Toward a Decolonial Feminist Research on Indigeneity in Contemporary Peru

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Abstract

This paper proposes a decolonial feminist framework for doing research on the representation of Indigenous women in contemporary Peruvian cultural and media production. It argues for an analytical methodology that recognizes Indigenous women gendered experience of colonialism—of being subjected to violence, made invisible and muted throughout historiography, and reduced to stagnant and degrading stereotypes in current cultural representations. It appositionally reads both the modern Peruvian nation-state and Western academic research as structures of colonial figurations that obscure the gender complexity of Indigenous identity, engaging a gender perspective that considers the contested relationship between Indigeneity and Peruvian identity, while centering Indigenous women' political and cultural mobilities shed light on the complexities of identitarian politics and the role of hetero—and ethnonormative neoliberal regimes.

Keywords: Decolonial feminism, Indigenous women, cultural representation, colonialism and academic complicity, nation-state's heteronormativity and ethnonormativity

> The word itself, "research," is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world's vocabulary… it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful.
> —Linda Tuhiwai-Smith

Social sciences and humanities disciplines have grown to recognize the ethical implications of doing research on Indigeneity given that "to speak of Indigeneity is to speak of colonialism" (Simpson 67). In her groundbreaking work, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith formulates a series of questions on Indigenous research: Who carries out the research and how? Who will ultimately benefit from the research, and how will those benefits be measured? As a mestizo Peruvian and formerly undocumented immigrant now living in California for almost two decades—learning to live as a POC (person of color), negotiating my own Latinx identity within a white majority, and almost reinventing a new existence—I find these questions more than necessary.

Doing research on Peruvian Indigenous women and their representation requires an ethical approach to their lived experience of colonialism—of being subjected to violence, made invisible and muted throughout historiography, and lately, reduced to stagnant and degrading stereotypes in cultural and media productions. Taking stock of my positionality and educational privilege, this research hopes to contribute to the bridging formations between decolonial and feminist thought in the Americas, by looking at previous explorations of Peruvian Indigeneity and bringing forth new political and social intricacies of the multi-cultural and neoliberal era, such as the growing role of Indigenous women.

How to Write about Indigeneity: A Framework

The Aymara scholar and activist Silvia Rivera-Cusicanqui has also criticized the workings of "academic colonialism" in the Americas, pointing out knowledge production and its circulation between North and South, specifically between U.S. and Latin-American universities. She argues that the "decolonial turn" is another fad in the U.S. academy, as *indigenismo* once was. Like Rivera Cusicanqui, historian Pedro Chamix criticizes academic indigenismo as a practice that

> takes the Indians into a laboratory to study them in terms of their physical appearance, family names, dress, language, customs, and later regurgitates them in hundreds of publications and books in English, German, or French, only later translated into Spanish without any political utility. (49)

Humanist departments, and possibly all academic research carried out in the U.S., cannot escape the constitutive inequality of North and South relationships. However, despite this undeniable academic disproportion, part and parcel of U.S. imperialism, Indigenous scholarship in Latin America has not only increased but has also fostered transnational dialogues among Indigenous actors, activists, and scholars. The influence of feminist thought has also promoted new methodologies that recognize the urgency of intertwining theory and praxis, a goal the present research aims to accomplish, if not fully, at least by integrating both Indigenous scholarship and also the lived experience of leaders and activists who take a stand through and against nation-state structures and discourses.

One of the most audacious intellectuals at the forefront of Indigenous feminisms is Julieta Paredes, who has proposed "feminismo comunitario" and a closer analysis of "entronque patriarcal." Paredes's invitation to undo colonialism echoes other native feminists who advocate against the subordination or complete dismissal of Indigenous women's issues within their own communities (Ramírez; Smith). Although feminism is still a thorny and antagonizing subject within many Indigenous groups, the encounter between decolonial and feminist thought has proven to be productive, as more Indigenous intellectuals and scholars in Latin America embrace both disciplines. Like Paredes, most Indigenous feminists locate community at the center, in contrast to the ruthless individualism globalized capitalism promotes.

Inspired by these Indigenous and feminist scholars, who rightfully and in a timely manner question non-Indigenous scholarly production on Indigeneity, *and* by those who believe that community can extend beyond the nation, this research is conceived as a collaborative exercise with women in multiple latitudes who resist silence and understand the reality that women's rights are never completely secured. Well aware of my positionality as a scholar and a woman of color in the North, this research recognizes that decolonizing gender requires a constant effort at unveiling the entangled power relationships between women from "un norte rico y el sur empobrecido" (Paredes 72), as well as keen attention to geographic and cultural specificities. A decolonial possibility should also account for the multiple fronts of Indigenous women's agendas, as the "backbone of cultural revitalization" (Jacob 108), and as historical "dynamic political actors who have partaken in international politics and shaped state practices using diferent forms of resistance" (Picq 3). I also argue that this recognition of agency should not only be limited to "exceptional" political or violent times, but also include myriad ongoing local processes and collective organizations and solidarities.

