Alterable Geographies

In/Humanity, Emancipation, and the Spatial Poetics of *Lo Abigarrado* in Bolivia

MAREIKE WINCHELL

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

ABSTRACT Like plantation slavery, Indigenous servitude on Bolivian haciendas raises crucial questions about the afterlives of colonial subjection. Engaging questions of colonialism, unfreedom, and emancipation across the Americas, this article examines how Quechua Bolivians remake landscapes defined by continued material traces of subjection and abiding racial inequalities. Rather than inhabiting this landscape as one of passive historical repetition, Quechua Bolivians use narratives and spatial practices to alter landscapes—including elderberry trees where kin were whipped, high mountain lakes constructed by forced laboring kin, and ravines and valley crevices that offered routes of escape from indentured labor and political violence. Such practices point to a politics of *lo abigarrado* (the motley), a term used to describe people whose labor itineraries and affective attachments have not been constrained by the frames of Mestizo citizenship and timeless Indigenous rootedness to place. Through this spatial poetics, Quechua families thwart nationalist paradigms of propertied redress to forge alternate plotlines of emancipation based on keeping time, and places, open to the demands of a violent past.

KEYWORDS Indigeneity, emancipation, colonialism, geography, resistance

> [The Indian is] no more than a beast of burden, miserable and abject, who warrants no compassion and must be exploited to the point of inhumanity and indignity. . . . If we must eliminate them, because they constitute an obstacle to our programme, let us do it frankly and energetically.
> —Bautista Saavedra, *El Ayllu*

> If the plantation, at least in part, ushered in how and where we live now, and thus contributes to the racial contours of uneven geographies, how might we give it a different future?
> —Katherine McKittrick, "Plantation Futures"

CRITICAL TIMES | 6:2 | AUGUST 2023
DOI 10.1215/26410478-10437057 | © 2023 Mareike Winchell
This is an open access article distributed under the terms of a Creative Commons license (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

FIGURE 1. The weathered wall of an early twentieth-century hacienda estate still stands in the village of Sailapata in Ayopaya province, Bolivia.

The golden glow of adobe in the sun drew my attention to the crumbling skeleton of an old building concealed behind a row of eucalyptus trees (fig. 1). Gregorio Condorí, a Quechua farmer in his late forties whom I had joined on his agricultural tasks that day, gestured casually in their direction: "It's the hacienda house, the house of the master." This description, specifically Gregorio's ambiguous use of the present tense, points to the uncertain historical status of Mestizo-owned agrarian estates, or haciendas, in the region. Forced agrarian and domestic labor on such estates was formally abolished in 1953, but these buildings, and racial and landed hierarchies rooted in earlier subjection, remain. This essay builds on ethnographic fieldwork and archival research I carried out in Bolivia between 2010 and 2012 to explore the generative ways that the living relatives of former hacienda workers navigate this divisive labor past today. How to account for a past whose closure or pastness itself remains an open question?

Bolivia's haciendas grew out of colonial encomiendas first founded in 1645, providing land and tribute to Spanish administrators, merchants, and imperial elites. Haciendas in the Cochabamba region were small farms owned by Mestizo landlords and small bosses (*juch'uy patrones*)—Quechua field hands who had bought land and thereby escaped servitude. Alongside tenant farming, the system was built upon the domestic labor of unmarried women and girls. During rotating

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

mitani "service," women prepared food, cleaned, wove, brewed chicha, fed animals, and cared for children—including the master's children, servant children, and adoptees. The region was famous for the ubiquity of "unnatural" (sexual) abuses and landlord's tight control over labor conditions, conditions that fomented widespread antihacienda uprisings in Ayopaya in 1947. This was the only twentieth-century armed rebellion in Cochabamba preceding Bolivia's socialist revolution of 1952. Following national land reform in 1953, most estate land was redistributed or abandoned. However, severe racialized hierarchies persisted, assuming new shape in paid domestic labor and gold mining work. Into the present, some hacendado families still live and work in the region, their agriculture supplemented by small-scale mining of gold, antimony, and sodalite.

Drawing on villagers' accounts of hacienda subjection and postabolitionary violence, this essay examines how Quechua relatives of hacienda servants and tenant farmers navigate a landscape defined by elements of earlier labor subjection and racial violence. Elderberry trees remind people of whipped kin, ravines elicit narratives of grandparents' escapes, and high mountain lakes (including those built by the unpaid labor of Indigenous hacienda servants) are sites of revelry and devotion and not only of tragic memories of violence. Following Katherine McKittrick,[1] I approach such narratives as insight into *respatializations*: "the alternative geographic formulations that subaltern communities advance." Narratives of shared pleasure and subversion that I encountered contest hegemonic associations of the servile or enslaved with nonlife; they point to the need to articulate freedom as "something more" than an opposition to a history of enslavement.[2] They thereby reveal spatial productions, with their racialized corollaries, as unfinished in ways that complicate naturalized racial schemas of difference.[3]

