a fuller awareness of the mineworkers' actual inhuman conditions. In the passage, the gradual development of the narrator's awareness is highlighted by the displacement from verbs denoting perception, to verbs denoting the faculty of thinking, reasoning and gaining knowledge.

At the beginning, perceptive verbs are used to describe the action of descending into the mine as an overwhelming experience which involves most of the senses. The narrator describes his trip into the mine by drawing attention to the smell of urine and dynamite mixed together or the unusual sensation of thick saliva in his mouth. Even so, the narrator favours sight over other senses when recounting his experience. Although he is not able to see anything because of the darkness, he paradoxically points out how the experience of moving in darkness enhances his sight. If, initially, he can see nothing and moves carefully, putting his hands forward, he later manages to distinguish shapes in spite of the darkness. While he explores the mine, the narrator further underlines the importance of sight by using verbs such as '*miro mejor*' (94), '*les veo venir*' (94) or the expression '*me arden los ojos*' (95). The emphasis on sight aims to suggest how the factual report of his trip is authentic and trustworthy, mostly because it is based on visual perception.

With regard to the idea of proximity, this concept is graphically displayed in the text through a large number of bold words concentrated in a short paragraph. Before proceeding to examine the literary function of these words in the episode, it is necessary to explain that, in the text, the use of bold font is used to underline those words which the two authors consider as generally not understandable for an urban and cultivated readership. Indeed, these words are linked to a glossary which can be found at the end of

each chapter. This list of words is mostly composed of Aymara terms or terms whose referent has a specifically mining context. Their meaning is generally clarified by the author through synonyms, paraphrases, hypernyms or equivalent words in Spanish. Returning to the previously described passage, the concentration of bold words in a short passage probably aims to highlight how the narrator is moving closer to the unknown reality of the mineworkers' life. Nevertheless, it is worth adding that *chacka* and *mitas* are written in bold type but are not included in any glossary in the novel. One possible interpretation is that the absence of these words in the glossary is because these terms do not prevent the reader from understanding the overall meaning of the passage. Indeed, the terms *chacka* is explained in the same paragraph whereas *mitas* is a term coming from Quechua which is generally used in several countries in Latin America as a specific labour system in farms and mines. However, while their absence from the glossary may be due to their partial intelligibility, there may be other reasons. It seems that this inaccuracy proposes to signal graphically a gap between readers and narrator, that is, a discrepancy between the readers who become familiar with the mineworkers' lives only through reading the novel and the narrator who supposedly experiences this 'reality'. This gap might betray the narrator's intention of confirming his authority as a witness of this experience and also his aim of maintaining his privileged position of expert: he does inform his readers of all information he has as he possesses more knowledge than his readers.

The previously analysed passage describes the narrator's immediate involvement in the mineworkers' life. However, the text displays a sudden displacement from the idea of proximity to the idea of distance. The closer he explores the mineworkers' lives the more distant he feels from this lifestyle. This is suggested in the episode by the depiction of the mineworkers through references to animals. Before illustrating the logical link between animal, distance and mineworkers, it is necessary to examine how the

animalisation of the mineworkers manifests itself in the text. The description of these characters as animals is expressed initially through the simile 'famélicos como perros' and then through the metaphors 'acémilas humanas' and 'estas bestias de carga' (94-95). This process of increasing animalisation is suggested by the passage from simile to metaphors. With regard to the difference between these two figures of speech, Frye writes that: 'whereas simile compares, metaphors predicate or name' (Frye 1988: 460). One of the implications of this statement is that simile establishes a distance between two constituents or words whereas metaphors do not. Indeed, similes are based on the use of adverbs, such as 'like' and 'as', which create similarities between two semantic domains but at the same time, mark distance between them (Fogelin 2013: 23-25). On the other hand, metaphors are expressed when one constituent is replaced by another; for example, in this episode, the constituent 'tres indios' is replaced by constituents based on animal referents such as 'perros', 'acémilas humanas'. Due to the elision of the constituent 'tres indios', the metaphor suggests an increasing closeness between the mineworkers and animal referents. Moreover, this increasing animalisation concludes with this description: 'Si revuelvo son tres puntos de luz que se alejan con el paso sincronizado de los galeotes en cadena' (95). Here, the idea of dehumanisation is further underlined by the description of these characters as sparkling points gradually fading away in darkness.

Metaphorical connections between the mineworkers and animals might hint at different interpretations. It is likely that the narrator attempts to communicate to readers how harsh labour conditions and hostile workplace completely deprive the mineworkers of human attributes and human dignity. This idea is also supported by the fact that the only metaphor based on human referents is represented by 'los galeotes en cadena', meaning 'enchained galley slaves' (95). Through this expression, the difficult working conditions of the mineworkers are compared with slavery. Nevertheless, the dehumanised depiction of the mineworkers might also be interpreted as the narrator's attempt to distance

himself from the mineworkers' lives. As seen on page 75, the animal referent is closely related to the Latin American historical conception of nature as other or, in other words, as something external to man and society (Magnarelli 1985: 50). On this basis, mineworkers are presented as other to the narrator's subjectivity as they are described as components of fauna, therefore as belonging to nature. The idea of distance is also suggested by the French word, *decauville*, the only word which is placed in inverted commas in the passage. This technical word is used in this context to refer to a system of railtracks which are easily demountable and transportable in the mining gallery. Although this word is closely related to the semantic field of mining, it clashes with the previous words written in bold type, mainly because of its different origin and use. Indeed, *decauville* is much more recent than the bold words as it is associated with modernisation in extractive production as well as with foreign multinationals' first investments in Bolivia. From the first half of the twentieth century, this word was commonly introduced by foreign engineers who promoted technological development in order to optimise extraction and transportation of metals (Pacheco 1993: 64). In addition to its specific denotative meaning, such a word presents itself in the passage as an intrusive word, mainly because of its graphic representation; indeed, it stands out in the text not only because it is placed in inverted commas but also because it morphologically appears as an extraneous word to Spanish. What is interesting about this word is that this immediate impression of intrusion, which is graphically displayed, reveals relevant information about the status of the narrator. By introducing a foreign word, the narrator displays knowledge of technical words with which mineworkers are probably not familiar; in this way, he implicitly draws the readers' attention to his privileged status. He does not share the same sociolinguistic and cultural background as the mineworkers probably because he acts in social milieus mainly composed of engineers and the Bolivian mine-owning oligarchy. Through this literary device, the narrator confirms his position of outsider or rather, external observer, of this

'reality': although he experiences the mineworkers' marginality he distances himself from it. The final paragraph of the passage marks the displacement from the narrator's experience mediated by his senses to his awareness. This passage from senses to comprehension is highlighted by the use of verbs associated with the process of understanding with other ones related to sight. In this respect, Rosemary Jackson underlines the close link between the action of seeing, the acquisition of knowledge and the action of comprehending: 'I see is synonymous with I understand. Knowledge, comprehension, reason are established through the power of the look, through the eye and the I of the human subject' (Jackson 1981: 45).

After experiencing these characters' lifestyles, the narrator develops a deeper awareness and understanding of the complex interplay between his position as an external observer and the mineworkers' condition as an object of observation and representation. His awareness is reflected in this paragraph through the unsolved contradiction between proximity and distance. The ideas of proximity and distance are spatially expressed in the text through the concepts of vertical/horizontal and internal/external.

The paragraph includes two images which combine with each other to metaphorically display the mineworkers' harsh life. The first is the image of rock layers standing above the mineworkers while they are working in deep mines. The second is the description of mineworkers' lives, blighted by lung diseases, alcoholism and hunger. These contiguous images serve to illustrate how the mineworkers' brutal conditions are comparable to heavy rocks resting on their shoulders, as the following quotation suggests:

Ahí tierra adentro, con millones de millones de toneladas de roca sobre la cabeza, trabajan los mineros en las puntas de día o de noche. [...] La vida de adentro de la mina bestializa a quien le penetra y trabaja. Por eso el minero ha borrado la sonrisa de su faz ennegrecida. Por eso no habla sino con monosílabos; por eso "toma" y se alcoholiza, para llorar como un niño o enfurecerse como un poseído. (95)

In the final part of the passage, Fenelón Aparicio resorts to the metaphorical connection of rocks' weight/ mineworkers' hard life, in order to problematise his position as a narrator

and an external observer of the mineworkers' lives. Although the narrator has explored the deep mines of La Afortunada, he claims that he only managed to walk for a short distance and for a short time: 'Como ahora yo que tengo el peso circunstancial de todo el Supay-Kollo sobre mis hombros y que solo he andado unos cuantos metros de socavón' (96).

In contrast to the mineworkers, he does not have to endure such a weight of suffering and injustice for his whole life. He further highlights his position as an observer rather than as a participant in the following quotation:

Yo no quiero ser un mixtificador a la usanza de los tantos que escriben sobre la 'mina adentro', sin siquiera haber ganado uno cuantos jornales al tope de las galerías. (96)

Although he experienced the mineworkers' life at first hand, he never worked as a mineworker; therefore, he has never been directly involved in this reality. In the passage, the description of the vertical and internal mining space is used as an image to express, in spatial and physical terms, how the narrator struggles to reach an inside view and a deeper understanding of the mineworkers' life. The final quotation of the passage illustrates how the representation of the horizontal and external space around mines more suitably mirrors the narrator's status: 'La novela de la mina –repito, de la mina adentro– tiene que ser obra de un hijo de la mina.' (96). Despite his efforts to get closer to mineworkers, he is still an outsider and external observer of the mineworkers' life.

These continuous oscillations between proximity and distance, as well as between internal and external space, underline the problematic relationship between the narrator and the mineworkers. From a broader perspective, this relationship is a fictional reflection of the complex interface between the status of the two authors and that of the mineworkers. Indeed, this spatial paradigm visually clarifies the complex process through which intellectuals build relationships of solidarity with subaltern people who are their object of representation. Similarly, Gustavo Gutiérrez describes the relationship between

intellectual and subaltern people through the structure of an asymptotic curve: intellectuals and writers can achieve proximity to the world of the subaltern in their work, personal relations, and political practice, but they can never actually merge with it (Beverley 1999: 40).

### **Fenelón Aparicio and *Palliris*: Identification of Identities**

This novel hinges on complex gender relationships between Fenelón Aparicio and the female characters, the *palliris*. The way in which the male narrator interacts with the female mineworkers can be described as a relationship of identification and subordination. In this respect, Lacan's ideas can be used to explain the interplay between gender, testimonial discourse and literary representation of mine space. Although Lacanian ideas on the mirror stage describe the psychological development of a child, they can be particularly efficacious for understanding the gender relations between the characters.

Lacan uses the term 'mirror-phase' to describe a life stage, which occurs in the human childhood and on which the formation of ego is based. The psychoanalyst explains the theory about the mirror phase by further developing Freud's ideas about narcissistic ego. According to the founder of psychoanalysis, the narcissistic ego is formed through identifications and internalisations of images of others. Therefore, the ego is intersubjective, that is, it depends on the subject's relationships with the other (Freud 1914: 135). Lacan starts from the assumption of the intersubjective ego and, similarly, defines the ego as a combination of images of others which have been internalised (Lacan in Grosz 1990: 48). He defines the mirror phase as the subject's first recognition of its ego and describes this crucial moment as an identification:

We have only to understand the mirror-phase *as an identification*, in the full sense which analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation which takes place in the subject when he assumes an image — whose predestination to this phase — effect is sufficiently indicated by the use, in analytical theory, of the old term *imago*. (Lacan 1968:72)



In other words, the mirror-phase is the stage at which the child identifies itself with the image of an other and in particular with the image of the mother. As a result of this identification, the subject achieves and interiorises the visual *gestalt*, that is, the specular image of itself that is totalised and complete. Therefore, the formation of the child's identity corresponds with the recognition of an ideal ego that is united and complete (Lacan 1968: 73-76).

Throughout the narration, the relationship between the narrator and the female figures resembles this decisive moment of human identity formation. The identification between Fenelón Aparicio and female mineworkers is suggested by the fact that these characters share the same space, the external area surrounding the mine. This is evident in a chapter examined above, the chapter '30 de mayo', in which Fenelón Aparicio descends into the mine for the first time. As explained previously, this chapter focuses on the exploration of the interior of the mine which is a dark, closed and deep space. The narrative structure of this episode is presented as an alternation between external space, then internal space and then again, external space. Indeed, the depiction of mining caves is interposed between the initial description of the external 'canchamina' and the final hint at the wide world outside the deep mine:

Estoy frente a la bocamina, una negra boca de monstruo, abierta como de un solo tajo en la montaña. Quintales, toneladas de metal disperso en la canchamina, esta explanada donde las palliris trozan o chanquean a golpe de combo, mientras sus 'guaguas' cargadas de las espaldas lloriquean de hambre y sorben las candelas de moco endurecido por el frío [...] Yo no quiero ser un mixtificador a la usanza de los tantos que escriben sobre "la mina adentro", sin siquiera haber ganado unos cuantos jornales al tope de las galerías. La novela de la mina –repito, de la mina adentro– tiene que ser obra de un hijo de la mina. Yo nací para la anchura del mundo (92-96).

The symmetric structure of the episode displays a connection between the 'canchamina' and 'anchura del mundo'. The 'canchamina' is the space surrounding the cave in which female workers extract minerals from the rocks brought to the surface by the miners. On the other hand, 'anchura del mundo' is the space symbolically associated with the narrator,

Fenelón Aparicio, as is highlighted by the last part of the passage; ‘yo nací para la anchura del mundo’. Indeed, this utterance suggests that the character performs his daily work tasks outside the underground mine galleries; thus, he descends into the mine solely to experience first-hand the mineworkers’ hard work. More significantly, this sentence refers to a wider space beyond the Apay-Kollo. It alludes to the fact that the narrator did not live just in the mine but that he comes from an unknown Bolivian city.

Fenelón Aparicio and the *palliris* identify with each other because they share not only the same external area but also what is symbolically associated with it. The symbolic significance of the *canchamina* can be understood through ideas related to gender space. According to Jane Rendell, places become gendered according to the sex of the people who occupy them as well as according to the types of activities which occur in them (Rendell 2000:101). Therefore, the interplay between gender and space is closely related to social activities and social relationships which characterise a certain environment. Rendell also considers symbolic representations of gendered spaces; in particular, she focuses on one of the most conventionally androcentric spatial paradigms: the division between two separate spheres. This spatial model consists of an opposition between a dominant male space and a subordinated female space. This hierarchical opposition is between a male gendered space, which is public, aimed at economic production, and a female gendered space which is domestic, aimed at sexual reproduction (Rendell 2000: 103).

Having explained what is meant by separate spheres, one can see that the novel’s depiction of mining space confirms and, at the same time, questions this androcentric ideology. This is evident in the passage quoted above. There, the description of the mining space in the novel conforms to this ideology as it displays a neat separation between an area prevalently occupied by men and another area mainly occupied by women. Moreover, it is worth noting that women are depicted in the external mine area not only working but

also carrying their children. Thus, the description of the *canchamina* space still highlights the conventional connection between space, women and their reproductive role. Yet the *canchamina* space conforms to the separate sphere paradigm; it partly challenges it. This supposedly female environment is a space which is public and external rather than domestic and private. Moreover, the image of women extracting minerals from the rocks suggests that the *canchamina* is a space aimed at the production of marketable goods.

Nevertheless, the depiction of this space is much more problematic and ambiguous. Hilson (2006) offers useful ideas to explore further the gender implications underlying the depiction of the *canchamina* space. He provides valuable insights into different forms of artisanal and small-scale mining activities both in developed countries and developing countries. His research draws the readers' attention to the fact that most of these activities are not legally regulated. Indeed, these forms of employment are generally informal and illicit in developing countries. While they provide a livelihood to a large number of people in local communities, they do not seem to have a substantial impact on national economies or, generally speaking, on the capitalist system of production.<sup>30</sup> The author provides a broad overview of gender inequalities in mining production in different countries around the world and, in particular, he highlights women's major involvement in small-scale mining activities (Hinton, Veiga, Beinhoff 2006: 156). With regard to Bolivian mining industries, Hilson illustrates the wide range of roles occupied by women, from those having the most informal jobs (eg: washing and digging) to those having more legally recognised jobs such as *palliris*. Yet, if most of the *palliris* officially form part of Bolivian mining cooperatives, they are paid a lower wage than their male counterparts (Tallichet, Rendlin, Harris 2006:193). In addition to their brutal work conditions, Hilson also underlines the fact that women in Latin American extractive industries have more indirect

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<sup>30</sup> Hilson also points out that these informal activities might have a negative impact on national economies, because they generally cause economic, environmental problems. For that reason, he highlights the need to create an appropriate legislative framework to regulate small-scale mining activities and therefore, to promote positive changes in this sector (Hilson 2006: 2-4).

roles in production and also that their input is barely acknowledged by researchers, development programmers and governments (Tallichet, Rendlin, Harris 2006: 189-191).

This brief outline of the *palliris*' social status and the theories related to gender space provide useful ideas to explore the link between gender and the *canchamina* space in the novel. The *palliris*' location in the *canchamina* emphasises the ambiguous position of these female characters. Their identity is connected with a dynamic of inclusion and exclusion. On the one hand, the *palliris* are partly outside the production system as they perform the least profitable tasks. On the other hand, they form part of this productive system because they contribute, albeit modestly, to the extraction of natural resources to a smaller extent.

The link between the literary description of the *canchamina* and the *palliris*' identity leads the reader to pose a question: why does the text emphasise a resemblance between Fenelón Aparicio and the *palliris*? The most straightforward perception is that the narrator and the female characters differ from each other in their socio-economic status as well as in their cultural background. Indeed, Fenelón Aparicio works in the Supay-Kollo mine as a storekeeper. Therefore, he does not work inside the mine but he is in charge of distributing basic goods to the mineworkers' families. Because of his daily tasks, he is even more indirectly involved in the production and distribution of natural resources than the *palliris*. From various passages in the novel, it is clear that he is not a native of this mining community but that he comes from an unknown Bolivian city. The fact that he puts into writing the mineworkers' experience underlines his formal educational background. His literacy skills are some of the most important distinctive characteristics between this male character and the female figures. The subalternity of marginal communities is due to their high level of illiteracy and their lack of authority. This is particularly evident in Beverley's words which elaborate upon Spivak's observation that 'the subaltern cannot speak' (Spivak 1988: 310).

When Gayatri Spivak makes the claim that the subaltern cannot speak, she means that the subaltern cannot speak in a way that would carry any sort of authority or meaning for us without altering the relations of power/knowledge that constitute it as subaltern in the first place. (Beverley 1999: 29)

These ideas suggest that the mineworkers lack social status or authority to claim independently for their needs. Moreover, as discussed above, gender differences and lack of workplace protection lead women to be the most subaltern and marginalised subjects within extractive industry communities.

In spite of these differences, the narrator and the *palliris* have in common the ambiguous identity between outsider and insider. Like these female figures, Fenelón Aparicio is a member of this Supay-Kollo community as he is in charge of distributing primary goods. Although he cannot be considered strictly speaking as a part of this work force, he indirectly contributes to the mining communities' survival. On the other hand, he is an outsider as he has no direct experience of mine work. His position outside the mine stands for a particular locus of enunciation as well as a particular perspective. Thus, his outsider view prevents him from fully comprehending this local community's life and from truthfully reporting their experience.

Nevertheless, the relationship between the narrator and the female mineworkers appears much more problematic in the text.

### **Identification: Recognition and Misrecognition**

Throughout the narration, the text narrows its attention down to the relationship between the storekeeper, Fenelón Aparicio, and Ángela, a Supay-Kollo *palliris*. The gender relationship between this male and this female character will be examined further by expanding the explanation of Lacan's theories related to the mirror stage. The aim of this analysis is to demonstrate continuity between gender, the two writers' construction of the narrator's identity, writers' authorship and the representation of material linked to subalternity.

As discussed above, the mirror phase has been described by Lacan as an identification between the ego and the other. The previous explanation of this theory had focused solely on the initial moment of this life stage, namely, the child's recognition of its completed and totalised ego. Nevertheless, this process is also characterised by another moment: the child's first recognition of lack or absence. The child recognises the external image of itself but, at the same time, it acknowledges that it can be the object of another's perspective (Lacan 1977: 2).<sup>31</sup> As a consequence of this, the subject is torn between recognition and misrecognition.<sup>32</sup> On the one hand, it recognises this external ego as a homogenous and unified subjectivity. On the other hand, it misrecognises this idealised representation of its subjectivity. Indeed, the subject perceives that this totalised ego is in contradiction with the chaotic and fragmentary felt reality which has no boundaries, borders, divisions. In other words, the subject becomes aware of the internal rupture between the self and the other (Lacan 1968: 73; 1977: 4). Furthermore, the division between the self and the other is closely connected with the end of the symbiotic and mutual relationship between the mother and the child. Indeed, the rupture of this symbiotic relationship entails the subject's acknowledgment of a self separated from the other (Lacan 1968:73; 1977: 4).

This moment of misrecognition related to the mirror stage plays a relevant role as it triggers the subject's transition to the oedipal complex. This latter process allows the

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<sup>31</sup> Grosz clarifies the connection objectification/ sight and explains how the separation between the subject and the object is more related to the sense of sight: 'The primacy of the visual is not altogether surprising. [...] Of all the senses, vision remains the one which most readily confirms the separation of subject from object. Vision performs a distancing function, leaving the looker unimplicated in or uncontaminated by its object. With all of the other senses, there is a contiguity between subject and object, if not an internalization and incorporation of the object by the subject' (Lacan in Grosz 1990: 38).

<sup>32</sup> The child recognises the external representation of itself; therefore, it accepts the external perspective on itself. It also notices a contradiction between the externalisation of itself and its perception of its body: 'The maturation of his power is given to him only as gestalt, that is to say, in an exteriority in which this form is certainly more constituent than constituted, but in which it appears to him above all in a contrasting size that fixes it and in a symmetry that inverts it, in contrast with the turbulent movements that the subject feels are animating him'. (Lacan 1977:2)

child to acquire authority and, in this way, to counterbalance the experience of misrecognition generated by the mirror-stage (Lacan 1977: 199). Lacan develops Freud's theory of the oedipal complex but he questions one of its most important assumptions. Freud defines this process in biological terms as the male child's fear of losing its penis. As a consequence of this, he gives an anatomical justification to the subordinate role of women: they are passive objects of desire as they are 'castrated', in an anatomical sense. Conversely, Lacan rejects the biological explanation of this process and considers both the mirror-phase and the oedipal complex as social, linguistic and cultural constructions (Lacan in Grosz 1990: 70). Indeed, Lacan partly confirms Freud's ideas and describes the oedipal complex as the intervention of the father in the mutual and symbiotic relationship between the mother and the subject. However, he questions Freud's theoretical framework by explaining this process from a symbolic point of view.<sup>33</sup> According to Lacan, the father does not necessarily correspond with the genetic father but generally speaking refers to the possessor of the phallus, that is, the possessor of a signifier which, within patriarchal symbolic systems, stands for law, order and authority (Lacan 1977: 67). Through the oedipal complex, the father prohibits the mutual and symbiotic identification between the child and the mother and, thus, further confirms the child's separation of its self from the other. However, the child's renunciation of the mother is compensated by the child's acquisition of law and authority.<sup>34</sup> In other words, the child's recognition of its separation from the other is counteracted by the acquisition of a status within the culture. In internalising the authority of the father, the subject acquires an authorised speaking position. It becomes a subject of the symbolic, it becomes a speaking subject (Lacan 1977:

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<sup>33</sup> 'It is in *the name of the father* that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of law' (Lacan 1977: 67).

<sup>34</sup> The child's renunciation of the relationship with the mother is called primary repression. This first repression is an action through which superego and unconscious are formed (Freud 1921: 220; Freud 1915: 101).

67).<sup>35</sup> On the basis of this, the subject who acquires authority is male because it speaks. As Lacan suggests: ‘Man speaks, then, but it is because the symbol has made him man’ (Lacan 1977: 65). Therefore, the acquisition of authority is a process which only involves the male child. According to Lacan, the woman is related to the signifier of the phallus but is located as symbolically ‘castrated, passive and an object of desire for men instead of a subject who desires’ (Lacan in Grosz 1990: 71). Bearing this in mind, woman is viewed as the other who threatens male castration or evokes the man’s fear of being deprived of the phallus. Thus, this fear of castration is explained exclusively from a symbolic perspective, as a fear of losing what is symbolically associated with the phallus.<sup>36</sup>

Lacan’s ideas shed light on the relationship between Fenelón Aparicio and the female character Ángela. In the previous section, it has been explained that the text emphasises the relationship of identification between Fenelón Aparicio and the group of female mineworkers. Even so, this narration simultaneously narrows its focus to the exclusive relationship between Fenelón Aparicio and one *palliris*. Moreover, the interaction between the two characters evolves throughout the text. In his diary, the narrator describes the gradual crescendo of an obsession which turns from a fortuitous encounter to a strong sexual attraction. At the beginning of the novel, the male character clarifies that his sexual instincts have reawakened after a long time. This is because he noticed the unexpected physical changes of this female character who turned from child to woman. After that, he reveals his uncontrollable desire for Ángela.

The narrator reveals his interest in Ángela when the landowner Alcántara also appears to be sexually attracted to the same woman. The apparently accidental

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<sup>35</sup> Lacan also highlighted the connection between the formation of the subject and language in his book: ‘The I is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the Other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject’ (Lacan 1977: 2).

<sup>36</sup> Lacan describes castration as a symbolic process: ‘Castration may derive support from privation, that is to say, from the apprehension in the Real of the absence of the penis in women — but even this supposes a symbolization of an object, since the Real is full and lacks nothing. In so far as one finds castration in the genesis, it is never real but symbolic and is aimed at an imaginary object. (Lacan 1966: 512)



concurrency between these two events will be examined in the next sections. For now it is worth noting that the narrator's sexual desire arises for the first time in an episode previously described. These previous sections examined the passage in which the landowner goes to Ángela's house to visit his father who is ill. The narrator reports the conversation between the *gamonal* and the dying mineworker Gumercindo Urpiales, a narration which places more emphasis to a landowner's behaviour than his utterances. The narrator chooses to give more importance to the *gamonal's* gaze and his gesture of whipping his boots. The emphasis on the whiplash can be interpreted as a hint at conventional Latin American discourses. Indeed, the word 'látigo' (33) refers to a violent action which serves to deliberately cause pain to someone but also aims to tame an animal. The meaning of this word, in particular, the idea of subjugation, is closely linked to independent and decolonised Latin American discourses. Indeed, the *gamonal* symbolises the Spanish, the European or the Western coloniser who subjugates the Latin American continent and dispossesses it of its resources but brings about 'order' and 'civilisation' (Pratt 1992: 127). On the other hand, the idea of subjugation indirectly recalls the creole understanding of Latin America, conceived as an extraordinary but indomitable nature or as an exuberant but primitive feminine beauty which has to be tamed (Swanson 2003:80).

Despite these references to Latin American discourses, the emphasis on this action creates continuity with other passages in the text. The action of whipping Ángela becomes a key aspect in the narrator's dream account. Indeed, immediately after the two characters' encounter, the narrator has a quite ambiguous dream which seems to fall between nightmare and erotic fantasy. Fenelón Aparicio is chained up to a rock and bears witness to the landowner raping Ángela. Having whipped her, Alcántara abuses the woman. The episode becomes even more perverse: the narrator watches the scene while his dog licks his foot. While Alcántara assaults Ángela, he stares at Fenelón Aparicio. Moreover, the woman shouts the *pulpero's* name while being beaten:

He despertado después de un cuadro horrible entre mis sueños. El látigo de Alcántara chispea en el cuerpo desnudo de Ángela, allá en el vértice de Supay-Kollo. Yo estoy encadenado mirando el cerro satánico desde el hueco de una ventana, mientras el 'Chascka' lame mis pies congelados. Ángela lucha por cubrir con las manos la desnudez de su cuerpo moreno y se dobla gritando mi nombre cuando restalla el fuate. Alcántara me mira de lo alto con el mismo fulgor de los ojos de esta tarde. (34)

The dream seems to manifest the narrator's anxieties. While the scene appears violent in itself, it also hints at a wide range of behaviours considered by Freud as sexual deviances. For example, Fenelón Aparicio staring at the sexual abuse has all the characteristics of a voyeur. As discussed on pages 96 and 97, Laura Mulvey analyses some Hollywood films by focusing on the connection between the male gaze and its desire for mastery. She provides this definition of voyeurism: 'voyeurism is a preoccupation with the re-enactments of the original trauma [...] counterbalanced by the devaluation, punishment or saving of the guilty object' (Mulvey 1999: 65). From this quotation, it might be inferred that by devaluing the woman, the man reduces his own castration anxiety and asserts his authority by confirming the power of the phallus, that is to say the semiotic system on which patriarchal society is based (Mulvey 1999: 59-60). Returning to the episode quoted above, the physical and sexual violence, which Ángela suffers is not only associated with voyeurism but also with the sexual behaviour of sadism. This type of sexual pleasure exacerbates the same dynamic of voyeurism as Laura Mulvey explains: (in sadism) 'pleasure lies in asserting guilt (immediately associated with castration) asserting control and subjecting the guilty person through punishment and forgiveness' (Mulvey 1999: 65). Moreover, the dream described above contains themes which have a further development in other points of the novel. For example, this oneiric scene seems to have continuity with the passage which immediately follows the dream. In the chapter '27 de mayo', the narrator describes the starving female mineworkers who enter his shop and expect to receive some food rations. Whilst depicting a woman's undernourished body, the character points out an unexpected detail. He acknowledges that his gaze falls on her

nipples: ‘La mujer de Juan Sirpa tiene cuatro hijos. Compra dos billetes de pan. Veo sus senos aplastados. Pezones negros’ (36). Immediately afterwards, the unexpected appearance of Ángela leads him to think of the female mineworkers’ nipples again:

Aquí está Ángela. Unas ojeras le pintan óvalos en el rostro. [...] La desesperación pinta una actitud de desgano en Ángela. Pienso en el corazón de esta mujer. En su sangre. Me viene una idea pueril: ¿Serán negros los pezones de Ángela...? Se me ha clavado la visión de los pezones negros de la mujer de Juan Sirpa. (36)

This passage shows free association between different ideas: the description of Ángela’s debilitated body, the character thinking of Ángela’s heart and the character remembering the image of the nipples of Juan Sirpa’s wife. Moreover, it is worth noting that the word ‘corazón’ is presented in the text as an ambiguous term which is in-between the physical and the abstract. ‘Corazón’ can be interpreted as an allusion to the woman’s body but also as a metonym which stands for the human site of feelings and emotions (Penas Ibáñez 2009: 155). This ambiguity between the corporeal and the non-material seems to fade in the last line where there is a return to the erotic dimension. In the last sentence the narrator says that the image of the nipples of Juan Sirpa’s wife is fixed in his mind. By saying this, he indirectly alludes to the idea of sex and pleasure closely related to the visual experience. In fact, the word ‘visión’ emphasises again the sense of sight. Conversely, the verb ‘clavar’ conveys different meanings in Spanish: it means ‘staring at someone’ in the expression ‘clavar los ojos en alguien’ but also it refers to the action of nailing. Therefore, this verb seems to be metaphorically connected with the idea of penetration and the idea of seeing. In line with the previous dream account, this passage also underlines the link between sexual impulses and gaze.

Returning to the previously described dream, the perversion of this scene is also highlighted by the image of the dog licking the character’s feet. Swanson makes an interesting observation about the fictitious image of a dog in the Chilean text *La misteriosa desaparición de la Marquesita de Loria* (1980). According to him, this animal, which

always follows the protagonist of the novel, represents the unconscious side of this character (Swanson 1995: 108). Despite the obvious differences between this text and *Canchamina*, it can be seen that the literary figure of the dog has the same symbolic value. In particular, it becomes the projection of the character's sexual instincts. From the start, the text focuses on the animal image whenever Ángela goes to visit Fenelón Aparicio. The following passage seems to describe one of the most common behaviours of a domestic animal: barking at an unknown person. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the narrator explicitly acknowledges the similarity between the dog's response and his nervous wait before seeing Ángela.

De pronto el perro se estremece. Sin tratar de incorporarse alza la cabeza [...] ahueca las lanudas orejas y gruñe sordamente. Yo imito la actitud expectante del animal. Y trato de mirar más allá de la negrura de la noche, de la llovizna y del viento. Son pasos lejanos que están cruzando el pedregal inmediato al rancherío. Se aproximan con nitidez creciente sobre las huellas que conducen a mi cabaña. Es Ángela. (14)

Another illustrative example can be found in the chapter '28 de mayo' (51-61). Here, the novel highlights a correspondence between the dog awakening and the erotic thoughts appearing in the character's mind.