Above all, this research could not hope to answer its feminist and decolonial goal without including the voices of Indigenous women themselves. For this reason, I approached ONAMIAP (the

National Peruvian Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Women's Organization), a national Indigenous organization formed by women that welcomed me to collaborate on a digital ethnographic project. Choosing to collaborate with the Indigenous women of ONAMIAP is an attempt to distance my work from discourses that romanticize or reify cultural difference. It recognizes their agency, knowledge, and expertise as the only national Indigenous women's organization. ONAMIAP is also officially recognized among the five leading organizations of the Peruvian Indigenous movement that participated in a multisectorial commission led by the Ministerio de Cultura to discuss the Law on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2011.

In addition to Indigenous scholarship and methodologies, this research also follows the steps of non-Indigenous and feminist works that approach knowledge production as a dialogue of *situated knowledges,* because "all drawings of inside-outside boundaries in knowledge are theorized as power moves, not moves toward truth" (Haraway 576), instead of "reiterating the inequalities of epistemic credibility" (Alcoff 17) associated with identity. When I explained my digital storytelling project to the leaders of ONAMIAP, they suggested a plan to follow, as well as a list of women who would best represent the diversity and the interests of the organization. Their readiness to help me and to think together about how to conduct the project despite their limited agenda demonstrates their collaborative work ethic as well as their expertise, both indispensable not only in the formation of a national and transnational Indigenous women's movement but also in their interaction with the intricate nation-state machine, as their trajectory evidence. As Devine Guzmán states in the case of Brazil, the "Indigenous movement and its supporters reflects what dominant indigenist discourses collectively failed to do: replace the monolithic, flat, imperialist notion of Indianness with a political recognition of Indigeneity that prioritizes self-identification, in all of its heterogeneity and potential contradiction" (36). Similarly, ONAMIAP's agency and success attest to the futility of Peruvian excluding mestizo discourses of nationalism, even more so for being a women's movement in a male-dominated arena. As Stephanie Rousseau and Anahi Morales argue in the first academic analysis of Indigenous women movements, ONAMIAP has accomplished national reach, bridging the historical Selva/Sierra divide (184) unlike any other Indigenous women movement in history.

ONAMIAP's members come from many different Andean and Amazonian communities, and depending on institutional resources, many of them sporadically participate in annual workshops on diverse topics at the Lima headquarters. Regardless of age, each member has a trajectory of leadership in her community. Similarly, the leaders of ONAMIAP, Ketty Marcelo, Gladis Vila, and Melania Canales, have grassroots organizational experience, as well as international participation in official

institutions such as the United Nations and ECMIA (Americas Indigenous Women's Continental Network), and have established relations with other scholars around the world. Their practices and expertise have critically enriched and nuanced my academic formation, broadening it beyond U.S.-centered Native American studies.

While I could echo critiques of U.S. Native American studies imperialism that ignore or dismiss most of the Americas' Indigenous groups, access to the contrasting historical frames of European colonialism, Spanish and British, and the different forms of Indigenous resistance has provided me with a much broader perspective, especially with regard to how Indigeneity has articulated with nationalism. While U.S. playing Indian almost thoroughly served the purposes of imperialist nationalism, the anxieties of Peruvian political leaders, intellectuals, artists, and social activists with the "Indian problem" was the simultaneous impossibility of de-Indianization and the desire of a mestizo Peruvianness, as Estelle Tarica has demonstrated. This conflicting doubleness of identity discourse that Stuart Hall deemed as "the necessity of the Other to the self" (48) continues to be present throughout Peruvian cultural production.

According to this logic, the ominous phrase "Indian problem" is part and parcel of the obdurate ideology that splits Peru in two: one part mestizo, modern and civilized, in contrast to an Indigenous, archaic and violent *Other*. In 1983 this perception was once again reinstated by Peru's most famous writer, Mario Vargas Llosa, in the controversial "Informe de Uchuraccay" he led, which concluded that the assassination of eight journalists by campesino locals was, in summary, a cultural misunderstanding, a natural result of the community's isolation from progress and modern Peru. Although widely criticized and now debunked, the report reiterated stereotypical narratives on Indigeneity as intrinsically outside of modernity and inclined to violence, a perception that even the final Truth Commission Report over three decades later has not been able to eradicate.

The controversy around the report arose not only because it involved the most renowned Peruvian writer. In "Arqueología de una mirada criolla," Santiago López Maguiña highlights its relevance, for it was the first official report regarding the political violence that would continue for almost two decades. For him, this report "fija los términos y los valores mediante los cuales el discurso estatal percibía las acciones violentas que venían desarrollándose" (257), a perception that placed all the blame on the communities, when further investigations revealed that the Uchuraccay community had in fact been fighting against Shining Path activities in their area for three years, and the military had encouraged Uchuraccainos to deal with terrorists according to their consuetudinary norms.