In particular, the narratives of communities of former hacienda laborers can teach us about a vision of livability that dispenses with romantic ideas of timeless Indigenous rootedness in place and Black placelessness.[4] Quechua laborers have long moved between highland ayllu communities, mines, and agrarian estates, with relatives who came to the province as *forasteros* (landless and/or itinerant Indigenous laborers), *mitayos* (Indigenous mine workers), or *yanaconas* (forced mine laborers) in the central Bolivian valleys, forming what René Zavaleta Mercado calls "lo abigarrado" (the motley).[5] The historical itineraries of such migrant laborers reveal the limits to state modernization premised on the goal of either "exterminating" Indians or, later, with Bolivian Independence in 1825, of absorbing Indigenous people into a liberal nation of modern, rights-bearing citizens (*NPB*, 196). The politics of this failed stranglehold of liberal inclusion have been elaborated by Sylvia Rivera Cusicanqui as a *ch'ixi* space defined by the overlapping but not the convergence of Mestizo and Indigenous worlds, one that problematizes a telos of Mestizo, nationalist assimilation.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

A politics of *lo abigarrado* complicates the trajectories of anticolonial freedom proffered through nationalist projects of citizen inclusion, underpinned as they are by presumptions of human perfectibility: the idea that, once they adopt an appropriate set of dispositions and rights, formerly indentured subjects can count themselves among the citizens of Bolivia's modern nation. Instead, Ayopayan farmers inhabit and thereby remake landscapes of unfreedom into something more than what they can be according to masterly designs of property and human commodification. If, as Rinaldo Walcott suggests, freedom must be disentwined from emancipation as an incomplete juridical project, these relationships to place and history point to a project of freedom that pushes past formal abolition or emancipation as a singular framework. Ayopayans grapple with a subordinating past and a revolutionary present that has reproduced many of the conditions of political erasure that defined hacienda bondage.[6] Meditating on an encumbered landscape opens up critical questions about the elusiveness of state projects of Indigenous inclusion, instead eliciting efforts to redefine collective life at odds with a familiar telos of national inclusion via rights.

Contesting the Human: Shoals, Archipelagos, and Freedom Otherwise

Late modernity is built on fantasies of historical closure: the idea that, with formal emancipation, colonialism—with its brutal configurations of anti-Black violence and destruction—has been made *past*. Yet projects of human perfectibility (with their expectation that the dispossessed find reparation or justice through a liberal framework of rights-based uplift and inclusion) continue to rely upon a model of the Human configured through tiered visions of humanity and the death and inhumanity of Black and Indigenous peoples.[7] Hence, scholars like Walcott argue that emancipation should be seen not as a break but rather as the endurance of the "social relations that underpin slavery."[8] Moreover, in defining the bounds within which freedom can be imagined or sought, "emancipation is a legal process [that] . . . marks continued unfreedom, *not* the freedom it supposedly ushered in."[9] Walcott refers to this "continuation of the juridical and legislative status of Black nonbeing" as the *long emancipation*.[10]

Despite these limitations, Rinaldo Walcott (drawing from Saidiya Hartman) insists that "Black people do experience moments of freedom" including in ways that are "unscripted, imaginative, and beyond our current modes of intelligibility."[11] He calls for attention to practices of dwelling "in its fleeting moments" in which pleasure and flesh—Toni Morrison's "flesh that needs to be loved"—are reclaimed to push back against the sense of belatedness and anticipation that orient legal projects of emancipation.[12] Similarly, Tiffany Lethabo King draws attention to practices of mutual care, sensuality, and erotics as instances of "Black and Indigenous gathering (shoaling) or coming together" that evade the problematic mediation of

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

freedom by white settler colonial studies and by normative models of self-mastery that downplay violence.[13] Instead, she calls for an ethics of "noticing and caring for Black and Indigenous life" through practices of affectability and attentiveness to "what else happened."[14] Likewise, Kim TallBear invites us to sit with caretaking relations and interspecies attachments beyond the frameworks of juridical humanity.[15] Projects like these unsettle fantasies of racialized dominance—the idea that histories of indenture and slavery have *absolutely* determined the possibilities for living and dying for the formerly dispossessed.

One way to think through this "what else" is through an attention to the gaps and failures of a homogenous program of unmarked humanity, what Zavaleta Mercado calls "mundiality," defined as a worlding that seeks to install new structures of desire for inclusion and democratic representation. Rather than understand "history as a closed circle in which the dependent could produce nothing but dependency," he asks about "non-dependent forms of articulation" (*NPB*, 7). These articulations highlight the limits to "social 'receptivity'" or civil society understood as a "general opening . . . to moments of emptying, that is, to the conjunctures in which great masses are prepared to assume new collective beliefs" (*NPB*, 10). Liberal formations here do not simply supplement existing social and relational formations but rather "empty out" and then "substitute" them with "democratic mediation" (*NPB*, 10). In this move, "traditional forms of domination"—and, I would add, ways of contesting them—are masked or replaced by mechanisms of appeal to juridical spheres. While Zavaleta Mercado introduces this notion to critique Bolivia's oligarchic political system,[16] his approach also alerts us to the losses entailed when liberal democratic mores are installed as singular frameworks for addressing injustice. Returning to Walcott, this highlights how a formal approach to emancipation through humanistic inclusion or citizenship also closes down other ways of imagining, and agitating for, freedom.