El 'Chasca' dormita. Yo ni siquiera puedo dormir. Mis pensamientos saltan. Se mezclan. [...] Las ideas brincan hacia Urpiales. La situación es clara. Alcántara tiene ganada ya la batalla. Morirá el viejo y rudo minero. La Afortunada quedará en manos del otro. [...] Una cosa es que Alcántara trate de imponer su rigor. [...] Los mineros quieren a Urpiales y aún muerto tratarán de recuperar la mina en su nombre. La sangre golpea mi cerebro. El 'Chasca' ha dejado de dormitar. Vuelvo al monólogo. Mi perro me escucha, gruñendo siempre. [...] ¿Qué ideas devanará a estas horas Ángela? Me imagino cómo estará en su rancho: los cabellos largos cosquilleándole los hombros; las manos sobre el vientre; pensando en el padre. Tiritando. Y quien sabe si en su mente no habrá un pensamiento para mí. (59-60)

In this passage, while the dog is sleeping, Fenelón Aparicio's reflections are focused on what will happen between the mineworkers and the mine owner. As soon as the dog wakes up, the intrusive memory of Ángela insinuates itself in his mind. The awakening of the dog seems to trigger the passage from his pragmatic thoughts about the mineworkers' revolt to his reassuring memory of Ángela's sensual body. His thoughts about Ángela

appear in the text as erotic thoughts. Again the character is depicted as a voyeur who stares at the woman who has been reduced to a body, or, rather, an object on which the male gaze is projected (Mulvey 1999: 62-63).

The relationship between the character and the dog is depicted in such a way as to mirror the narrator's contradictory feelings of anxiety and desire. In this passage, he acknowledges that his dog is a relief from his miserable life in the mine but at the same time, he admits his hidden desire to hit the animal and break its head into pieces:

Me dan ganas de trizarle el cráneo a este perro con un puñado de dinamita.  
[...] Sus ojos semi-azules, su mirada suave, su hocico respingado que transpira algunas pequeñas gotas de sudor, me devuelvan la calma. (73)

The character wants to destroy his dog probably because he is driven by a desire to repress what is symbolically associated with this animal figure: his unacceptable subconscious side and, in particular, his perverse sexual desires to possess physically the *palliris*. According to Freud, repression is a defensive mechanism through which the ego is able to ward off dangerous instinctual impulses and goes on to explain the dynamic of repression in more depth: 'the essence of repression lies simply in the function of rejecting and keeping something out of the unconscious' (Freud 1915: 101). In connection with these ideas, the narrator's aggressiveness towards his pet shows a return of what has been repressed. Indeed, his sexual impulses, not completely repressed, again become conscious but they are somehow negated. With respect to this failed repression, Freud states: 'The subject-matter of a repressed image or thought can make its way into consciousness, on condition that it is denied' (Freud 1915: 63).

Moreover, it is worth considering another dream account which similarly mirrors the narrator's most hidden anxieties. Like the previous one, this oneiric episode contains only tangential hints at the character's sexual desires. Indeed, in the passage above, the narrator somehow denies his sexual desires as he portrays himself as a voyeur, not as Ángela's rapist. More evidently, in the following dream description, he does not make any

explicit allusion to a sexual dimension and depicts an idyllic scene between himself and Ángela. The two characters already form a family as they live together and they have a baby:

En los pasos que doy forjo un pequeño sueño: estoy lejos, en una choza blanca, con Ángela. [...] Ha nacido mi hijo: no es un monigote como este de Pedro Arispe. [...] Este sueño se me ha clavado como una espina. Ángela y yo levantando entre nuestras manos, un pequeño hijo, más allá del Supay-Kollo. (44-45)

The emphasis on the new-born figure can be significant in the text if it is interpreted within the theoretical framework related to psychoanalysis. It is possible that this dream account further mirrors the narrator's anxiety. Indeed, what is interesting about this passage is that it focuses on a relationship of filiation rather than sexual intercourse. On the basis of this, such a dream can be considered as a literary representation of sublimation, a psychological mechanism of defence through which sexual instincts are redirected toward goals which are nonsexual and socially acceptable.<sup>37</sup> In this case, the social value is exemplified by the emphasis on a family nucleus. Cornejo Polar highlights the importance of the literary motif of the family in Latin American literature. In particular, he underlines the connection of the idea of family with society and broader social institutions such as nations (Cornejo Polar 2013: 83).

Both Lacan's and Freud's ideas explained so far are useful to understand the tormented feelings that the narrator has towards the female mineworker, Ángela. Moreover, this psychoanalytical approach is useful to explore the complex construction of the narrator's psychology and to compare two different gendered relations existing in the text. On the one hand, there is a relationship of mutual identification between the narrator and the female mineworkers. On the other hand, there is a hierarchical relationship of control and possession between the narrator and Ángela. Lacan's theory of the mirror stage sheds some light on the way in which identification with the other implies a comforting

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<sup>37</sup> 'Sublimate' in Merriam Webster Dictionary [online]

recognition of an ideal ego but also a destabilising misrecognition of that ego. Indeed, the convergence of literary themes related to sexual deviances aims to show the character's deepest anxiety. Ideas related to psychoanalysis illustrate how sexual deviances and violent behaviours are the ego's mechanisms of defence against the other. Indeed, these sexual and violent impulses refer to the fear of male castration, namely, the male fear of losing what is symbolically associated with the phallus. Bearing this in mind, the female character of Ángela is depicted as the threatening other that evokes the deprivation of the phallus. This psychoanalytical framework also illustrates how this anxiety is compensated by the narrator's desire for control and authority. The sexual perversions have the purpose of confirming the Law of Phallus, a patriarchal symbolic system which correlates the male with law, active social agency, authority and order and associates the female with disorder, passivity, lack of authority (Lacan in Grosz 1990: 118-126).

The following section clarifies how the subordinated relationship between Fenelón Aparicio and Ángela is closely connected with some dynamics embedded in testimonial discourses.

### ***Testimonio: Appropriation/Violence and Distance***

This section examines some contradictions inherent in testimonial writing. The ultimate aim of this analysis is to illustrate how the complex interplay between gender, social inequalities and sexuality is of key importance in the text *Canchamina*.

In this respect, Bartow's ideas are helpful to explore the main issues and the main questions regarding gender and *testimonios*. She claims that the gender differences, which sometimes characterise the relationship between the informant and the transcriber, are used in *testimonios* to highlight the cultural, economic and social distance between these two figures (Bartow 2005: 141). Additionally, she brings to attention another interesting link between gender and testimonial discourses: the informant's endeavour to write other

people's experiences can be described through the concept of appropriation. She uses this idea to describe the process through which transcribers or authors appropriate the marginal individuals' experience and identity for themselves. Therefore, the process of understanding and communicating other people's experience can be considered as a form of appropriation aimed at authors' self-legitimation and fulfilment of their identity. In other words, due to this unconscious desire for appropriation, testimonial authors use marginalised people's experience to define their authority as writers or, perhaps, to assure their prestige as intellectuals (Bartow 2005:142-143). Moreover, according to this critic, the reference to appropriation remains obscure in the *testimonio strictu sensu* whereas it appears to be more evident in the testimonial novels. In fictitious testimonial discourses, the rape of a woman stands for this appropriation process. This is partly because the rape idea points out the exploitative relationship underlying testimonial writing (Bartow 2005: 143). Just as the male rapist takes physical possession of the female body, similarly the transcriber violently takes possession of the informant's life. The idea of penetration, closely connected with the idea of rape, sheds light on another aspect of the appropriation dynamic. The testimonial writing can be seen as a textual rape as it can be considered as the transcriber's violent intrusion into another person's life (Bartow 2005: 149).

As previously explained, although the rape idea is latent throughout the text, it surfaces more evidently in this passage:

Qué deseos tengo de dejar a un lado todas estas cosas para contar a ella mi desesperación, y por qué no, mis sueños. ¿Es que sólo el deseo me empuja hacia ella? No. Aquí, en el Supay-Kollo, mis impulsos sexuales se han detenido hace tiempo; están estrangulados. Ahora entiendo: quiero compartir mi soledad con otra vida. Es nada más que esto: quiero un rostro que se aplaste en las noches con el mío. Lo que yo deseo es que nuestras vísceras sean golpeadas al mismo tiempo por el dolor de vivir en este rancharío. Sí: es esto lo que siento ahora al encontrarme con Ángela en la pulpería. Es la mía una implacable y enfermiza obsesión. Es, quién sabe, la misma que tuvieron estos mineros cuando tomaron entre sus manos a esas mujeres [...] Yo que he venido aquí, empujado por el destino, huyendo de la podredumbre de otros mundos, quiero al final que mi nombre, cuando muera, se quede sobre la superficie del Supay-Kollo, apretado en el recuerdo de una mujer. (76-77)



Not only does the *pulpero* deny his sexual attraction to Ángela but also he describes his infatuation toward the woman as an exclusively spiritual feeling. He wishes to live with Ángela and to share with her his existential malaise. He describes this sentimental bond between him and a woman through a language which is in between the corporeal and non-material, as this sentence from the passage suggests: ‘Lo que yo deseo es que nuestras vísceras sean golpeadas al mismo tiempo por el dolor de vivir en este rancharío’. Indeed, he imagines this psychological discomfort as a pain which reaches the depth of their souls. Here, the connection with corporeal dimension can be found in the Spanish word ‘vísceras’. This word actually refers to human entrails. However, it is conventionally used in poetic texts to express the inner side of the human personality. Moreover, although the sentence alludes to the narrator’s emotion, it can also be interpreted as a hint at sexual intercourse. The image of this sharp piercing pain suggests the idea of depth; therefore, it might indirectly evoke the image of sexual penetration. The reference to sex is also underlined by another sentence: ‘la misma que tuvieron estos mineros cuando tomaron entre sus manos a esas mujeres’. This description of men touching women suggests different ideas related to sex: objectification of women depicted as mere bodies, the idea of holding and possessing something, the corporal aspect suggested by the tactile sense. It is worth noting that this passage emphasises the connections between two desires of the narrator: Fenelón Aparicio timidly shows his urge to be with Ángela and, later, he expresses his wish of being remembered after death. The link between these apparently disparate desires can be examined in relation to the ideas of name, authorship, writing and memory. Indeed, the sentence in which the narrator wishes his name to endure after his death can be considered as an allusion to the writing process. Testimonial discourses give particular emphasis to the violence of no name. The lack of a name is considered as another form of violence from which *testimonios* arise especially because it implies the non-recognition of a subject or one person’s identity (Bartow 2005:

195). Conversely, the idea of a name in writing is closely connected with the concept of authority. Indeed, a name does not just allow identification of a subject but also recognition of a subject as an owner of a text. According to Foucault, authorship is closely connected with a name:

The author's name is not simply an element in a discourse (capable of being either subject or object, of being replaced by a pronoun, and the like); it performs a certain role with regard to narrative discourse, assuring a classificatory function. Such a name permits one to group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others (...) The fact that the discourse has an author's name that one can say "this was written by so-and-so" or "so-and-so is its author" shows that this discourse is not ordinary everyday speech that merely comes and goes (...) It is a speech that must be received in a certain mode, and that, in a given culture, must receive a certain status. (Foucault 1998: 210-211)

Returning to the passage in the novel, the last sentence contains other hints at the writing process. In particular, the last expression 'se quede sobre la superficie del Supay-Kollo' alludes to the concept of memory which is conventionally associated with the medium of writing. In fact, a prolific number of resources highlight the link between writing and memory; one example is represented by Derrida's interpretation of an Egyptian myth, the mythological account of Theuth and Thamus. In his essay 'Pharmakon', he explains how, in this ancient story, writing is presented as a gift aimed at fostering accumulation of knowledge and improving memory (Derrida 1981: 75-84). Thus, the last sentence of the previously quoted passage which evokes the ideas of writing, memory and authority unveils the narrator's hope of being remembered as the writer of this text. Moreover, the connection between this wish and the sexual desire for Ángela can be analysed in relation to Bartow's idea of appropriation and authorial legitimisation: by appropriating the mineworkers' experience, the character wants to achieve the prestige of being a writer.

Bartow explores the idea of violence to illustrate complexities and ambiguities related to testimonial texts. She underlines the way in which testimonial discourses are based on an unsolvable contradiction. They emerge from violence as they aim to denounce

abuse, aggression and injustice. At the same time, they create violence as they are grounded in the dynamics of appropriation. This is because the authors' closeness to the subaltern often turns into their desire to project themselves into the other and, in more extreme terms, often leads to the destruction of that other (Bartow 2005: 148-152). Additionally, the sense of violence which permeates testimonial narrative discourses also manifests itself through the authors' vengeance against the marginal. Although writers seek to identify themselves with the marginalised, they also see their prestigious status threatened. Bearing this in mind, the scholar depicts the subaltern as someone with whom 'we want to identify ourselves, but who we are not, nor do we want to be' (Bartow 2005: 87). This desire for revenge embedded in testimonial texts can be found in some passages in *Canchamina*. The previous section focuses attention on the episode in which the narrator shows unexpected aggressiveness towards his dog. A paragraph preceding the scene gives further clues to the character's desire to kill the animal. In this passage, the narrator thinks of how miners suffer due to hunger. Immediately afterwards, he clarifies that he does not share their suffering. And finally, these ideas lead him to the unexpected thought of venting his aggression against the dog. The previous overview of psychoanalytical theories can be useful to understand the connection between violence characterising this episode and the concept of vengeance provided by Bartow. Above, it has been illustrated that the dog manifests itself in the text as a surrogate of the character's unconscious or, in other words, a substitute for the other separated by the self. Therefore, as explained before, the idea of butchering the animal might hint at the narrator's denial of the other within his self. Moreover, as previously explained, the dog figure connects itself with the character Ángela depicted as other, that is, as a menace to the character's manhood. This female figure plays a relevant role in the text, not just because she symbolises the other but also because she is a *palliris*. What has emerged so far is that the *palliris* represent the most marginal, the most subordinate and the most silent subjects in

the text. The underlying connection between the dog figure, the woman, the other and the marginal allows for a reading of the passage on a deeper level. The violent impulse to kill the dog presents itself as the narrator's desire for vengeance on the marginal which endangers his self and also privileged status of intellectual. Therefore, this event highlights the dangers which the identification process with the subaltern implies as Bartow claims: 'Identification with the testimonial subject's position, however, endangers the transcriber's privilege and knowledge, casting her into the infernal reality of having nothing' (Bartow 2005:160). In the end, identification with the subaltern is similar to a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it allows the writer to be personally closer to marginal people and have a more truthful view of their life. On the other hand, it undermines the writers' privileged status. Additionally, the idea of appropriation can be seen in relation to the complex identification between the marginal and the author. Appropriating marginal people's lives unveils authors' most hidden desires to control the other.

The theme of rape and the idea of appropriation shed light on another key aspect related to testimonial discourses: the exploitative relationship between the informant and the writer. In the text, the hint at exploitation is that the main male characters, the storekeeper and landowner, contend with each other to seduce Ángela. At the beginning, this competition is quite misleading. The landowner is shown to have the intention to exploit and abuse Ángela. Conversely, the narrator presents himself as a powerless victim who will not be able to put an end to this abuse. Here, the narrator describes his reaction the first time he discovers Alcántara's sexual attraction to the female mineworker.

— Mi padre me ha dicho que me cuide del señor Alcántara.  
Esta frase, venida como desde lejos para triturar mis pensamientos, me hiere horribilmente. Es un latigazo aun más profundo que el que hizo restallar el viento, abriendo una larga huella en mi rostro y en mi vida. El odio se endereza y estalla. [...] Amaso otro sueño absurdo. Si Alcántara cayese en tentación con ella, creo que yo estaría mirándola llorar: indefenso, derrotado. (78)

Here, it is interesting to note that this unexpected news has a strong and painful impact on the character — as if it were a whiplash. As explained before, the lash of a whip is closely associated with the landowner figure and it evokes the ideas of violence, power and submission. Through this image, the narrator portrays himself as the *gamonal*'s victim. From Ángela's utterance, Fenelón Aparicio realises that the *gamonal* is physically attracted to the female mineworker. From this point onward, the storekeeper has contradictory feelings which include hatred, jealousy and impotence.

El temor de Ángela era justo. [...] Otra vez mis ilusiones se hunden. Sin saberlo, Alcántara me ha asestado un rudo golpe. Estoy como quien, atado de brazos, se precipita hacia el abismo. [...] Nada fecundizará para mí en este negro rancharío! (80)

Therefore, the novel emphasises a connection between two different exploitative relationships. The first is the hierarchical relationship between the landowner and mineworkers which underpinned the colonial order. The second is a less straightforward relationship between the narrator and Ángela. The next section will demonstrate that the rivalry between these two male characters sheds further light on some discursive mechanisms underlying testimonial fiction. So far, it can be seen that the narrator's approach to Ángela hints at the main contradictions inherent in testimonial fiction. Writing about marginalised people's lives is characterised by an unsolved contradiction between solidarity and authority. On the one hand, the production of *testimonios* implies a gesture of empathy and generosity on the part of the authors. Writers use their authorial status to give voice to subordinate people's needs. On the other hand, testimonial production aims to legitimate writers' authority. Indeed, authors narrate marginalised people's experience to define their authority as writers or, in other words, to assure their prestige as intellectuals.

### **Possession within Revolution**

The end of the novel consists of a parallelism between two mineworkers' protests. The narration of the first demonstration is preceded by a moving description of the Supay-

Kollo community's marginal conditions. The storekeeper describes how the unbearable conditions of hunger and poverty lead the mineworkers to rebel. After this long digression, the narrator does not dwell on the final protest. Moreover, he portrays this event as a fiasco. The mineworkers, along with the *palliris*, plan to kidnap the landowner and head together toward his house. They do not find the landowner in his house, and therefore, do not even have the chance to have a face-to-face confrontation with him.

Los mineros y sus mujeres se van acercando más y más al rancho de Alcántara. [...] Luna aprieta en este instante, toda la rabia contenida en su vida. Encolerizado, empuja la puerta. Alcántara y Fernández no están. Se han marchado. Apenas queda el vaho del alcohol. Luna y yo miramos. Todo fue inútil. (84-85)

It is interesting that some pages later, in the chapter '31 de Mayo', there is the report of another protest. The narration of this event displays itself as a hyperbolic reproduction of the previous scene: a large group of mineworkers want to kill Alcántara and advance towards his house. The *pulpero* is at the top of a mountain. Standing on this high point, he observes the mineworkers marching towards the landlord's residence. The mineworkers' mobilisation is presented as a war. Their leader, Octavio Luna, is portrayed as a military hero wearing his uniform. The mineworkers occupy strategic positions as if they were in a battle camp. Moments of action are interrupted by explosions of dynamite. Just before the conflict reaches its final stage, a condor flies in the air making loops. The narrator uses the bird image not as an irrelevant descriptive detail, but rather as an element anticipating other events in the text. The condor is not just one of the most common animals in Andean fauna but is also one of the most prominent Bolivian national emblems. It is pictured in the Bolivian national seal. The bird image is also connected with peasant and Indigenous heritage, for example the Aymara word 'mallku' which means 'big condor' is used to refer to the most powerful leader in some Indigenous communities (Lopez Levy 2001: 4).

After this preliminary description, there is a face to face encounter between the mineworkers and Alcántara. The whole group of protesters suggest killing the landowner. However, the voice of the eccentric character, Quispe, stands out amongst the crowd: ‘¡Hay que encadenarlo en el Supay-Kollo! ¡Que se lo coma el Anchancho! ¡Que se lo coma!’(115). The utterances of Octavio Luna and of the narrator turn the woman’s apparently bizarre idea into a definitive verdict:

— ¡Hay que encadenarlo en el Supay-Kolloo! ¡Que se lo coma el Anchancho!  
— ¡Que se lo coma!  
— ¡Hay que escarmentarlo! — añade tranquilamente Octavio Luna.  
— A la bocamina. ¡Rápido...! grita el minero del casco de la infantería.  
— ¡¡Sííí...!! estallo yo de una sola vez. Nunca ha discernido mejor la “borracha” Quispe. Ni Octavio Luna, el minero de la mano áspera y nervuda, estuvo tan tranquilo e inexorable. ¿Yo? Hoy he roto mi silencio. El monosílabo que he gritado esta tarde en el drama del Supay-Kollo, fue mi primera y última palabra dicha concencialmente y con la voz de la verdad en este cerro diabólico. (115)

The last page of the novel revolves around the moment of Alcántara’s punishment. It is clearly not a coincidence that the narrator’s description of this event is presented symmetrically as an inversion of the character’s previously narrated dream. Alcántara is chained up to a rock whereas Fenelón Aparicio is comfortable in his house with Ángela:

José de Alántara está vencido. Pálido, maltrecho y desgredado [...] Está solo, definitivamente solo, en esta derrota: la primera y última de su vida. [...] Estoy otra vez sumido en lo insondable de las horas nocturnas. Como siempre, el ‘Chascka’ está a mis pies. Ha olvidado la tarde del Supay-Kollo. Y ha permitido — no sin antes gruñir con desesperación — que Ángela trasponga la puerta de mi rancho. Por fin está junto a mí. Callada y con los ojos entreabiertos. (114-116)

After providing a detailed description of the character’s suffering, the narrator claims with veiled satisfaction ‘Estoy cerca de mi “Chascka”. Y ahora abrazo el cuerpo de Ángela que también es mía’ (117). The end of the novel makes clearer the dynamics underlying testimonial discourses. In particular, the sentence ‘Ángela que también es mía’ is an explicit reference to the idea of possession. Thus, the overall text can be interpreted as a power battle between two male characters. As explained before, the reason for their rivalry is represented by Ángela who does not just epitomise an object of male desire but also

symbolises quintessentially the subaltern. The defeat of the ruthless landowner is not depicted as a collective victory of miners, but rather, as the personal victory of one character. Indeed, the description of this social protest contains numerous hints at Bolivian collective identity. In this respect, it may suffice to mention the repertoire of images related to Bolivian nationhood, described previously. However, the last episode, the character hugging the woman, suggests that the narrator has won over Alcántara and has finally satisfied his desire for the woman.

The two protests described above can be considered as symmetrical as they revolve around a similar sequence of events. Nevertheless, these same episodes differ from each other because of the way in which they are described. While the first episode is the abridged and concise description of a protest, the second one is a pompous and detailed version of a similar event. If the end of the first scene highlights the mineworkers' impotence, the conclusion of the second episode describes their victory over the landowner. The correspondences between the two passages seem to suggest how writing can draw from the same raw material and use it to produce different effects. Therefore, the symmetrical events highlight the double potentiality of writing which is a tool of artistic creation but also a tool of manipulation. Through writing, authors express their creativity but also they invent their own 'reality'. In the last page, the narrator describes Alcántara's punishment. Before doing so, he explicitly says that he does not want to lie but he also acknowledges that he has just vague memories of this event. The hyperbolic description of the protest and the mythical narration of Alcántara's punishment confer a particular meaning to this sentence. These words can be interpreted as a warning for the reader. The narrator knows that he might betray the readers' conventional expectations by offering a subjective and idealised account of his individual experience rather than a truthful testimony of a collective experience.



The allusion to false testimony is underlined by some incongruities throughout the narration. An example is represented by the following passage: ‘Pienso que no somos treinta, ni cincuenta ni cien. Somos millares — tal vez millones — marchando sin fanfarrias al mismo paso’ (113). The reference to different numbers emphasises the approximate number of protesters. In the sentence, the narrator uses vague or inaccurate information in order to highlight the majestic and solemn march of mineworkers going toward the landowner’s house.

### **Literature as a Tool of Agency**

The episode of the second protest deserves more consideration on account of the figure Quispe, a character who plays an apparently secondary role in the previous pages of the novel. Quispe is depicted in the novel as a bizarre character. Indeed, she has been given the nickname of ‘la borracha’ because of her eccentric behaviour. She is also called ‘juez y augurio’ as, because of her unconscious mental state, she leaves cryptic messages which are interpreted by the characters as truthful predictions of future events or as unreliable and eccentric observations. The name of this character is also relevant because of its connections with extra-linguistic reality. Indeed, it evokes the figure of Edoardo Nina Quispe, one of the first Indigenous leaders who suggested new measures to give more ‘autonomia política’ to Indigenous people (Albó 2002: 143). He founded the *Sociedad Centro Educativo Coyasullo*, an institution aimed at promoting education in different Andean communities. He proposed an agrarian reform to convert disregarded and discredited haciendas into *ayllus* (Arnold 2006: 53; Albó 2002: 117).<sup>38</sup>

In this scene, Quispe advises fastening the landowner to a rock and letting *Achancho*<sup>39</sup> eat him. It is interesting that this suggestion becomes action only after being

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<sup>38</sup> A Quechua term used to describe an Andean form of community based on the collective administration of the land (Klein 2011: 22).

<sup>39</sup> In Andean cultures *Achancho* is an evil spirit of the mountains which attacks solitary travellers and sucks their blood (Bingham and Roberts 2010: 6)

supported by the mineworker, Octavio Luna, and the narrator. Here, readers might infer that Quispe is saying something senseless because she is 'la borracha'. Therefore, she has no power to persuade the crowd because she might say something mad. Because of this, she needs approval from the mineworker and, finally, the narrator. Quispe's madness and her inability to be convincing can be better explored through Foucault's theory about madness. By exploring the ways in which madness was perceived throughout the centuries, Foucault writes that madness is a concept which is socially and historically constituted. According to him, the origins of madness refer back to the division between reason and non-reason: this opposition leads to the consequence that speaking outside the locus of reason is synonymous with madness, crimes and disease. This schism leads to the opposition included/excluded: those labelled as mad were generally outcasts, and marginalised (Foucault 1989: xi-xiii). Therefore, as mad people are outside the locus of power, they produce truths which are excluded from the true discourse. Foucault does not see truth in all mad people's discourses but he questions the ordinary understanding of truth. Indeed, in his books, he questions the conventional ideas of subject, truth and freedom. He believes that the subject is immersed in a 'multiplicity of power relations' as he considers power not as an institution but as a force permeating the whole society (Foucault 1979: 93). Moreover, he rejects the idea of an objective and universal truth and he thinks that utterances are truth not because of their content but because they are 'linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it' (Foucault 1980:133).

Having summarised Foucault's main issues, it can be seen that the connection between truth and power is of primary importance. The link between truth and power explains the underlying reasons why Quispe's plan is not immediately put into action. Her words sound absurd; therefore they are not powerful. They can become action as long as they are sanctioned by Octavio Luna and lastly by the narrator. The fact that Quispe refers

back to an Indigenous leader makes this episode more problematic. The scene underlines the gradual passage from suggesting a form of punishment to Fenelón Aparicio putting this punishment into action: Quispe proposes this punishment, the mineworker agrees with her and the narrator gives the final order. This sequence might hint at a hierarchical structure in which the most powerful voice is the storekeeper's 'yes' which triggers punitive measures against the *gamonal*. Therefore, his utterance is performative because it is 'not merely saying something but doing something' (Austin 1975: 25).

The effect of these words, which legitimise Quispe's suggestion and create action, can be useful to further understand the discursive mechanisms underpinning *testimonios*. Bartow uses the word 'legitimation' to describe the relationship between the informant and the transcriber. Moreover, she clarifies how the verb 'to legitimate' is closely related to legal jargon; indeed, it refers to the action of proving or justifying the truth of something or the character of a person or the thing in conformity to the law. As previously illustrated, the production of *testimonios* is underpinned by mutual legitimacy. Indeed, on the one hand, informants legitimate a message that writers from another background are not authorised to advocate. On the other hand, transcribers legitimate the informant's message as they have access to publishers (Bartow 2005: 33-35). In spite of this reciprocity, Bartow highlights how the collaboration between informants and transcriber is substantially hierarchical. This is mainly because transcribers have more authority and lend more legitimacy to testimonial discourses. In particular, the power of authority and, therefore, the power of legitimating are due to certain characteristics: 'a sanctioned position in the hierarchy established by dominant groups and their discourses; possession of certain knowledge, of truth; the power to make people listen, to create an audience' (Bartow 2005: 35). From Bartow's words it can be understood that transcribers have the authority of legitimisation: they can validate the truthfulness of informants' accounts and they can raise political awareness and eventually, promote political action. The narrator exclaiming 'yes'

evokes the process of legitimisation in *testimonios*. Indeed, he confirms that Quispe's words are sensible and as a consequence of that, he puts them into action.

The narrator's words in this scene serve not only to emphasise the role of authors in testimonial writing but also the position of intellectuals in the construction of a collective political consciousness in Bolivia. The characters of this scene refer to some social actors who are involved in Bolivian political debates: Indigenous people embodied by Quispe; mineworkers represented by Octavio Luna; and intellectuals epitomised by the narrator.<sup>40</sup> In this scene, the collaboration between these characters presents a hierarchical structure: the mineworkers are the mediators between the Indigenous people and the intellectuals whereas the intellectual is the leader who legitimises the ideas and promotes action.

## Conclusion

In reading this text, the most immediate impression is that both authors try to reduce their presence in the text. *Testimonio* discourses and the manuscript theme make readers think that the two authors have not intervened too much in the novel. These literary devices suggest that the authors have delegated the choice of writing material and the writing process to a third person, the character Fenelón Aparicio. However, this strategy of authorial effacement is questioned by other aspects in the novel. We have seen how *testimonio* interacts with the diary discourses and how the essential features of diaries highlight an opposite idea. Therefore, whereas *testimonio* is based on other people's experience, the diary is an individual private expression of the writer. Moreover, the intertextual references to diary and *testimonio* highlight the presence of these writers who have a high level of control over the text and use these literary devices with considerable skill.

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<sup>40</sup> The previous sections have discussed how Felenón Aparicio often evokes the figure of the intellectual.

The contradictory dynamic through which the authority of the writers is minimised and, at the same time, reinforced, manifests itself in the text through the literary themes of crying/writing and silence/reticence. The previous sections have illustrated how the inherent differences between writing and speaking underline the idea of loss: what the mineworkers orally narrate cannot be completely translated into writing. The gap between these two means of expression undermines the authority of the writers as it highlights their inadequacy in writing the brutal experience of mineworkers. Conversely, the opposition silence/ reticence reinforces the authority of writers. On the one hand, the idea of silence negatively describes the mineworkers' inability to break their silence and to denounce their marginal conditions. On the other hand, reticence draws readers' attention to writers' deliberate choice of omitting information. Therefore, the contrast between silence and reticence underlines the authority of writers who have the liberty of deciding what to omit or what to narrate.

It is important to say that in this text the narrator, Fenelón Aparicio, works as a fictitious reflection of both writers. In many aspects, the narrator evokes the conventional figure of the intellectual: he comes from the city, he is often overwhelmed by interior malaise, he is more privileged than mineworkers (being the storekeeper he makes sure that he has food for himself; therefore, he does not suffer hunger), and lastly but not less importantly, he is able to express his experience through writing. Another important aspect of the text is the gap between the more advantaged status of the narrator and the marginal condition of miners. This idea is highlighted in the episode of the character descending into the mine.

The distance between Fenelón Aparicio and the mineworkers explains why the narrator identifies himself with the female characters of the novel, the *palliris*. The analysis of some passages demonstrates how these women mineworkers and the narrator have an ambiguous identity in common; that is, they are halfway between outsider and

insider. Lacan's psychoanalytical theories are useful to understand the unconscious fear which characterises the identification with these female figures. The text shifts gradually towards the exclusive relationship between the narrator and Ángela. The character has contradictory feelings towards the woman: compassion, sexual attraction, sincere affections and fear. The psychoanalytical interpretation of the storekeeper's dreams and the dog image show how the character sees Ángela as an object of pleasure but also as a danger to ward off. This unconscious fear alludes to a key dynamic underpinning the writing process of *testimonios*. The intellectuals identify themselves with the subaltern but at the same time, they see their privileged positions threatened. Lacan's theories are also beneficial to explore further the issue of authorship in the novel. The end of the novel suggests that the defeat of the landowner presents itself more as a personal victory of Fenelón Aparacio than as a collective victory of mineworkers. Aparacio prevailed over Alcántara as he managed to possess Ángela. We have seen how in the *testimonio* fiction the physical possession of a woman is used as a literary motif to refer to the transcribers' appropriation of informants' experience. Narrating other people's experience is interpreted by Bartow as an act of violence because it foregrounds authors' prestige. After expressing his desire to possess Ángela, the narrator says: 'porque mi nombre, cuando muera, se quede sobre la superficie del Supay-Kollo, apretado en el recuerdo de una mujer' (76-77). As discussed in the previous sections, the connections between writing, name, memory, physical possession of a woman and *testimonio* hint at writers' wishes or concerns: they take possession of marginal peoples' experience in order to be remembered as writers in the future.

The final episodes bring into focus the manipulative function of writing. The last pages of the novel provide a different narration of a similar scene: the bare narration of a failed protest contrasts with the hyperbolic description of a victorious demonstration. This opposition seems to suggest that writing can reproduce the same facts in different ways by

creating different effects. Finally, it has been observed that the last episode sheds light on the hierarchical relationship between the Indigenous community, mineworkers and intellectuals. Although each of these social actors can participate in political debates, the intellectual is the most influential figure who examines, approves ideas and puts them into action. The implicit message of his episode is that intellectuals' words are the only words which might shape new political ideologies and eventually, promote political militancy.