However, as Misha Kokotovic demonstrated in *The Colonial Divide*, Vargas Llosa's written work

reveals a consistent disregard for Indigenous groups. With his defeatist vision of Peru—summarized by one of his characters' famous question in *Conversación en La Catedral*, "¿en qué momento se jodió el Perú?" (3)—Vargas Llosa published "Questions of Conquest" in 1990, in which he writes about the other, more prestigious Indigenous group, the Inca, and their demise at the hands of only 180 Spaniards. "At the precise moment the Inca emperor is captured, before the battle begins, his armies give up the fight as if manacled by a magic force… Those Indians who let themselves be knifed or blown up into pieces that somber afternoon in Cajamarca Square lacked the ability to make their own decisions" (4). The 2010 Nobel Prize winner not only oversimplifies the colonial encounter to a single event, but he also echoes the selective discourse on Indigeneity: one previously magnificent, such as the Incan past, and its leftovers, the dispersed helpless Indians who still wander around in desperate need of direction and purpose.

This restrictive perspective on Indigenous peoples is not unique but rather part of the ongoing indigenista influence characteristic of Latin American countries with large Indigenous populations. To a great extent, much of indigenista endeavor has been "a colonialist desire to appropriate an 'essence' of Indianness without actually having to deal with Native peoples" (Guzmán 49) despite the insistence on Indigenous redemption. In a later literary instance, *El hablador*, Vargas Llosa argues that Machiguenga tradition can only be preserved by an outsider.

To different degrees throughout Latin America, literary Indigenous representations have served to strategically maintain a specific set of attitudes to ultimately blame Indigenous peoples for their own state of misery, and to shape identity and cultural discourses, as well as practices of racialization and belonging. Over a century before Vargas Llosa, Argentine Domingo Faustino Sarmiento wrote on the role of literary representation:

> Si un destello de literatura nacional puede brillar momentáneamente en las nuevas sociedades americanas, es el que resultará de la descripción de las grandiosas escenas naturales, y sobre todo de la lucha entre la civilización europea y la barbarie indígena, entre la inteligencia y la materia; lucha imponente en América, y que da lugar a escenas tan peculiares, tan características y tan fuera del círculo de ideas en que se ha educado el espíritu europeo. (89)

Like Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, an unapologetic Vargas Llosa settles the dichotomy of civilization versus barbarism with Indigenous erasure: "If forced to choose between the preservation of Indian cultures and their complete assimilation, with great sadness I would choose modernization of the Indian population." In other words, he "calls upon the conquered, not the conquerors, to bear

the costs of remedying the injustices produced by the Conquest" (Kokotovic 448), which ultimately means cultural sacrifice for the greater Peruvian good. However, paternalistic attitudes and governing impulses underlying discourses like Vargas Llosa's were not only intended to "modernize" the Indian; they also address a much greater concern: fear for Indigenous peoples' political agency and their fair share of citizenship and welfare in the emerging Peruvian nation.

Considering this history of representation, how to write about Indigeneity is a difficult question that thoroughly permeates this research. At the core of these ethical imperatives embedded in doing North/South research on Indigeneity lies the constitutive relationship between colonial power and knowledge, on which Walter Mignolo has extensively theorized. Based on Aníbal Quijano's notion of "coloniality of power," Mignolo argues that the colonial system was also a geopolitics of knowledge, strictly organized to produce and sustain a clear epistemic hierarchy, which Mignolo considers to be one of the most enduring and pervasive traits of colonialism. Consequently, in this hierarchy Indigenous knowledge occupies the loose end; doing research is a "constant battle to authorize Indigenous knowledge[s] and methodologies as legitimate and valued components of research" (Moreton-Robinson 331). To me, writing about Indigenous women without considering their own narratives is unthinkable; producing knowledge on Indigenous women should be knowledge produced with Indigenous women.

Transnational processes have also favored a more horizontal collaboration between scholars and Indigenous activists and communities, with an increased awareness of issues of "Indigenous knowledge appropriation by the academic discourse" (Rappaport 12). The internationalization of Indigenous rights and movements (Crossen; Kastrup), and the "decolonial turn" in Latin America have fostered the operationalization of race as an analytical category of power. While the decolonial turn offers great potential in unveiling and understanding the intricacies of Peruvian identity in the globalized era, this research emphasizes a gender perspective on racialization to amplify the lenses through which difference is perceived and actively assembled.

The construct of Peruvian Indigeneity is a conundrum of situated local practices through and against national discourses, together in conversation with transnational narratives of Indigeneity. Although since the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007 Indigeneity has gained transnational momentum, it still faces the most serious challenges in urban areas with more aggressive practices of disidentification. In Lima, none of the taxi drivers I asked had heard of Indigenous women's groups in the city, because such a presence is inconceivable for most. However, as Ramón Pajuelo argues, Indigenous disidentification "does not imply an absence of

identity but rather expresses the challenges of ethnic identification in the public sphere" (285), especially in urban contexts where most markers of Indigeneity mean being at risk of discrimination and violence, and even more so for women.

ONAMIAP's leading role in the Peruvian Indigenous movement and its interaction with nation-state mechanisms provide evidence for Pajuelo's argument. Indigenous women are creating a space for identity and autonomy against reinforced subordination within and outside their communities. They also demonstrate that the rise and strengthening of the Peruvian Indigenous movement responds to a growing organizational competence (Oliart; Yashar) that fosters a unitary discourse based on "sameness" to promote political capital (Stephen), even though Indigeneity is in fact a multiverse of practices and experiences in which individuals and groups participate from different positions, whether urban or rural.