Efforts to clamp down on illiberal modalities of belonging in turn foment episodes of "subterranean revenge" premised upon Indigenous opposition to white and Mestizo enslavement, dispossession, and centralized governance (*NPB*, 202). Such "subterranean revenge" introduces a sense of volatility and redemption to racialized landscapes, what McKittrick calls "cartographies of struggle." While brutal in their reshaping of Black life and futurity, cartographies of violence, McKittrick argues, are also fundamentally *alterable*. Returning to Bolivia, we might ask about the creative ways farmers like Gregorio Condorí inhabit former hacienda lands. While facing a distinct set of racialized challenges vis-à-vis Spanish colonialists, Republican reformers, and Mestizo hacendados, Quechua communities in Ayopaya too have been caught in the double bind of liberal models of repair that tend to presume uninterrupted Indigenous ties to land and, conversely, Black and other subjugated peoples' absolute alienation and detachment from place.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

Alternates to this double bind come into view if we attend to partial presences and remainders as opposed to absolute spatial connection or detachment. Echoing Lethabo King's rethinking of land and water boundaries that have overdetermined conversations about Indigenous and Black justice,[17] Zavaleta Mercado calls for attention to a political "otherwise" as materialized by the spatial figure of the *archipelago*. Like *shoals*, archipelagos involve entanglements and slippages that leak over nationalist (and humanist) frames. The archipelago is a limit to the quantification that accompanied modern disciplinary regimes and that, Zavaleta Mercado argues, "plays a more limited part in more heterogenous societies" (*NPB*, 17). Attending to this subversive politics of the remainder brings into view how histories of mobility are redeployed as challenges to projects of Indigenous assimilation. As he writes, "the peasant transformed his weakness—his dispersion—into a perpetual erosion of all other forces" (*NPB*, 158).[18] This raises a key question: What has the dispersal of Quechua collectivities across multiple islands of agricultural production meant for modern paradigms of private property, on the one hand, and for redemptive models of Indigenous land return, on the other? How do grounded dispersals erode liberal categories of political inclusion?

Holding multiple lineages, Quechua Ayopayans have long traversed haciendas, mines, and ayllu communities in ways that produce a disparateness that remains unresolved. Importantly, the so-called vertical archipelagos that organize such production are not made up of detached islands but rather of multiple and overlapping spatial ties and obligations.[19] This insight clarifies how the "motley" (*abigarrado*) character of Bolivia's countryside, that is its overlapping and itinerant arrangements of Quechua labor from the late Inca period onward, has obstructed a nationalist unification project. Spatial dispersal here has gone hand in hand with a refusal of assimilation.[20] In its multiple "places of articulation," the motley contests a model of freedom through integration, instead erring on the side of what Zavaleta Mercado calls "provisionality" (*NPB*, 134). The archipelago, like Lethabo King's figure of the shoal, allows us to rethink racialized cartographies of dispersal not simply as artifacts of colonial violence and fragmentation but also of alternate frameworks of anticolonial repair. As Lethabo King beautifully describes, "uncharted" spaces offer locations from which "to reassemble the self" through acts of "connection, transit, [and] passage" at odds with "the smooth flow of continental thought."[21]

Dispersals obstruct projects of justice premised on fixity. Drawing on Zavaleta Mercado's figure of the motley and echoing Black Atlantic critiques of legal transparency, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui describes the reification of Indigeneity within Bolivian rights-based movements from the late twentieth century onward, which was newly formalized under President Evo Morales of the Movement toward Socialism (Movimiento al Socialismo, MAS) party in 2005. As she notes, Bolivian state multiculturalism has harbored a "schematic" view of Indigenous peoples that

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

fixes them to place, including to recognized Indigenous territories, thereby limiting possibilities for a more robust decolonial agenda.[22] In converting Indigeneity into a *minoritarian* question, reform programs under Morales's leadership tied ethnicity to presumptions of purity and to projects of formal equality through rights-based inclusion. Rather than being at odds, both recognition-based paradigms and citizenship-based projects of national inclusion require spatial fixity and identitarian boundedness rooted in liberal configurations of political subjectivity. Migrants, hacienda workers and mining laborers, and urban Indigenous peoples lie outside of both citizenship and an ethnic revivalist schema centered on the figure of "original peoples."[23] This schema faces noteworthy challenges in Ayopaya, where earlier sexual violence in haciendas produced children who do not fit within the neat boundaries of Mestizo or Indigenous identity. Twenty-first-century political organizing there reflects these violent entanglements, giving way to what we might call an "unruly Indigeneity" based on traversed borders and the evasion of state enclosures either of private property or Indigenous territory.[24]

Political projects of insistent dispersal illuminate other ways of engaging with oppressive labor pasts. Such projects recall what Rivera Cusicanqui calls a *ch'ixi* politics as a heteronomy that evades full admixture. Here, the "parallel coexistence of multiple cultural differences . . . do not extinguish but instead antagonize and complement each other."[25] Like archipelagos and shoals, *lo abigarrado* seizes upon the limitations of homogenous citizenship. Its political project does not seek purity but rather, in Zavaleta Mercado's words, "builds the Indian hegemony to be realized in spaces that were created by the cultural invader"—in short, it forces its way into spaces of failed Mestizo hegemony. As I discuss below, one way that this occurs is through the revaluation of landscapes of dispossession, such as through insistent attachments to geological sites of earlier labor brutality as well as to other subjugated life forms: sheep and horses.

Bolivia's Ayopaya province is frequently identified with entrenched racial hierarchies and forms of "acculturation" generated by earlier hacienda servitude. Likewise, Quechua farmers' labor on dispersed agricultural islands stands at odds with ideals of "original peoples" and of highland ayllu communities that guide state recognition paradigms and ethnic revivalist movements (especially *Katarismo*). In this way, communities of former hacienda workers fall short of the models of redemption offered through promises of return to homeland or the reclaiming of ancestral lands. Yet that departure is not lived only as lack. Departing from nationalist alignments of hacienda *colonos* with sheer victimhood, Quechua farmers like Gregorio instead insisted on reclaimed attachments to the spaces of earlier labor subjection. They thereby articulated plotlines considered impossible under slavery and servitude: grounded forms of belonging based on connections to land and animals against what is frequently cast as a history of abject, alienated subjection.[26] Such a

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

spatial poetics attests to how people creatively subvert historical reentrenchments to recast emancipation's sequential promise. Not only geography, as McKittrick insists, but also its utility for a state politics of repair based on totalizing privation or return, is here fundamentally *alterable*.