## CHAPTER THREE

### MINING CONTACT ZONES IN *TODAS LAS SANGRES*: UTOPIA OR DYSTOPIA?

#### Introduction

As discussed in the Introduction, the expansion of extractive industries in the Andean countries engenders significant alterations like landscape transformations, changes of social relations and the acquisition of new cultural models. The novel *Todas las sangres* (1964), written by José María Arguedas explores these changes and raises different questions on the complex interplay between tradition and modernity in Peru. Some of them include: is it possible to build an alternative idea of progress based on the particular Peruvian case? Is there any way to find a possible balance between the peasant communities' exposure to Western practices and the defence of their Indigenous peculiarity?

As in Chapter One, Pratt's concept of 'contact zone' has been used to illustrate one of the essential features of mining communities: the social heterogeneity of these areas and their cultural diversity. Indeed, different social groups which come into contact with each other in a same space, culturally influence each other as a consequence of their constant daily interactions (Pratt 1992: 6). These processes of cultural changes are known as phenomena of transculturation. As explained in the Introduction, Ángel Rama was the first scholar to express his preference for the term 'transculturation', which implies a multi-directional and interactive process between different cultural systems, rather than for the term 'acculturation', which implies a unidirectional and hierarchical exchange from one culture to another. Despite its hierarchical implications, the term 'acculturation' is used at some points of the chapter for explanatory convenience, in order to focus attention

on the impact of Western modernity on local communities' cultures. This chapter also makes use of the words 'utopia' and 'dystopia', concepts which are rooted in European culture but which are also the basic paradigmatic model of different Latin American thinkers.<sup>41</sup>

The chapter consists of three parts. The first part focuses on how the settlements mainly occupied by *mestizo* mineworkers are depicted in the novel. The second section uses the binary death/birth to analyse one of the key episodes in *Todas las sangres*: the descent of a mixed race character into the mine and the image of the horse going from the depth of mining galleries up to the surface. Finally, the last part examines the main character of the novel, Rendón Wilka, by focusing on his culturally hybrid identity.

With regard to its plot, the novel deals with the power conflicts between Peruvian entrepreneurs, mining multinationals and Indigenous populations in the highland area of Lahuaymarca. The text begins with the suicide of the wealthiest landowner in the village of San Pedro de Lahuaymarca, Don Andrés Aragón of Peralta. This powerful man has two sons, Don Fermín and Don Bruno who constantly compete with each other. The reason for their conflicts is the Apark'ora mine, discovered by Don Fermín on his lands. Don

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<sup>41</sup> The word 'utopia' was coined by Thomas More to refer to an ideal state in which citizens are financially and legally equal. Other authors who adopted the same concept were Tommaso Campanella in the *City of Sun* (1602) and Francis Bacon with *New Atlantis* (1627). The word 'utopia' led to the invention of the opposite concept 'dystopia', that is, the prospect for a bad society. Examples of dystopian fiction are *1984* (1949) by George Orwell and *Brave new world* (1931) by Aldous Huxley. In his book *Utopia and the Dialectic in Latin American Liberation*, Gogol illustrates the historical construction of the utopia concept in Latin America. In this respect, he explains how the European concept of utopia interwove with cosmos-visions and historical memories rooted in Latin American cultures. Some of them include: Pre-Columbian cosmos-visions, Afro-Latin American communities' historic memories of pre-enslavement; Indigenous peoples' memories of resistance like the Túpac Amaru and the Túpac Katari (Gogol 2015: 16). Similarly, in *The Utopian Impulse in Latin America*, Beauchesne and Santos believe that utopia is not exclusively a European concept exported to Latin America; rather, 'the utopian impulse in its broader sense, was ingrained in the native imagination long before the arrival of European explorers' (Beauchesne and Santos 2011: 8). They also provide different examples of Latin American utopian thoughts: Simón Bolívar and José Martí's project of uniting the whole Latin American continent; Vasconcelos's essay *La raza cósmica* in which he foresees the emergence of a new Latin American society based on the mixing of races; the Andean utopia of the Peruvian philosopher Alberto Flores Galindo which is centred on the return to an idealised Pre-Columbian civilization and the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s led by Ernesto Che Guevara (Beauchesne and Santos 2011: 9-10).

Fermín is a small entrepreneur who wants to exploit the mine. Don Bruno is a traditional landowner who is against this project as he is worried that modernity would corrupt his Indian slaves. In spite of these disputes, Don Bruno ends up being persuaded by Don Fermín and helps his brother in digging the mine by providing his Indian slaves. The international consortium — Wisther-Bozart — disrupts the equilibrium between the two characters as it tries to take control of the mine. Don Fermín cannot compete against this big multinational and is obliged to sell the Apark'ora mine. Contemporaneously, Rendón Wilka, an Indigenous person who lived in Lima and has come back to Lahuaymarca, organises an uprising of peasants and mineworkers against the company Wishter-Bozart. The mobilisation led by Rendón Wilka is bloodily repressed by soldiers supporting the government. The novel concludes with the tragic death of the character. As discussed in the Introduction, this text provides a panoramic depiction of Peruvian society as it involves a wide range of characters from different cultural backgrounds and social status.

### **Different Stages of Acculturation and The Anxious Dystopia**

As explained in the Introduction, in Peru extractive industries which have developed in the highland areas and in the Amazon, engender changes in the local communities mainly dedicated to agricultural activities. Indeed, in the extractive industry contact zones, the acculturation of local communities is partly due to the development of skilled labour. In order to obviate the shortage of specialised workers, mining companies train local people in the skills needed for extractive production. Thus, technological advancement entails the transformation of the cultures of the local communities who adjust their peasant culture to technical knowledge. However, these cultural changes are not only caused by the formation of specialised labour but also by the radical transformation of the Peruvian social and cultural configuration. Indeed, the expansion of extractive production determines social mobility on an international and national level, by

promoting the arrival of technical and managerial personnel from the capital and foreign countries and by encouraging the immigration of peasants who come from contiguous areas to take jobs in industry (Archibald 2002: 112).

Chapter four of the novel describes the area surrounding the Apark'ora mine, putting particular emphasis on the social changes fostered by the development of extractive industries:

La boca-mina principal estaba a un kilómetro del caserío, cerro arriba, muy cerca del pequeño torrente que bajaba por la quebrada de Apark'ora, hacia el sur. El caserío, una callejuela que separaba dos filas de habitaciones techadas de calamina y con un pequeño corral cercado, ocupaba una suave ladera, en el mismo margen del torrente de la mina. Muy cerca del caserío y separados por espacios irregulares, unos cien peones habían construido chozas con paredes de barro y piedras y techo de paja. Esos peones eran, casi, todos, puneños y andahuaylinos. Habían elegido sitios en que crecían pequeños árboles de molle. Las ramas se cubrían de fruto bajo y abundantísimo, en su tiempo, y los peones de Andahuaylas hacían, ellos mismos, chicha de molle, que en la región de la mina no se conocía. [...] Cada quien tenía su árbol o arbusto; los poquísimos que habían tomado mujer en San Pedro o que habían venido acompañados levantaron un cerco y formaron un corral espacioso donde crecía hierba. Las mujeres criaban allí sus “animalitos”, hasta algún carnero y chivatos. El “maestro” consideraba esta costumbre como típica del “indio” que no es todavía obrero y que difícilmente o nunca llegará a ser maestro. (102-103)

The most straightforward impression is that the description draws attention to the clear cut divisions between the ‘caserío’, the group of houses reserved for the most qualified workers; the ‘choza’, the huts made with mud, straw and stones allocated to the Indigenous people who are not ‘todavía obrero’. Moreover, on the margins of the mining area, there is the ‘galpón’, the slave quarter where Don Bruno’s peasants would have lived:

Cuando se construyó el galpón para los colonos, Antenor, un carrilano coracoreño, pensó que representaría en Apark'ora el barrio “El Montón” de Lima, y así lo dijo. (103)

The depiction of this space also reflects a constant connection between place of residence in the mining community, geographical origin and the professional qualifications of workers, as the following suggests:

Los habitantes del caserío, arequipeños y mestizos cuzqueños y parinacochanos, consideraban a los peones “de choza” como a gente inferior. Todos los obreros calificados, enmaderadores y perforistas, eran arequipeños; los carrilanos, cuzqueños y parinacochanos; puneños y andahuaylinos habían llegado más tarde; ya no tuvieron lugar en el caserío y durmieron, primero, en ramadas; después, don Fermín le contrató ayudantes indios para la construcción de sus chozas. (102)

The position of a certain social group in the mining space is due to the following dynamic: the more distant a group's origins from the coast, the lower their qualifications and the closer to the Indigenous. As a result, the division into social classes depends on social hierarchies in mining production and the two oppositions, highland and coast/ Indigenous and Western. The rigid topography of the mining labour system reaffirms the binary division between highland and coast, the long standing, internal inequality that has existed in Peru since its independence (De la Cadena 1998: 145-147). Nevertheless, this representation of mining space challenges this rigid structure by suggesting also that there are myriad ways of being *mestizos*. As discussed in the Introduction, since the 1950s and 1960s immigration fostered by the development of the service industry and the impoverishment of the agricultural sector has destabilised this binary representation of Peruvian nationhood, creole versus Indigenous, by bringing about the emergence of new *mestizo* identities (Lambright 2007: 2; Wood 2005: 25-33; Cornejo Polar 1973: 256).

The organisation of space complicates the representation of Peruvian society by visually showing the phenomenon of acculturation. The depiction of this social transformation is closely related to the Positivist ideas of space and time,<sup>42</sup> according to which the temporal and spatial dimensions are closely united and can be represented as a linear process of development.<sup>43</sup> The houses, the huts and the slave quarters simplify the

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<sup>42</sup> Space and time, intended as closely related dimensions, constitute the basis of the laws of Newtonian dynamics and will be the point of departure for further reflections in the 20th century physics theories, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [online].

<sup>43</sup> The book, *Latin America and the Origins of its Twenty-First Century*, focuses on how the Positivist theory of historical progress influenced the Latin American intellectual milieu. The Positivist conception of history is based on Comte's theory according to which history can be organised into three

phenomenon of acculturation as a process which develops in a linear time and can be broken into different evolutionary stages. The notion of linearity is also highlighted by the use of the verb ‘ver’ as this passage illustrates:

Cabrejos se refería con adjetivos fuertes a Piskulich, que trazó el caserío. “Estrecho y miserable, como si hubiera adivinado que su porvenir no se haría aquí. ¡Con tanto espacio! Y trazar conejeras. Los obreros se enferman, se contagian. Se amargan más. Ese hombre *veía* y creo que desconfiaba de sus ojos. Así son estos cateadores locos”. (103)

Here, the verb ‘ver’ refers to the engineer Piskulich’s attempt to speculate on the consequences of the migration phenomenon. He planned to build the ‘caserío’ in a very restricted area because he thought that the arrival of new mineworkers would not continue in the future. Returning to the representation of the mining space, the division between the ‘chozas’ and the ‘caserío’ would seem to be based on different degrees of acculturation. The huts are for those who are not completely acculturated, that is, who are not yet mineworkers. The hut space reveals that this social group has some cultural traits that are conventionally marked as Indigenous: the houses with the fruit gardens hint at these mineworkers’ desire to preserve a frugal life based on agrarian and non-capitalist values and also suggest their need to maintain some traditional customs linked to their peasant background, like the beverage *chicha de molle*. Moreover, the presence of a large shared yard recalls the Inca economic system based on collectivism (De la Cadena 1998: 148). On the same level, the ‘caserío’ reflects a stage of acculturation which shows closeness to the Western and an urban environment. For example, the houses with fenced gardens highlight the idea of private ownership, as the presence of taverns and brothels accounts for the similarities of this area with the neighbouring city of San Pedro and the provincial capital (De La Cadena 1998: 156).

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stages: the theological age, the metaphysical age and the scientific age. This last stage corresponds to the most advanced point at which humanity would continue to live in peace and would progress without end (Monteón 2009: 58-59). This teleological perception of time was the key idea not only in the theory of Comte but also in the work of other European thinkers like Hegel, Marx and Mill (Isaacs 2004: 197).

Primarily, the ‘caserío’ is also distinctive because of music that manifests itself as a cluttered mixture of styles ranging from trendy Western music to the traditional *mestizo* or Indigenous *huaynos*. This musical hybridity, in which international, national, local as well as traditional and modern, coexist, makes the area ‘un ambiente urbano ridículo’.

Las radiolas tragamonedas que habían instalado ya en dos cantinas del caserío retumbaban el bajo techo de calamina y en la callejuela. Tocaban música de moda y huaynos mestizos e indios; daban al caserío un ambiente urbano ridículo, pero evidente (103).

The latter expression deserves attention since it seems to betray a slight disapproval of the cultural hybridity associated with the ‘caserío’ space. Indeed, the negative connotation of the adjective ‘ridículo’ reveals how the description embodies a judgmental stance toward the alleged urban environment of the ‘caserío’. This disapproving posture is particularly evident in the following sentence in which the inverted commas imply an irony: ‘A lo lejos, las chozas “residenciales” eran consideradas por los “maestros” obreros como la “barriada” del “caserío”’. Here, the sentence can either refer to the hierarchical superiority of the ‘caserío’ over ‘choza’ or express the opposite meaning, that is, the ‘caserío’ is the ‘barriada’ of the ‘chozas’. The statement encloses the conflict between two opposite stances, one which prefers the environment of houses — which is more urban — and the other one which shows bias for the environment of ‘choza’— which is more agrarian. The inverted commas are used as a literary device that reveals the presence of an implied author behind the writing process, and consequently, refers back to the authority of Arguedas as a writer. The expression seems to reveal Arguedas’ inner concerns about cultural hybridity.

Marisol de la Cadena’s ideas enable a better understanding of the ambiguous character of the aforementioned sentence. In her essay, De la Cadena illustrates how in the Peruvian intellectual milieu the scientific concept of ‘race’ has been replaced by the words ‘class’ and ‘culture’ since the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the shift from ‘race’ to ‘class’ and ‘culture’ does not mean an end to discrimination. Indeed, although the explicit term disappeared from cultural discourses, racist feelings still survive — that are no longer

based on phenotypical traits but mostly on social status and formal education. As a result of this, race becomes a cultural construction which still legitimates the exclusion of *mestizos* and Indians. This phenomenon, known as silent racism, explains how indigenist intellectuals place emphasis on education and cultural purity to depict *mestizos* as a ‘gente de pueblo’ dominated by racial degeneration, immorality and bad social tastes. Moreover, De la Cadena claims that as a consequence of this silent racism, the discourse of pro-cultural hybridity leads to new discourses of cultural subordination. An example is the cultural eugenic theory of the anthropologist, Oscar Nuñez Prado, according to which the improvement of Indigenous people occurs only by avoiding the negative aspects of Indigenous and Western cultures and maintaining the most efficient aspects of both cultures. Thus, this recognises, as a positive model, a model of cultural hybridity which is closer to Indigenist purism and less close to *cholificación* (De la Cadena 1998: 143-164).<sup>44</sup> As discussed on page 29, this word does not indicate just a form of *mestizaje cultural* but also a social category. The adjective *cholo* encloses a wide range of social indicators: Indigenous background, Andean provenance, condition of urban migrant, working class status and scant formal education.

The connection point between the ‘choza’ hybridity and the ‘caserío’ hybridity is represented by the word ‘*chicha*’. In the first part, the term is used to describe the traditional Indigenous beverage which represents the preservation of the Indigenous traditions among ‘choza’ inhabitants. In the depiction of the ‘caserío’, the word is not explained but resonates in the reader’s head through the description of the hybrid music that is a clear hint at *música chicha*. This music style originated in urban environments, notably in Lima, around 1960 and expanded especially in the popular neighbourhoods. This kind of music was characterised by an intermingling of rural Andean traditions with Western and creole elements (Watt 2000: 333). The adjective ‘*chicha*’ was used later to

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<sup>44</sup> The explanation of the term *cholificación* can be found in the Introduction.



denote not only the music but also an informal and vernacular culture that was associated with *cholos*. Some years later, Vargas Llosa would define ‘*chicha* culture’ as concoction, confusion, amalgam, jumble:

De ello ha resultado que, hoy en día, el Perú haya dejado en gran parte de ser aquella sociedad dual que describía el indigenismo. *Integración* acaso no sea la palabra que convenga para describir el fenómeno, pues ella sugiere una armoniosa aleación de culturas en la que una absorbe a la otra y, a su vez, se enriquece con el añadido. *Mescolanza, confusión, amalgama, entrevero* parecen términos más apropiados para caracterizar esta amorfa sociedad surgida de la forzada cohabitación de millones de peruanos de origen serrano con los costeños o los pobladores occidentalizados de las ciudades andinas. [...] Más bien, un extraño híbrido en el que al rudimentario español o jerga acriollada que sirve para la comunicación, corresponden unos gustos, una sensibilidad, una idiosincrasia, y hasta unos valores estéticos virtualmente nuevos: la cultura *chicha*. (Vargas Llosa 1996: 331-332)

In connection with Vargas Llosa’s statement and De la Cadena’s ideas, the underlying meaning of the statement ‘las chozas eran consideradas como la “barriada” del “caserío”’ suggests that the call for cultural hybridity is run through by an elitist feeling. On the one hand there is the high culture of the Pre-Columbian cultural heritage associated with integrity, agricultural background and the deepest elements of the Inca culture; on the other hand there is *chicha* music considered as a deformation of Indigenous culture, associated with the superficial, the uneducated and bad taste.

In conclusion, the overall description and, notably, the subjective perspective underlying some sentences show the author’s intimate concern for this process of acculturation whereby cultural contact with Western and urban culture implies a radical elaboration/change or annihilation of the Indian. The slight irony of the aforementioned sentence vaguely suggests Arguedas’ bias towards the cultural hybridity associated with the hut inhabitants. The next sections will illustrate how this vague allusion is confirmed by other elements in the text.

## Change vs Stasis

The previous section has reviewed migration and acculturation as two key aspects of social transformation connected with the development of extractive industries in Peru. What follows is a deeper understanding of these social phenomena through the close reading of some passages in chapter two of the novel. At this point in the narration, the manager Don Fermín and the engineer Cabrejos have a conversation about the overall progress of their projects in order to inaugurate silver exploitation in Apark'ora. Among their projects, it is worth mentioning both the building of a wall, which prevents Don Bruno's peasants' access to the other mineworkers' areas, and the construction of a highway which promotes the connection between this area and the more commercially active Peruvian coast. Comparing the two projects, it can be seen that they stand for two opposite tendencies. The wall precludes the Indigenous mineworkers from continuous contacts with other mineworkers: thereby, it 'contains' the mutual acculturations of this social group. By contrast, the highway causes an increase in social mobility; it, thus, represents an important driving factor for converting the mining area into a culturally and socially heterogeneous area.

After talking to Cabrejos, the manager Don Fermín and Rendón Wilka go to visit Don Bellido, an Indigenous old man who works as a blacksmith in San Pedro. Don Fermín wants to go to Don Bellido's workshop as much to repair his father's old gun as to make a tempting job offer to Perico Bellido, who is Don Bellido's son. With regard to the episode's backdrop, it is worth noting the hint at the traditional platform:

Don Fermín entró al taller del platero por el patio. Ocupaba una de las últimas casas, hacia el oeste, camino de la costa; el patio era una especie de andén que formaba como el segundo piso de otro más bajo en que concluía el pueblo. Allí en el bajo, solían despedir a los viajeros, antes de la construcción de la carretera. Los despedían con himnos tristes, especialmente a los reclutas. A ese andén donde se cantaba, siempre entre lágrimas de las mujeres y de los niños, se le llama, como en todos los pueblos antiguos "Kacharparly pata" campo del desgarramiento. (45)

Such a place, also known as *campo del desgarramiento*, refers to a sort of platform where Indigenous people used to sing melancholic hymns in order to say goodbye to the departing conscripts. Don Bellido's memories clearly show how, in this place, the departure of the conscripts presents itself as a rite of initiation from youth to adulthood, in which the detachment of an individual was accompanied by music and a traditional ceremony. In the description, there is also a sentence highlighting how this traditional place has been replaced by the recently built highway. Both spaces are, in some way, similar since they denote a place of departure; thus, they can be considered as the propulsive factors of social mobility. Notwithstanding such similarities, they represent two spaces that are opposite to each other. Whilst the highway is associated with the idea of social change and with a dynamic and culturally heterogeneous model of society, the platform is linked to the unaltered transmission of a tradition; it thus preserves the cultural homogeneity of society. The importance of these places will be further confirmed by the final section of the episode.

In addition to this significant backdrop, the episode is centred on the appearance of a new character, Perico Bellico, a seemingly secondary figure. From the dialogue between Don Fermín and Rendón Wilka, it can be presumed that Perico Bellico undertook casual jobs in Lima to fund his studies in accounting. Then, thanks to his educational achievements, he is hired by Don Fermín as an accountant in the Apark'ora mine. Afterwards, he fulfils a relevant role in the narrative by discovering the intrigue orchestrated by the engineer Cabrejos against Don Fermín. Later on, unexpectedly, he neither collaborates with Cabrejos nor defends Don Fermín's interests, but decides to escape with the company's money.

On the basis of these life experiences, it is quite evident that such a character presents a sort of affinity with the character Rendón Wilka. Indeed, both of them represent a new social subject, an Andean migrant who has lived in Lima but come back to his place

of origin. The identity of these characters draws the readers' attention to the *cholificación*, a cultural phenomenon which brought about radical changes within Peruvian society and, in particular, complicated the perception of Andean social and cultural identities. As pointed out in the Introduction, the emergence of these culturally hybrid identities was mainly the consequence of the massive migration from the Peruvian highlands to the cities which was exacerbated from the 1960s onward.

Despite their straightforward resemblance, the two characters are presented as opposed to each other. In the overall passage, Perico Bellido is shown in a negative light in respect to Rendón Wilka. In comparison with Don Bruno the peasants' leader, he stands out as an inconsistent character. The inconsistency of Perico Bellido's ideas can be inferred from the contradiction between his statements either recognising or rejecting the colonial social order based on the landowner's power. Indeed, at the beginning, he does not extend a respectful welcome to Don Fermín because he ironically says that the *gamonal* should greet first as every good *caballero* does. '¿No es verdad, señor de Peralta, que el caballero que entra a una casa saluda?' (45). Later he denies what he said earlier by claiming that: 'He hablado una equivocación. No creo en los caballeros' (45). Moreover, Perico Bellido's doubtful integrity is highlighted by his actions which seem to anticipate his future role of traitor in the next episodes. He accuses Rendón Wilka of being Don Fermín's ally but he becomes submissive when he is literally kicked by the Indigenous mineworkers' leader. Moreover, his rebellious behaviour radically changes when he is hired by Don Fermín as an accountant in the Apark'ora mine, as the following shows: 'Buenos días señor. Usted jefe, yo tengo que saludar, pues... como a jefe' (46).

The negative characterisation of Bellido suggests that the two characters are hierarchally related to each other. Although both Rendón Wilka and Bellido epitomise cultural hybridity, the former represents a positive model of it whereas the latter represents a negative one. Such a hierarchy is further strengthened by the old man Bellido's thoughts,

in which the memories of the old traditional platform trigger a series of reflections revolving around the idea of change and the hybrid identity of the two characters. As soon as Rendón Wilka and Don Fermín leave, a flow of reflections and memories appear in the old character's mind. While singing an old Indigenous song, he visualises the traditional place of the platform in his mind. Singing this old *harawy* reminds him of when he said goodbye to his people to join the armed forces. Comparing his experience with those of Rendón Wilka and his son, his migrant journey has not had profound consequences for his life mainly because it did not entail any change in his customs, traditions or, in general terms, his culture. Unlike Rendón Wilka and his son, he came back without changing:

Un canto surgía en su memoria a pesar de que pretendía borrar todo pensamiento que le inquietara: [...] Con ese harawy lo despidieron del pueblo cuando fue atrapado para recluta. [...] Lo desgarraron de su pueblo pero volvió pronto y sin cambiar. Ahora no lo entendía su hijo, el contador. (48-49)

Don Bellido's struggle to interpret Rendón Wilka's hybrid figure is emphasised by the question. '¿Rendón... será o no será?' (49). The action of wondering whether Rendón Wilka is Indigenous or not shows how the old man's thoughts are still rooted in the representation of Peru in terms of exclusive and contradictory binaries: Western and Latin American, the Indigenous and the Hispanic, the traditional and the modern.

Don Bellido's memories and thoughts are accompanied by the melody of an old *harawy* whose literal transcript in Quechua and translated text in Spanish are explicitly reported in the text. Moreover, the text emphasises the contrast between internal and external perceptions, that is, between the character's subjective imagination and the external narrative reality. On the one hand, there is Don Bellido's interior voice which imagines hearing a *harawy*, an example of the Pre-Columbian Andean music. On the other hand, the narration focuses on the figure of Perico Bellido who leaves his father's house by whistling a *mercumbé*, a modern musical style, consisting of a mixture of the Colombian *cumbia* and the Dominican *merengue* (Birenbaum 2013: 183).

El mozo se retiró de la puerta. Se puso la americana; se arregló cuidadosamente la corbata y salió a la calle por la puerta de la tienda. [...] Llegó a la plaza silbando una canción de moda, un merecumbé. Algunas mozas oyeron el ritmo y salieron a la puerta de sus tiendas. El viejo vio cómo la sombra de su hijo desaparecía del piso del taller. Siguió cautivado por el harawy antiguo. Lo entonaba con hondura porque la tranquila mole del cuerpo del indio Rendón Wilka, vestido de casimir, no se desprendía de su memoria. Pero el harawy exaltaba más su figura. (49)

In this passage, the hint at the *merecumbé* musical style as well as the fashionable *americana* jacket suggests that the *mestizo* identity is further complicated by the assimilation of some transnational cultural models coming partly from other Latin American countries but primarily from Europe and the USA. Perico Bellido epitomises the hybridity that consists in the complete assimilation of foreign customs and results in the loss of the Indigenous identity.

At another point of the episode, the discrepancy between the external perception and imagination is repeated: when Don Bellido sees his son's shadow leaving his workshop and disappearing he vividly sees the figure of Rendón Wilka in his mind. The conflict between objective perception and imagination has the purpose of further confirming the hierarchical relationship between Rendón Wilka and Perico Bellido. Imagination is related to the character's memories as well as the character's nostalgia for the Andean cultural heritage. The emphasis on the image of Rendón Wilka, who is vivid in Bellido's mind, implies that Rendón Wilka embraces modernity without breaking the ties with Indigenous traditions; thus, he does not clash with the old man's past or, generally speaking, with the Indigenous past. At the end, the narration explicitly shows Don Bellido's inclination more toward Rendón Wilka rather than his son's hybridity. Although he feels discomfort, Don Bellido is glad that Rendón Wilka challenged his son and punished his disrespectful behaviour.

This section has pointed out how the visual experience is a recurrent motif in the narrative. Similarly, in this episode, the action of seeing presents itself as a cognitive process through which the character Bellido imagines where Peruvian society is heading.

He sees Rendón Wilka not only as the prolongation of the Indian but also as a good model of hybridity on which an optimistic vision of the future lies.

### **The Descent into the Mine: The Death of a Dichotomy**

The episode in which the mixed race Gregorio descends into the mine provides a deep insight into the social issues revolving around development of the extractive industries. The Introduction discussed the theories of the anthropologist Lienhard, who uses the expression *núcleos estéticos* to refer to images creatively reworked by Arguedas in which different cultural discourses converge. The combination of cultural discourses, also known as transculturation, gives rise to polysemic forms of representation which are open to a wide range of interpretations (Lienhard 1990: 12). In the aforementioned episode, the representation of the mine is based on the syncretic combination of different mythological references.

In chapter four of the novel, Gregorio, a mixed race and middle class character, is promised a generous amount of money by the engineer Cabrejos so long as he descends into the mine Apark'ora, disguised as an Indigenous mineworker. Gregorio is required to simulate the frightening shout of the *Amauta*, the Inca mythological creature represented as a supernatural double-headed serpent, in order to terrify Rendón Wilka's mineworkers and cause them to interrupt their excavation work. The engineer plans this joke to delay the discovery of the metal and to allow the international consortium, Wisther-Bozart, to take possession of the mines sooner than Don Fermín. Cabrejos' plan does not achieve the desired outcome; on the contrary, it has a tragic ending. Gregorio is shot by an unidentified person; Rendón Wilka and his mineworkers do not fall for Cabrejos's trick, with the result that they do not stop working in the mines.

The episode recalls the descent into the underworld, a theme that as explained on page 137, can be found in different religious traditions, in the form of rituals and myths.

In Arguedas' episode, the figure of Gregorio has a possible resemblance to the ancient Greek mythical hero of Orpheus.<sup>45</sup> This Greek character, a poet and musician, half divine and half human, descends into Hades' territory to redeem his wife; he fails in his task because he betrays Hades' rule of not turning back during his journey through the underworld (Guthrie 1993: 25). Similarly, Gregorio is a musician of the Andean instrument called *charango* and has a hybrid identity due to both mixed race traits and his middle-class social status.<sup>46</sup> He agrees to descend into the mines as he wants to socially and economically ascend and endears himself to the creole Asunta. This possible intertextual linkage with the Greek mythical hero emphasises Gregorio's liminal condition, or in other words, his hybrid identity. Different elements associated with the character of Gregorio suggest how such hybridity is dominated by the unsolved contradictions between the two opposite poles of Western and Indigenous. His squinting eyes makes his face divide into two asymmetrical sides. He involuntarily stiffens his left eye whenever he is driven by vices allegedly considered as Western, for example, ambition and lust for money. On the other hand, when he sings traditional Indigenous music, he experiences light through his right eye and, in doing so, establishes a harmonious relationship with surrounding nature. Indeed, according to Quechua beliefs, solar light along with the boundless fluidity of water, are the natural elements through which human beings are connected with the integrated and inclusive image of the Andean cosmos (Staller and Stross 2013: 19).

A further aspect of his face's physical description is that the irregularity of his two eyes suggest the opposing ideas of division/ unity. This tension between division and

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<sup>45</sup> There is no strong evidence to prove that Arguedas based the depiction of Gregorio on the characteristics of the Greek mythological figure. Nevertheless, Arguedas' wide knowledge of ethnology and folklore makes the connection between the two figures plausible.

<sup>46</sup> *Charango* is a Peruvian adaptation of the Spanish guitar. Originating in the Andean areas at the beginning of the eighteenth century, this instrument gradually became popular in other areas of Peru, from the 1930s to the 1960s. (Gonzalez 2000a: 326).



unity seems to imply that Peruvian identity is characterised by the difficult compatibility between the autochthonous cultural heritage and the Western conception of progress. Additionally, it is worth noting that Gregorio's strategies to seduce Asunta follow the same dynamic of two opposing tendencies. He attempts to attract the woman by giving her a large amount of money but also by serenading her with his *charango*. In connection with the previous discussion, it can be seen that money and music appear in the text as opposing poles standing for, respectively, the Latin American and the Western, the Indigenous and the Hispanic, the traditional and the modern. Indeed, money is the main medium of exchange on which the Western system of capitalism is based, while music is the main foundation of the oral Andean cultural heritage. Besides the inner contradictions within the character, his vicissitudes emphasise what Cornejo Polar defines as double marginality (Cornejo Polar 1973: 36-40). He claims that some of Arguedas' characters experience double marginality as they continuously transit from Indigenous to Western culture because of their hybrid identity. Despite their ties with two cultures, they do not actually belong to either of them. Such a marginalised condition is particularly exemplified in the text when the character plays the *charango* in front of Asunta's door. This episode highlights the impossibility of Gregorio communicating with white and Indigenous people. On the one hand, the character is rejected by the white woman when he expresses his love to her through his music. On the other hand, he initially does not provoke any reaction in the two hidden hearers, two Indigenous people belonging to Rendón Wilka's peasants. They casually hear Gregorio's music but do not understand completely the lyrics of his songs, both because they are physically distant from the musician and they cannot speak Spanish.

In addition to a possible linkage with the Western literature tradition, the episode echoes the Andean cultural heritage through the explicit reference to the *Amaru* as well as the hint at the most modern manifestations of the *Amaru* myth in the Inkari traditions. As

explained above, a deep air of mystery surrounds Gregorio's death owing to two facts: the offender's identity is not known and the only traces of Gregorio's body are a few bones. Concerning Gregorio's missing body, it is worth noting Cabrejos's comment about the impossibility of finding his head:

— ¿Y la cabeza?— preguntó Cabrejos.  
— Creo que nada más vamos a encontrar. Todo su resto ha sido molido. La cabeza habrá volado como una granadilla, y sabe Dios en qué tierra o piedras se habrá pegado. (137)

The loss of the character's head has a connection with the tradition of Inkarrí, a wide range of accounts that developed in the Peruvian highlands from the colonial period onwards. Before the publication of *Todas las sangres*, Arguedas worked intensively in furthering the knowledge about Inkarrí and reported different versions of Inkarrí myths. Despite their divergences, the various accounts represent the drama of the Spanish colonisation of Peru since all of them depict the battle between the symbols of Inca and Spanish culture. On the one hand, there are some symbols related to Spanish culture such as Pizarro, the president in Lima or the bull; on the other hand, there are symbols associated with the Inca culture such as the Inkarrí, that is, the Inca king or the two-headed Andean serpent the Amaru. All the various accounts include the separation of the Inca king's head from his body (Nauss Millay 2005: 92). The detail of this beheading gives rise to a series of prophecies called *ritos mesiánicos*: all of them believe that Inkarrí's head is still alive and will reunite with its body one day, signalling the end of Spanish domination and the messianic return of the Inca (Steele and Allen 2004: 194-196; Badini, Giannelli and Lenzi 95 :1994).