The historic practice of representation also exacerbates the constant scrutiny of Indigenous authenticity. During a workshop trip to Cusco, ONAMIAP Indigenous leaders Ketty Marcelo and Gladis Vila posed for photographs next to Andean women selling textiles at the market. The two leaders sported jeans and a T-shirt with the map of Peru, while the vendors wore traditional attire as part of their engagement with tourists consumers. While this contrast reaffirms Shane Greene's notion of Indigeneity customization to refer to "both specific acts and to a structural process of constrained creativity" (*Customizing Indigeneity* 17) through performance and relationality with other actors (whether they are the state, national and international tourists, NGOs, or researchers), it also reveals the degree of competing Indigenous paradigms, assumptions on authenticity, and the necessary and difficult task of projecting sameness.

Indigenous agentic practices and revitalization not only implies a change for Indigenous peoples, but especially puts to the test hegemonic narratives of "Peruvianness," pressuring the nation-state to respond (Varese). If at the individual level, as Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui argues, mestizo subjectivity is simultaneously inhabited by an Indigenous and a q'ara (white) complex, in the national dimension, Peruvian unity remains unaccomplished because of Indigeneity. It continues to complicate Peruvian sovereign power over its subjects' "bare life" and demands reevaluating how race, racialization, and identity practices define belonging in a new multicultural Peru. If in the recent past playing Indian fluctuated according to ruling elites' biopolitics that imagined a mestizo (or at least de-Indianized) community, the multicultural discourse and governance has opened new possibilities as well as challenges for organized and mobilized Indigenous groups, in which women are increasingly taking the lead.

Although globalization technologies have favored some renewal in the politics and poetics of Indigeneity, many challenges remain to be resolved, including the ethical ways in which we, nonindigenous scholars, write about Indigenous subjects. The unresolved tensions "between Indigenous peoples and nation-states, on the one hand, and between Indigeneity and nationhood, on the other, serve at the very least as a perpetual reminder of the always violent nature of their present incommensurability" (Guzmán 51), tensions which to a great extent are a result of the inadequacy of representation and its violence, for which this research intends to account.

Indigeneity, Indianness and Playing Indian in Peru

To inquire into contemporary Indigeneity in Peru compels us to revisit the ill-famed "Indian Problem" that preoccupied several Latin American countries in the twentieth century. As nationalist sentiments began to crystallize among the ruling elites, Indianness was clearly not only a problem of economics, labor, and politics; it mainly constituted a threat that obscured the promised horizon of Peruvian modernity. Despite the advocacy of past and contemporary indigenismos—from fray Bartolomé de las Casas, the first "Protector of the Indians," to Clorinda Matto de Turner, José Carlos Mariátegui, and José María Arguedas—and the diverse ways in which Peruvian hegemony sought to represent Indigeneity, Peru continues to grapple with colonial and, more specifically, oligarchic legacies of racialized displacement and dispossession. In recent history, the wide distribution of death and violence that the Peruvian army and the Shining Path inflicted upon Indigenous bodies during the political and armed conflict between 1980 and 2000 evidences the stronghold of anti-Indianist sentiments still present.

In Peru's national imaginary, the construct of Indigeneity remains a highly contested category given its convoluted history and the current diversity of experiences across regions. While it is probably more appropriate to speak of Indigeneities, a common denominator of the Indigenous experience is its entanglement with the historical "indio" as an imposed identification, and Indianness as a narrative controlled by others—initially criollo ruling elites and later mestizo intelligentsia—everyone except Indigenous groups themselves, especially during the formation of Peruvian nationalism that desperately sought ways to create a more homogeneous community.

Given this impossibility and deeply permeated by colonial desires, most Peruvian nationalists favored the *better* version of Indigeneity—under the imperial cloak—while disregarding the majority of Indigenous groups. Historian Cecilia Méndez eloquently summarizes this paradox in her essay "Incas sí, indios no." This discursive divorce separates the empire from the Indian and is reflected in

the contradictory sentiment between "Inca power" and the "Indian problem" that lies at the core of Peruvian identity. Anthropologist Shane Greene argues that the preponderance of Incanism, or the "Inca slot," also implies "not seeing the Peruvian Amazon and ignoring Indigenous Amazonians" ("Getting Over" 328).

This preference for Inca Indigeneity is also a result of cultural consumption and tourism. However, playing up the "Inca Indian" version has also been used as a political move. Augusto B. Leguía, whose dictatorship in 1920 gave a broad platform to Indigenismo, proclaimed himself Viracocha. Like Leguía, many politicians have deployed "Incan" tropes as symbols of virile authoritative endeavor. Although throughout his political career ex-president Alejandro Toledo (also known as Choledo) insisted on his humble "cholo" origins, he frequently resorted to diverse Inca symbols and figures, especially those that projected power. In July 2000, Toledo's neo-Incaic protest model employed to gain access to office "consciously utilized" (Greene, "Entre lo indio" 114) the imperial trope of Tawantinsuyo in "la marcha de los cuatro suyos," a massive protest against Alberto Fujimori's third consecutive fraudulent election, and was popularly referred to as Peru's "new Pachacuti." Once elected, the following year Toledo celebrated a symbolic inauguration of his presidency in Machu Picchu—the official inauguration took place the day before in Lima—to signal a "new dawn" and propel tourism. Víctor Vich argues that Toledo's was indeed a political performance, in which the presidential couple, Andean (neo-Inca) Toledo and Belgian first lady Eliane Karp, represented "the entrance of Pachacútec in the global market" (78). Fujimori, the previously pardoned but again incarcerated ex-dictator, had played Indian as well, although he usually donned the typical campesino attire of the poncho and the chullo, following his populist style.