"Human Beasts": Indigenous Citizenship and Its Others

The problem of decolonizing Bolivia assumed renewed urgency in the final decades of the twentieth century, as participants in mass social movements took to the streets, demanding resource sovereignty and Indigenous rights. In many ways the culmination of these movements, President Evo Morales's election to the presidency in 2005 promised to draw lessons from a long history of Indigenous rebellion, this time to steadfastly oppose a series of structural readjustment policies that had deprived many Bolivians of water, gas, and access to basic food staples like sugar and flour. Additionally, his party implemented a wide-ranging agrarian reform targeting the tenacity of entrenched colonial orders, above all the nation's dramatic inequalities of land ownership. In state agrarian reform and land-based movements alike, decolonization required restoring land rights to the formerly dispossessed, especially to forced hacienda laborers.

In this political milieu, Indigenous hacienda workers became emblematic of the partial humanity of the enslaved. In a meme that circulated widely on Facebook by the user Ayni Digital, a man stands in traditional ritual dress (fig. 2). Above, to his right, the text reads, "We are neither *colonos* nor human beasts" (No somos colonos ni bestias humanas), and below, to the right, "We are Bolivians, and millenarian children of this earth" (Somos bolivianos, hijos milenarios de esta tierra). The meme likens *colono* status to animality not as outside of humanity but as an inferior variant of it: the "human beast."[27] In mid-twentieth-century archival documents, too, state lawyers and workers' representatives described *colonaje* as a feudal system supported by the "traction of blood" (*tracción de sangre*).[28] One document additionally notes that the reduction of hacienda laborers to such brute force lays waste to "human force" (*la fuerza humana*).[29] Severe labor conditions were routinely identified as having lowered *colonos* to the status of animals. This stigmatization of contemporary communities of former hacienda workers in Bolivia as "human beasts" suggest that liberal formations of tiered humanity continue to shape national decolonial imaginaries.[30]

To better understand the ways that such dehumanizing formations are encountered—and subverted—by Quechua relatives of earlier hacienda laborers, I spent March 2011 to March 2012 in the town of Independencia in rural Ayopaya.[31] There, it struck me that Quechua people whom I spoke to denoted the period of forced hacienda labor by way of the phrase *ñawpaq kawsay* (life before). Yet the line separating the before and the now was not absolute. Rather, they apprehended

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

FIGURE 2. "No somos colonos, ni bestias humanas. Somos Bolivianos Hijos Milenarios de Esta Tierra." Widely circulated meme (posted publicly on former Bolivian President Evo Morales Ayma's Twitter feed, among other social media platforms) declares that as Indigenous Bolivians, "We are not *colonos* [indentured hacienda tenants] nor human beasts. We are Bolivians, millenarian children of this earth."

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

political change as deeply fragile. Not only had racial hierarchies been reproduced in contemporary labor conditions (such as mines and domestic labor) and land hierarchies, but national political discourses, too, continued to withhold full humanity from the formerly subjugated.[32] The fragmentation of hacienda workers into deserving and undeserving recipients of state rights and resources was replicated in the micro-dimensions of daily life. This generated abiding sensibilities of blameworthiness, evident in the tendency to describe hacienda servants as culpable for their earlier subjection. At the same time, this narrative elicited new possibilities for making demands on non-Indigenous subjects, especially landowners, who could be newly cast as backwards vis-à-vis a revolutionary telos of Indigenous inclusion and rights.

Indigenous anti-hacienda leaders recounted that the period of political upheaval that culminated in the hacienda's abolition began with labor unrest in the 1940s, a period known as the "time of armed militias" (*waychu tiempo*) or the "the coming of the revolutionaries" (*revolucionarios jamusqanku*). Santos, a Quechua man known known for his role organizing villagers of Sarahuayto against a powerful landowning family, outlined the tiered labor system defining hacienda servitude. The lowest tier of laborers was hacienda servants (*pongos* and

mitanis), whom he associated with the dirt and deception of proximity to haciendas. This compromised condition mimicked the animals such laborers tended: "chicken-farmers and pig-farmers." These same workers, Santos recounted, betrayed their fellow laborers by informing overseers, or *melgueros*, of planned political activity or small subversions. For instance, *pongos* advised landowners of hidden sheep, of secret union meetings and eventually the impending revolution, thereby enabling the landlord's midnight escape to a nearby town. Doña Rufina (Santos's wife) recalled how such "traitors" tipped off the masters, on one occasion informing them of where the family had hidden her "favorite sheep."

As "revolutionaries"—a term used to describe anti-hacienda organizers from elsewhere—arrived in the 1940s, neighboring ravines and mountains offered routes of escape. Doña Rufina recounted, "In the time of the *waychus* they came in through open doors and found the food hidden in the back. They would escape with clothes and food. They came with machetes. My mother told me this." She continued, "My grandfather told me he escaped with my grandmother through a path in the ravine. People escaped to many places." The Mestizo masters then severely punished Santos's grandfather, an Indigenous leader, for trying to participate in the first National Indigenous Congress in La Paz in 1945. As he explained,

> [In] Independencia they were not permitted to pass. After the congress, the masters regained power. They called my grandfather to the house of the hacienda. There was a yellow elderberry tree there. They tied my grandfather to this [tree] and they flogged him until limp. For this reason, we have vengeance for the masters. I have always said to them, "I am of this blood so you will pay [for this] with me." Each time I insult them like this.