The Inkarrí myth is doubly repeated in the episode as it is recalled by some of Gregorio's utterances and, at a later stage, confirmed by some events occurring in the episode. By claiming 'Si él se planta, lo degüello. ¡Deme un cuchillo!' (124), the character expresses his intent to kill Rendón Wilka. Through this utterance he echoes the mythological battle between the Hispanic and the Indigenous: he presents himself as a

defender of the Hispanic whereas he presents Rendón Wilka as the mythical hero of Inkari. If the similarity between Rendón Wilka/Inkarri and between Gregorio/Spanish coloniser underpins the binary Hispanic/Indigenous, it also complicates such clear-cut opposition. Gregorio and Rendón Wilka represent iconic figures of cultural hybridity but they do not represent in absolute terms, respectively, the Hispanic and the Indigenous. In this case, the straightforward dichotomy Hispanic /Indigenous is both confirmed and negated at the same time, suggesting that this simplistic and exclusive dichotomy still exists but does not fully represent the actual complexity of Peruvian society.

Gregorio's hybridity explains how this figure turns from a Hispanic to an Indigenous image in the final part of the episode. Indeed, there is a new hint at the Inkari myth: the narration draws attention to Gregorio's lost body but particularly to his lost head. Moreover, despite their ambiguities, some details make the reader suspect that the engineer Cabrejos kills Gregorio:

Cabrejos se plantó en el medio de los rieles, con la pistola en la mano derecha y un reflector en la obra. [...] Y por cuarta vez el grito recommenzó, de más cerca, y con otro aire, como de vencedor. Pero en ese instante empezó a estallar la cadena de tiros y cortó el grito. (133)

As pointed out earlier, the mysterious disappearance of Gregorio's head might establish a connection with this figure and the Inkari figure, or generally speaking with the Indigenous. Conversely, the figure of Cabrejos might have a linkage with the Hispanic. From the passage it can be seen that the mythical fight between the Hispanic and the Indigenous is repeated. Nevertheless, similar to Gregorio and Rendón Wilka, the engineer Cabrejos appears in the text as a more polysemic figure. In fact, being a coastal native as well as belonging to a privileged creole class, this character incarnates the Hispanic. His professional status as an engineer highlights the link between this character and the multinational Wither-Bozart, hinting at the Western foreigner who has played a relevant role in the Latin American self-construction of an independent and decolonised consciousness.

From these discussions, it is important to see that the mine space associated with the complex reworking of such mythic discourses can be interpreted as a reminder of the European conquest of Latin America but also of postcolonial economic imperialism; both endeavours aimed at the exploitation of natural resources. Moreover, after the accident, what remains of the *mestizo*'s body further epitomises the complex correspondence of the Hispanic and the Western. Only a few bones and a knife labelled 'Toro' are found. Regarding the latter, it is worth noting that the word 'toro' has both Hispanic and Western connotations. It refers back to the animal conventionally considered as an icon of the Hispanic, whereas the hint at 'toro' as a brand recalls the economic capitalistic system mainly based on the production, distribution and exchange of consumer goods.

### **The Birth of a New Hybridity**

The previous section has described how the author confirms the dichotomy of the Inkari myth but at the same time weakens such rigid duality. In this specific case, he breaks the rigidity of two poles, Inca/ Spanish, by identifying both with culturally hybrid characters such as Rendón Wilka, Gregorio and Cabrejos (Cornejo Polar 1973: 254-261).

Moreover, it is important to also take into account that this episode echoes a motif recurring in different religious and literary traditions, the descent and return from the underworld. As explained on page 137, this mythological and religious theme suggests the idea of the passage from death to life. On the basis of this intertextual echo, it can be seen that the previously examined episode can be reduced to a new duality, that is, death/birth. The text alludes to the birth idea by resorting to different religious codes; besides the linkage with Inkari myth, there is a specific hint at the Catholic idea of Resurrection as the character's words suggest: 'Todos vamos a resucitar' (144). The birth concept is mainly expressed through a particular scene in the text, the scene of a horse descending into the mine and returning to the surface.

Returning to this episode, Don Fermín rushes to the mine riding his horse in order to investigate the mysterious accident. After hearing different versions about what happened, Don Fermín leaves his horse and goes into the mine to personally see Gregorio's dismembered corpse. At this point in the narration, the text draws attention to the abandoned horse descending into the mine and returning to the surface:

El caballo salió de la mina, solo, tan apresuradamente ensillado. [...] Se quedó parado como si dudara adónde debía dirigirse. Era la luz que lo había deslumbrado. Se detuvo para ser feliz en el mundo que redescubría. Un instante después relinchó, y la masa de gente sintió la vida en medio de la consternación, el desconcierto y el odio que empezaba a separar a la gente en bandos más definidos. El caballo era feliz, estaba casi libre; el gran sol miraba por sus ojos; la tierra amante con su hermosura se reflejaba en ellos. (142)

In the following passage, different elements emphasise the birth idea: the expression 'el mundo que redescubría' alludes to the rediscovery of the outside world, therefore, indirectly to rebirth after death; the light blinding the horse evokes the moment of parturition; the neigh might recall the offspring crying after the birth as it unexpectedly arouses feelings of life among the people attending Gregorio's funeral. The birth idea establishes a logical connection with Gregorio's death. Through the dichotomy of death/birth the narrator creates an invisible thread between Gregorio's character and the horse image.

The previous section described how contradiction and division characterise Gregorio's hybrid identity and how these aspects implicitly allude to the unsolved incompatibility between the Peruvian autochthonous cultural heritage and the Western conception of progress. In connection with this, the death/birth dichotomy highlights how Gregorio's disappearance gives way to the horse image which presents itself in the text as a harmonious combination of culturally heterogeneous elements. Indeed, a close reading of the passage shows how this image can be considered as a transcultural symbol, or in Lienhard's terms an example of *núcleos estéticos* (Lienhard 1990:12). A close interpretation of the birth scene shows how the description of the horse encloses references

to culturally heterogeneous discourses. The previously quoted passage focuses on how, at the beginning, the animal is dazzled by sunshine and, later, it basks in the sun. The scene has not only a descriptive function as it hints at important concepts within the text. In this respect, it is important to consider the polysemy of the horse image throughout Latin American literature. Horses are closely tied with the Hispanic and the Western; indeed, these animals were introduced, for the first time, by Spanish invaders in Latin America and also they were the distinctive marker of the Spanish landowners' privileged status in the colonial society (Pratt 1992: 38). Nevertheless, horses also bring to mind the idea of barbarism opposed to civilisation, echoing the indomitable horse in the regional novels, which stands for the overwhelming Latin American nature tamed by the Hispanic landowner (Swanson 2005b: 30). The echo of different literary discourses related to the horse image is further complicated by the interaction with the light image in Arguedas' novel. In different parts of the text, both the references to the light and the horse function as hints at different cultural discourses. Moreover, they interact with each other by epitomising the cultural interplay between heterogeneous cultural elements. Before proceeding to analyse the aforementioned scene of death/birth, it is necessary to explore the images recurring in the text, which are based on the complex relationship between light and horse images.

In chapter four, the *gamonal* Don Bruno meets the Indigenous Rendón Wilka for the first time. Throughout the narration, the dialogue between the two characters is run through by the recurrent scene of the horse glimmering in the light. This image is quite ambiguous as it encloses different ideas. At the beginning of the episode, horse and light refer back to Catholic beliefs. Indeed, when Don Bruno wants to ascertain Rendón Wilka's knowledge of Catholic religion, he addresses an unusual question to the Indigenous character: '¿Yo soy Caín?'. By saying that 'Tu potro está brillando en la luz. No eres "Caín" ni maldecido', (118) Rendón Wilka shows a wide understanding of Catholic symbols and,

particularly, of the notions of hell/heaven. Although he claims that Don Bruno is closer to hell because of his position as landowner, he uses this sentence to imply that the *gamonal* will manage to redeem himself from sin. He resorts to the image of the horse glimmering in the light in order to allude to the Christian concepts of light/ darkness, infernal punishment/ glory or, in general terms, of hell/heaven. Indeed, the duality hell/heaven is mainly connected with the ambiguous name of Don Bruno's horse, Lucero, a term which literally means a horse with a white patch on its forehead, but which also evokes various meanings related to Catholic beliefs. The word indirectly recalls the Christian notion of light as opposed to darkness as it etymologically comes from the Latin word *lux*, meaning 'light'. Nevertheless, it also brings to mind evil spirits as this term is used in Spanish for Venus, the most brilliant planet, conventionally associated with evil.

In the same episode, the *gamonal*'s voice refers back to the previous horse image but provides a different reworking of it: 'Hablas como indio, aunque con tanto entendimiento que ligas a mi potro con la luz de afuera y sabes lo que es un patrón' (119). In this passage, the image appears in the text as a reference to the Catholic religion but also as a hint at Positivist ideas of reason and progress. Indeed, it suggests a linkage with Christian beliefs by alluding to external light opposed to the infernal darkness. The words 'entendimiento' and light — used in the same sentence — suggest the link between positivism, reason and light (Caruso 2015: 45). In his forthcoming article, Wood examines the visual representations of modernity in nineteenth century Peruvian culture mainly focusing on the first examples of photography and some representative journals of the Peruvian enlightenment. In the journal *Foto Club Lima*, he mentions a key passage reflecting the close links between reason, light and enlightenment: 'Al fin tenemos luz, ese fluido solo comparable al pensamiento, que esclarece y vivifica' (Wood, forthcoming article: 4). Returning to Don Bruno's utterance, the detail of light from an external source provides further information about the notion of positivism and modernity. The adjective

‘external’, related to light, seems to suggest that Peruvian modernity is perceived as a discourse and experience coming from hegemonic centres identified with US or European countries. In fact, in nineteenth-century Peruvian culture, the discourse of modernity is visually represented as combined with the depiction of light coming from an external source. This relationship between modernity and image is illustrated by Tauzin Castellanos in her article *La imagen en El Perú Ilustrado* (2003). By interpreting the first covers of the newspaper *El Perú Ilustrado*, she focuses on how the light image, suggesting the idea of progress, is positioned in the overall picture. She observes that, whereas in the first issue the light is depicted as coming from the distant ocean, in the second issue the light is represented as released by the title *El Perú Ilustrado*. The passage from an external to an internal light source visually mirrors the main assumption on which Latin American debates revolving around the notion of modernity are based: the subordination of peripheries to a centre. On the one hand, there are the European and US centres from which practices and ideas of modernity arise; on the other hand, the peripheral Latin American countries, in which discourses of modernity are applied, are adapted to a new cultural specificity (Tauzin Castellanos 2003: 135-137).

In the same episode, the interplay of horse/light is highlighted by other images. In the final part of the scene, a third-person voice focuses on the description of Don Bruno’s horse glimmering in the sunshine: ‘El potro blanco permanecía quieto, casi como un oficial de ejército; recibía en su piel lustrosa la luz del sol declinante que iba cambiando de color’ (120). In this scene, sunlight reflecting on the horse’s skin seems to be more closely related to Andean cultural discourses. Indeed, the direct reference to the sunlight evokes images related to Inca religious beliefs. According to Rowe, in *Todas las sangres* the light hints at the continuous flow connecting all the elements in nature and contributes to the representation of an integrated and inclusive image of the Andean cosmos. (Rowe 1979: 88).



Later, another reference to the light/horse image can be found in the words which Rendón Wilka addresses to Don Bruno's horse. After observing its regal appearance, Rendón Wilka tells the horse that it will be overwhelmingly beaten by technology:

El camión te va a enterrar, ¡caray! "Lucero". Puede más que tú, y el hombre, pues, lo ha hecho. El hombre, pues, está ganando. "Lucero". Despidete. El sol te prefiere, te hace grande, por gusto. (120)

Here, the image of the horse alludes to the social status of *gamonales* and indirectly alludes to colonial order validated by the power of creole oligarchy. At the same time, the horse image defeated by machine, serves to highlight the separation from the colonial past but also to underline some ideas closely connected with modernity such as the development of technological inventions and the primary importance of the individual (Caruso 2015: 46).

From what has been explained so far, it can be seen that the birth scene is preceded by a chain of meanings associated with the images of horse/light. Due to its anaphorical link with the previous intratextual discourses, the birth scene has a wide semantic spectrum and displays itself in the narrative space as a crucial nucleus in which different cultural discourses converge. In particular, the idea of birth represents the climax whereby the heterogeneous combination of meanings attributed to the complex interplay between light and horse reaches its culmination. The scene epitomises the birth of a new identity based on the transcultural dialogue between Western, Indigenous and Hispanic. In addition, the text draws the readers' attention to how the sudden appearance of the horse epitomises the point of rupture from a negative atmosphere. Just before the horse goes to the surface, the surrounding environment is depicted by a combination of negative words: 'la masa de gente sintió la vida en medio de la 'consternación, 'el desconcierto y el odio que empezaba a separar a la gente en bandos más definidos' (142). The following words 'consternación', 'desconcierto', 'odio', along with the verb 'separar', hint at a division between the social

stratifications of Peruvian society. The idea of separation is highlighted in a previous scene by the reference to the physical distance between different characters:

Desmontó de un salto don Fermín. Entendió al instante el sentido de las distancias que separaban a los hombres que encontró y que lo estaban esperando: Cabrejos aislado con una expresión todavía algo confusa aunque altanera; frente a él, evidentemente frente a él, aparecía Rendón Wilka con su vara en la mano derecha; [...] los jefes obreros y Carhuamayo desde el carril, daban la impresión de espectadores ganados a favor del *varayok*'. (138)

The word 'distancia' has the purpose of differentiating homogenous social groups who have a certain role in the social pyramid related to mining production: the highest social position is embodied by the engineer Cabrejos, the intermediate social standing by mineworkers' foremen and finally the lowest social status is epitomised by the character Rendón Wilka. The appearance of the horse brought to an end this environment, that was divided in neat conflicting groups and dominated by hatred. By transmitting ideas of happiness, harmony and life, the horse is an example of an alternative to the surrounding feelings of dismay, hatred and bewilderment. It indirectly allegorises the start of an alternative society based on integration and cultural dialogue between different cultural groups.

The transcultural character of the horse is further complicated by other aspects: the hybrid image of the horse is presented as a literary reformulation of the Pre-Columbian *waka*.<sup>47</sup> The horse's neigh appears to be endowed with power as it breaks the generally negative mood of people attending Gregorio's funeral. Moreover, like the 'magic' *waka*, the horse sound manifests itself as a presage of what is about to happen in the novel. Indeed, by observing the mineworkers' reaction to the horse's neigh, Rendón Wilka suspects that Carhuamayo, the foreman of Apark'ora mine, has deceived him. Indeed, he notes that his co-worker is the only one who is bothered by the animal's sound rather than being bewitched. The narrator explicitly displays Rendón Wilka's inward thoughts:

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<sup>47</sup> For the meaning of this term, see the Introduction.

De otro modo ha oído el caballo; su mal pensamiento se ha desatado por eso. Me está desconfiando; el azote le está doliendo, siempre, pues; como a mí. El cantar del animal alegre le ha agarrado; a él también le ha hecho cantar, sucio. ¡Carhuamayo; pobre! (142)

Later, Rendón Wilka's suspicions reveal themselves to be well-founded. Carhuamayo behaves ambiguously when he celebrates the funeral liturgy for the person who mysteriously died during the accident. During the funeral, he buries the deceased's bones and his knife, the only traces which could unravel the mysterious events surrounding this accident. Through a rhetorical speech, he says that the mysterious person's death occurred because of God's will; therefore, he indirectly encourages the mineworkers not to find the person involved in the crime. Rendón Wilka and a few mineworkers realise that the foreman has been corrupted by the engineer Cabrejos.

The dualism of death and birth has the purpose of highlighting the opposition between the image of the horse and the figure of Gregorio. Whereas the latter mainly epitomises ideas of contradiction and division, the horse manifests itself as a transcultural image suggesting a harmonious compatibility between the Indigenous and the Western and the traditional and the modern. The previous sections have explained how the representation of mining space reveals the existence of a hierarchy underlying the *mestizaje* discourse. On the one hand, it reflects an inclination towards cultural hybridity considered as closer to Indigenous purism; on the other hand, it displays aversion to cultural hybridity regarded as closer to modernity. The cultural hybridity, which is positively marked, embraces the Western, the urban and the modern as long as they are harmonically compatible with tradition, the Indigenous past and Pre-Columbian agrarian heritage. The cultural hybridity, which is negatively marked, supports a model of modernity represented by the radical assimilation of foreign customs, extensive urbanisation and massive immigration, all aspects which might conflict with the traditional and the Indigenous. The opposition of harmony/conflict seems to be repeated in the dichotomy of Gregorio/horse (De la Cadena 1998: 156). Thus, the birth idea serves to

express the author's hidden anxieties of the emergence of new cultural hybridity. Through the factual death of Gregorio and the birth of the horse, the author expresses his expectations for the end of cultural hybridism dominated by division and contradictions and the start of a new cultural hybridism based on cultural dialogue and harmony.

The idea of birth is also highlighted by the image of Gregorio's corpse extracted from the mine. As explained above, what is brought to the surface is just a few bones and a knife labelled 'toro'. The word 'toro' echoes back to the idea of the Hispanic and, in a wider sense, it can be interpreted as an allusion to the Hispanic colonial legacy. Contemporaneously, the word 'marca' evokes the commercial circuits of the capitalist system in which products are sold, purchased or transferred. Thus, this image creates a connection between the ideas of extraction, Hispanic colonialism and capitalism. The metaphoric linkage between these concepts is related to the debates on the relationship of dependency between Latin American countries and the hegemonic centres represented by European countries and the USA. Historians and economists use the term 'neocolonialism' to refer to the endurance of the colonial relationships in Latin America through economic imperialism. Matthew Brown and Gabriel Paquette question the idea that Latin American countries had completely gained their autonomy after the Independence Wars. Even though they were politically dominated by Spain, they were economically weak, so they had to accept loans and investments from European countries, in particular from Britain. This new form of domination changed throughout the years as the dominant role of Britain was replaced by the economic power of US firms (Clayton 2017: 127, Brown 2013: 1-5; Keen and Haynes 2008: 244). Thus, returning to the episode, the link between neocolonialism and capitalism seems to suggest that the European and US imperialism in Latin America was a form of domination which was not strictly speaking political but mainly economic. Moreover, the extraction of the knife from the mine underlines an interesting link between natural resources extraction, capitalism, colonialism and

neocolonialism. The link between these ideas is also suggested by Rendón Wilka's words: 'los tiros no han matado al metal, pues. El metal anda en figura de toro...' (147). As discussed in the Introduction, colonisation of Latin America was closely tied up with the exploitation and transfer of natural resources from Latin America to Europe. After independence, the natural resource sector in Latin America still attracted foreign investments. Pratt provides a clear demonstration of this by examining the travel writings of British mining entrepreneurs who explored Latin American countries since the nineteenth century in order to detect resources to be exploited (Pratt 1992: 144-171). According to Keen and Hyanes, neocolonialism is closely connected with the exploitation of primary resources. This sector, on which most Latin American economies are based, created the premises of an economic dependency: unequal relationships between the governments and foreign investors and the vulnerability of these countries to the changes in the global market and price fluctuations (Keen and Haynes 2008: 244).

The episodes analysed previously explore how the novel's treatment of the development of Peruvian extractive industries mainly in terms of social and cultural changes. Similarly, social change is investigated in this episode through the dichotomy of death/birth. The convergence of different mythological discourses converts the literary representation of the mine into a cultural space in which the author's expectations and concerns regarding the changes in Peru surface.

### **Birth: Passage from Marginal to Leading Position**

In the aforementioned passage, the horse returns to the surface and is lost as it is no longer under the custody of Don Fermín. It does not know where to head to, even though it can glimpse three potential destinations: the field, the church and the living quarters surrounding the mine:

El caballo salió de la mina, solo, tan apresuradamente ensillado. Miró los campos, los techos de calamina, la profunda quebrada por donde el río grande

corría, y descubrió a la multitud reunida frente a la pequeña iglesia. Se quedó parado, como si dudara adónde debía dirigirse. (142)

It is worth noting that the aforementioned places — ‘campos’, ‘los techos de calamina’, ‘la iglesia’ — seem to point to three possible representations of Peru. Indeed, the field recalls the agrarian which is conventionally associated with the pre-industrial and the Indigenous in Latin American discourse; the church echoes the European, as the clergy along with Spanish colonisers contributed to the conquest of the New World; the living quarters surrounding the mine represent the urban, the mercantile, the industrial, as they are connected with the expansion of multinational extractive industries.

The abandoned horse’s disorientation is a significant detail as it seems to disclose another episode occurring later in the novel. In chapter five, the *gamonal* Don Bruno who wants to have more information about the accident in the mine, orders Rendón Wilka to go to his mansion at 10 am. In order to arrive at the place as quickly as possible, Rendón Wilka rides the *gamonal*’s horse and rushes through the valley. The narration draws particular attention to the scene in which Rendón Wilka tames a horse arousing interest among butlers, servants and women, all people representing marginal and possibly mixed race social groups.

Rendón [...] iba montando al mejor potro de la quebrada. [...] Los mayordomos, pongos y mujeres quedaron asombrados al ver a un indio manejar con mano firme las riendas del “Lucero” y llevar en la otra una corta vara con crucifijo y anillos de plata. (180-181)

The comparison between the aforementioned passages illustrates how two symmetrical images, the horse abandoned by Don Fermín and the horse tamed by Rendón Wilka, create an interface between two culturally hybrid characters: Gregorio and Rendón Wilka. As seen earlier, Gregorio embodies the *mestizo*’s double marginality as he transits from the Western to Indigenous cultures but, actually, he does not belong to either of these cultures. On the contrary, as explained in the previous sections, Rendón Wilka typifies a positive model of cultural hybridism, based on well-balanced compatibility between Indigenous

traditions and modernity. Gregorio's death and the subsequent birth of the horse foretell the emergence of a new *mestizo*, Rendón Wilka.

The image of Rendón Wilka on horseback reflects the author's expectations of the emergence of a new political leader who might be either a spokesman of Indigenous specificity or a defender of progress. Rendón Wilka's leading role is emphasised by the action 'manejar con mano firme' that literally means 'taking the reins and holding them firmly'. Rendón Wilka's action of reining a horse does not only literally refer to the action of riding a horse but also hints at the action of taking control of a situation and directing something toward a certain place. In fact, DRAE points out that the concept of taking on a leading role might be expressed in Spanish through expressions such as 'tomar las riendas' or 'apoderarse de las riendas', all sentences which literally mean 'taking over the reins'. This scene discloses other episodes in which Rendón Wilka will be shown as a real political leader. Indeed, the following sections will explain how the character's organisational and management skills are demonstrated by more factual events in the last pages of the novel.

Extra-linguistic reality weighs on the most important idea of this scene, the passage from the *mestizos'* marginal status to their leading role. Cornejo Polar has pointed out how Arguedas wrote *Todas las sangres* in a period in which there were high expectations of social change and reforms in Peru. In 1962, Fernando Belaúnde Terry planned an intense political campaign in which he promised agrarian reform and promoted various development projects in favour of the most marginal social groups in Peru. In 1963, the first years of his presidency marked a period of general optimism and hope for a better future for Peru. Although Arguedas would be disappointed by Belaúnde's administration later, he was driven by this climate of intense enthusiasm when he wrote the novel *Todas las sangres*.<sup>48</sup> He hoped that Belaúnde Terry's politics might contribute to the decrease in

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<sup>48</sup> When Belaúnde won the elections, Arguedas supported the new president's politics in such a way that he accepted the administrative mandate of presiding over *Casa de la Cultura del Perú*. In 1964,

some social groups' marginalisation and an improvement of these subordinate social groups' conditions (Cornejo Polar 1973:187-190).

It may be that the author was inspired by an existing political leader's endeavours when he outlined the personality of Rendón Wilka. In the 1960s, Hugo Blanco successfully led several peasant uprisings especially in the Convención Valley, in the department of Cuzco in Southern Peru. This charismatic leader, a member of the Trotskyist group the Workers Revolutionary Party, created 148 peasant unions and led a number of successful strikes. Arguedas was a close friend of Hugo Blanco; he even exchanged letters in Quechua with him and gave him the first copy of the novel *Todas las sangres* (Aranda and others 2009: 154). Arguedas probably admired Hugo Blanco and based the depiction of his character on these characteristics: organisational skills and inner knowledge of peasant community culture. Indeed, Hugo Blanco was remembered in the history of Peruvian peasant struggles especially because he was an effective organiser. The basis of his success was to combine political militancy with the founding of well-structured peasant organisations. Moreover, this leftist intellectual acknowledged the importance of having close ties with peasant communities. Although he was the grandson of a powerful landowner, he spoke Quechua and attempted to gain the trust of peasant communities (De La Cadena 2004: 212).

Returning to the image of Rendón Wilka on horseback, this scene serves to highlight not only the leading position of this character but also his cultural hybridity, as this quotation suggests:

No tenía reloj pero ingresó unos minutos antes de las diez al patio de la casa-hacienda. [...] Los mayordomos, pongos y mujeres quedaron asombrados al ver a un indio manejar con mano firme las riendas del "Lucero" y llevar en la otra una corta vara con crucifijo y anillos de plata. (181)

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Arguedas resigned his position as leader of the Peruvian cultural department because he was disappointed by Belaúnde's politics. In the last years of his administration, Belaúnde Terry did not manage to put most of his promises into action. His government proved to be weak and fragmentary especially because it had to face the strong opposition of Peruvian conservative parties. Moreover, it lost the support of peasant classes when it embarked on the cruel repression of peasant protests (Cornejo Polar 1973: 189)



In addition to the rich polysemy of the horse image, there are references to other cultural discourses. The character holds a stick with a cross, an image which combines the cross related to Christian iconography and the stick associated with a certain political status in the Lahuaymarca Indigenous community. Although the character does not have a watch, he manages to arrive at Don Bruno's house on time. The emphasis on the character's punctuality and the lack of a watch is quite ambiguous as it seems either to confirm or negate the modern and industrial conception of time. Indeed, the text seems to suggest that the character does not possess a watch because he underestimates the utility of this tool and, consequently, does not recognise the importance of scientifically measuring time through mechanical devices. In addition, the text seems to underline the fact that the character is punctual probably because he manages to find equivalences between clock-based time and another way of measuring time. This apparently contradictory description seems to hint at a hybrid relationship between two different conceptions of time. On the one hand, there is an industrial conception of time based on the mechanical measurement of time and its division into a progressive sequence of seconds, minutes and hours. On the other hand, there is a pre-industrial conception of time probably based on rhythm in nature or the length of a particular activity dictated by agricultural schedules. (Rubin 2013: 500-502)

Rendón Wilka's leading role will be further analysed in relation to other episodes in the novel, involving the rebellion of some mixed race women against Peruvian military forces. The common idea connecting these episodes — the displacement from these characters' marginal status to their leading role — is problematised by Pratt's theory about negotiations between nationhood, womanhood and ethnicity.

## **The Detachment of the Engineer**

In the previous sections, the episode revolving around Gregorio's death is examined mainly by taking into account its links to different mythological discourses. A further analysis of this episode consists of exploring the controversial role of the engineer Cabrejos, particularly his superficial understanding of local community cultures. Indeed, the engineer does not manage to cheat the Indigenous people from Lahuaymarca especially because he is culturally and socially distant from local mineworker communities and particularly from Indigenous ones. In the episode of the accident, this cultural and social gap is highlighted by the clothing motif revealing the engineer's static and simplistic understanding of Indigenous cultures.

In order to put his plan into effect, Cabrejos tells Gregorio to disguise himself as an Indigenous person with a native Indigenous costume bought a long time before. Nevertheless, as this disguise is old-fashioned and not identifiable as the actual Lahuaymarca costume, it underscores Gregorio's false identity, rather than camouflaging it. Indeed, when Rendón Wilka's peasants see an unknown person entering into the mine, they realise that this person does not belong to their community because of his odd clothing; in particular, the detailed description of some silver ribbons unveils Gregorio's condition as a stranger. As a result, Rendón Wilka summons a meeting with his mineworkers to foil this possible plot.

After the tragic accident, the intruder's disguise is used again as evidence showing his lack of belonging to the Lamyaraca community. Indeed, as Cabrejos fears that the finding of Gregorio's body can reveal the plot, he claims that the accident was caused by Don Bruno's peasant. Instead, Rendón Wilka contests the engineer's accusations by appealing to the silver ribbon detail of the disguise that had been found. The latter shows the mysterious figure's outsider condition, thus proving the Lahuaymarca community's innocence:

Dicen es de indio los huesitos — continuó Rendón —. Maestro Portales guarda cinta plata de la montera. ¿Qué cinta plata hay nunca en sombrero de Lahuaymarca y colonos? Mande, patrón, contar a obreros también. El falso ha entrado disfrazado a la mina. Ha gritado imitando al *Amaru*. (139)

Generally speaking, Rendón Wilka resorts to Cabrejos's superficial understanding of Lahuaymarca's community to make the engineer's false accusations evident. Cabrejos claims that the other mineworkers were frightened by Don Bruno's peasant simulating the *Amauta*'s shout. Rendón Wilka contradicts him by drawing attention to how Cabrejos' generalising and homogenising preconceptions do not coincide with the actual heterogeneity and complexity of the Peruvian Indigenous groups with their hybrid cultures, ideologies and religions. By claiming that all of his mineworkers are Christian, Rendón Wilka suggests that an Indigenous community is not necessarily associated with Prehispanic beliefs, and that the Indigenous communities are marked with many differences and various degrees of hybridity: '¿Cuándo hay *Amaru* en mina, en socavón hecho por el cristiano?¿Cuándo?... *Amaru* extranjero habrá sido; para morir con la dinamita lo habrán matado' (139).

The same episode highlights the fact that Cabrejos has a misleading perception of Peruvian highland communities mainly because he is a coastal native as well as an engineer. After having a conversation with the captain of the Apark'ora mine, Cabrejos realises he has the perspective of an outsider that prevents him from fully comprehending the local communities, but also feels a certain reluctance to explore deeply the actual complexity of the Peruvian highlands. He uses different labels such as 'cholo' or 'comunero con entendimiento' to simplify the cultural hybridity of some characters like Rendón Wilka (130). The captain of the Apark'ora's mine also clearly highlights the engineer's position of outsider:

Usted guía bien el trabajo; hace sus cálculos; orienta como buen ingeniero los tiros. Sus trazos de ayer creo son precisos. Se cumplirán reloj en mano. El manejo de los obreros es en cambio mi oficio. (130)

Thus, the overall episode supports the idea that technical expertise or, in more specific terms, creole and foreign business classes are culturally distant from local communities in the mine contact zones. As Foster observes about neocolonialism in Latin America, the US and British business men who exploit natural resources in Latin American countries are totally indifferent to the locals and their cultures; since they have no mission beyond the extraction of profits, they do not struggle to comprehend the other, to abandon their traditional preconceptions and widen their vision (Foster 2009: 11). Additionally, Cabrejos's failed plot hints at a lack of cultural communication between the various Peruvian social strata. The overall episode seems to suggest that the understanding of the other consists only of stereotypes, fixed and simplified ideas based on the most external aspects of a social group, such as physical appearance, physical features or clothing, as well as on a preconceived notion of the static nature of cultural traits.