Since the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007, Indigeneity has gained global currency in "larger social fields of difference and sameness" (de la Cadena and Starn 4) and continues to expand its grounds of contestation into imagined futures, while Indianness carries the traumatic reminder of the colonial imposition and the load of ethno-racial exclusion from the modern national project. Until the 1970s, "la mancha india" (the Indian stain) was a term regularly used by social scientists and elites to refer to the central Andean region of Peru with the highest concentration of Indigenous people, the same region that suffered the most during the political violence. As a rhetorical figure, "Indian stain" also reveals the clear borders of Peruvian bio- and necropolitics.

The borders of such a geographical racialization ought to be reiterated in urban spaces (Méndez), reinforcing the antagonism between Indianness and modernity. While Lima is still referred

to as the "City of Kings" and Arequipa the "White City," Cusco is known as the "Imperial City" despite being part of the "mancha india." Thus, parallel to a containment of an excess of racialized Others (a stain), urban elites ensured an everyday normative structure to police mobility, which is very well alive when "serranxs" (euphemism for "indixs") enter Lima. The Indian threat was also linguistic, as José María Arguedas denounced: "En la Colonia el quechua fue un idioma estudiado, difundido y cultivado; en cambio, el quechua durante la República aparece como un idioma pretérito, despreciado y al cual no se le da ninguna importancia" (45).

Since Christianization, Indianness has been and continues to be subjected to diverse forms of transformation or redemption in order to be considered for inclusion. As scholars from different fields have demonstrated, several national modernizing projects have sought to eventually "improve" the Indian condition by ideological and structural means. As Pablo Drinot showed in *The Allure of Labor*, at the turn of the twentieth century industrialization was not only an economic but also a cultural project by which labor could transform backward Indigenous peoples into civilized white/mestizo workers.

However, in Peru, as in many Latin American countries, education was conceived and designed as a flawless vault from barbarism to civilization, with the specific task of forming national citizens. This modernizing project did not consider the Indigenous subject until the mid-twentieth century, when rural education began to expand. Nevertheless, state education policies specifically formulated for Indigenous populations had a peculiar goal: to secure an Indigenous essence threatened by the corrupting force of mestizaje. Luis E. Valcárcel, known as the "father of Peruvian anthropology," advocated for "recuperating the greatness of the Inca empire" (250), for which he implemented the "Núcleos Escolares Campesinos" program during his appointment as Minister of Education in 1948. As Devine Guzmán states, Valcárcel's term lasted for only two years, but his influence on rural education left an imprint until the end of the 1960s.

In the 1950s the massive rural migration to coastal cities, especially Lima, invariably changed the material and cultural landscape, while entrenched colonial longings exacerbated urban racializing processes. The failure to contain the "Indian stain" became "el huaico serrano," a dreadful threat spread in Lima by the press. The expression, which literally means "Andean landslide," reveals once again the contempt for Indianness, but most notoriously, the growing anxiety among the urban elites of "la ciudad letrada" of losing their privileged and exclusive position of centralized power.

Juan Velasco's agrarian reform and official institutionalization of peasant communities—originally established by Augusto B. Leguía about fifty years earlier—marked a turnabout in the

material conditions and perceptions of Indigenous communities (García). Although Velasco's vision was not the first to enforce protectionist decrees against the overpowering landholders, the reform resulted in the largest decrease in land ownership inequality in Peruvian history. However, his Marxist enterprise also implied a radical cultural change, in which Indianness had no place. Following Mariátegui's vision, Velasco's state-sponsored cooperative peasantry and land ownership were the ultimate modernizing measures to erase Indianness. Despite the multiple benefits the reform accomplished, officializing "the disappearance of Indians as Indians, recognizing them instead only as peasants" (Barre 53) consolidated a normative politics of de-Indianization that only tweaked existing forms of displacement and dispossession, especially for the thousands who migrated to urban areas after the decline of agriculture and the failed promise of rural industrialization.

Positivist remnants are also evident in the intellectual production of the 1980s regarding Lima's fast social changes. Sociologists termed this process "cholificación" (Bourricaud; Mangin; Quijano; Varallanos), an emergent and transitional social segment characterized by permanent cultural conflict, yet believed to be the promised true cultural Peruvian identity (Quijano). In 1984, anthropologist Matos Mar published his iconic *Desborde popular*, meaning "popular overflow," a new, sanitized title for the Andean landslide.