Santos here expressed a deep commitment to make the hacienda masters "pay" for their violent mistreatment of his kin. This required vigilance about lingering racial hierarchies and their reproduction in relations to contemporary Mestizo neighbors, such as in forms of sharecropping, or working "in company," with former masters through the 1970s. Arrangements like these granted peasants access to plots of land beside the master's home, but they also made farmers vulnerable to continued demands for free labor.[33] By 1982, he was a union official and decided to confront the owner, proposing that the peasants be allowed to purchase the land. The owner responded: "I do not have any need to sell anything. I have money enough to buy Bolivia. The hacienda is mine and I will not sell it. This hacienda is my pride." In response, Santos challenged, "Well, Don Raúl, how is it that you want to continue enslaving us [*escalvisaykita*]? The time of slavery [*esclavitu tiempo*] has long passed [*pasakapunña*]." He continued, "I am going to make you comply with the law of the Agrarian Reform. The Reform law does not

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

condone that you enslave us. That time passed long ago [*pasakapunña unay*]. You have to work your lands. You cannot make other people work them."

When threats of legal action proved ineffective, Santos organized an armed strike: "We put guards around the hacienda and waited for the landowner to come." What resulted was a brutal confrontation. But while the master was safely delivered to a neighboring town by loyal servants, his remaining servants were beaten until bloody.[34] Hence, while the abolition of forced labor on haciendas occurred in 1953, in Sarahuayto conflicts with masters continued until 1985. These conflicts produced splits and fragmentations in the social order that impacted relations among villagers as much as toward former masters. In fact, the strike was thwarted by community divisions rooted in labor hierarchies and abiding ties to masters. It followed that Santos spent three years (1983–86) in prison. While he was in prison, the lands were sold to his enemies, the traitors.

In former haciendas like Sarahuayto, promises of land rights and paid labor contracts did not bring about the changes reformers promised. Abiding arrangements of forced labor into the mid-1980s cast doubt over a broader political framework of emancipation through contract. At the same time, this loss of faith in legal redress did not lead villagers like Santos to dispense entirely with expectations of the hacienda's temporal displacement. Where legal mechanisms were found wanting, the hacienda had to be *made past* through action. Such action took the shape of labor strikes and violent confrontations with master families driven by demands that Mestizo elites relinquish their racialized mastery.

The Long Emancipation and the Politics of Place

Former servants and their children narrated hacienda subjection as defined both by severe devastation and by small but pleasurable subversions. One afternoon as we walked near their farmlands, an elderly Quechua couple Remigio and Juana recalled how her parents had suffered as hacienda workers. Tears spilled onto Juana's cheeks as she spoke. "Yes," she sighed, "my mother and my father had to serve, and oh how they were abused." We stopped walking, looking out over the farmlands with blue mountain ridges behind them. Remigio pointed to the line of eucalyptus trees along a stream that carved a ravine between us and the town. "It is the border of [the late haciendas] Rodeo and Tiquirpaya," he explained. "We would move from one hacienda to another, like nomads," he explained, "leaving one hacienda for another if the work was too bad." He continued, "Our houses were made only of sticks and rocks, so we did not have much. We could easily leave."

For Remigio and Juana, memories of subjection and earlier labor violence were sedimented in surrounding features of the landscape. Yet, while nationalist narratives frequently cast hacienda laborers as "human beasts" or passive victims, former servants like these also encountered landscapes as containing traces

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

of earlier subversion and opposition to masterly designs. The elderberry tree elicited Santos's recollection of his grandfather's whipping, as well as his continued commitment to seeking "vengeance" for her mistreatment. This suggests how hacienda subjection not only *unmade* subjects (an argument put forth in the meme about hacienda colonos as "human beasts") but also *generated* political projects whose answerability to earlier violence was layered atop the spaces of earlier subjection.

Landscapes that were weaponized by hacienda masters could be cultivated to new ends. Before hacienda abolition, Santos explained, masters and their assistants (*melgueros* and *hilicatas*) patrolled by horse, meting out a *chicotazo* (lashing), or "siccing his dogs on you" if you did your work poorly. Yet these were also spaces of humor, subversion, and trickery. In one case, villagers made use of the steep mountainside in their efforts to evade work following one religious festival (fig. 3). The master, who always traveled by horseback, could not pursue the merrymakers up a steep slope, where they continued to dance and play flute music for several days despite requirements that they return to work. Santos laughed as he described the master attempting to climb the steep slope on horseback, shouting "Indios carajos!" (Damn Indians!). This nearby slope and the cemetery above were places where elders escaped from dogs and whips, from the landowner's verbal assaults. But they are also sites of celebration and dance, planting and harvest, where rituals and merrymaking continue to be carved out from the overdeterminations of earlier subjection. Moreover, high mountain lakes built by bonded labor, such as one named Pina Laguna, continue to be honored by Quechua gifts of flute-play and dance.[35] Such practices subvert settler fantasies of uninhabitable space, instead revealing how landscapes were inhabited selectively by Indigenous laborers who sought to cut them off from hacienda masters, overseers, and their rabid dogs. In this way, laborers repurposed geographies of perceived wildness—a notion that, here as elsewhere, is profoundly racialized—to generate spaces of gathering defined by their exclusion of Mestizo masters and their animals.[36]