### **Mining Space: A Destabilising Prostitute**

In chapter seven of the novel the text establishes interesting links between the representation of the female and the depiction of mining space and, in doing so, it highlights key concepts which underpin indigenist consciousness. Hints at indigenist consciousness can be found in the scene in which the disorder of the Apark'ora mining space is depicted as closely linked with the migration of new prostitutes from Lima and adjacent provincial cities:

Apark'ora hormigueaba de gente venida de provincias lejanas, pobladas de comuneros sin tierras, o de siervos que habían huido de las haciendas. La Whister movilizó a sus agentes contratistas. Levantaron barracas, especies de grandes campos techados, junto a las minúsculas "barriadas" de los tiempos de don Fermín para recibir a la nueva gente. Construyeron un "campamento" con departamentos muy pequeños de una y dos piezas, para los maestros obreros calificados. Triplicaron los turnos de los obreros. Las cantineras y "ch'aran k'aras" ampliaron su negocio; las primeras reclutaron mestizas de la capital de la provincia y de pueblos donde la escasez de las tierras había empobrecido y envilecido a los pequeños propietarios. Las "niñas señoritas" y las mestizas eran contratadas como empleadas, y ya indefensas, a cinco o siete días de camino de sus pueblos y después de algunos días de astuto y

“convinciente” “adoctrinamiento” de las experimentadas “ch’aran k’aras”, jóvenes “decentes” se convertían en prostitutas. “Llevaban un tiempo”, muy tristemente; luego muchas de ellas se convertían en las más alcoholizadas, soeces y pendencieras. [...] El método para atraer a la gruesa clientela que formaban los indios “brutos” tuvo que ser diferente. No aceptaron al principio entrar a los camastros de las cantinas. Exigían salir con las cholas, y ellas fueron obligadas a ir al campo, hasta donde había arbustos que los escondieran si la noche era clara. No comprendían los indios que debían pagar; no lo podían entender. Pretendían quedarse con las cholas. Ellas les explicaban persuasivamente, y la mayor parte alcanzaba a entender, y pagaban con amargura incurable la compañía. (395)

The most straightforward interpretation of this passage is that the emphasis on the prostitutes’ massive migration recalls the quintessentially indigenist association of the Peruvian coast with woman and the Peruvian highlands with man (Cornejo Polar 1973: 278). As seen in the Introduction, the indigenist consciousness promotes a patriarchal vision of nationhood according to which the creole culture and modernity mediated by Western values are identified with the female, that is, the threatening other (Pratt 1994: 27-47). The female figure of the prostitute was recurrent in indigenist discourses; for example, it can be found in one of the most representative works of Indigenism, *Tempestad en los Andes* (1928) by Luis Valcárcel (Archibald 2002: 107). The challenging behaviour of prostitutes has the purpose of depicting the areas mainly inhabited by the creole elite such as Lima and coastal cities, as places dominated by moral and sexual degeneration. Similarly, in the extract from *Todas las sangres*, the presence of prostitutes serves to describe the indigenist depiction of an urban space as an environment of increasing immorality, bad manners and bad social taste; it serves as well to emphasise further the complex interplay between tradition and modernity. The text focuses on contradictions which cause the presence of prostitutes in the cultural and social milieu of mining areas. It presents these contradictions essentially through the clash between the supposedly ‘capitalist’ idea of sex and the peasant traditions of the newcomers. Whereas the experienced mineworkers go to an indoor place and pay to have sexual intercourse, the

new mineworkers coming from a peasant background are used to having sexual intercourse outdoors and without paying for it.

From the quoted passage it can be seen that the quotation marks draw the reader's attention to the word 'adoctrinamiento'. This term has a negative connotation as it implies a power-relationship between the instructor and the learner with no possibility of dissent. As has been pointed out in the previous sections, the quotation marks are used as literary devices to reveal the author's presence behind the writing process, as well as to provide a new way of interpreting the text. The quotation might suggest that Arguedas underlines some key words either because he distances himself from their meaning or because he wants to express his approval of them. In this passage, the word in inverted commas seems to describe the *mestizas*' induction into the world of prostitution. The pejorative connotation of indoctrination is further reinforced by the following words 'alcoholizadas, soeces y pendejeras'. These serve to depict negatively the professional training of prostitution whereby these women turn from being decent to being immoral, from being Indigenous to Western. The combination of these pejorative terms seems to mirror Indigenist intellectuals' concern for the phenomenon of acculturation. Most of them believe that the Indigenous groups' contact with technological advancement and Western lifestyle leads these autochthonous social groups toward moral degeneration and the loss of their cultural identity (De la Cadena 1998: 143-164).

Nevertheless, the prostitute figure cannot be interpreted solely as a hint at the Indigenist consciousness. Indeed, other critics have provided other explanations for the prostitute figures in Arguedas' texts, particularly in his posthumous text *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* in which Chimbote port is compared with female genitals or with the prostitute figure. As regards the latter novel, Lienhard highlights how Arguedas resorts to the prostitute figure in order to hint at the alienating impact of the fish trade on the social and cultural context of Chimbote. According to him, the relationship between the

prostitute image and Chimbote's social and cultural milieu is linked with the Marxist concept of alienation. If prostitutes use their bodies not to gain personal profit but to guarantee their exploiters' wealth, similarly, the working classes become merely the means to assure the material wealth of the elites (Lienhard 1990: 81). Additionally, Mario Vargas Llosa claims that Arguedas frequently resorts to the prostitute figure and describes degraded sexual atmospheres in his texts in order to sublimate his personal traumatic experiences relating to sexuality (Vargas Llosa 1996: 93-96).

The prostitute figure is closely intermingled with negotiations between gender, nationhood and ethnicity. The text highlights how the increasing number of prostitutes is one of the destabilising factors caused by social mobility. The episode emphasises that mixed race women are employed as prostitutes to satisfy increasing demands for sexual acts. This phenomenon, as described in the novel, can be seen as a chain of causes and effects: the need for more prostitutes is a consequence of massive immigration; in turn, massive migration is a result of the unexpected increase in the extractive market. Moreover, the contact between experienced mineworkers and new migrants brings about a culturally hybrid social reality: experienced mineworkers and new migrants belonging to a peasant background come into contact and adapt to each other, reformulating their previous cultural practices or adopting new ones. From this passage, it can be seen that the increasing number of prostitutes is closely related to social changes due to immigration and cultural hybridity. As was previously explained, the mining space is a contact zone in which socially and culturally different groups come into contact with each other. Because of this cultural heterogeneity, the mining space seems to reproduce the hybrid configuration of Peruvian society on a reduced scale. The passage also shows that the unstable social configuration surrounding the mining space stems from the mutability of the extractive market, which is dependent on depletion or the finding of natural resources.

Pasaron muchos años para que llegaran a entender ese negocio. [...] Como nunca venían a trabajar de por vida en esas minas, se alimentaban de maíz

tostado y carne salada, que habían traído o mandaban hacer. Y cumplido su contrato se iban, llevándose un pequeño capital para trabajar en sus pueblos. [...] La mina tenía siempre una población flotante, inestable, que ofrecía grandes ventajas a la empresa. (396)

The sentence 'La mina tenía siempre una población flotante, inestable, que ofrecía grandes ventajas a la empresa' is a clear illustration of how social groups in mining space are subject to continuous changes. The relationship between the idea of instability and the representation of the female is important in examining the prostitute figure in the mining space.

In Arguedas' texts the relationship between the mining space and the prostitution might have a connection with one of the oldest male self-definition discourses, that of female destabilisation. On page 80, Pratt's ideas have been useful to illustrate how in Latin America, Anderson's modern notion of nationhood contributed to the depiction of women as the 'other' to the nation or, in other words, as a cause of instability. Indeed, due to their unpredictable capacity for reproduction, women undermine the sovereignty of nations over finite boundaries and put national brotherhood in a permanent state of instability. In line with these observations, the promiscuity of prostitutes further strengthens the depiction of women as a source of peril for the integrity of an androcentric and modern nation. Moreover, Pratt's ideas account for the continuity between different ideas such as cultural hybridity, crossbreeding, immigration, gender and promiscuity. Prostitution and immigration are depicted in the text as two sides of the same issue, implicitly suggesting that both phenomena are conceived as destabilising factors. The promiscuity of prostitutes undermines the integrity of the nation as it further accentuates the characteristic associated with women, the capacity of their nonfinite, elastic bodies to reproduce themselves without control (Pratt 1994: 29-31). Similarly, the continuous migrant waves continuously threaten the integrity of the Peruvian nation as they depend on the unpredictable changes of the extractive market. Moreover, immigration has, as a consequence, an unstable cultural hybridity which undermines the cultural homogeneity of Peruvian national



community and challenges the traditional configuration of Peru based on the duality between white and Indigenous.

### **The Ambiguous Position of *Mestizos***

This section is thematically close to the previous one as it focuses on the literary representation of the female in the novel. The depiction of the female characters in the text intertwines with the political, social and economic issues related to extractive industries besides revealing social anxieties and authorial uncertainties about these changes. For this purpose, it is worth analysing the episode in which some *mestizo* women attack security guards on horseback.

In chapter ten, some mounted police officers ride through a shanty area of Lima to arrest some political representatives of the San Pedro community, who are involved in political activism against the multinational. In this scene, a group of mixed race women attack the police in an attempt to prevent the arrest of these political militants.

Dispararon sobre los perros y sobre las cabezas de la multitud, especialmente de las mujeres que competían con los perros en “inconsciente temeridad”, como informó el oficial. Ellas gritaban más rabiosamente que los perros y llegaban a prenderse de los estribos de los guardias civiles montados. [...] Cuando lograban prenderse de las bridas de algún caballo sus manos alcanzaban a tener la insensibilidad y la fuerza del acero. (359)

This episode is also significant because it is a demonstration of how the communication between different Peruvian areas reaches a higher level. The tremendous changes which affect a Peruvian highland region have repercussions not only in the provincial city but also in the Peruvian capital. In this district of Lima, the emigrants coming from the town of San Pedro adapt their own traditions and do not break their ties with their place of origin. They undertake political militancy against the expropriation of lands on the part of Wither-Bozart multinational. Despite having left San Pedro, they are concerned that the monopoly of this multinational will have a great impact on their community especially in terms of their economy, social relations and traditions (Cornejo Polar 1973: 252-254).

In this fight it is worth noting that the women attack mainly by aiming at the policemen's horses. They try to dislodge the police officers from their saddles to take control of the horses; in order to do that, they bite the riders' boots or the horses' mouth to seize control of the stirrups and the reins. In turn, the policemen counterattack by injuring the women's hands or literally racing their horses against the women's bodies, as these passages suggest:

Los gendarmes las golpeaban a planazos, hacían saltar a los caballos sobre el cuerpo de las mujeres o arrastrándolas. [...] Disparaban los guardias, y las balas le infundían más coraje. Las herían en los dedos con la punta del sable, las arrastraban como a muñecos. (359)

In this episode, security forces embody the corrupted Peruvian political institutions defending the interests respectively of *gamonales* and foreign multinational companies. Conversely, the mixed race women who attack the officers are rebel figures who challenge the conventionally asymmetric relationships between man/woman, political authority/citizen, police/civilian, creole/*mestizo*. Nevertheless, the subversive nature of these women could be put into question by Pratt's ideas on the interplay between nature and history in the patriarchal notion of nationhood. Pratt's ideas are important in exploring how the mixed race figures allegorise the ambiguous position of *mestizo* social groups in the Peruvian nation (Pratt 1994: 29-31). The *mestizas* present characteristics traditionally related to the soldier figure such as comradeship and physical strength. Their protagonist role in a battle suggests their involvement as social agents in history, canonically characterised by battles, treaties and dates to celebrate (Caruso 2015: 46). The representation of women within a patriarchal framework contrasts with the identification of woman with the 'other'. Several elements depict the women's behaviour as irrational, reinforcing the paternalistic representation of irrationality as a primordially female characteristic (Swier 2009: 21). For example, the irrationality of the women is emphasised by the sentences 'más rabiosas que los perros' or 'competían con los perros en inconsciente temeridad' (Caruso 2015: 46). The militancy of the women is counterbalanced by the

typically female value of domesticity. The women fight against the soldiers because they are at home while their husbands are working. But after the uprising, the women/soldiers have not failed in their duty of providing food as can be seen from this quotation: ‘Al anochecer, cuando llegaron los hombres que trabajaban en la ciudad, encontraron decenas de perros muertos en las “calles”. Las mujeres seguían con los ojos hinchados y enrojecidos. Pero la magra comida estaba hecha’ (361).

As Pratt points out, in the patriarchal conception of knowledge, history is male and nature is female (Pratt 1994: 42). In line with these ideas, *mestizas* are represented as both history and nature as they are described as social agents involved in the process of nation-building but also associated with nature, thus as other, antagonistic to civilisation (Caruso 2015: 46). The image of mixed race women defying the binaries of female/male, and nature/ history demonstrates how the discourse about the *mestizos* is tied to the dynamic of inclusion or exclusion (Caruso 2015: 48). On the one hand, there is an attempt to include *mestizos* into Peruvian nationhood; on the other hand, there is the opposing tendency to exclude this social group from the nation (Pratt 1994: 29-31). From this passage it can be seen that the women attack the soldiers in vain, trying to take control of the reins. In contrast to this image, the previous sections have focussed on the figure of *mestizo* Rendón Wilka riding the horse of the *gamonal* Don Bruno.

The horse image functions as an intratextual linkage between culturally hybrid figures. Whereas in the previous episode, the contrast is between two culturally hybrid male characters, in this episode, the opposition is between the male character of Rendón Wilka and the female *mestizo* characters. Therefore, the text highlights that one model of hybridity is marked as male and another one as female. The opposition female/male is also reinforced by the traditional dichotomy: rational subject/male and emotional subject/female (Swier 2009: 21).<sup>49</sup> Indeed, whereas the women ‘gritaban más rabiosamente que

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<sup>49</sup> There is already a wide bibliography on this dichotomy. In her book, *Hybrid Nations: Gender Troping and the Emergence of Bigendered Subjects in Latin American Narrative*, Swier briefly explains the

los perros' (359) Rendón Wilka is described in the novel as un 'hombre con entendimiento'.

Concerning the descriptive phrase related to Rendón Wilka, it has a straightforward linkage with the Positivist idea of reason and it also hints at the character's education. Indeed, Rendón Wilka has 'entendimiento' mainly because he went to school. The text emphasises how the character's education had different stages: first he went to the school in San Pedro mainly attended by creoles, then he studied on his own without receiving any formal education, and, finally, he went to a night school in Lima. Through Gregorio's voice, it can be understood that the Lahuaymarca community invested in Rendón Wilka's education and because of this, they financed his stay in Lima: 'Él ha estado cinco, séis, años en Lima; el Común le mandaba plata' (94). Although it does not explicitly state the reasons, the text seems to imply that the character has preferential treatment, probably because he will become the political leader of his community. Moreover, the Indigenous community's decision to send Rendón Wilka to Lima seems to be based on the assumption that both his experience in Lima and his education are necessary steps for his self-development. Living in the capital of Peru allows him to experience various social milieus in Lima, in this way learning new social rules; it also helps him to engage with people of different political persuasions and from different cultural backgrounds, in this way developing his own political consciousness.

Moreover, the opposition between these female figures and Rendón Wilka is also based on the contrast between women's failure to take control of the reins and the male character's ability to tame the *gamonal's* horse. The connection between the metaphorical sentence 'manejar las riendas' and these episodes seems to hint at a hierarchy underlying the novel. The chaotic group of *mestizas* who do not manage to take control of the reins

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theories of two feminist scholars, Anne Cranny Francis and Hélène Cixous. Both of them illustrate how the patriarchal binaries such as rational/emotional, passive/active, male/female are social constructions firmly grounded in language (Swier 2009).

indirectly calls to mind ethnically marginalised groups who have no voice in Peruvian politics. Conversely, Rendón Wilka is a culturally hybrid figure who is presented as a potential leader especially because he stands out from the masses because of his education and experience. Marisol de la Cadena's ideas further explain the hierarchy underlying these episodes. As explained above, she defines, as silent racism, a form of discrimination based no longer on the scientific concept of race, but on the cultural concepts of social status and formal education. Since the nineteenth century, intelligentsia belonging to the ethnically subordinate sectors of Peruvian society stress their intellectual achievement in order to whiten themselves and dissociate themselves from the racially marked *gente del pueblo*. These racist practices, centred on the principles of intelligence and acquired education, legitimise social hierarchies between intelligentsia and *gente del pueblo*, that is, uneducated people generally considered as non-white (De la Cadena 1998: 148). According to De la Cadena, social hierarchies based on education also characterise leftist social parties' thought. For example, the Peruvian Communist Party uses academic knowledge of Marxism as a criterion to give leadership. Although the leftist parties' ideas aim to promote the rights of marginalised social groups, they are also based on the assumption that ethnically marginalised groups are illiterate and need guidance. Because of this, leadership should be ideally constituted by educated people. From the analysis of these passages and De la Cadena's ideas it can be seen that Arguedas recognises the importance of formal education as the distinctive feature of a potential leader.

### **Rendón Wilka: Between Modernity and Tradition**

As previously examined, Rendón Wilka stands out from the large variety of characters, especially because of his leadership skills, his life experiences and also his spirit of initiative. His prominent narrative role suggests that this character's

consciousness is closer to the author's ideas, especially the author's concerns about the impact of industrialisation on the Andean local communities.

In chapter four, the character decides to cross the areas surrounding the mine rather than going through the countryside. So far the chapter has described the space around the mine as a contact zone, which is a point of convergence for people from different cultural backgrounds and from different social groups. It is worth adding also that the mining space manifests itself in the novel as a space halfway between the rural and the urban. The mining space is partly rural as it is in the Peruvian highlands. It has some similarities with the countryside as it offers areas in which the recently arrived mineworkers with an agrarian background can build their huts and gardens. At the same time, it is partly urban, as a consequence of industrialisation and modernisation. The text emphasises how the mining space comes in contact with modernity not only through technological advancement but also through everyday experiences such as the consumption of goods or the assimilation of new cultural models like the habit of listening to Western musical styles or wearing Western clothes.

The action of crossing the mining space has the purpose of emphasising how the character is in close contact with a culturally heterogeneous and urban space but he shows a lack of belonging to and non-involvement in this environment. The ideas of crossing and non-involvement evoke a passage from Arguedas' novel *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, in which the character Esteban tells his life story. Cornejo Polar points out that Esteban's account represents a synthesis of the extended, complicated and dispersed Peruvian country. Indeed, the character has a heterogeneous and diversified life, as he has worked in different areas; he has experienced different social milieus; he has lived in different places, ranging from the countryside to the city, from highland to coast (Cornejo Polar 1973: 290-295). In his monologue, the character bizarrely says that the toad is a

respectful animal, because it immerses itself in a muddy environment but manages to preserve its purity:

Sapo Esaías; chicharras, gente chico, nosotros, zancuditos, cojudos, borrachos que' hemos nacido a montonazos. Del barro negrociento habla sapo contra del oscuro, bravo. No le hace contagio, pudrición homildad, barro fango, carajo. Pa'él no hay oscuro: al revés. (157)

In this passage the use of the plural pronoun 'nosotros' suggests the connection between the character and the toad. According to Cornejo Polar, this figure identifies himself with a toad because, like the animal, he is in contact with a 'bad' reality but himself remains pure:

Don Esteban descubre en los sapos su propia imagen. Al igual que ellos se ha hundido y vive en un lodazal [...] al igual que ellos no ha sido contagiado por el cenagoso mundo que habita. [...] La alegoría del sapo esconde toda una filosofía de vida: sumergirse en la realidad, aunque maligna y luchar contra ella. Las aventuras de Esteban han sido, así, inmersiones en el universo de la realidad (un universo impregnado por el mal) y su actividad humana, rabiosamente condenatoria, implica el heroico esfuerzo por preservar su inocencia esencial. (Cornejo Polar 1973: 294-295)

In another passage of *Todas las sangres*, the same metaphorical connection between immersion and purity is used to describe Rendón Wilka's experience in the urban environment of Lima: 'Rendón Wilka ha estado en Lima [...] en las barriadas de Lima, y está más puro que tú' (182). Like the character Esteban, Rendón Wilka crosses the culturally and socially heterogeneous space of the mine but remains extraneous to this environment. The condition of being extraneous presents similarities with the condition of being pure, which literally means 'not being mixed with anything else' or 'being morally good'. In this passage, the depiction of the mining space seems to be rooted in the indigenist assumption that the urban and *mestizo* environments are corrupted and immoral. The passage aims also to emphasise that, although the character crosses this space, he maintains his purity by defending his moral integrity and his Indigenous essence.

Rendón Wilka prefirió pasar por la callejuela del caserío y no por el campo. — ¡Ven cholo! ¡Toma una cerveza conmigo! — Lo llamó Antenor que bebía con su compañero que lo estuvo persiguiendo luego de la discusión con Portales.

— Ahorita no, Don Antenor. Estoy de comisión. Yo bueno para cervecita. Mañana, pues. Perdón; tú, jefe, comprendiendo — y le mostró su vara. Antenor dudó.  
— Sí, cholo. Disciplina, siempre. Hasta otra ocasión.  
Nadie más lo llamó. Algunas mujeres lo observaron con curiosidad. (121-122)

The overall passage suggests an opposition between the character's reliability and other mineworkers' more permissive behaviour. Indeed, Rendón Wilka declines the invitation from two mineworkers to have a beer in the tavern because he is on duty. Additionally, his responsible attitude discourages the women who limit themselves to staring at him without making any advances. In this context, some cultural practices or forms of social behaviour, considered to be Western, are presented as a threat to the character's morality, especially because they might bring about the loss of Andean culture. These include enjoying leisure time or consuming goods such as alcoholic beverages.

Moreover, in this episode, Rendón Wilka walks through the mining area and listens to a melody which combines the Peruvian music of *muliza* with the Cuban rhythms of *chachacha* (Romero 2000: 363).

La callejuela ya no estaba muy concurrida a esa hora, pero dos radiolas tragamonedas funcionaban a su mayor volumen y el caserío se estremecía con la voz de un chachachá y de una muliza; se estremecía y daba la impresión de estar congestionada. (122)

In this passage, the adjective 'congestionado' hints at the high level of cultural hybridity characterising this musical style. Indeed, the Peruvian music of *muliza*, which involves a fusion of Andean music, Spanish instruments and European church music, further merges with a Cuban music style which is based on the hybrid combination of Afro, Hispanic and international rhythms (Rosa 2008: 63). Rendón Wilka's difficulty in separating Pre-Columbian music styles from foreign music highlights the chaotic combination of rhythms from different cultures: 'Lejos, a doscientos metros, aún llegaba la música mezclada. Demetrio no lograba separar bien la dulce melodía de la canción jaujina del ritmo endiablado de la danza extranjera' (122). The hybrid music, presented as the backdrop of



the overall scene, seems to complete the frivolous and superficial description of the mining space. Indeed, Arguedas' opinion on *chicha* music is useful for understanding how, in the text, the reference to such music serves to confirm further the association between bad taste and immorality and *mestizaje*. Arguedas describes the *chicha* music of the Peruvian singer Ima Sumac in a very negative way: 'she has deformed the Andean song to make it accessible to the superficial, frivolous, and quotidian emotions of the urban public' (De la Cadena 1998: 153).

The straightforward reaction of this character is to hug his fellows and to sing a traditional song in Quechua, which can be interpreted as an attempt to defend his identity from this uncontrolled and unpredictable cultural melting pot which might involve the dissolution of Indigenous identity. The analysis of this song illustrates how cultural hybridity is seen as a threat to the integrity of Pre-Columbian cultural heritage. The last four lines are particularly significant, as they literally emphasise how the action of drinking blood is a necessary condition for not getting lost. The term 'blood' affirms the idea of belonging to a race but also to a culture:

Rendón Wilka,  
De noche estamos andando,  
Si has tomado sangre de gavián  
No podrás extraviar el camino. (122)

The traditional Indigenous song, opposed to the *chicha* music, seems to suggest that the character rejects this side of modernity, the extreme cultural hybridity which might lead to the radical transformation of the Indigenous cultural heritage. However, the song cannot be interpreted as an extreme negation of cultural hybridity as it also consists of a hybrid combination of different cultural discourses. Indeed, even though the lyrics are sung in Quechua, they are quoted in Spanish. This apparently irrelevant detail shows how the song is based on a transcultural dialogue between a referent related to the Andean world and a means of expression belonging to the Western world. Whereas in the previous passage, the character confirms and negates hybridity, at other points of the novel, Rendón Wilka

undertakes constant dialogue between tradition and modernity, between the Peruvian cultural heritage and Western ideas of progress. One of the previous episodes which has been analysed illustrates how the text emphasises Rendón Wilka's punctuality although he does not have a watch. This scene highlights how the character's actions are characterised by a complex interplay between the industrial and pre-industrial concepts of time. At other points in the narration, the character exemplifies the cultural dialogue between different cultural discourses by embedding the technology motif within pre-Hispanic religious iconography. The following quotation repeats the motif of the horse defeated by the machine and also provides an example of industrial animism through the image of wheels endowed with life: 'Las ruedas tienen vida, señora, y más, desgraciadamente, que el caballo' (411). In other parts of the novel, the character expresses how the Peruvian cultural peculiarity, closely related to Andean cultural heritage, is the potential base on which a discourse of progress can be built. This aspect is metaphorically expressed through the image of the light inside the mine:

Pero la oración de K'oyowasi hizo reflexionar a Demetrio. "¡La luz de afuera del mundo!" Dentro de la mina vivía la tiniebla, a la que era necesario no temer, rendir más bien, para tomar de esa oscura entraña lo que ella podía dar al hombre para su bienestar, para su triunfo sobre la naturaleza. "¡La luz dentro del mundo puede hacerse! La haremos. El hombre es grande". (108-109)

Besides possible connections with Incan and Catholic iconography, the light image is used in the passage to suggest some ideas, closely connected with modernity, like the progress intended through an accumulation of knowledge and improvements in material conditions, the primary importance of the individual, and the human domination of nature. Nevertheless, Rendón Wilka's utterance creates intra-textual links with Don Bruno's utterance, examined previously: 'Hablas como indio, aunque con tanto entendimiento que ligas a mi potro con la luz de afuera y sabes lo que es un patrón' (119). The contrast between these two voices is characterised by the dualism between inside and outside; between internal space and external space. As previously explained, these oppositions

stand for the relationships of subordination between centre and periphery, on which the discourse of modernity is based in Latin America. The previous section has illustrated how Don Bruno's voice gives hints that Western countries are the centre of modernity whereas Peru stands at the periphery. The sentence '¡La luz dentro del mundo puede hacerse!' represents an alternative to Don Bruno's utterance. Rendón Wilka's words might metaphorically refer to the action of finding brilliant metals within the dark environment of the mine but also might suggest other interpretations. Through this sentence, the character probably wishes to express how practices and ideas of modernity can be built inside the specific Peruvian culture. The iconographic material of the enlightened journal *El Perú Ilustrado* is useful for demonstrating how the image of the light within the mine refers to the relationship between modernity and Peruvian cultural specificity. Tauzin Castellanos points out that the covers for the first two issues represent mineworkers dazzled by a strong source of light within the cave. She also notes that, compared to the first issue, the second portrays the light coming directly from the title of the journal *El Perú Ilustrado* rather than from the far ocean (Tauzin Castellanos 2003: 135-137). The reference to this enlightened journal is not intended to imply that Arguedas was directly inspired by this picture; rather it aims to demonstrate how the interplay between the light image and modernity has been rooted in the Peruvian collective consciousness since the Enlightenment.

This section has explored Rendón Wilka's complex relationship with modernity. In some episodes, he denies modernity since he believes it is not compatible with the preservation of Indigenous cultures. In others, he defends an alternative version of progress, based on Peruvian autochthony.

## Rendón Wilka: From Real Social Subject to Legend

Although it has been briefly illustrated in the previous sections, the political consciousness of this figure can be further explored if it is compared to other characters. As previously illustrated, Arguedas wrote *Todas las sangres* with the main objective of depicting all the social components of the Peruvian nation. In particular, the dialogue between some characters reproduces Peruvian political debates on a reduced scale. Some of these characters are the mineworker Don Antenor who is member of the Peruvian political party of APRA (Partido Aprista Peruano) and Portales who is a Communist.

In this passage, the division between representatives of different parties is highlighted by offensive words, provocations and aggressive menaces. Moreover, all these aspects seem to suggest that these characters are capable neither of cooperating with each other nor developing constructive arguments.

- Mientras ustedes se calientan al sol aquí, como vizcachas, los nuestros reúnen gente en los barrios — dijo uno de los que no eran mestizos.
- ¿Para qué? — preguntó el que parecía ser el jefe de los cuatro que permanecían junto a la pila.
- ¡Para qué! Traidorcito comunista, no sabes sino calumniar a nuestro gran partido o calentarte al sol.
- Compañero: le ruego contestarme a la pregunta. Podemos coordinar...
- Para hacer traición — contestó el mestizo.
- ¿La traición a quienes nos trajeron la tiranía? Pero es mejor que peleemos en otra ocasión, no ahora.
- ¡Ahora! — dijo uno de los cuatro.
- ¡Silencio camarada! Tú no vas a aceptar una provocación suicida. Ustedes, compañeros apristas, ¿por qué no van a colaborar en la movilización de los barrios en lugar de perder tiempo hablando como vizcachas?
- Queríamos demostrarles que ustedes hablan como vitrolas lo que Moscú les ordena, y por eso en nuestro pueblo, a la hora de la acción, se quedan sin cabeza.
- ¡Caray! si no estuviéramos en la plaza te rompía las costillas. (328)

As a consequence of these divisions, the political discussions manifest themselves in the text as inconclusive verbal disputes which do not lead to any improvement for the marginal classes.

In comparison with these characters, Rendón Wilka is less talkative but more prone to act and undertake an active political militancy. Whereas the other characters'

actions are preceded by interior monologues expressing their different ruminations, Rendón Wilka's actions manifest themselves in the text when they are already performed. For example, in chapter four the Parayambamba political representatives go to the San Pedro Province court to be condemned and they march with the mayors of San Pedro. The landowner Cisneros' words instil doubt about whether the unexpected appearance of the Province mayors is Rendón Wilka's idea: 'Cisneros tuvo una corazonada 'Esto es cosa del Rendón Wilka. ¿Cómo han sabido los alcaldes de la capital para recibir a estos traposos que venían presos? ¿Cómo han sabido? ¿Y no harán nada?' (314). The event which follows this scene, the *mestizas*' rebellion, shows how Cisneros' supposition is quite plausible. A possible interpretation is that Rendón Wilka has planned the provincial mayors' participation in this march in order to arouse compassion, or probably rage, in the public. The scene has the purpose of communicating a sense of social belongingness: by walking close to the provincial mayors, the Indigenous people appear less extraneous to the environment of the provincial city.

Returning to the character's political ideas, he distances himself from all these political parties by expressing the importance of cooperating and of being culturally close to the Indigenous cultures:

Comunistas también que han matado a Dios pelean entre ellos, más que alacranes se quitan el mando. ¡Aristas...sapos y culebras son; arrodillan delante de jefes ociosos, putañeros! ¿Comunero es distinto...¿comunistas? ¡Que vengan pues! Nosotros cortaremos su tenaza de alacrán, su venenito, entonces, serán hermanos. [...] ¡Yo firme! Comunero de... cuarenta pueblos, haciendas, firme! (407)

The character claims that it is necessary to overcome the political conflicts between the parties in order to struggle against the common enemy of multinationals. Additionally, he asserts that it is important to have a cultural insider's view of peasant communities. The previous passage completes the political profile of the character: so far the passages have depicted him as a political leader who is sufficiently educated, socially versatile and with good organisational skills. The monologue quoted above portrays him as a pragmatic

political leader who is more prone to action than political discussion, with deep cultural awareness of peasant communities. Although Rendón Wilka's political militancy appears quite cryptic and without a precise goal in the whole novel, it is described through more factual events at the end of the narration. In the final pages, he starts to communicate with the peasants from the surrounding areas by giving them precise recommendations in order to face the landowners' abuses, as this quotation suggests: 'que no se trabaje si don Lucas no paga los jornales de diez soles' (244). Moreover, the character plans nonviolent resistance: he tells the Lahuaymarca peasants to keep on working their lands even when they risk being deprived of their properties by the multinationals.

In the last page of the novel, the character acquires mythical dimensions. Arguedas describes the murder of this character through images belonging to the Pre-Columbian cosmology. As soon as Rendón Wilka is shot, some characters of the novel hear a river flowing underneath the soil:

El oficial accedió y lo hizo matar. Pero se quedó solo. Y él, como los otros guardias, escuchó un sonido de grandes torrentes que sacudían el subsuelo, como si las montañas empezaran a caminar. (470)

The reference to the river evokes the *yamar mayu*, which literally means 'river of blood'. This image, deeply rooted in the Andean iconography, is recurrently used by the author to refer to belonging to a world, a culture, a race and a 'blood'. In this context, the sudden manifestation of this noise can be interpreted as the emergence of a new life after death. This latent force underneath the soil represents the destruction of a world but also prophetically predicts the emergence of a new world as Cornejo Polar suggests:

Es el aterrador sonido de un mundo que se quiebra y destruye definitivamente; es, al mismo tiempo, el himno de la esperanza, el que surge del nacimiento de otro mundo distinto, del verdadero "nuevo mundo". (Cornejo Polar 1973: 247)

The death/life dualism creates an intratextual parallel between this episode and the episode of Gregorio's death. In the previous episode, the death of the character gives way to the birth of the horse so as to highlight the passage from contradictory hybridity to

harmonious plurality. Similarly, the murder of Rendón Wilka triggers the appearance of the *yamar mayu*, indicating the passage from an individual consciousness to a collective consciousness. According to Cornejo Polar, Rendón Wilka has no fear of dying because he sees himself as a part of a collective historical process:

Demetrio se sitúa en una perspectiva histórica, lo que le permite engarzar su vida en un proceso colectivo, trascender su ser personal y deslindar su suerte individual de la de su pueblo, hasta el punto de no importarle morir porque su proyecto se mantendrá vivo en otros hombres. (243)

On the basis of these ideas, the death of Rendón Wilka is merely a prelude to the emergence of a new Indigenous consciousness. This rising consciousness aims to find a harmonious compatibility between the Western and Indigenous world view and also intends to generate a new discourse of modernity closely related to the Peruvian cultural specificity.

## **Conclusion**

Different passages in the text seem to mirror Arguedas' concerns about the development of extractive industries in Peru. The subjective representation of the space in the novel contributes to the way in which the author interrogates these worries. In the text, the mining settlements are depicted as spaces which are halfway between the rural and the urban. They are also described as heterogeneous environments which are exposed to different cultural influences as a consequence of the constant arrival of labour forces from different areas in Peru.