Rural and Indigenous groups with some economic means or relatives in Lima fled their communities in search of refuge and better opportunities in the capital. Limeño streets became "the bountiful space for the legitimization of new social subjectivities" (Vich 152) and collective practices rooted in Andean culture. Against the Limeño exclusionary terms of belonging, loud and colorful "chicha" music celebrated migrant ingenuity, resourcefulness, and entrepreneurship, especially among the younger generations who expanded its influence mainly into the visual arts. While in the sixties "cholo" identity conveyed strong cultural referents such as Yuyachkani, Cuatrotablas and Barricada, it later became mostly a mainstream phenomenon. Terms, such as "choledad," "Cholywood," and "cholo power," have also gained popularity, as more artists and intellectuals happily embrace "cholo" or "chola" identity, particularly in mainstream media and few theatrical productions such as Yuyachkani In literary production, Marco Avilés's *De dónde venimos los cholos* promises complexity, and it has enjoyed considerable reception. However, unlike Indigenous agendas, "cholo" cultural production remains centralized and has yet to accompany greater political dimentions.

Until recently, scholarly debate on Indigenous movements in Peru was usually settled with unfavorable conclusions, labeling these movements as weak, "anomalous" (Yashar 224) and "without return" (Albó 364)). These affirmations especially stemmed from unfortunate comparisons to

Ecuador and Bolivia's Indigenous movements, which scored two major accomplishments in recent decades, such as the official recognition of a pluri-national state and the rights of Nature. However, as further research shows, it is now acknowledged that part of the issue was the comparison itself: searching for a pan-national Indigenous movement obscured other forms of Indigenous activism and local politics that had existed long before official national or international declarations.

The growth of the once "remarkably elusive" (García 217) Peruvian Indigeneity reveals its vitality but also the contested nature of Indigeneity, which is now adapting to neoliberal ideologies. Indigenous agency has been present and vital throughout Peruvian nation-making through many local and regional organizations and collectives. As Ramón Pajuelo demonstrated, Peruvian Indigeneity has been present throughout different organizational expressions. Indigeneity as a process is now heavily fueled by a transnational network of agencies, among them official institutions, nonprofits and developmental organizations, activists and academics, all of which have been long immersed in, and are now further facilitated by, communication technologies, fostering broader, deeper, and also more contested dialogues with multiple Indigenous actors.

In this context, the challenge of constructing Indigeneity against "Indianness" implies not only creating political spaces for autonomy, such as the expanding Indigenous movement, but also resignifying Indigeneity from new "positions of enunciation" (Hall 1989, 68) that challenge old ideologies of racialized belonging. Andrew Canessa points to a similar situation in Bolivia. After working with the Wila Kjarka—an Andean highland community—for almost twenty years, he states that "one can be comfortably Indigenous; one can never be comfortably Indian."

Despite the Peruvian multicultural turn, the increased legibility and participation of Indigenous voices, and a more prolific and nuanced cultural representation in the post-conflict era, Indigenous actors—and even more so Indigenous women at risk of mockery and humiliation—have rarely had the epistemic privilege of contestation and have instead been relegated to cultural stock. The influence of indigenismo is still present, and the symbolic capital of Indigeneity continues to be predominantly male, urban, and a centralized playing Indian production that circulates in the national and international metropolis. Similarly, despite the increased female literary and cultural production in the postconflict boom, gendered Indigeneity continues to heavily rely on stereotypical representation, framed between victimization and abjection, or by the interplay between them, dismissing the critical agency Indigenous women had during and after the political conflict. Although women were the first to organize to denounce human rights violations and search for their disappeared loved ones, gendered representations of Indigeneity have not changed to reflect this reality, which, on the contrary, is

stubbornly depicted in essentialist terms, demonstrating that women are still 'more Indian' (de la Cadena 1995).

Although the Peruvian Commission on Truth and Reconciliation (CVR) has recognized the racial and gendered dimensions of violence during 'manchay tiempo' (time of horror), the reinforced inequality (Tilly) that both categories produce has not been sufficiently addressed. The Peruvian economic miracle of the last decade has further reinforced the prevailing view that those years were an exceptional period, an aberration, but as Jelke Boesten's analysis demonstrates, gender violence is systemic and occurs in a war-and-peace continuum. The extent of derogatory language associated with Indigeneity, even within intellectual circles, reveals how the naturalization of violence was not simply a war occurrence or a phenomenon of terror. Violence preceded these terrors because of existing normative structures that continue to dictate the distribution of difference and violence.

Almost every year during the extreme cold temperatures of June and July known as *friaje*, hundreds of Indigenous people in high Andean communities die, and thousands of children suffer from respiratory diseases. Consistently, every year, the Peruvian government declares these "remote" areas in a "state of emergency," until the number of deaths declines or temperatures rise. This systemic "state of emergency" demonstrates how the language of exceptionality and containment articulate to simultaneously downplay state responsibilities and highlight the state's eagerness to provide "protection" to remote Peruvians, especially during extraordinary times.

During the CVR Final Report presentation, the Commission's president, Salomón Lerner, declared that not only direct and brutal violence but also indifference kills. In the poorest barrios of Lima, such as San Juan de Lurigancho, mostly composed of migrant and displaced communities, the number of women who suffer domestic violence or die at the hands of male partners has almost doubled in the last two unexceptional years. If the blame is not placed on the victims themselves, as usually happens, then poverty, ignorance, or alcoholism will suffice to explain the statistics. How articulations of racialized masculinity and femininity are connected to violence are not questioned because most Peruvians assume classism is more of an issue than racism. Recognizing that anti-Indianist ideologies were not the exclusive purview of the military personnel or the Shining Path but are very much alive can help us understand the new regimes and structures of racialized and gendered violence.