Efforts to creatively inhabit and thereby remake these obstinate landscapes persisted well into the early twenty-first century. Another child of hacienda servants, Gregorio Condorí, had planted fruit trees in the cracks of weathered hacienda walls on land inherited from his parents. When we passed several horses on the drive back to town from his land in 2012, I asked him about the horses: had they come from the haciendas? Gregorio rebuked me: "Not *everything* comes from the hacienda! The people [working in agriculture] here have always had horses." Ayopaya's topography here arose as a material corollary to narratives of failed historical superseding. Both landscapes and animals introduced within Spanish colonial agriculture, such as horses, sheep, and dogs, were reclaimed as more than mere products of racial violence. Dogs connote the severity of hacienda labor regimes, but horses were taken up widely, and sheep, pigs, and chickens were also raised affectionately. This was apparent in Rufina's childhood recollection that the master seized her "favorite sheep."

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

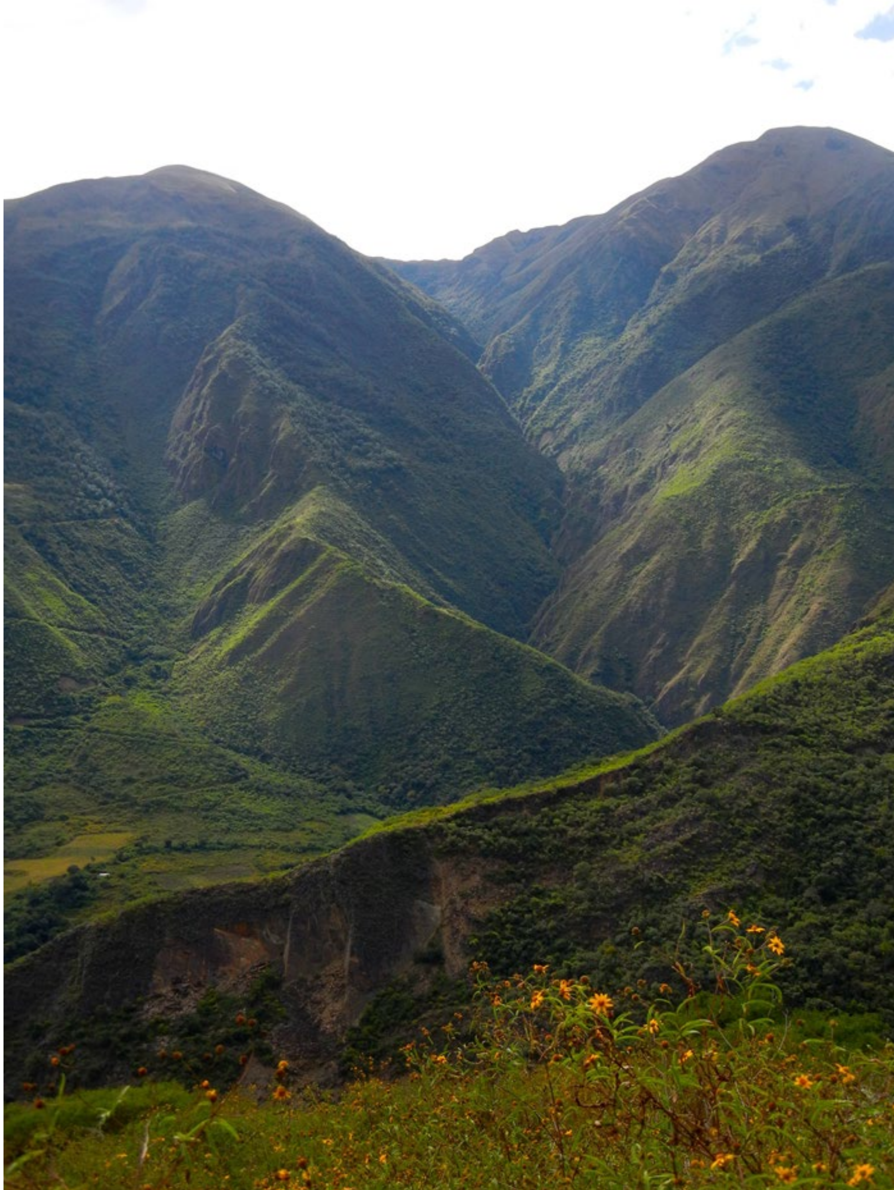

FIGURE 3. Steep slopes of the inter-Andean mountain valleys of Ayopaya offered routes of escape from bonded labor and from the master's rapacious dogs.

High mountain ridges, ravines, and elderberry trees as well as these animal accompaniments to agrarian subjection—horses, sheep, and fierce dogs—point to how servitude's "interhuman" but also *interspecies* geographies have come to be recast in the present.[37] This landscape's beholdenness to violent labor regimes imbued it with key importance for villagers' efforts to forge an *alternate* history of presence.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

Such lived engagements with the material sediments of hacienda violence point to the "long emancipation," wherein juridical processes of installing freedom through assimilative citizenship remain incomplete and fragile.[38] Rather than living that obstruction mainly as failure or blockage, Quechua Ayopayans recast it as a point of insight into the limits to formal approaches to posthacienda justice. In this corner of the world,[39] Ayopayan farmers have long struggled against Mestizo mastery while insisting on forms of emplacement that do not subscribe to what Mark Rifkin calls the "trajectories of allotment": land titles as reparative mechanisms for addressing earlier hacienda violence in Bolivia.[40] Instead, farmers evoke abiding attachments to places of subjection and to itinerant histories of labor mobility that exceed recognition-based models of bounded collectivity. Against nationalist programs that have likened communities of former servants to animals, human beasts, or the walking dead, Ayopayans redeploy temporal beholdenness as a call to action and as a reminder of the urgency of their ongoing efforts to recraft life *within* landscapes of dispossession.