The space reflects an author's judgemental stance towards some mundane and quintessentially urban activities of the mining town. Some passages in the novel reflect this negative judgement: the depiction of *chicha* music as a deformation of old Indigenous songs, the increasing number of prostitutes arriving at the mine. The latter phenomenon has been examined in relation to Pratt's ideas of gender, sexuality and nationhood. This theory has been useful to understand how prostitution and immigration are depicted in the

novel as crucial factors which destabilise cultural homogeneity. Thus, the description of the space uncovers the author's rejection of some modern cultural practices. This disapproving tone is connected with an Indigenist assumption that cities are immoral. Thus, through the depiction of space, the author unveils what he believes would be a dystopia: the radical transformations of Indigenous cultures due to their interaction with Western cultural models.

The text reflects not just a dystopia but also a utopia; it expresses not solely the author's concerns but also his hopes. In this respect, it has been helpful to explore the image of Don Fermín's horse ascending from the depth of the mine to the surface. This scene hints at different cultural discourses as it is closely related to other passages in the novel. It hints at the author's expectations for the emergence of a new *mestizaje* in which the West, the urban and the modern are harmonically compatible with the traditional, the Indigenous past and the Pre-Columbian agrarian heritage.

The constant fluctuation between utopia and dystopia manifests itself in the novel through the character of Rendón Wilka. The novel presents a wide range of *mestizo* figures, some of whom are marked as positive, others as negative. For example, Gregorio and Perico Bellido embody the negative *mestizaje* and they epitomise the conflict between Indigenous and Western values. By contrast, Rendón Wilka stands out in the novel as he represents the mediator between tradition and modernity, Andean cultures and Western cultures. In particular, his exclamation '¡La luz dentro del mundo puede hacerse!' (109) becomes highly significant when related to the different interpretations of the light image in the novel. Through this utterance, the character communicates his hopes for the future: overcoming the Eurocentric discourse of modernity and building an alternative vision of modernity based on Peruvian cultural specificity. In other passages of the novel, the author embodies the Indigenist view according to which modernity is a synonym of immorality. Indeed, he occasionally goes inside the mining towns and when he crosses the area, he



does not get involved with the activities in the mine: he does not drink alcohol, he does not appreciate *chicha* music and he does not go to the brothel. The character's contradictory opinions on modernity reveal both his enthusiasm for and his uneasiness about progress. He is a strong advocate of technological progress as he thinks that it would bring material wealth and advancement of knowledge. However, he does not accept the cultural changes resulting from the development of extractives industries as they may bring about the 'erosion' of Indigenous cultural specificity. These conflicting ideas highlight Rendón Wilka's idealistic vision of *mestizaje* which is similar to Oscar Nuñez Prado's cultural eugenic theory discussed previously on page 184. For him, *mestizaje* implies a model of cultural hybridity which maintains the intrinsic aspects of both cultures.

Vargas Llosa provides useful ideas for exploring the character's consciousness more extensively and also for understanding Arguedas' view. As discussed on page 34, Vargas Llosa resorts to the expression 'utopía arcaica', which is also the title of his book, to question Arguedas' attempt to create a cultural dialogue between the Andean past and a Western model of progress. He also notes that: 'Arguedas intuía, de manera certera, que el desarrollo era incompatible con el ideal arcaico. No hay mundo campesino mágico, religioso, folclórico, que sobreviva a la modernización' (Vargas Llosa 1996: 276). Here, Vargas Llosa provides a stereotypical image of Andean cultures as he restrictively associates them with magic, folklore and religion. Moreover, he interprets Arguedas' bond with the Andean past as an idealistic nostalgia which is the antonym of progress. Actually, the depiction of Rendón Wilka contradicts Vargas Llosa's opinions about Arguedas' total rejection of progress. This character does not present modernity or tradition in contradictory terms. Rather, his consciousness can be interpreted as a projection of Arguedas' attempt to overcome the incompatibility between the Peruvian autochthonous cultures' preservation and the Western conception of progress.

We have seen how the horse image is useful to explore the depiction of Rendón Wilka as an ideal political leader. In the protest episode, rebel mixed-race women attack policemen's horses in a vain attempt to take control of the animals. This image, which is apparently of secondary importance, creates interesting links with the scene of Rendón Wilka who 'maneja con manera firme las riendas'. The contrast between these female characters and Rendón Wilka is also due to the underlying gender hierarchy between Rendón Wilka and the women, as well as the dichotomy of rational subject/male and emotional subject/ female. These oppositions highlight a feature for which Rendón Wilka is presented as the ideal political leader in the novel: his intellectual superiority. This characteristic finds an explanation in De la Cadena's theory of silent racism, as we have seen. Thus, the text emphasises the features by which the character epitomises the future of a new Indigenous political consciousness offering an insider's insight into peasant communities, pragmatism, formal education and organisational skills.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ***¿QUIÉN MATÓ A PALOMINO MOLERO?: THE MINE SPACE AND ITS PROXIMITY TO THE OTHER***

#### **Introduction**

The depiction of space is conventionally conceived as a secondary literary motif and it serves as a backdrop for the plot. This is evident in the English translation of the text *Who Killed Palomino Molero?*, in which various descriptions are considered as superfluous material that can be removed. An example can be found in chapter six of the translated text, in which the following Spanish passage is simplified as follows:

Estaban en el peñón de los cangrejos, atalaya natural de una playita pedregosa, de aguas quietas, protegida de los vientos del atardecer por un farallón polvoriento y por varios almacenes de la International Petroleum Company. A sus espaldas, desplegada en abanicos, tenían la bahía, con sus dos muelles, la refinería erizada de tubos, escaleras y torreones metálicos y el desorden del pueblo. (109)

The two of them were hiding up on Crab Point, a natural watchtower that overlooked a stony beach and a quiet inlet. (88)

A close reading of the Spanish passage shows how some dynamics, like division, order, hierarchy between high and low, demarcation between nature and industry, underpin the representation of space. The ultimate aim of this study is to examine how the establishment and the challenge of these dynamics characterise the overall structure of the novel *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* (1986) and mirror the author's most intimate concerns with the heterogeneous configuration of Peruvian society.

Before analysing this novel, it is necessary to consider its evident connection with the Post-Boom trend. Indeed, the text both conforms with and manipulates the conventions of the detective genre, as it refers to popular culture, in particular cowboy movies and some popular Latin American music styles, and has a more accessible style and more

concern for social and everyday life. The link with the Post-Boom trend is in turn complicated by the intimate connection of Vargas Llosa with the Boom. The elite framework of *nueva narrativa* is still present, and manifests itself through the contrast between the accessible popular style and some narrative techniques (such as the intricate dialogism between different voices) which foregrounds the problematic relationship between literature and reality. The interpretation of this text shows how the foreign model of the detective genre is the starting point for a new reformulation in Latin America (Swanson 2005a:216).

This chapter is organised into three parts. The first section gives an overview of the writer's political ideas by examining some passages of the nonfiction work *El pez en el agua* (1993). His political thought provides a useful lens for analysing the novel, in particular, the description of Talara, the town in which the novel is set. This section also provides contextual information on the existing Peruvian city of Talara in order to understand how this extra linguistic reality is reproduced in fiction. The second section explains the way in which the representation of the space in the novel encapsulates different polarities: civilisation and barbarism, order and disorder, writing and speech. It will be demonstrated how these oppositions are also connected with the literary discourses of the detective genre. This section also looks at how the demarcation between nature and extractive industry and the hybrid interaction between these two domains contribute to the way in which Vargas Llosa interrogates and complicates the notion of *mestizaje*. Finally, the last section focuses on the intertextual references to the last novel of José María Arguedas, *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (1971). The links between these texts shed light on some points of connection between the two authors with regards to their vision of *mestizaje*. This section also has recourse to Julia Kristeva's theories of abjection, in order to explore the controversial link between Vargas Llosa's subjectivity and his concern for Peruvian identity.

Before delving deeper into the analysis of the text, it is necessary to explain the plot of the novel. In *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?*, Teniente Silva and his subordinate, Lituma, investigate the murder of the airman Palomino Molero. The novel revolves around two main story lines. In the first, the detective Teniente and his assistant gather information through interviews. Through these interviews they conclude that the commander of the air base, Colonel Mindreau, is implicated in the murder of the character in question. According to their version, Palomino was the partner of Alicia, the daughter of the Colonel Mindreau, and he escaped with her to get married. He was killed by Alicia's father with the complicity of two of his subordinates. The plot ends with Alicia's father's suicide. In the second story line, the Civil Guard Lieutenant Silva has an obsessive sexual attraction towards the curvaceous and mature Adriana, the owner of the bar in Talara. After solving the crime, Silva goes to Adriana to have sex with her. Surprisingly, she challenges him, with the result that he is unable to perform and withdraws.

### **Continuity between Literary and Public Persona**

As explained in the Introduction, the text can be interpreted as the author's response to the serious accusations with which he had to deal after the investigation of the Uchuraccay case in 1983. Even though the novel does not make any explicit reference to these events, it does, as Roy Boland claims, represent a literary exorcism of the author's own experience on the commission (Boland 1988: 160-182). In particular, the end of the novel transmits a pervasive sense of irritation, which Vargas Llosa felt after the investigation in Uchuraccay. The case is unsolved and the dynamics of the crime are not particularly clear. Lituma and Silva are doubly humiliated, both by Talara's people and by institutions. Talara's population are sceptical about the results of the investigation and gossip about the case. Also, the military institutions seem to be upset about Lituma and

Silva's declarations, as they reward the two policemen with transfers to remote posts in Peru.

Moreover, *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* was published some decades after Vargas Llosa radically changed his political ideas. 1971 is considered by critics as the crucial date which marked a shift in the author's political thinking from Socialism to Neoliberalism. In that year, the intellectual Heberto Padilla was imprisoned in Cuba because he criticised Castro's government in his work *Fuera del juego* (1968). This event provoked division in the Latin American intellectual milieu. Some Latin American writers showed their disenchantment with Fidel Castro's regime and in particular with his repressive measures (Henken 2008: 376). Amongst these intellectuals there was Vargas Llosa who definitively distanced himself from leftist ideas and went from being a defender of Cuban Revolution to a passionate opposer.

After being ostracised by the Latin American Left, the author wrote novels which were not quintessentially engaged with political issues. Some of the novels written between the 1970s and the 1980s are closely connected with the Post-Boom, for example, *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* (1973), *La tía Julia y el escribidor* (1977) and the novel chosen for this project, *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?*. As mentioned previously, the Post-Boom narrative moves toward a new aesthetic trend, characterised by greater accessibility, the inclusion of popular narratives and references to music and movies. In Post-Boom fiction the most straightforward impression is that the themes related to popular culture reflect an escapist tendency deprived of political intentions. Nevertheless, in his analysis of *La tía Julia y el escribidor* (1977), Swanson believes that there is a link between popular narrative and political issues. In his view, the novel has a political significance, paradoxically because it has no issues that are strictly speaking political and social (Swanson 1995: 58-77).

Similarly, Swanson shows that there is a link between Vargas Llosa's literary persona and his public persona in *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?*. In this novel, pop culture themes become signifiers of political and social issues. For example, the frivolous referent of Mexican cinema is a hidden attack on censorship. In the novel, the priest of Talara cuts the film scenes that he considers to be obscene. Although this event is presented as a comic anecdote, it hints at Odría's dictatorship and also specific cases of intellectual censorship in Communist countries, for example, the Padilla case in Cuba (Swanson 2005a: 225). Moreover, pop culture acquires a political and social significance, as it serves to denounce the corruption of the police and military institutions in Peru. This is particularly evident in the episode in which the two main characters, Silva and Lituma, are allowed to have free cinema entrance tickets because they belong to the institution of the Peruvian *Guardia Civil* (Swanson 2005a: 221). In line with Swanson's suggestions, the references to the popular music of *boleros*, and to some Mexican movies, do not merely function as the signifiers of an escapist, frivolous and more accessible culture. The theme of Latin American music, represented by different musical styles such as *bolero*<sup>50</sup>, *vals*<sup>51</sup> and *tenderos*,<sup>52</sup> emphasise the cultural mixture of Western, *mestizo* and African heritages.

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<sup>50</sup> Originating from a mix of European, African and Indian influences, *bolero* arose in Cuba. Between 1930 and 1970, this music style became very popular abroad mainly following the growth of radio and the development of music industries. Most *bolero* songs have love as a main theme (Castillo Zapata 2000: 197).

<sup>51</sup> *Vals*, also known as *walts criollo*, is a reformulation of the European *walts*. It derived from the Spanish *jota*, *mazurka* and from the Viennese *waltz* (Romero 2000: 367). Since the first decades of the 1900s, this musical genre fuses European elements with Afro-Peruvian rhythms. Indeed, it is played by the European guitar and the Afro-Peruvian percussion *cajón* (Rosa 2008:65). Moreover, *vals* became the main musical expression of the lower class neighbourhoods in Lima. The most important composer of *walts criollos* was Felipe Plingo whose songs reflected working class values and conflicts. During the 1950s, the *walts criollo* was made known outside Peru by the composer Chabuca Grande. When it reached the height of its popularity inside and outside Peru, it got enriched by cultural influences (Rosa 2008: 65).

<sup>52</sup> It is a musical genre which is very popular in the northern coastal departments of Libertad, Lambayeque and Piura. It is in many aspects similar to the Peruvian music style of *marinera*. For example, it is played by the Afro-Peruvian percussion, *cajón* and the European guitar. (Romero 2000: 367). With regard to *marinera*, this style of music and dance derives from the Chilean music *zamacueca*. Originally it was known as *cueca chilena*. After the Pacific War, Peruvians did not want to associate this musical genre with their former enemies, the Chileans, so they decided to call it *marinera*. The best singers of *marinera* were Afro-Peruvians (Gonzalez 2000b: 917)

Nevertheless, the use of a wide popular music repertoire is a way of simplifying the complex historical, political or anthropological reality of Peruvian *mestizo* groups, and likewise an attempt to conform it to the hybrid cultural manifestations of other Latin American countries.

In addition to references to popular culture, hints at the author's political ideas can be found in the subjective representation of the industrial space and Talara community. In order to begin the literary analysis of these passages, it is necessary to examine Vargas Llosa's non fictional work *El pez en el agua* (1993) by which it is possible to understand how his new political views emerged and matured after the Padilla case. The text is divided into two main narrative threads. The first is composed of chapters in which he narrates his life from his childhood up to the beginning of his career as an author. The second consists of chapters which describe the different stages of his campaign for the presidency of Peru in 1990. Indeed, Vargas Llosa ran as a candidate of the presidential election by creating a new political bloc, called FREDEMO. This political coalition was between the political movement, the *Movimiento Libertad* and two existing parties: *Acción Popular* led by the ex-president Fernando Belaúnde Terry and the *Partido Popular Cristiano* under the leadership of Luis Bedoya Reyes (Vargas Llosa 2015: 1186). In *El pez en el agua* (1993), the author illustrates the key ideas of FREDEMO's political agenda: new measures against the problem of terrorism, a new labour reform, and new policies in the service sector, in education and in industrial economy.

With regard to the extractive industries, his economic agenda promoted a model of progress more oriented toward US models. The key ideas on which this economic plan were based were: privatising industries, promoting foreign investments, stimulating a free market based on competition, and reducing state interventionism.<sup>53</sup> In order to

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<sup>53</sup>¿No era evidente, ante esos peruanos que se morían de hambre, en esa cordillera con el potencial minero más rico del continente, de la que salieron el oro y la plata gracias a los cuales el nombre del Perú fue sinónimo de munificencia, que la política debía orientarse a atraer inversiones, abrir industrias,



demonstrate the efficacy of this economic program, he mentioned Korea, Taiwan, Japan and Singapore as examples of countries which grew considerably after adopting new economic measures oriented toward free trade.<sup>54</sup> He strongly criticises the state-led economical approach which the government of Peru has adopted since 1960. With regard to the industrial sector, he expresses his opposition to the nationalisation of the oil and steel companies, which were converted into the state-owned companies *Petroperú* and *Siderperú*.<sup>55</sup> He is against state economic intervention mainly because he does not trust Peruvian institutions: the revenues from extractive industries would not benefit the Peruvian population but would go into the pockets of a small number of political bureaucrats.<sup>56</sup>

### **Talara: Between Fiction and Reality**

The story of Palomino Molero is set in Talara, a town located in the northern region of Piura. Both in the text and in the extra-linguistic context it is a port city, it hosts a military air base and it has oil reserves.

The history of Talara is closely linked to the development of extractive industries in Peru. The city is surrounded by the oil reserves of La Brea, Pariñas, Zorritos and Negritos. In late nineteenth century, these territories were exploited by family-run

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activar el comercio, revalorizar las tierras, desarrollar la minería, la agricultura, la ganadería?’ (Vargas Llosa 2015: 3290).

54 ‘También había siempre alguna exposición sobre aquellos países del Tercer Mundo a los que políticas de mercado, fomento a la exportación y a la empresa privada habían traído un rápido crecimiento, como las cuatro dragones asiáticos — Corea del Sur, Taiwán, Hong Kong y Singapur —o como Chile’ (Vargas Llosa 2015: 2373).

55 ‘Había exposiciones destinadas a mostrar, con cifras, cómo las nacionalizaciones habían empobrecido al país, aumentado la discriminación y la injusticia, y cómo el intervencionismo, además de destruir la industria, perjudicaba a los consumidores y favorecía a mafias a las que el sistema de cuotas y dólares preferenciales enriquecía sin que tuvieran que competir ni servir al público’ (Vargas Llosa 2015: 2368).

56 ‘Empresas como Siderperú, cuya vida artificial costaba ingentes recursos al país, era un paralogismo, pues esos recursos desperdiciados, de los que se beneficiaban un puñado de burócratas y de políticos, podían servir para construir las escuelas y los hospitales que tanta falta hacían a los pobres’ (Vargas Llosa 2015: 6505).

businesses: the Italian entrepreneur Faustino Piaggio along with the British businessman Henry Smith extracted oil from the deposits of Zorritos and Negritos whereas the Peruvian Genaro Helguero exploited the areas of La Brea and Pariñas. As discussed in the Introduction, these industrialists had to face an increase in production costs; as a consequence of this, they had to cede their properties to the British company London and Pacific Petroleum which in turn sold these territories to the US multinational IPC in 1914 (Contreras and Cueto 2007: 207-208, Aranda Dioses 1998: 43-44). Additionally, it has been explained that the 1960s marked a shift in the Peruvian management of extractive industries. Previously the Peruvian government followed an economic approach based on foreign investments and a *laissez-faire* principle, it then changed towards a state-led economy. In this period of Peruvian history, Talara played a relevant role. In 1968, President Belaúnde started the negotiations with the IPC in order to nationalise extractive industries in Peru. In August 1969 the Peruvian president and the IPC signed the Talara pact. This agreement envisaged that IPC would give back all the Peruvian exploited areas to the state but it would keep the refinery in Talara and would obtain concessions to exploit wide areas in the Peruvian jungle (Young 2005: 74). The conditions of this agreement, which favoured the US company, were not immediately announced. When the content of the agreement was disclosed, revealing great concessions to the company, it created a great scandal and put the president in a bad light (Wright 2001: 114; Maurer 2013: 370). This agreement divided public opinion and led to the military coup of General Juan Velasco Alvarado in October 1968. The regime under the new president expropriated all the Peruvian deposits from the IPC and founded the national extractive industry *Petroperú*.

The urban configuration of Talara was conditioned by these extractive industries. This Northern city of Peru was originally a fishermen's town which changed radically after the intensive exploitation of oil reserves in the surrounding areas. Aranda Dioses

divides the changes of Talara into three different phases: *campamento de madera*, *ciudad empresa* and *ciudad abierta* (Aranda Dioses 1998: 15-24).

The first stage corresponds with the period in which the British company exploited the area. The expression 'campamento de madera' alludes to the construction material from which the first mineworkers' houses were built. It was one of the first mining settlements in Peru which became the point of convergence for immigrants from the departments of Chira and Piura (Aranda Dioses 1998: 47-49). In spite of this increasing immigration, the arrival of the labor force was strictly controlled by the extractive company. Indeed, the town of Talara was enclosed by wire mesh and it was protected by guards who were employed by the industry to regulate the access of people into the settlement (Aranda Dioses 1998: 54). Talara was an example of an enclave, an industrial town in which private industry completely took over the function of the state. Indeed, London and Pacific Petroleum was responsible for police forces, health assistance and education (Aranda Dioses 1998: 55). The company guaranteed social order through a hierarchical arrangement of residential areas: the most qualified employers and managers lived in the wealthiest areas which were far away from the neighbourhoods occupied by the least qualified workers. Aranda Dioses points out that these hierarchies reflect the divisions between 'capital y trabajo, [...] dirección y ejecución; [...] trabajo manual y no manual' (Aranda Dioses 1998: 27).

The second phase is when the city was run by the multinational IPC. In 1954 the wire mesh was removed. Although the company allowed free transit of people, it monitored the entrance of newcomers into the city by intensifying police controls. In the first years of the 50s, the city was re-designed in such way that it had gardens, a new park and new buildings: thus, it appeared more similar to European and US cities. Nevertheless, like the preceding period, the urban configuration of Talara still marked social hierarchies: the upper and middle class areas were separated from the working-class suburbs (Aranda

Dioses 1998: 65). Similarly, the administration of the town was placed in the hands of political figures closely connected with the private company (Aranda Dioses 1998: 68).

The last stage coincides with the nationalisation of extractive industries and the establishment of *Petroperú*. Talara is no longer under the control of IPC but under the management of the Peruvian state. It becomes a *ciudad abierta* because its borders are open to all Peruvian citizens. This increased immigration from the Northern areas of Peru to Talara (accentuated by the natural disaster of El Niño in 1983), uncontrolled urbanisation and the growth of economic informal sectors. These changes are described in negative terms by Aranda Dioses:

Un crecimiento urbano abigarrado y desordenado donde la pobreza, la violencia urbana y el deterioro de los servicios constituyen evidencias cotidianas de crisis y desigualdad. La Talara ordenada y regulada ciudad-empresa- enclave, en la cual regían las costumbres y el calendario de fiestas americano no pasará a convertirse en una ciudad típicamente peruana. (Aranda Dioses 1998: 17)

From her words it can be inferred that she is biased toward the US management of Talara and she has uneasy feelings towards the cultural diversity of the town. This is demonstrated by the fact that she attributes the supposed violence and chaos of Talara to a heterogeneous environment in which different cultures intertwine:

Con el advenimiento de la ciudad abierta las redes sociales se diversifican, amplían y complejizan, así como el escenario se diluye y matiza con el contexto urbano de un país pluricultural y pluriétnico en permanente inestabilidad (Aranda Dioses 1998: 23)

The US influence in Talara was also linked to the settlement of the US military base. After the Second World War, Peru allowed the US to open a military base in Talara. As part of the deal, Peru and US reached some agreements: the US provided loans aimed at improving Peruvian education and public health while Peru accepted US control of the raw material prices (Hunefeldt 2014: 203).

## The Space of Talara

In the novel the representation of Talara is primarily organised according to the principles of division, order and verticality.

Como los gringos de la International, éstos, detrás de sus muros y rejas, vivían igual que en las películas [...] Porque desde la Base, sobrevolando Talara, se divisaban en un promontorio rocoso, detrás de rejas protegidas día y noche, por vigilantes armados, las casitas de los ingenieros, técnicos y altos empleados de la International. (34)

Here, the specific distinctions between different social hierarchies are emphasised by the presence of borders which organise social groups into rigid defined spaces. They distinguish airmen from the leading representatives of the International Petroleum Company and also divide the highest hierarchies from the citizens of Talara. The *reja* reflects the fact of belonging to an ethnicity, as it divides the white elite from the ethnically diverse community of Talara. Indeed, in this passage, Palomino is described as a liminal figure who sings on the boundary line between white people and the rest of population: ‘Veía al flaquito afinando la guitarra [...] al pie de las rejas y de los balcones de sus novias y enamoradas’ (23). Relating to the principle of order, the coherently organised space reserved for the upper echelons of the oil company contrasts with the disorder of Talara’s population: ‘A sus espaldas, desplegada en abanico, tenían la bahía [...] y el desorden del pueblo’(109). The principle of verticality spatially signals the power of the upper classes who are identified with people in the air forces and ‘gringos’: ‘Y gringos y aviadores podían mirarse la cara por sobre las cabezas de los talareños’ (34). The principles of division, order and verticality underline the presence of a hierarchy on which the order of society is based. These principles operate within the entire narrative discourse and create a pattern in the novel that is either confirmed or challenged by different motifs.

Moreover, it is also important to draw attention to the oil well of the IPC that is relegated to the margins of the town. This separated space is a reminder of postcolonial economic imperialism but also of the European conquest of Latin America aimed at the

exploitation of new natural resources (Pratt 1992:7). Generally speaking, it hints at the ‘foreignness’ that has had an impact on the Latin American self-invention of an independent and decolonised identity (Swanson 2005a: 224).

Finally, the following sections will discuss how the descriptions of IPC installations interact with the conventional representation of nature as woman and untainted landscape. As discussed in the Introduction, the historical understanding of nature as empty space and woman is embedded in the concept of civilisation and barbarism. Thus, the opposition nature/ industry encloses the dichotomy female/male. These opposing poles are grounded in the readers’ expectations related to nature and extractive industries. Indeed, while nature is traditionally conceived as female, extractive industry is conventionally related to a male dominated space in which job proficiency and the strict male-gendered hierarchies determine the marginality of women. The relationship between the male and extractive industry has its foundation in an extra-linguistic reality. Economists and sociologists have pointed out how women are marginalised in the extractive industry communities in Peru. Indeed, most of the employment opportunities benefit men; as a consequence of this, most women are economically dependent on their husbands: they carry out domestic work or they work in family run-farms. Moreover, women are not significantly involved in the consultation processes by which communities and extractive industry companies find agreements on environmental issues, labour conditions and exploitation of land (Ward 2011: 5, 27; True 2012: 87).

This section and the previous one are aimed at assessing the similarities and differences between the development of Talara in the extra-linguistic reality and the literary representation of this town in the fiction. From this comparison it might be implied that the relationship between fiction and reality is quite problematic. The textual Talara is set in a fictitious period which conflates two different moments of the city’s history. The presence of the IPC suggests that the novel is set in the period in which the US company

was still present in the region of Piura. Nevertheless, the allusion to the ‘desorden del pueblo’ coincides with the vision of Aranda Dioses who describes the environment of Talara after the 60s as ‘abigarrado y desordenado’ (Aranda Dioses 1998: 17).

### **Challenging the Hierarchy: Between Writing and Speech**

The description of Talara mirrors the dichotomy of civilisation and barbarism. Civilisation is exemplified by the ordered residential district of the IPC and the US military base. These two spaces quintessentially represent foreign modernity because of their connections with postcolonial imperialism. Moreover, these areas are also associated with civilisation as they are occupied by the white elite of Talara, mainly composed of IPC managers and high-level staff of the army. Conversely, barbarism is symbolised by the lower-class community of Talara. Its connection with barbarism is suggested by the term ‘desorden’ which evokes the conventional conception of barbarian as chaos.

The divisions between IPC and Talara, and between the upper and lower classes, manifest themselves in the text through the opposition between writing and speech. According to Wood, the social distance between elites and subordinate classes is reflected in Peruvian culture through the chasm between the hegemonic cultural form of literature, which has writing as a means of expression, and the other popular cultures which have speech as their main vehicle of expression.<sup>57</sup> In his work, *Writing in the Air*, Cornejo Polar

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<sup>57</sup> Wood clarifies how the term *cultura popular* has a different meaning from what is intended for popular culture in English-speaking countries. Whereas popular culture is used to refer to cultural manifestations associated with mass media, *cultura popular* has a more negative connotation and refers to all the cultural practices related to *pueblo* (Wood 2005: 17). According to Wood, writing was the hegemonic cultural form from the colonial period to the 60s (Wood 2005:14). Indeed, during the *virreinato*, the Spanish oligarchy used writing as a tool to assert power; they legitimised their authority in the Latin American continent through bureaucratic documents, reports and laws (Wood 2005: 37). Between the post-independence period and the 60s, literature was associated with the hegemonic power of the elite *criolla* based in Lima. In this respect, Wood uses the concept of Anderson, according to which the printed word catalyses the formation of a national ‘imagined community’ (Wood 2005:22). Indeed, literature, in particular, the novels written by creole intellectuals, contributed to the construction of a Peruvian national identity (Wood 2005: 22). Nevertheless, writing did not lead to the formation of an inclusive sense of nation as it brought about the exclusion of a wide portion of Peruvian society; in particular, it excludes social groups who cannot access books because of their education level, their limited financial possibilities or because they do not speak Spanish. Contemporaneously, Wood

points out that this divide within Peruvian culture refers back to the encounter between Atahualpa Inca and Father Vicente Valverde. A lot of chronicles documented this event, but all of them focus on the same moment: Valverde, through an interpreter, asks the Inca to be subject to Christian beliefs and the rule of Spain and gives him the Bible that Atahualpa throws on the ground. This anecdote symbolically represents the clash between speech and writing in Peruvian culture. It also illustrates that writing appears in the Andes not so much as a system of communication but as symbol of order, authority and power (Cornejo Polar 2013:13-30).

The confrontation between writing and speech is expressed through the action of some key characters. The representatives of the elites rely on writing as a source of knowledge and expression of order. The characters belonging to the lower-class population of Talara challenge the authority of upper classes through the opposing force of speech. More specifically, the novel represents these two polarities —speech and writing— respectively through the characters of Palomino Molero, Coronel Mindreau and the detective Silva.

Palomino Molero is the character on whom the novel is based. As the plot conforms to the conventions of the detective genre, it narrates the life of this character only after his death. He is called by a number of names: Palomino, Palito, Themistocles, el guitarrista de Castilla, el muchacho de Castilla. Similarly, his life is revived through the memories of various characters who tell different anecdotes about him. The proliferation

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questions the dichotomy — writing and speech — underpinning Peruvian culture. First of all, he deconstructs the Western concept of literature conventionally identified with writing and as a consequence of this, he claims that other cultural products such as the Inca textile *quipus* can be considered as forms of literature (Wood 2005: 39). Moreover, he explains that the 60s marked the beginning of ‘la democratización de la identidad nacional’: subordinated sectors of Peruvian society (Indigenous, *mestizos* and Afro-Peruvian) gained more visibility in the nation (Wood 2005: 21). This change was due to a conjunction of political, economic and social factors: the massive migration from the highland to the city, decreased illiteracy, the emergence of a middle class formed by Indigenous and *mestizo* immigrants, the development of mass media. As a consequence of these changes, literature became more democratic. Indeed, Peruvian literature saw the emergence of new writers coming not just from Lima but other regions of Peru (Wood 2005: 46). Wood explores literature, football and craftwork in Peru to show how, since the 60s, elite culture and popular culture in Peru influence each other.



of names and accounts highlight the inherent differences between written and oral literatures. Written texts are fixed as they are the property of authors who are entitled to claim the copyright of their creations and regulate the variations of their works. Conversely, oral literatures are subject to constant changes because the variations are not to be compared to a fixed text and also because the memory of the authorship is almost absent (Goody 2010: 3, 46; Firestone 1990: 17). The identity of Palomino is closely linked to music; he plays the guitar through which he performs *boleros*, *vals* and *tenderos*. These culturally hybrid musical genres, described in the previous section, are meant to emphasise the *mestizo* identity of this figure. Music is an example of cultural manifestation whose production and consumption involve mainly speech. Because of this, it works in the text as a hint at the Peruvian *cultura popular*, closely connected with oral cultural manifestations. Along with Palomino, the population of Talara is also related to the dominance of speech. It represents the social nucleus from which rumours originate. Moreover, the actions of some of Talara's citizens show a rejection of writing. For example, the ironic image of the taxi driver, Don Jerónimo using the newspaper to scare away flies: 'Alargando la cabeza por entre el periódico con el cual ahuyentaba a las moscas' (182).

By contrast, el Coronel Mindreau is associated with writing. He is the figure of major power in the fictional discourse and he is described with a set of characteristics related to the idea of order, rigidity, and precision. He is tidy, extremely pedantic and clean. He has a moustache which is meticulously cut, 'un bigotito entrecano, milimétricamente recortado' (35). He uses writing as an expression of truth and authority. When he is questioned by Silva and Lituma he defends his version of the case by showing the evidence of his report. At the end of the novel, he leaves a note as his last statement before killing himself. The physical description of the character and his reliance on writing as a main

means of expression emphasises the strong connection of writing with the ideas of order, hierarchy, power and law (Cornejo Polar 2013: 14-30).