Indigeneity, Gender and Normative Violence

Indigeneity, one of colonialism foundational fictions, stemmed from the imposition of colonial normative violence, understood as the power of norms to control, enable, or restrict how one can live. For Indigenous peoples, "all politics since the Conquest have been biopolitics" (Guzmán 168); thus, Indigeneity as a "foundational fiction" was possible through multiple coercive institutions and structures that simultaneously guaranteed its subordinate character and legitimated racialized and gendered violence. As Indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith states, colonialism brought "complete disorder to colonized peoples, disconnecting them from their histories, their landscapes, their languages, their social relations and their own ways of thinking, feeling, and interacting with the world" (28). In Peru, these normative forms of violence sought to deal with the excess of an 'inappropriate/d other' as someone "whom you cannot appropriate, and . . . who is inappropriate (Minh-Ha 125). This ideology is represented by terms such as "la mancha india" or the "Indian problem," which simultaneously highlight Indigenous illegibility within the national body and explicitly eject an entire population from an imagined homogenous community.

In *El laberinto de la choledad*, Eduardo Nugent questions why the Peruvian state did not implement a legal anti-Indigenous apartheid-like apparatus given the deep contempt for the Indigenous population. Although such an institution could not have been possible given the extreme dependence on Indigenous labor, the dynamics of subordination—through external physical means and internalized colonialism—were sufficiently powerful to sustain the hierarchies that continue into the present. As Ashis Nandy states, "after all, we are concerned with a colonialism which survives the demise of empires." (xi). Although the stratified caste system designed to limit social mobility in Peru was abolished centuries ago, race and gender still articulate in specific ways to legitimate inequality and power hierarchies, which, to use Judith Butler's concepts, endow some with more livable lives at the expense of less livable ones. Indigenous lives were and continue to be disposable regardless of the many laws designed to protect or not discriminate against them. The encumbrance of normative violence against Indigeneity, as the political conflict revealed, does away with the need for any explicit legal structure.

It is not surprising that the violence Indigenous and peasant communities suffered during the armed political conflict did little to change public perception in their favor. On the contrary, it reinforced existing sentiments and associations. The easiest way to delegitimize individuals or groups defending land or water rights is by calling them *terroristas*. Another pervasive discourse, especially for Indigenous women, is their naturalization as perpetual victims.

To a certain extent, it is simplistic to assert that a distribution of difference is a distribution of violence. However, the Peruvian political conflict between 1980 and 2000 unambiguously affected Indigenous bodies and also manifested specific gendered forms that reveal the articulation of racialized and gendered violence. Jelke Boesten has demonstrated that rape of women during these years was based on a racialized sexuality: soldiers of the Peruvian military and Shining Path perpetrators repeatedly used the derogatory term *chola*—an Indigenous woman outside her community—which in turn determined sexual "availability" (57). The statistics revealed by the Truth Commission are also clear-cut: 80 percent of the dead were men; 98 percent of the victims of sexual violence were women, of which 75 percent were Quechua speakers; and in the Peruvian total, 85 percent of the victims belonged to "la mancha india."

In the context of the armed internal conflict, privileged hegemonic masculinity—despite being Indigenous—overrode the feminine, legitimating violent masculinities. According to Eduardo Gonzales Cueva, "soldiers who are abused because of their race or class, and who are taught to associate masculinity and violence, Indianness and brutality, poverty and victimization, learn . . . to exert sexist violence over women, racist violence against Indigenous groups, and class violence against the poor" (100). Although these conclusions are obvious, they are not restricted to violent times, as Boesten demonstrates. The increasing attacks against women in the past three years have taken place in the poorest barrios of Lima mostly populated by rural and Indigenous migrants.

These grim statistics reveal the extent of anti-Indianism as a very specific form of racism in Peru. However, as historian Robin D.G. Kelley argues, skin color is not an essential feature of racism, a point that illustrates dated Peruvian denial on the issue. While doing research on racial discrimination, Peruvian scholars Nelson Manrique and Suzanne Oboler noted that interviewees frequently claimed racial discrimination had happened to someone else they knew (Manrique), or thought of racism as a problem in other countries like the U.S. (Oboler), prompting terminology for the differentiated Peruvian racist practices as 'latent' or 'silent.'

Another tangential reaction to the issue is that most Peruvians would rather consider classism. For example, during the last World Cup, Peruvian soccer player Edison Flores, whose nickname is "Orejas," joined an oficial campaign by the Peruvian Ministerio de Cultura against racism and declared for *The New York Times*: "En el Perú se da más la discriminación por la clase, se le ponen muchos apelativos a la gente, muchas veces, por el clasismo que se da contra los indígenas." (Vilchis n.p.) While newspapers and social media celebrated Flores's decision to raise awareness of discrimination, he, too, conflates racism with classism, revealing the depth of its internalization. Not surprisingly,

some Peruvian scholars view academic critical race studies as a fad, and believe racism is reserved for emblematic cases, such as the United States or South Africa.