Conclusion

Spatialized engagements with an unjust labor past on the part of Quechua Bolivians offer glimpses into a politics of freedom that goes beyond a "purely oppositional narrative" defined by rejecting earlier servitude, demanding attention instead to a set of geographic plot-lives that are constitutively unfinished. What kinds of life and flourishing emerge out of the uneven emplacements of subjection? The creative work that such "secretive histories" do pushes back against familiar narratives of racialized lifelessness[41]—in Bolivia, accounts of the hacienda *pongo* as a "walking dead" figure to be enlivened through exposure to the benefits of rights-based citizenship.[42] By remaking landscapes of hacienda subjection, Bolivian interlocuters have instead oriented their activities toward materializing a livability that refuses mediation by the state as a singular horizon of justice.

Quechua respatializations of a landscape of servitude point to the importance of a place-based poetics within grounded efforts to address colonial histories of subjection. Naturalistic paradigms of space as an empirical container for social relations are seductive, reproducing as they do what Paul Carter calls "geography's myth" of a landscape bereft of human inhabitants.[43] Yet such paradigms overlook both how materiality can disguise human terror and how geographies remain *alterable* through the telling of different geographic stories.[44] Just as "black subjectivity is not swallowed up by the ship,"[45] so too Ayopayans have not allowed themselves to be absolutely determined by the convergences of pleasure, violence, and property that buttressed racialized institutions of hacienda servitude. This highlights the ways that material referents overlap with subjectivities, imaginations, and stories that insist upon terrains' fundamental alterability. Not only do geographies sedi-

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

ment earlier racial regimes, but subjects also *inhabit* the "crevices of power"—in this case, ravines where relatives fled violence and supposedly impassible high mountain forests that house Pina Laguna—in order to "recast the meaning of slavery's geographic terrain."[46]

Such respatializations unsettle more familiar answers to the question both of "'the where' of alterity *and* the geographic imperatives in the struggle for social justice."[47] Put simply, they point to a politics of slavery's afterlives that dispenses with the singular desire for socioeconomic possession, offering insight into grammars of liberation unmoored from the logics of property-based redemption that have organized legal approaches to slavery and servitude across the Americas. Interhuman and *interspecies* geographies place new demands on the present, complicating reformist fantasies of a landscape emptied of the relational textures of abiding violence, struggle, and loss. The practices of narrative, revelry, and interspecies attachment recounted here illuminate the central conceit of nationalist programs of rights-based uplift: the hope that land can be closed off from the past and with it from bodily relations of spatial making and remaking over time.[48] To recast servitude's geographies is to revive other, less visible, relational, cross-generational, and other-than-human attachments. Such plotlines exuberantly overflow the trajectories of freedom afforded through statist designs of property.

MAREIKE WINCHELL is assistant professor of anthropology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her first book, *After Servitude: Elusive Property and the Ethics of Kinship in Bolivia* (2022), examines popular challenges to land formalization as a route to Indigenous justice and the possibilities of kin-making as a decolonial practice of historical accountability after violence.

Notes

1. McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, xix.
2. Walcott, *Long Emancipation*, 2.
3. In Bolivia, such spatial productions are evident in narratives of Mestizo and white alienation from place and of Indigenous (especially Aymara and Quechua) attachments and rootedness to land and agriculture.
4. Walcott, *Long Emancipation*, 72.
5. Zavaleta Mercado, *National-Popular in Bolivia*, 171, 264 (hereafter cited in text as *NPB*).
6. Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 135.
7. Lethabo King, *Black Shoals*, 20.
8. Walcott, *Long Emancipation*, 3.
9. Walcott, *Long Emancipation*, 1–2.
10. Walcott, *Long Emancipation*, 3.
11. Walcott, *Long Emancipation*, 4.
12. Walcott, *Long Emancipation*, 4; Morrison, *Beloved*, 88–89.
13. Lethabo King, *Black Shoals*, 32, 33.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