As regards the figure of Silva, his relationship with writing is problematised by the conventions of the detective genre. As explained on page 142, the correspondence between sight and authority is highlighted by Rosemary Jackson in her book *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (Jackson 1981: 45). With regard to Vargas Llosa's novel, the link between sight, comprehension and authority is closely connected with the figure of the detective figure. Moreover, before examining the link between sight and writing, it is worth considering some comments by Messent on the detective formula. The critic explores the conventions of this genre and illustrates the passage from the individualistic and autonomous perspective of 'Private Eye' versus the police procedure. He claims that all detective novels hinge on the complex interaction between authority and rebellion: 'the Private Eye [...] may appear to see and act from an individualistic and autonomous perspective, but the detective's agency is in fact subordinated to larger forms of social monitoring and control, and her or his vision is limited by the "private" basis on which he or she operates' (Messent 1997:10). In line with these observations, the detective Silva is a particularly interesting figure in the novel. He is the go-between for the private detective and the policeman and as a consequence of his ambiguous nature, he epitomises both justice and corruption. His social status as a Civil Guard raises the controversial issue of corruption as a phenomenon that involves many official sectors of Peruvian society. The character is committed to the values and regulations of such institutions but he benefits from the privileges of this status and he abuses his authority. For example, he is entitled to have free entry at the Talara cinema or does not pay for his beer at the brothel because it is 'por cuenta de la casa, claro está' (53). At the same time, he represents a maverick figure within the system. At the end of the novel, his sense of justice comes into conflict with the authorities of the Peruvian Civil Guard. The results of his investigation

compromise the reputation of the Peruvian military institution and upset some mysterious, important people who reward Silva with a humiliating transfer to a remote place in Peru.

Returning to the link between sight and detective conventions, the text is characterised by the confrontation between two perceptive fields: sight and hearing. This opposition emphasises the struggle of power between speech and writing. Indeed, the detective Silva confirms his authority through sight, which is closely related to the purportedly objective perception of reality but also to the act of reading. He collects some pieces of evidence, through some anonymous notes that are left in the police station. Nevertheless, his confidence in writing appears quite ambiguous. He cautiously touches the written paper as if it were not an object of communication but a fetish: ‘había sido testigo de la excitación que, la noche anterior le provocó el anónimo. Olfateando el papel como el sabueso la presa’ (85). Moreover, his authority is gradually annihilated through the narration. Critics such as Swanson, Booker and Wesley and Weaver have analysed in detail how the figure of Silva is gradually undermined as a source of knowledge and humiliated as an image of masculinity (Swanson 2005a: 216-228; Booker 1994: 131-161; Wesley and Weaver 1996: 168-178). He loses his credibility when nobody in Talara believes his version of the case of Palomino Molero. He is also humiliated in his masculinity because he cannot have sexual intercourse with Adriana (Swanson 2005a: 222). The link between sex and epistemology will be discussed later. Now it is relevant to show how the loss of authority is related to sight and reflects itself also in the act of reading. The contradictory relationship between Silva and writing is evident in chapter six of the novel. Silva and Lituma find Palomino’s missing guitar in their police station and they go to the beach in Talara to relax. In this passage, Silva is keen to play Palomino’s guitar but he is not able to produce any melody because he is tormented by an inexplicable fear. Silva’s desire to play the guitar but also his awkwardness in doing so represent the dramatic relationship toward the world-view of the *mestizo*. As seen before, music works

in the text as an example of heterogeneous culture based on the convergence of different cultural models as well as an epitome of *cultura popular* which has speech as a vehicle of expression. Therefore, the uncomfortable feelings of this character while playing the guitar hint at his uneasiness toward 'la incómoda unidad heterogénea del Perú' (Wood 2005: 24). He throws the guitar on the sand when Mindreau approaches them: 'la guitarra rodó a la arena' (150). But he holds the guitar again as if it is a weapon when he distances himself from Mindreau: 'llevaba la guitarra al hombro como si fuera un fusil o una azada' (166). These images, which negate and confirm the object of the guitar as a symbol of power, reflect again Silva's feelings of anxiety and attraction toward the *mestizaje*: he acknowledges and rejects the potentiality of *mestizo* cultures as sources of a quintessential Peruvian identity.

This gradual loss of visual control manifests itself in the same chapter of the novel through Lituma's scepticism toward sight as a valid epistemological tool. The detective's assistant questions Silva's authority as a Private Eye when he gives more importance to what he hears than to what he sees. At this point of the narration, Lituma takes for granted that Alicia brought the guitar to the police station because in the previous interrogation the teenager had told them that she was in possession of Palomino's guitar. He contradicts Silva who believes that this version is not convincing as it is not confirmed by any written evidence: 'pero a mí no me consta. Yo no vi ninguna carta ni tarjeta ni nada que me pruebe que ella fue la que llevó la guitarra al Puesto' (147). In the same chapter, Coronel Mindreau approaches them. The Air Force officer claims that Alicia suffers from a mental disease called delusions and, in doing so, overturns his daughter's version. He claims to have left a note at the police station. As soon as Silva and Lituma leave the beach, they hear a gunshot. Whereas Lituma believes that this noise is proof of Mindreau's suicide, Silva does not think that the noise of the gunshot is important. Instead, the detective favours going to the police station to read the piece of paper left by Mindreau and he does not

come back to the beach to verify if Mindreau has actually killed himself. He shows a resistance toward what he heard because he relies on what he reads:

El pedo de un borracho, el eructo de una ballena. Mil cosas. No tengo ninguna prueba de que ese ruido haya sido un tiro [...] Espérate a que llegemos al Puesto. Puede que ahí se aclare el misterio que te atormenta. (166-167)

Silva arrives at the police station and carefully starts to read the piece of paper. The linear movement of Silva's sight, going from left to right, emphasises the linearity and irreversibility of reading.

Desgarraba el sobre, y con dos dedos extraía de él un papelito blanco, casi transparente. Lituma [...] vio, lleno de ansiedad que los ojos del Teniente se movían, despacio, de izquierda a derecha. (169)

The conclusion of this chapter seems to announce the victory of sight over hearing, the victory of reading over speech. Nevertheless, there is ambiguity in this description. The character touches the piece of paper not as if it is a means of communication but as a physical object that is considered sacred and worthy of veneration. 'Lituma vio a su jefe, acuclillado, cogerlo y levantarlo con mucha delicadeza, como si se tratara de un objeto frágil y precioso' (169). Moreover, a third voice identified with Lituma's point of view suggests that the message says nothing coherent. 'Lituma se precipitó a cogerlo, a leerlo, y, mientras leía, creyendo y no creyendo, entendiendo y no entendiendo' (170). The image of Silva touching this piece of paper echoes back to the sacred object of the Bible that appeared in Latin America more as an instrument of domination than as an act of language. Through his analysis of the dialogue between Atuahualpa Inca and Father Vicente Valverde, Cornejo Polar shows how the Bible symbolises the lack of communication between Indigenous and Spanish cultures (Cornejo Polar 2013:13-30). This sacred book represented a symbol of power more than a symbol of culture. It suggests the acculturation of Indigenous people through Christianisation and, more generally speaking, it hints at the process of the Spanish Conquest. An example could be the *Requerimiento*, a written declaration, which Spanish military forces read to New World native peoples to assert the sovereignty of the Catholic Church and the Spanish King over Latin America. The public

reading of this religious document implied the establishment of power rather than communication between Spanish and Indigenous cultures (Merrell 2005: 288).

The power struggle between writing and speech is made more complex in the final part of the novel. Here, the circulation of rumours further undermines the authority of the detective as a source of truth.

### **The Ambiguous Dynamic of Rumours**

Some key figures show the clear correspondence between writing/order/authority and sight on the one hand, and speech/disorder/dissent and hearing on the other hand. This dynamic also appears in the novel through the thematic element of rumours. These rumours create a dispersing pluralism of points of view and completely undermine the coherent version that was provided by Silva. He conventionally represents the figure who establishes order in the social community by unfolding the mysterious case of the murder and by consigning the agents of crime to the realm of the guilty. His authority is unexpectedly challenged by the disorder of rumours.

The idea of disorder-related rumours is also repeated in the depiction of space. In support of this, Lituma observes crabs running through the rocks. An omniscient narrator identified with Lituma makes an explicit analogy between the frenetic movement of these animals and the investigation of the mysterious case of Palomino: 'Una movedizas manchitas terrosas, y, una vez fuera, [...] echarse a correr, de una manera tan confusa que era imposible saber si avanzaban o retrocedían' (110). Here, the process of investigation does not follow the linear dynamic of reading, but is subject to the constant movement toward different directions. Similarly, the presence of rumours is always shown through the physical action of running: '¿Ya se había corrido la voz, en el pueblo, de lo de Amotape?' (118). In both cases, rumours are represented as entities that are neither static nor set in an ordered space.

Moreover, rumours manifest themselves through the dialogic interaction of voices that have equal worth; and are dialogically interrelated and contradict the voice of the detective (Collins 1989: 43-49). Like crabs that go backward and forward, rumours create confusion in the narrative space and obstruct the semantic closure of the novel (Booker 1994: 139-161). To use Bakhtin's 'own centrifugal/centripetal metaphor', the centripetal force of the narrator Teniente Silva who tries to impose a monological unity on the events contrasts with the centrifugal force of various voices dispersing toward a pluralism of points of view (Bakhtin 1981: 272).<sup>58</sup> The figure of Teniente Silva is no longer the authorial source of knowledge. His version of truth is undermined by the intrusion of other discourses.

Even so, the matter is much more complex. The constant battle between a third person narration and a conglomerate of voices creates a state of disorder. The reader has the straightforward impression that the narration distances itself from the authority of the writer and reaches a sort of narration zero. But this observation is purely intuitive. The voices that appear through the signifier of rumours are interwoven in the novel through complex literary devices and they signal the hidden presence of an author who controls the narrative discourse through the manipulation of narrative tools. An example can show how the complex web of rumours is structured. Reported speech is complicated by the conflation of direct and free indirect speech:

Una noche estábamos conversando aquí, Palomino Molero sentado donde tú estás. Oyó que un amigo mío se iba a Chiclayo y le preguntó si podía jalarlo hasta el aeropuerto. ¿Y qué vas a hacer en el aeropuerto a estas horas, flaco cantor? "Voy a darle una serenata a mi amorcito, Moisés". O sea que ella vivía por ahí. (24)

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<sup>58</sup> In his essay, Bakhtin defines the novel as 'a diversity of social speech types and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organised'. The novel is also the locus in which centrifugal and centripetal forces converge (Bakhtin 1981: 262). The centripetal forces are the languages and the socio-ideological beliefs incorporated in a text which creates decentralisation and disunification whereas the centrifugal forces correspond with the 'authorial individuality in language' which gives unity to the novel (Bakhtin 1981: 272, 311).

Here the voice of the character Moisés is a clear demonstration of the author's sophisticated use of the narrative devices. The utterance of Moisés includes the voices of other two characters.

The rumour theme seems to confirm the dualistic structure of gossip versus reading as well as gossip versus the authorial sight of the detective. Nevertheless, the insertion of rumours in the text conveys also the illusory idea of a mixture between writing and speech. The erasure of boundaries between writing and speech is connected with the tendencies of the Post-Boom which consist of the collapse of hierarchies between upper and lower-class cultures. As discussed previously, the novel overcomes the polarities between high and low cultures by combining the sophisticated literary techniques of the Boom trend with the more accessible conventions of the detective genre and with references to the Latin American mass culture, particularly cinema and popular music.

### **Silence and Fanaticism**

Throughout the novel, there is a continuous movement from a diffused silence to the emergence of rumours. The dynamic of silence is predominant in the first part of the narration and is sometimes highlighted by corporal expressions or whispers: 'codazos, miradas, guiños, cuchicheos' (56). In other cases, it reflects itself in the narrative discourse through sentences that are based on negations and do not communicate any meaning: 'la señora respondió dócilmente a todas las preguntas: no, nadie, nunca' (17).

The silence pervades the population of Talara and Piura and is always accompanied by a sense of fear. It represents the reaction of a society dominated by a threatening and asphyxiating authority. This sense of anxiety manifests itself when the name of authority is mentioned: '¡carajo, no lo nombres!' (66). This sense of fear can be interpreted as a hint at the climate of terror which affected the rural areas of Peru following the revolution of the Shining Path. Between 1980 and 2000 the paramilitary forces of this



rebel group and the Peruvian army were responsible for committing crimes, rapes and other atrocities mostly in the central southern regions of Peru and, to a lesser extent, in other areas of the country (González 2011: 37). Vargas Llosa's text *El pez en el agua* (1993) explains that the fight against terrorism did not give encouraging results because local people did not trust the Peruvian armed forces and they were not inclined to collaborate with them:

Dejar la lucha contra el terror en manos de policías y militares no había dado fruto. [...] Las desapariciones, las ejecuciones extrajudiciales habían resentido a las poblaciones campesinas, que no colaboraban con las fuerzas del orden. (3373)

Returning to the novel, the interrogations of witnesses and suspects are particularly relevant to explore the theme of silence. When the inhabitants of Talara are interrogated by the detective and Lituma, they refuse to release any information. Only after long silence and hesitations do the characters dare to answer Silva's questions. While speaking, they behave as if they are performing the Christian ritual of confession. Indeed, when Doña Asunta talks about Palomino she makes the sign of the cross and speaks as if she is singing sacred verses. Likewise, Doña Lupe answers Silva's questions by beating her chest. Finally, Teniente Dufó is drunk and answers Silva's questions by kneeling down and holding his head in his hands. Despite their comic effect, these scenes hint at the Christian practice of confession. All these gestures refer back to respect toward authority and relegate the act of speaking to actions deserving reproach. They also express the desire to expiate guilt through punishment. Doña Lupe 'preguntaba al cielo qué pecado había cometido para verse enredada en una historia tan terrible' (102).

The parodic reworking of this Catholic ritual can be interpreted as the author's attempt to demonstrate what he considers a form of fanaticism. This term refers to a central idea in his political evolution from Socialist to Neoliberal ideas. Fanaticism refers to an emotional intensity, which leads an individual or a group of people to fight for their political utopias or their fixed ideas. By 1975, the year of the Padilla case, the author

explored the thought of different intellectuals like Isaiah Berlin, Karl Popper, Fernand Braudel and Jean François Revel. After this wider reading, he started to clarify his new position by regarding Socialist ideas as a form of fanaticism. Since this shift, most of his novels have dealt with and amplified the theme of fanaticism (Kristal 1998: 89-123). The grotesque representation of the characters who perform the ritual of confession echo some passages of Vargas Llosa's memoir *El pez en el agua* (1993) where he describes some Peruvian religious practices as forms of religious fanaticism:

Apenas estuvimos solos, uno de ellos comenzó a hablar de manera inspirada y a citar de memoria la Biblia, y, de pronto los demás comenzaron “¡Aleluya! ¡Aleluya! poniéndose de pie y elevando las manos al cielo. [...] Algunos se habían puesto a llorar, otros oraban de rodillas, con los ojos cerrados y los brazos en alto. Por fin los evangélicos se calmaron, compusieron y partieron, asegurándose que yo era el ungido y que ganaría las elecciones. (7593-7594)

The notion of fanaticism is aligned with the discourse *civilización y barbarie*. Other novels of Vargas Llosa, like *La guerra del fin del mundo* (1981) and *Pantaleón y sus visitadoras* (1973), depict fanaticism as a form of dangerous primitivism which has to be counterrasted by a programme of civilisation (Swanson 2003: 82-83). In the previous sections, Talara has been described as a chaotic place in which gossip undermines the results of investigation and leads to the humiliation of the detective Silva. But this section overturns the previous description: Talara is a town in which everybody is afraid to speak and does not collaborate with investigators. Despite being antithetical, these descriptions share the same idea: Talara is associated with backwardness and barbarism.

Moreover, rumours create continuity with silence rather than revealing themselves as an opposite force. They often contain pronouns like ‘todos’ whose main semantic function is not to convey a meaning, but to point out a preceding entity both in the extra-linguistic and linguistic reality. ‘Todos dicen que tenía una voz regia — Que hubiera sido un artista, uno de esos que cantan por la radio y hacen giras’ (15). As a consequence, rumours lack a specific personal subject that can prove the reliability of what is said (Magnarelli 1985: 157). Similarly, the rumours are introduced by impersonal verbs:

‘También se anda diciendo que podría ser cosa de mariconería’ (186). The complex juxtaposition of rumours climaxes in the final chapter of the novel and raises different possibilities about the case of Palomino Molero. According to the populace, it might have been a matter of ‘mariconería’ or Colonel Mindreau might have been killed to cover up a national or international conspiracy: ‘También se ha dicho que pudo ser algo de espionaje, más que de contrabando’ (180), ‘Que Palomino Molero descubrió que pasaban secretos militares al Ecuador y que por eso lo mataron’ (181), ‘También se anda diciendo que podría ser cosa de mariconerías’ (186). Also, through the channel of rumour, some lapidary sentences are constantly repeated such as the reference to ‘peces gordos’ which runs through the novel. This term functions as a symbol that stands for something else, like the indefinite pronoun ‘todos’. In this case the object of rumours is obfuscated by the uncertainty of the symbol and functions as a cover that masks the precarious status of what has been rumoured (Magnarelli 1985: 157). The phrase ‘peces gordos’ acquires notable importance because it creates continuity with other relevant aspects in the novel and refers back to the animal domain that plays a crucial role in the novel. This aspect will be discussed in the following pages.

### **Voyeurism and Imagination**

As illustrated previously, the representation of space encloses ideas of verticality (the arrangement of space that underlines the presence of high and low hierarchies), division (the presence of borders that strictly define certain compartments of society) and order versus disorder (the orderly space of the upper class versus the confused space of the population). The depiction of Talara’s landscape is also based on the neat distinction of the natural versus industrial domain. This divide refers back to the demarcations nature/humankind and the male/female which underlie the cultural discourse of civilisation and barbarism.

This is particularly evident in chapter four, where Silva is with Lituma on a high rock, called by Talara's habitants "el peñón de los cangrejos", and he spies with his binoculars on Adriana bathing in the sea. Here, an omniscient narrator depicts a space which is organised through the neat opposition between the oil well and nature.

Estaban en el peñón de los cangrejos, atalaya natural de una playita pedregosa, de aguas quietas, protegida de los vientos del atardecer por un farallón polvoriento y por varios almacenes de la International Petroleum Company. A sus espaldas, desplegada en un abanico, tenían la bahía, con sus dos muelles, la refinería erizada de tubos, escaleras y torreones metálicos y el desorden del pueblo. (109)

The natural promontory contrasts with the storehouse of the oil well and, similarly, the beach opposes the refinery and the population of Talara. We have already discussed how the extractive industry is closely linked to masculinity whereas the landscape evokes the traditional conception of nature as a female. In this respect, it is also worth noting that extractive industries which are connected with the activity of perforation establish strong metaphorical connections with the idea of sexual penetration and also symbolise men's physical mastery over women. Moreover, the presence of the oil well is linked to the colonial and postcolonial exploitation of natural resources in Latin America and it also suggests the idea of civilisation that actually masks an economic endeavour (Caruso 2015: 41).

In *Imperial Eyes*, Pratt uses a gender perspective to examine the writings of the European entrepreneurs exploring the Latin American continent in search of profitable areas. By analysing these texts, she highlights connections between the male gaze and the idea of possession of natural resources. She coins the expression 'seeing man' to refer to the male European explorer who goes through the Latin American territories and observes the landscape in order to find areas that can be exploited or resources that can be possessed (Pratt 1992:7). This travel narrative contributed to the historical construction of Latin America in Europe: Latin America is seen as primal nature on which European imperial eyes are projected (Pratt 1992: 126). In this chapter of the novel, the depiction of the

landscape serves as a backdrop for the theme of voyeurism. The act of seeing a woman as an object of pleasure repeats the same opposition of female versus male observed in the space; additionally, it evokes the European discourses according to which Latin America is like an untainted landscape offering itself to European eyes.

Moreover, the motif of voyeurism is closely related to the detective's sight. As explained previously, the seeing-eye is the means which leads to knowledge and comprehension and also has the power of confirming the authority and identity of the subject who sees. Similarly, as discussed on page 154, voyeurism constitutes a process aimed at asserting an authority and submitting to the other (Mulvey 1999: 62-65). Indeed, Mulvey explores the theme of voyeurism in some traditional Hollywood films in order to demonstrate the connection between male gaze and the male spectators' desire for mastery (Mulvey 1999: 62-65). Therefore, the motif of voyeurism, when connected to the theme of 'Private Eye', highlights the linkage between seeing, sexuality, knowledge and authority. This connection is evident when Silva lends his binoculars to Lituma and allows him to spy on Adriana. Here, the act of seeing is also symbolically the act through which Lituma can ascend to a superior professional position and turn into a 'verdadero hombre': 'Prepárate, Lituma [...] será tu regalo de cumpleaños, tu ascenso' (110).

The spying episode shows how a naturalistic view of landscape, which reflects a polarised vision of the world, converges with a detached perception of reality and the theme of voyeurism. Nevertheless, in the same chapter the objective sight of Silva gives way to the imagination of Lituma which generates a collapse of the divide between industry and nature as well as between female and male.

### **The Inversion of Voyeurism and Imagination**

In the previously described episode, the text emphasises a gradual shift from Silva's voyeurism to Lituma's imagination. While Silva spies on Adriana, a third voice

which corresponds with the free indirect speech of Lituma casts doubt on the reliability of Silva's investigative insight: '¿Era Doña Adriana esa nubecita de polvo o [...] sus arrechuras lo hacían ver visiones al Teniente Silva?' (109). Lituma spies on Adriana only to comply with the orders of Silva. He does not show a real interest in Adriana's body but prefers to direct his gaze toward the presence of crabs on the promontory. He starts to mould the surrounding landscape with his imagination. Moreover, the ironic comment of Lituma highlights the problematic relationship between reality and objective perception, and also confirms the defeat of Silva's investigative sight: 'Yo no debo tener su buena vista o, mejor dicho, su buena imaginación, mi Teniente. [...] La verdad, no veo más que la espumita' (113). The imagination of Lituma marks a change, visually speaking. The differences between detached observation and imagination are directly related to the notions of the external and the internal: the detective's observation is an objective vision whereas imagination is a subjective vision. As a result of this change, the depiction of space does not follow the naturalist principle of *mimesis*, but mirrors the subjective perspective of Lituma (Magnarelli 1985: 43).

As a consequence of the imagination, a polarised representation of space gives way to a hybrid image. The strict binary of nature versus humanity, and female versus male, is replaced by a space where the boundaries between the natural and the human domains blur. This is quite evident with the image of the crabs. They excavate galleries by creating an immediate parallel with the construction of human mining galleries: 'Se le ocurrió que el cerro entero estaba horadado por las galerías excavadas en él por los cangrejos' (111). This hybrid image mirrors what Lituma is feeling. Indeed, the image of excavation follows the image of falling and reflects the confusion of the character:

El teniente Silva y él se hundirían en unas profundidades oscuras, arenosas, asfixiantes, pobladas de enjambres de estas crostas vivientes, artilladas con pinzas. Antes de perecer, tendrían una agonía de pesadilla. Tentó el suelo. Durísimo, menos mal. (111)

Moreover, the stream of his thoughts moves from this hybrid image to the disconcerting reminder of Palomino Molero: ‘Se sentía incómodo e impaciente. ¿Era por culpa de Palomino Molero? [...] Desde que lo había visto empalado, tenía la sensación de que ni un solo momento había podido quitárselo de la cabeza’ (112). The narrator creates an invisible thread between hybridism and the death of Palomino Molero. Palomino is a figure who challenges race, class and gender boundaries. His angelical figure and his melodious voice attract both men and women. He represents a liminal figure because he plays creole *boleros*, *vals* and *tonderos*, all music styles rooted in the fusion of different cultural influences. But he mainly challenges the strict demarcation of class and race because he falls in love with Alicia, a white girl and daughter of the most powerful authority (Swanson 2005a: 222).

This change from sight to imagination and the collapse of polarities is further hastened by the unexpected appearance of Alicia. This character marks a radical change in this chapter of the novel, because it destabilises the binary logic on which the entire episode is structured. Her personality and appearance disrupt all the polarities between the human and the natural domains, between female and male. Her androgynous figure challenges the neat distinctions between woman and man: ‘Con ese cuerpo [...] filiforme se la podía tomar por un muchacho’ (136). The colour of her outfit is similar to the shades of landscape and makes her appear as a figure merging with the natural background. ‘Imposible saber de qué color eran la blusita [...] y el pantalón [...] tenían el mismo tono ocre grisáceo de los arenales circundantes’. (115). The erasure of boundaries between animal and human domains is also highlighted by Lituma’s imagination and the words of Silva: ‘Qué hace una señorita como usted entre tanto cangrejo’ (115). The destabilising presence of Alicia is also connected to the idea of threat. The affront through which she draws the attention of Silva and Lituma is also underscored by her posture: ‘tenía los puñitos en la cadera, como un matador que hace un desplante’ (113). The reference to the

bullfight is linked to the animal domain and also introduces the idea of killing. The semiotic field of bullfighting can also be found in another context in the novel where it acquires a sexual significance. 'Una guardia civil debe tener unas bolas de toro.' (147). According to Dundes, the bullfight hints at a gender relationship in literature and in cinema: the *matador* is male whereas the bull is female; the killing of the bull is an allusion to the idea of sexual penetration as the *matadores* use their phallic-shaped sword to penetrate the bulls' flesh. Similarly, Dundes points out that the bullfight can allegorise an inverted gender hierarchy: the *matador* is female whereas the bull is male and the bullfight represents 'the domestication of male sexuality by a dangerously seductive woman' (Dundes 2005:353). In line with these observations, it can be inferred that the relationship between Alicia and the bullfight underscores the danger of this figure as a castrating woman.

Returning to the episode, the animated conversation between Alicia and two policemen draws the attention of Adriana. The latter realises that they are spying and insults Silva and Lituma by 'mentándoles la madre'. (115). The affront of Alicia and Adriana inverts the dynamic of voyeurism: the figure of the woman is endowed with power and turns the dominated to the dominant. This inversion of power is also emphasised by the motif of sight. Silva who previously was the voyeur ironically does not dare to direct his gaze toward Alicia.

Here the novel again places emphasis on the gaze. Lituma's gaze tries to examine Alicia's enigma. By observing the girl's behaviour and by hearing her contradictory answers, Lituma thinks that she might be crazy. His gaze creates continuity with the gaze of Silva that is related to the detection and the act of voyeurism. The spying episode shows how sight links two scenes that are symmetrically opposed. On the one hand, Silva's sight fails both because it is neutralised by Lituma's imagination and it is challenged by the affront of Alicia and Adriana. On the other hand, the subjective perception of Lituma



vainly tries to understand the hybridity related to space and Alicia. Even though the two scenes are symmetrically opposed, both show the defeat of two characters. Their gazes fail and raise unconscious fears.

### **Hybridity and Division in the Representation of Space**

After arguing with Adriana, Silva, together with Alicia and Lituma, descends the promontory and heads toward the office. From this point, the representation of space focuses on a series of images which manifest as a fluctuating displacement from division to hybridism, from harmony to conflict.

The surrounding space of Talara is described by a third-person narrative voice, which intersects with the free indirect speech of Lituma. It is presented according to the perspective of this character. Three descriptive passages ensue during the descent of the three characters from the promontory to the police station.

The first description appears to be very factual because it follows the conventional principle of *mimesis*. It can be divided into two parts. In the first part, the human and natural domains harmoniously coexist. The idea of harmony is suggested by the image of crabs which sneak between Lituma's boot, and then by a tugboat which goes through the sea. In the second part, the harmony is broken by the image of crabs which are crushed by the three characters and also by the reference to *reja*, which marks the boundary between the International Oil Company and population:

Entre sus botines corrían los cangrejos, en enrevesados zigzags [...] Allá abajo [...] un remolcador surcaba el mar, entre los muelles, despidiendo un rizo de humo gris y hacía sonar su sirena cada cierto trecho [...] Habían llegado a la trocha, que [...] conducía hasta la reja divisoria entre las instalaciones de la International y el pueblo de Talara. [...] Bajo sus pies crujían los cascajos o algún cangrejo aplastado. (117)

In the second description, the harmony manifests itself through the image of the water which passes through the houses raised on piles.

Todas tenían terrazas, levantadas sobre pilotes, entre los cuales se metían lenguas de mar. Había viejos en camiseta sentados en las escaleras, niños desnudos recogiendo conchas, y corros de mujeres. Se oían risotadas y el olor a pescados era fuertísimo. (121)

Nevertheless, the union of the human and natural domain is challenged on another perceptive level. The reference to the bad smell of fish that pervades Talara breaks the idyllic scenario and can be associated with the idea of dirtiness. This detail can be connected with the previous description of Alicia. The narrator draws attention to her nose which can perceive the different smells of people. ‘Esa naricita pretenciosa, que parecía poner notas a los olores de la gente’ (115).

Finally, the third representation of Talara more clearly captures the conflictive dynamic of demolishing and confirming the synthesis. In the same paragraph, a factual description appears alongside a subjective description. The orderly arrangement of space gives way to the hybrid image of the refinery as a giant crab:

Detrás de las rejas, en la cumbre del peñón del faro y en Punta Arena, donde estaban las casas de los gringos y de los altos empleados de la International [...] en un extremo de la bahía, la torre de un pozo de petróleo tenía un penacho de fuego, rojizo y dorado. Parecía un cangrejo gigante, remojándose las patas. (122)

The harmony of this image is questioned by the intertextual reference to José María Arguedas’ novel *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*. In this novel, the equipment of the Chimbote factory is described through an animal referent, as two worms spinning: ‘dos gusanos enormes, de acero, giraban, dirigiendo hacia la compuerta sus tornillos sin fin’ (Arguedas 1990: 120). In Lienhard’s terms, this scene can be regarded as an example of *animismo industrial*. The industrial imaginary interacts with the *gusano* referent, an image which is closely connected with Andean cosmology. Nevertheless, this hybrid image is intended to convey negative meanings. According to Melgar Bao, *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* contains the Andean images of *Amaru* (the sacred snake) and *Uru* (the worm devouring meat) which symbolise respectively the good and the bad (Melgar Bao 1998: 1180). The implicit negative connotation of this scene is also confirmed by the

occurrences of the word *gusano* in the *Todas las sangres*. In this text, this term is used to hint at qualities conventionally considered as Western, such as ambition or the greed for wealth. For example, in this passage *gusano*, which is associated with the idea of money, is negatively connoted as can be seen from the adjective ‘feo’: ‘Otra plata es maldición de dios, hace crecer gusano feo en el tuétano, en la sangre también’ (Arguedas 1968: 84). Returning to *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, the negative description of the anchovy factory is further reinforced by the fact that the character Don Diego compares this womb-like machine with death: ‘la muerte es como un gusano que está en el vacío de cemento’ (Arguedas 1990: 120). Thus, it is possible that the description of the refinery/crab in Vargas Llosa’s text alludes to *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* as it is not the single intertextual reference to Arguedas’ text. The following sections will explore other intertextual linkages between *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* and *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?*. Considering these premises, it is possible that Vargas Llosa intentionally used this allusion to endow his scene with other implicit meanings. This intertextual echo can be recognised by readers familiar with Arguedas’ text and can trigger the same negative connotations in their minds.

Finally, the three descriptions mirroring Lituma’s perspective unveil opposing tendencies — hybridity and division, harmony and conflict. This fluctuating dynamic reflects Lituma’s attempts to understand the love story between Palomino and Alicia, thus by extension, it mirrors his contradictory feelings toward the controversial theme of *mestizaje*. Lituma identifies himself with the figure of Palomino because he is aware of his hybrid identity: he is a *mestizo* with a middle social status, he is ‘an investigator yet emotionally fanciful, a policeman yet a subordinate, a tough guy yet feminised’ (Swanson 2005a: 224). His social, racial and gendered hybridity leads this character to reflect on the sad vicissitudes of Palomino (Swanson 2005a: 220). Lituma tries to imagine the romantic love story between Alicia and Palomino. He visualises idyllic moments between them but

at same time, he thinks that all this could never happen because of prejudices related to race and class. This stream of thoughts is closely connected with objective perception. His inability to imagine Alicia and Palomino together is suggested by sentences like ‘trató de verla’ or ‘no la veía’, as this passage suggests: ‘Trataba de verla desnuda, temblando, en brazos de Palomino Molero [...] No imposible. No la veía’ (136). Here, the verb ‘to see’ is used in negative sentences or it loses its semantic strength when it is used in verbal phrases like ‘tratar de’. This fluctuating dynamic between confirming and negating the existence of this love story finds its correspondence with the fluctuating displacement from hybrid to division and from harmony to death in the depiction of space (Caruso 2015: 43).

### **Animal Imagery**

As we have seen, in this text, cultural hybridity is suggested by scenes in which the demarcations between industry and nature blur. Nevertheless, these descriptions occur occasionally in comparison with images involving only animals which, instead of hybridity evoke the idea of homogeneity by showing the complete absence of the human referent. The constant hints at animals fit into the dichotomy civilisation/ barbarism and serve to allude to the idea of primitive, uncivilized or in other words, the threatening other. As seen on page 75, Magnarelli explains that the concept of bestiality originates from the divide between nature and human kind and, as a consequence of this, it is closely related to the other (Magnarelli 1985: 50). In the text, the images including animals express ideas of violence, conflict and death. They are much more than descriptive, since they represent intertextual references to José María Arguedas’ text, *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*.

In Vargas Llosa’s novel, the conversations between the characters are often interrupted by images of midges hitting the lamp: ‘Lituma observaba los insectos que revoloteaban en torno a la lámpara. Eran decenas, se precipitaban zumbando contra el

vidrio [...] querían suicidarse’ (16). In the same vein, in Arguedas’ novel, the description of the Chimbote factory includes a similar scene involving insects: ‘El visitante observaba un bicho alado que zumbaba sobre el vidrio de la lámpara’ (Arguedas 1990: 85). In both cases, the description encloses the idea of death. Similarly, the episode in which Alicia is interviewed by Silva and Lituma contains scenes which have animals as protagonists. An example is the depiction of cats fighting with each other: ‘A lo lejos varios gatos maullaban y chillaban, frenéticos: ¿Estarían peleándose o cachando? Todo era confuso en el mundo, carajo’ (163). This description suggests the idea of conflict but at same time, it expresses the idea of homogeneity. A symmetric image can be found also in *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*: ‘Dos perros [...] rondaban por fuera, desde que cierta noche, los chanchos arrinconaron a dos perros y se los comieron’ (Arguedas 1990: 211). The same idea of violence recurs in Vargas Llosa’s novel through the depiction of children torturing a cat: ‘Unos churres con hondas estaban acribillando a hondazos al gato del Chino Tang’ (127). Similarly, Arguedas’ novel describes a horde of children killing seagulls: ‘Los alcatraces seguían pajareando, cada vez más bajo. [...] Agonizaban horas de horas, o eran atacados por bandadas de niños que trataban de descuartizarlos’ (Arguedas 1990: 135).

In *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?*, the constant references to animals also share a relationship with the dynamic of rumours. Some rumours running through the text can be interpreted as a verbal counterpart of these images. The repetitive sentence is the rumour which stands out in the text and, contrary to other rumours that emerge in the final chapter, it appears in different points of the novel. The expression ‘peces gordos’ lacks a certain referential meaning both in the text and extra-linguistic world. Nevertheless, despite its ambiguity, it is commonly used in the Spanish language to point out an authority. Moreover, the link between the expression and the linguistic system, in particular with

some proverbs ‘los peces gordos comen a los chicos’ remarks a one-sided and asymmetrical relationship in which the strongest dominates the weakest.

From the overall analysis of these episodes, it appears that the references to animals characterise both Vargas Llosa’s and Arguedas’ novel. Moreover, it is worth considering why the intertextual references highlight parallels between two settings, Talara and Chimbote. This is probably because, in the extra-linguistic reality, these two cities share some similarities. Like Talara, Chimbote radically changed in the 60s after the Boom of anchovy production: the population of this city grew considerably due to the increasing number of immigrants. In *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, Arguedas depicts this change in pessimistic terms. Indeed, Chimbote appears in the text as the pessimistic fictional representation of a capitalistic industry, in which the inconsiderate exploitation of natural resources, poverty, pollution and deculturation of the autochthonous social groups make this place unlivable (Caviedes 1985: 65). Thus, the two Northern Peruvian cities have something in common: since the 60s Talara and Chimbote become points of convergence of immigrants from different cultural backgrounds and from different regions of Peru. In Pratt’s terms, Talara and Chimbote are examples of contact zones (see Chapter One).

These intertextual links between Chimbote and Talara show how Vargas Llosa confirms the pessimistic view of Arguedas. As seen in the previous chapter, in *Todas las sangres* the Indigenist author still believes in an idealised cultural hybridity in which the Andean populations do not completely change their own identity whilst being in contact with other cultures. On the contrary, in *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, Arguedas expresses all his disenchantment with the current Peruvian society and the reality of Chimbote. The cultural and social diversity of this port-city becomes an example of degradation and alienation; as Forgues points out ‘El mestizaje ideal, dinámico y fecundo, magníficamente plasmado en *Todas las sangres* es substituido por un proceso irreversible

de aculturación' (Forgues 1990: 308). Although Vargas Llosa and Arguedas do not share the same concern for the preservation of the autochthonous, they have the same pessimistic vision of the *mestizaje cultural*. Moreover, the constant emphasis on animal images further unveils Vargas Llosa's uneasiness towards cultural hybridity, seen as other to tame. It also demonstrates how in his view, the heterogeneous and pluri-ethnic community of Talara fits in the category of a 'barbarian land' dominated by violence, conflict and chaos.

The novel mirrors two opposing tendencies. Some images that challenge the borders between the human and the natural domains suggest the possibility of a harmonious interaction between two worlds. Other images have the annihilating power of highlighting the precariousness of this cultural hybridity.

### **Pollution: Something Abject**

The previous paragraphs have focused on the processes of division and hybridity that play an important role in the overall structure of the novel, but essentially mirror the author's uneasy feelings towards *mestizaje cultural*. According to Mignolo, the divide between the barbarian and the civilised is defined by a frontier which distinguishes the hegemonic cultures from the subordinated ones (Mignolo 2000: 299).<sup>59</sup> With regard to this novel, the demarcation of a border creates a division between the civilisation related to the masculinised industry and the ordered wealthy areas of Talara and the other, represented by the feminised landscape and the lower-class neighbourhoods of the town.

The French psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva's essay *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980) presents another way of examining the border between self and other, or in other words, the frontier between civilisation and barbarism. Her ideas provide a good

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<sup>59</sup> 'The "frontier" was the movable (westward) landmark of the march of the civilising mission, the line dividing civilisation and barbarism. The "frontier", however, was not only geographic but epistemologic as well: the location of the primitive and the barbarian was the "vacant land" from the point of view of economy, and the "empty space" of thinking, theory, and intellectually production' (Mignolo 2000: 298-299).

basis for understanding the controversial link between Vargas Llosa's subjectivity and his anxiety regarding cultural hybridity. 'Abject' is 'a revolt of being directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected against the scope of the possible, the tolerable and the thinkable' (Kristeva 1982: 2). The abject is not an object which can be named and imagined but it 'has only one quality of the object, that of being opposed to I' (Kristeva 1982: 2). What is abject is the jettisoned object, something that is radically excluded by the self (the superego) and is driven away (Kristeva 1982: 3). In line with this explanation, examples of the abject are things that the subject does not recognize as something understandable, such as loathing, blood, menstruation, corpses and dung. The culminating moment of the abject is the abjection of the self: after fruitless attempts to identify the abject with a familiar object, the subject finds that the impossible constitutes its very being (Kristeva 1982: 3). When the subject experiences the abject it feels contradictory feelings, from repugnance to fascination (Kristeva 1982: 2). This section aims to show how the establishment or challenge of borders, in the representation of the novel's space, mirrors the dynamic of abjection that underpins human subjectivity. Indeed, the abject is related to an imaginary border that exists within human subjectivity between self and other: the abject lies beyond the border, demarcated by the Superego. From this place of banishment the abject challenges the Superego, it disturbs its identity and brings it toward a liminal place where meaning collapses (Kristeva 1982: 2).

The text in question explores the abject related to the idea of pollution. The image of oil waste draws readers' attention to the environmental impact of oil extraction:

Era un olor rico, que hacía bien, pero tramposo, pues sugería playas acicaladas, de aguas transparentes, y el mar de Talara andaba siempre impregnado de residuos de petróleo y de las suciedades de los barcos del puerto. (29)

The most straightforward interpretation of this image is that the waste from the oil extraction unveils the double facade of the Western conception of modernity. On the one hand, it is associated with technological development and the exploitation of natural



resources, aimed at a capital increase. On the other hand, it is connected with more negative consequences, for example the transformation of landscape and ecological problems. Nevertheless, the overall perception of pollution cannot be only interpreted as a conscious acknowledgement of the negative consequences related to extractive industries but also can be considered as a manifestation of abjection. The image of oil refuse can be interpreted within the framework of Julia Kristeva's theory. It represents the abject because of its incompleteness. Moreover, the abjection of this image is manifested in the blurred mixture of liquids, which shows the threat of *pharmakos*, that is, the in-between, the ambiguous caused by the erasure of distinctions (Kristeva 1982: 84). In line with other images in the novel, the fusion of the sea water and the oil extraction waste, or in other words, the combination between the natural and the industrial, is not a merely descriptive element but refers back to the contentious theme of *mestizaje cultural*. Throughout the novel, the frailty of hybridity between industry and nature is underlined by dynamics of division, homogeneity, death and subordination that undermine the harmony that might exist between two domains. Here, the precariousness of hybridity is emphasised by images that transmit ideas of the abject rather than harmony. Moreover, it is well known that oil and water do not mix even when they are in contact with each other. It is not a coincidence that the Spanish saying 'son como el agua y el aceite' is used to refer to people who do not get along with each other. Despite the apparent hint at the idea of fusion, these images confirm the dual opposition between the industry and nature which refers back to two different worldviews, the Western and the Latin-American.

The idea of waste is not just related to the extractive environment but also to the animal referent. At this point of narration, Talara is depicted as a dirty and smelly town because of the fish wastes left on the street: 'En una de las casas de madera, unas mujeres abrían unos pescados y les sacaban diestramente las vísceras. [...] Olía fuerte y mal' (120). Here, the reference to the decomposing fish and the internal organs of these animals create

continuity with the animal domain and the perception of Latin America as a natural landscape. Nevertheless, the image of the women removing the entrails from fish evokes the idea of natural resources extracted from the entrails of the earth. The text provides another example of a hybrid image combining industry and nature. The hybridity of this scene is also suggested by the blurring demarcation between the female and the male. This scene in which all the characters are women hints at the idea of natural resource extraction which is conventionally associated with a male environment. Moreover, this image and the recurrent reference to the bad smell of fish can be interpreted as manifestations of abjection. According to Julia Kristeva, food is the other, because it is tied to orality, that is 'a boundary of the self's clean and proper body' (Kristeva 1982: 75). It represents the natural, that is opposed to the social condition of man, and destabilises the self's clean and proper body. Besides the ambivalence of food as other, the aforementioned image of fish left-overs causes abjection, because of their incompleteness and also their ambiguous nature, that is on the border between the inanimate and animate, the organic and the inorganic, culture and nature. The bowels in particular are perceived as abject not only because they challenge the distinctions between inside and outside, but also because they recall the violent action of expulsion which is related to birth (Kristeva 1982: 76).

Moreover, the bad smell of fish that pervades Talara and this sense of pollution establish strong intertextual connections with the work by José María Arguedas, *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (1971). In this novel, the bad smell of fish contributes to the pessimistic description of Chimbote, a city in which rapid industrialisation has brought about inhuman work styles and radical cultural changes. Chimbote reflects what for the author is the dreaded outcome of Peruvian society: the erosion of Andean identities following the intertwining of different cultures and the exposure to Western models. As previously discussed, Chimbote and Talara share a common characteristic: they are culturally and socially diverse.

The linking thread between these scenes, the concept of abjection and *mestizaje* as well as the intertextual links between Talara and Chimbote, lead the reader to think that the images of pollution do not hint at environmental contamination, strictly speaking. The idea of pollution evoking the cultural, social and racial diversity of Peru unveils Vargas Llosa's perception of *mestizaje* as other which is incompatible with the Western conception of modernity.

Nevertheless, Vargas Llosa shows his hidden disapproval for *mestizaje* but does not condemn industrialization *in toto*. This is particularly evident in *El pez en el agua* (1993) where he expresses his opinions about the extractive sector and fishing industry in Peru:

Esto, sumado a la declaratoria de guerra del gobierno al Fondo Monetario y a todo el sistema financiero mundial, a su política hostil a las inversiones extranjeras y a la inseguridad creciente en el país, habían convertido al Perú en una nación apesada: nadie le concedía créditos, nadie invertía en ella. De exportar petróleo, el Perú pasó a importarlo. Por eso presentaba la tierra piurana esa apariencia que sobrecogía el ánimo. (3266)

En los años cincuenta, gracias a la visión de un puñado de empresarios — surgió en la costa peruana una industria pionera: la de harina de pescado. En pocos años el Perú se convirtió en el primer productor mundial. Esto creó miles de puestos de trabajo, decenas de fábricas, convirtió el pequeño puerto de Chimbote en un gran centro comercial e industrial, y desarrolló la pesquería hasta volver al Perú, en los años sesenta, un país pesquero más importante que el Japón. [...] La dictadura militar nacionalizó en 1972 todas las empresas pesqueras y formó con ellas un gigantesco conglomerado — Pesca Perú — que puso en manos de la burocracia. El resultado: la ruina de la industria. (3254)

Here, Vargas Llosa promotes an idea of industrialisation closely connected with his neoliberal ideas. The above excerpt, which provides a desolate picture of the Piura region, contrasts with the nostalgic accounts of his childhood. He has a good memory of when he used to play in the International Petroleum Corporation swimming pool in Talara. At another point of the text he says:

Un departamento que conocía bien, antes, era el de Piura. Ahora, no podía creer lo que veía. Esos pueblos parecían haber muerto en vida, languidecer en un marasmo sin esperanza. En esos pueblos pobres de mi infancia piurana

había una vitalidad pujante, una alegría a flor de piel y una esperanza ahora extinguidas. (3243)

*¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* was published in 1985, the year in which extractive industries were under the management of the state-owned company *Petroperú*. It is not a coincidence that the text provides a negative description of Talara: a chaotic, polluted, backward town, pervaded by violence and fanaticism. This pessimistic description of Talara does not mirror only Vargas Llosa's rejection of its culturally and socially heterogeneous environment but also his disapproval of the Peruvian industrial management of the 80s. For Vargas Llosa, nationalisation brings poverty, the enrichment of a few bureaucrats and corruption. Therefore, the precariousness of hybridity can be interpreted as a hint at his political ideas. By echoing the dichotomy of civilisation and barbarism, Vargas Llosa follows the path of Spanish American intellectuals of the post-independence period. The precariousness of hybridity suggests that Vargas Llosa defends a Western model of progress (based on the Neoliberal political economy and oriented towards foreign investments) and does not attempt to find a compatibility between the Western concept of modernity and the Peruvian diverse cultural substrata. The Peruvian specificity which is identified with nature, the female and, thus, the other is seen as an impediment to progress.

### **Vargas Llosa: The Victory of the Author**

Julia Kristeva claims that 'any practice of speech, inasmuch it involves writing, is a language of fear' (Kristeva 1982: 38). By considering these ideas in the analysis of Vargas Llosa's novel, it is possible to say that the author struggles against fear through perfect control of literary tools.

The author subverts the generic expectations of the detective novel and displays the failure of the detective character, in order to show the void and uncertainty generated by the collapse of patriarchal laws. He also reproduces this sense of uncertainty in the

description of space through a non-distinctiveness between masculine and feminine, industry and nature, Latin American and Western. The author transmits a sense of vagueness and ambiguity by orchestrating a complexity of rumours that destabilise the third narrative voice which is identified with the truth of the detective.

The contradictions and ambiguities are not unconscious at all. On the contrary, they are a deliberate choice on the part of the author, and are the result of a particular focus on language and form. As previously discussed, the complex web of rumours shows that this disorder is only illusory because it is the result of manipulation on the part of the author. Although this complex system of narrative devices seems to underscore the author's withdrawal from the narration, it reveals the strong presence of a machinating author who is behind the scenes. Also, other literary elements show the hidden presence of an author who is perfectly aware of these literary devices such as the intertextual reference to Arguedas' novel; the symmetrical descriptions of space; the parodic reversal of conventions related to the detective genre; the repeated patterns of some narrative episodes; the specular representation of some characters and the link between two narrative threads that seem independent at the beginning (on the one hand, the investigation into the murder of Palomino Molero, and, on the other, the comic subplot revolving around Silva's sexual attraction to Adriana).

Kristeva talks about narcissism as a human being's reaction to his unstable relationship with the other. Narcissism is 'a self-contemplative, conservative and self-sufficient haven' (Kisteva 1982: 14) that prevents the subject from being threatened by the other. From this notion it can be inferred that the aforementioned control of the narrative discourse shows an autoreferential tendency, by which the author distances himself from a threatening other and barricades himself within the confines of his identity, as an intellectual and as a unique torchbearer for the values of civilisation and modernity.

## Conclusion

This analysis overturns the conventional assumption, according to which the representation of space is a secondary material for the interpretation of a text. Indeed, although Talara setting is not directly engaged with Peruvian extractive industries, it reveals Vargas Llosa's subconscious concerns for broader issues related to the growth of this sector: *mestizaje cultural*, immigration, the urbanization of peripheral areas.

The author plays on the expectations associated with the extractive industry setting and nature. The extractive industry environment represents the homogenous model of patriarchal institutions and is conceived as a space divorced from nature. Conversely, nature is described as a feminised landscape deprived of history and cultures as it is closely connected with the traditional understanding of the Latin American continent as empty space and woman.

The dualistic structure, civilisation and barbarism, underlies the novel. This is particularly evident from the description of the Talara community as opposed to the wealthy neighbourhoods occupied by the IPC managers and US army staff. The diverse community of Talara is associated with characteristics which are conventionally related to the barbarian in the Latin American literary tradition: it is a chaotic environment dominated by irrational behaviour like fanaticism, it is a locus of violence and conflict, and it is a dehumanised place which is closer to the animal. The traditional Latin American dichotomy of civilisation and barbarism underlines the social stratification of the town, divided between high and low culture/ lower and upper classes; the world of the powerless classes of Talara is related to pop culture, movies, and rumours contrasted with the world of the authorities which is linked with law, military reports and writing. Throughout the novel, the theme of rumours challenges these neat divisions by blurring the demarcations between writing and speech. Nevertheless, this hints at the idea of hybridity is much more problematic. The use of deictic words, like 'todos', and the use of symbols such as 'peces

gordos', uncovers the pure linguistic character of the rumours. In the first case, 'todos' is an indefinite pronoun and indicates no specific, personal subject that can prove the reliability of what is said. In the second case, the symbol 'peces gordos' expresses the mere dynamic of substitution, rather than referring to a certain entity in the linguistic or extra-linguistic reality. Rumours turn out to be a literary artifice that has no function of information, and that underlines the problematic and precarious status of what is rumoured. Paradoxically, the tendency to incorporate elements from spoken language is the result of a highly stylized prose.

The idea of cultural hybridity is also highlighted by the erasure of boundaries between the natural domain and industry. The image of the extractive industry interacts with the natural domain that is primarily the animal referent. The image of 'pozo como un cangrejo remojándose las patas' (122) stands out in the text by suggesting a symmetrical and harmonious relationship between two given worlds. Even so, the text puts much more emphasis on the frailty of hybridity (Caruso 2015: 47). The same referent of the animal domain is used to challenge hybridity, and to put forward ideas of conflict, death and homogeneity. The representation of the animal images, as opposing forces to hybridity, unveils Vargas Llosa's perception of *mestizaje* as an impediment to the complete development of Peruvian identity.

Throughout the novel, the concept of hybridity is accompanied by an undercurrent of anxiety, which particularly manifests itself in the field of visual perception. The spying episode shows how anxiety is raised by the hybrid figure of Alicia. Silva's voyeurism, which foregrounds links between sexuality, seeing and knowledge, is challenged by the appearance of the girl and highlights the male anxiety of castration. At the end of the novel this fear climaxes when Silva is unable to have sexual intercourse with Adriana. Similarly, Lituma tries to understand Alicia's enigma, primarily her love story with Palomino that defies race and class boundaries. His state of anxiety is mirrored in the

depiction of space that frenetically moves from images of hybridity to ones of division. Anxiety is also displayed in the text at a more subliminal level, being evident in the use of two images of pollution, the left over fish, an image that is related to the natural domain, and the oil well waste, connected to the industrial domain. Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection casts light on how the unconscious significance of these images is related to a fear of the other. Thus, the conventional perception of Latin America as nature and woman, the abject nature of some scenes and the anxiety surfacing in some descriptions of the space highlight Vargas Llosa's uneasy feelings toward *mestizaje*. All these aspects seem to confirm the author's perception of the Peruvian diverse society as other that has to be warded off to re-establish a stable identity.

Various passages in the text highlight constant parallelisms between *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (1971) and *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?*. These intertextual references suggest that despite having opposing views these authors are somehow connected to each other. The implicit linkage between Chimbote and Talara is attributable to the similarities between these two urban centres in the extra-linguistic context. Both cities expanded following the development of their industries and became an important destination for immigrants from different regions of Peru. The dialogue between these two texts seems to imply that Vargas Llosa shares the views expressed in Arguedas' last novel and, in particular, with its pessimistic vision of *mestizaje cultural*.

The author's perception of Peruvian society as barbarian leads the author to question whether progress can be feasible in his country. In *El pez en el agua* the author complains about the changes to Talara and the town's descent from prosperity to desolation. He believes that the degradation in the overall region of Piura is due to the shift from foreign-led industries to nationalised industries. In this nonfiction work, he expresses his opposition to the nationalisation of industries and, in general terms, to a state-led economy. The analysis of this novel shows how his opposition to an interventionist



economy is not just because this economic model does not conform with his neoliberal ideas. The precariousness of cultural hybridity in the text hints at the fact that the modern is compatible with the Latin American. The author's distrust of Peruvian society and institutions makes him wonder if it is possible to build an independent model of progress. For him modernity is only possible in Peru if it is associated with foreign investments as well as with US and European economic models.

The novel revolves around the defeat of the detective as an authority figure, but the masterful control of different literary devices refers back to the authority of Vargas Llosa as the writer. Therefore, the text is self-referential; that is to say, it is a reflection of its own creation. Despite the apparent openness toward hybridity, the text is designed to assert Vargas Llosa's status as an intellectual and as a writer. As the recurrent expression 'han sido los peces gordos' suggests, connecting with the idiomatic sentence 'ser como un pez fuera de agua', it is possible to say that the author feels like 'a fish out of water'. He feels extraneous to the political and social milieu of Peru, and he defends, as his principal values, his right to free criticism, the autonomous expression of his creativity and his intellectual integrity.



## CONCLUSION

This thesis did not seek to provide an exhaustive theory of how the extractive industry space is conceptualised in Bolivian and Peruvian fiction. It selectively examines to what extent four examples of fiction contribute to the discourses around the construction of the extractive industry in Bolivia and in Peru in a particular historical period.

With regard to the two selected Bolivian texts, it can be ascertained that both of them contribute to the construction of political discourses related to the development of the extractive industries. As explained in the Introduction, in comparison with Peru, mineworkers' political activism and, broadly speaking, the emergence of grass roots movements have been stronger in Bolivia. The leftist political parties were more influential in the political debates as they established strong alliances with the mineworkers and the peasant communities; finally, the Revolution of 1952 was a pivotal political event which marked a rupture with the oligarchic monopoly over natural resources and the nationalisation of industries.

Additionally, it has been explained how this particular historical background is reflected in Bolivian mining literature through certain horizons of expectations: the presence of an ideological message, the engagement with broader political discussions and the mimetic description of mineworkers' conditions. The analysis of the two chosen Bolivian texts shows that both partly conform to these horizons of expectations; indeed, both novels are politically engaged with different debates such as the empowerment of the working classes, the political role of the intellectual and the participation of peasant communities in mineworkers' struggles. Despite their differences, both novels reflect the way in which the authors interrogate their privileged social status in relation to the working classes' marginal conditions and, ultimately, they highlight their powerful position within the mineworkers' activism. *Aluvión de fuego* highlights these two issues through the

disappearance of Mauricio and the survival of El Coto. We have explained that both figures epitomise two opposing intellectuals: the first promotes equal and mutual relationships with the mineworkers and the Indigenous Jacinta, whereas the second has a paternalistic and authoritarian attitude towards the most marginalised characters. Therefore, through the survival of El Coto and the death of the most positive character Mauricio, the text highlights the limitations of leftist political militancy: the presence of a social hierarchy in which intellectuals are the political leaders, while the working-class people are the ancillary actors. Similarly, in *Canchamina*, the authorial role of the intellectual is the predominant lens for interpreting the text. The text emphasises the authority of the writer in political militancy through the gender relationships between the *palliris* Ángela and the narrator Fenelón Aparicio. In particular, the asymmetric relationship between the female and the male character serves to mirror the problematic relationships between intellectuals and mineworkers: the solidarity between these social actors versus the social, cultural and economic distance between them; the mineworkers' claims versus intellectuals' wish to assert their own prestige. The novel's ending draws the readers' attention to the primary role of intellectuals in working-class struggles: they shape ideology, they promote action through words and they legitimate the initiative of the working classes. Thus, the issue of intellectual authority which emerges in both texts is closely connected with the Bolivian historical context. From the Chaco War up to the Revolution of 1952, new leftist political forces have emerged and more political connections have been established with mineworkers and peasant communities. As explained in the previous chapters, the collaboration between these different social groups was the cause of both the success and the failure of the Revolution of 1952. Indeed, these alliances were beneficial to forming a strong political coalition which led to a notable weakening of the Bolivian oligarchy. At the same time, these alliances also brought tensions and divisions because of the differences between the members.

Moreover, the Bolivian novel *Aluvión de fuego* can be interpreted as the author's attempt to understand the social configuration of the Bolivian peripheral areas affected by the expansion of extractive industries. In this case, the mining zone is halfway between a contact zone and a barbaric area which the urban intellectuals try to analyse, idealise or represent. Nevertheless, the Bolivian text also depicts the mining town as a border thinking area, that is, a politically active space where new political consciousnesses arise. The depiction of this peripheral area as a centre of political discussions finds its explanation in the Bolivian history: as explained previously, the mobilisation of mineworkers in the peripheral mining towns of Bolivia notably intensified after the Chaco War.

Both texts show how the relationship between the intellectuals and the mineworkers are mediated by Indigenous figures. In both novels it is interesting to note that the Indigenous is embodied by female characters who represent the most marginal and the most excluded figures. In *Aluvión de fuego*, Indigenous ethnicity is associated with the two prostitutes, Eulalia and Jacinta. The first represents the most passive figure in the narrative whereas the second, an assertive and independent heroine, tragically dies. In spite of these differences, both characters are similarly depicted as physical objects on which male desire is projected. In both cases, the objectification of their bodies serves to mark their subaltern status. In *Canchamina*, the intersection between indigeneity and gender is suggested by the bizarre character of Quispe. Because of her constant drunken condition, she appears as an unreliable person who people do not take seriously or whose words become sensible only after being validated by someone else. Eulalia, Jacinta and Quispe draw readers' attention to the subaltern positions of Indigenous people in Bolivian political debates and, in particular, in Bolivian mineworkers' struggles between the 1930s and the 1960s. Eulalia and Jacinta show how Indigenous people still had no voice in the political dialogue and they are mainly exploited when they participate in working class protests.

On the other hand, Quispe demonstrates how in the 50s, Indigenous leaders have a more participative role in working-class protests but do not have any authoritative voice yet.

The two Peruvian texts are also shaped by, or reflect, cultural discourses related to extractive industries. Firstly, both authors participate in the extractive industry narrative by providing their way of seeing the peripheral areas of Peru affected by the exploitation of natural resources. Arguedas provides a more complex insight into the mining zones. He describes them as areas which challenge the dichotomies underpinning the traditional configuration of Peru: rural versus urban; *criollo* versus Andean; Indigenous versus Western. Moreover, he depicts them as contact zones, heterogeneous cultural spaces which are characterised by multiple relations between different social actors. Conversely, Vargas Llosa provides a view which is much closer to the *criollo* perspective by describing the extractive industry town of Talara as a barbaric zone in which cultural heterogeneity is synonymous with chaos, fanaticism and gossip. In spite of these differences, both texts show how the industrialisation of Peruvian peripheral areas shares much in common with two other social phenomena which arose in Peru in the 1960s: the construction of a highway linking Lima with the highland areas and the massive expansion of Lima. All these occurrences, which catalysed migration in Peru, led to a different geographic configuration of the nation. For Mignolo, the distinction between periphery and centre became blurred as the peripheries were now in the centre and the centre was in the peripheries (Mignolo 2000: ix). Thus, the two novels reveal the authors' attempts to understand phenomena which cannot be easily described via terms such as periphery or centre. Moreover, we can notice an essential difference between the Bolivian and Peruvian texts: the extractive industry spaces in the Peruvian novels are not depicted as politically active areas. The divergences are the consequence of a different historical background: as stated in the Introduction, the mobilisation of mineworkers was much weaker in Peru than in Bolivia.

In the Peruvian texts, both writers also seek to explore extractive industry spaces by interrogating the issue of migration. As detailed throughout the thesis, the industrialisation of the peripheral areas which are rich in natural resources brings about an unstable social mobility which is dependent on the different fluctuations of economic and labour demands. As a consequence of this, the social configuration of the extractive industry areas is based on the convergence of different peoples: business people and technical personnel from Lima and abroad and a labour force from other areas of Peru. The two novels unveil both authors' concern about migration. In Vargas Llosa's text there is an undercurrent of anxiety in the literary representation of the space of Talara. As explained in Chapter Four, the moment of publication of this text corresponds with a particular period: Talara was not an industrial enclave in which the arrival of the new labour force was strictly controlled by the multinational IPC but a *ciudad abierta* which, following the nationalisation of the oil industry, was a point of convergence for different immigrants. The intertextual parallelisms between the description of Talara and Arguedas' depiction of Chimbote suggest that Vargas Llosa shares Arguedas' pessimistic view in *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* in which the dystopic depiction of Chimbote is closely connected with uncontrollable migration and *cholificación*. Similarly, *Todas las sangres* displays Arguedas' concern about migration although it does not contain the same pessimistic view of the author's final novel. Indeed, in the novel selected for this project, migration is associated with prostitution. As seen in Chapter Three, the link between these apparently disparate motifs is embedded in the *indigenista* discourse of city as prostitute and also has a significant importance if it is related to an androcentric vision of the nation. On this basis, it hints that the author sees migration as a threatening factor in social and cultural homogeneity.

These texts also highlight how migration is closely related to *mestizaje cultural* and, in particular, to the emergence of new Andean *mestizo* identities. In *¿Quién mató a*

*Palomino Molero?*, the subjective representations of the space and the anxiety surfacing in these descriptions betray Vargas Llosa's uneasy feelings towards *mestizaje cultural*. Conversely, in *Todas las sangres*, various passages emphasise greater openness toward *mestizaje*. In this respect, Rendón Wilka embodies positive cultural hybridity as he represents the mediator between the Andean heritage and the Western concept of modernity. He accepts the technological process as long as this does not clash with Andean cultures and traditions. However, at the same time, this character dislikes certain cultural practices considered as *cholo*; an example is his preference for the traditional Quechua songs instead of the *chicha* music. In this respect, it has been discussed how the figure's disapproval of *mestizo* cultural manifestations reflects the author's main concern about *mestizaje*: the erosion of Indigenous identities as well as the loss of Andean traditions as a consequence of the exposure to Western cultural practices. Both authors' worries about cultural *mestizaje* are connected with the debate surrounding the development of industries in Andean countries. As explained in the Introduction, the exploitation of natural resources in Peru implies different problems; one of the main challenges in Andean areas is to promote a plan of industrial development which is not in conflict with the rural livelihood and cultural customs of the surrounding communities.

The two works also seek to answer central questions revolving around the extractive industries in Peru. They raise debates about whether the discourse of modernity should lie exclusively on the Western model or whether it could be built on Andean cultural specificity. They also promote discussions regarding whether natural resources should be owned by the nation or should be allocated to transnational firms. In *Todas las sangres*, it has been said that Rendón Wilka's statement '¡La luz dentro del mundo puede hacerse!' (109) has been interpreted as expressing his optimistic view of building an independent concept of modernity which can coexist with Andean traditions and cultural heritage. For this reason, this character represents the ideal political leader of peasants'



and mineworkers' mobilisations: he is a promoter of industrial progress but he also has an inside view of Andean culture. As a consequence of these characteristics, he can promote a model of industrial progress which does not contradict Andean concepts of livelihood and wellbeing. Conversely, the discussion has shown that Vargas Llosa's disapproval of the nationalisation of industries is partly due to his ideology, leaning more towards the privatisation of industries, the promotion of foreign investments and the non-intervention of the state. His opinions against the Peruvian management of industries also reveal his distrust for Peruvian institutions and his conception of the native as an obstacle to civilisation. On this basis, in contrast to Arguedas, he questions the possibility of an independent model of progress.

In summary, this thesis shows how the analysis of specific literary texts related to the extractive industries can open new paths for the study of natural resource extraction in Latin America. Indeed, from this analysis it can be seen that these texts engage with broader issues related to the expansion of extractive industries in Bolivia and Peru: *mestizaje*, migration, independent discourses of modernity, and the role of the intellectual within working-class struggles. An approach which incorporates literature can be helpful for understanding the cultural, social and economic implications of this economic sector in Bolivia and Peru. Moreover, this mediated method of study could be applied to the analysis of extractive industry discourses in other Latin American countries. Finally, the close reading of these novels demonstrates that there are notable divergences within the literary representation of extractive industries in the two countries selected. The largely taxonomic methodology, with its focus on content, generally favoured so far by critics has tended to homogenise the portrayal and interpretation of extractive industries in Latin American literature. The approach favoured in this thesis instead brings out a pattern of difference and variation between texts and contexts. It shows how the chosen texts are

very different from each other and are deeply embedded in the cultural discourses of a specific social and historical context.

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