14. Lethabo King, *Black Shoals*, 30.
15. TallBear, "Caretaking Relations."
16. Zavaleta Mercado argues that the "genocidal instincts of the oligarchic spirit" (*NPB*, 214) driven by a social Darwinist project of eliminating and dehumanizing Indians dramatically failed to assimilate difference within a paradigm of liberal rights and capital (what he calls "mundiality") (223).
17. Lethabo King, *Black Shoals*, 10.
18. While he cites John Murra's classic ethnohistorical study of "vertical archipelagos" in the Andes, Zavaleta Mercado stops short of considering the specific history of Andean patterns of land use and residence. See Murra, *Formaciones económicas y políticas del mundo andino*, 161.
19. Winchell, *After Servitude*.
20. As Zavaleta Mercado notes, "In a way, they don't want to be anything but what they are and they understand this as a will *not to belong to one another, not to become integrated*. It is an insistence on unfinished forms, on a distinct provisionality" (*NPB*, 134).
21. Lethabo King, *Black Shoals*, 5, 8–9.
22. Rivera Cusicanqui, "*Ch'ixinakax utxiwa*," 99.
23. This term "obscures and excludes the large majority of the Aymara- and Quichwa-speaking population of the sub-tropics, the mining centers, the cities, and the Indigenous commercial networks of the internal and black markets" (Rivera Cusicanqui, "*Ch'ixinakax utxiwa*," 99).
24. Winchell, *After Servitude*, 232.
25. Rivera Cusicanqui, "*Ch'ixinakax utxiwa*," 105.
26. McKittrick, "Plantation Futures," 10.
27. Zakiyyah Iman Jackson defines "Black(ened) humanity" as "the entanglement of racialized, gendered, and sexual discourses with those concerning animality" (*Becoming Human*, 60).
28. National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA), Cochabamba, Bolivia, INRA CBA.03.00008.03, p. 31.
29. National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA), Cochabamba, Bolivia, INRA CBA.03.00001.01 No. 1250, p. 20.
30. Winchell, *After Servitude*, 26, 94.
31. The town has a population of about two thousand. Agriculture, mining, and manufacturing constitute the dominant sources of employment. About 90 percent of the region's residents speak Quechua, making it one of the most heavily Quechua-speaking provinces of Bolivia. I augmented my fieldwork with archival research at the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) in Cochabamba in 2012, where I collected case files for 125 land redistribution cases initiated since 1953.
32. This vulnerability of time was apparent in frequent concerns with the return, reappearance, and uncertain loss of earlier labor subjection among Quechua villagers with whom I spoke, and as I describe in greater detail elsewhere. See Winchell, "Liberty Time in Question," 557–58.
33. For a parallel discussion of postbellum sharecropping, see Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*.
34. I discuss this case at length in Winchell, "Critical Ontologies."
35. Winchell, "Critical Ontologies," 9–12.
36. McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, 129.
37. McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, xxxi.
38. Walcott, *Long Emancipation*, 5; Zavaleta Mercado, *National-Popular in Bolivia*, 264.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

39. Winchell, *After Servitude*, 156–59.
40. Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time*, 101.
41. Wynter, "Novel and History," 97.
42. For a historical analysis of how racial paradigms of German Aryanism were taken up by Bolivian scholars of mestizaje, see Stephenson, *Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia*. While Gil Anidjar focuses on Nazi figurations of Jews and Muslims ("On the Political History of Destruction," 154), in Bolivia at this time Indians were, according to Bautista Saavedra, "the Jews of Bolivia"—that is, scapegoats that at once obstructed and enabled a modernist project of unified nationalism (*El Ayllu*, 36).
43. Carter, *Dark Writing*, 16–18.
44. McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, xi, x.
45. McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, xii.
46. McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, xvii.
47. McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, xix.
48. Gustavo Blanco-Wells similarly calls for a posthuman approach to repair for ecological and historical harms in the Chilean Cruces River wetland ("Ecologies of Repair," 6).

Works Cited

Anidjar, Gil. "On the Political History of Destruction." *Re-Orient* 4, no. 2 (2019): 144–65.

Blanco-Wells, Gustavo. "Ecologies of Repair: A Post-human Approach to Other-than-Human Natures." *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (2021): 1–10.

Carter, Paul. *Dark Writing: Geography, Performance, Design*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

Hartman, Saidiya. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Jackson, Zakiyyah Iman. *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World*. New York: New York University Press, 2020.

Lethabo King, Tiffany. *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Indigenous Studies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019.

McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

McKittrick, Katherine. "Plantation Futures." *Small Axe*, no. 42 (2013): 1–15.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. New York: Plume Books, 1988.

Murra, John V. *Formaciones económicas y políticas del mundo andino.* Lima: Instituto de estudios Peruanos, 1975.

Pictou, Sherry. "Decolonizing Decolonization: An Indigenous Feminist Perspective on the Recognition and Rights Framework." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 119, no. 2 (2020): 371–91.

Rifkin, Mark. *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017.

Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia. "*Ch'ixinakax utxiwa*: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 111, no. 1 (2012): 95–109.

Saavedra, Bautista. *El Ayllu*. Edited by P. Ollendorff. New York: New York Public Library, 1913.

Scott, David. *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.

Stephenson, Marcia. *Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024

TallBear, Kim. “Caretaking Relations, Not American Dreaming.” *KALFOU* 6, no. 1 (2019): 24–41.
Walcott, Rinaldo. *The Long Emancipation: Moving toward Black Freedom*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021.
Winchell, Mareike. *After Servitude: Elusive Property and the Ethics of Kinship in Bolivia*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2022.
Winchell, Mareike. “Critical Ontologies: Rethinking Relations to Other-than-humans from the Bolivian Andes.” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. Published ahead of print, June 12, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.13962.
Winchell, Mareike. “Liberty Time in Question: Historical Duration and Indigenous Refusal in Post-revolutionary Bolivia.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 62, no. 3 (2020): 551–87.
Wynter, Sylvia. “Novel and History, Plot and Plantation.” *Savacou* 1, no. 5 (1971): 95–102.
Zavaleta Mercado, René. *Towards a History of the National-Popular in Bolivia, 1879–1980*. Translated by Anne Freeland. Elsewhere Texts. New York: Seagull Books, 2018.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/6/2/271/2012976/271winchell.pdf by guest on 18 June 2024