Luis Escobedo amplifies the scope of the issue and questions if Peru is a racist state. He argues that Peru "is still a country where the state, media, and civil society may be 'licensing' racism in many ways" (173). The present research is not concerned with racism per se as a national behavior—given that race is unequivocally one of the most pervasive constructs and articulates in different ways in most societies. As Nelson Manrique affirms, "no existe pues un racismo; como toda construcción histórica, éste asume diversas formas de acuerdo al contexto social en que se genera. Su historia no puede desvincularse de la historia social" (12). My interest is to explore race in relation to the construct of Indigeneity and what its resignification implies in terms of racializing practices in Peruvian society, especially when intersected with gender.

A gender perspective can explain how anti-Indianist ideologies as a form of normative violence articulate with male privilege not only during violent times but also in peacetime. As Jelke Boesten demonstrates, "chola" sexual availability has always been present in rural *haciendas* and urban unregulated domestic service, as the term "cama adentro" perversely suggests. In contemporary Peruvian peacetime, male privilege and misogyny are manifest in visual and symbolic forms.

Comedian Jorge Benavides's drag impersonation called "la paisana Jacinta" is perhaps the worst case of playing Indian, and the embodiment of intersected racism and sexism. Not coincidentally, Benavides's exploit began in 1996, a period in which migration to Lima grew by over half a million (INEI). By reenacting historical gendered and racialized violence in which the female body exists for use and abuse, "la paisana Jacinta" can be read as the Limeño hegemony's reaction to the continuous "Andeanization" of the capital. To make issues worse, in its latest filmic iteration, *La paisana Jacinta: en búsqueda de Wasaberto*, there is a trivializing of the displacement and painful experience of many who never found their disappeared ones during the political violence. As a form of gendered Indigeneity, Benavides's act confirms that women are still 'more Indian' (de la Cadena).

Benavides also distorts the political power of drag, turning it into a recolonizing tactic. Belonging in Lima can only be attained by de-Indianization. While activists and organizations have publicly denounced the inherent racism of "la paisana Jacinta," they have not addressed the equally or more relevant component of sexism, which evidences Indigenous women's reinforced vulnerability in urban settings. The grammar of contestation in the report by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination for the UN against Benavides's characterization has been in regards to the character's racism—which is undeniable—but has not made Benavides responsible for the gendered

violence of his creation, nor addressed the "reinforced inequality" racism and sexism can produce when intersected.

Intersectionality, a feminist analytical methodology, was originally proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw to address compound discrimination of Black women in legal courts in the U.S. It elucidates how in addition to gender, other identity categories, such as race and class, articulate in a way that subordinate minority women. Intersectionality has also been useful in regards to Native American women (Goeman 2012). However, an intersectional analysis seems insufficient for the Peruvian context, where Indigenous women are not a minority, and neither are the "intersections" as clear-cut and stable as they appear to be in the U.S. Furthermore, to assess Indigeneity and gender in Peru, I argue that it is necessary to think of intersectionality along the ever-present colonial matrix (Quijano) and the dynamics of mass migration and social mobility in context of neoliberal capitalism.

An examination that considers degrees of mobility between different spaces, whether geographical, cultural, educational, and/or occupational, expands the intersectional perspective to consider how the Indigenous body is a site of contestation, especially when it enters and travels through hyper-racialized urban environments like Lima. In spaces that still "reflect historical efforts to eradicate Indigenous culture, including nation-state pressures to assimilate" (Delugan 84), mobility complicates and exceeds the construed intersections for Indigenous women, usually confined within subordinate spaces that limited their agency and autonomy.

Seneca scholar Mishuana Goeman impeccably explains these extremes in terms of mobility. "For Indigenous people traveling through constructed colonial and imperial spaces, the body can be hyper-visible as the abnormal body, and at times hyper-invisible as it becomes spatially disjointed from the map of the nation in both physical and mental imaginings" (12). In the Peruvian space, Indigenous women's mobility is similarly policed. They can be the urbanized 'cholas' that work in domestic service, cultural decoration at historic/touristic sites, or artistic performers. On the other hand, Benavides's drag portrays Indigenous women not only as the abject residue of an uncivilized past, but also as a stubborn female subjectivity that resists civilization. In other words, all the reasons why Indigenous women should not leave their environment.

Perhaps Benavides's representation mostly reveals the elite's reaction to Indigenous women's claims for rights and political power at the highest levels, such as Paulina Arpasi and Hilaria Supa did when they obtained congressional seats in 2001 and 2006 respectively. It is ironic that despite their feats, representations of female Indigeneity remain highly essentialist. They oscillate between two seemingly opposite images: the uncivilized, inept, and undesirable Andean woman, and on the other

end, the fiery protector of Indigenous traditions (Barrig). This antagonism is also evident in the symbolic struggle between Benavides's and Chirapaq's (Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru) campaign led by Indigenous activist and transnational leader Tarcila Rivera Zea.

Conclusions

A decolonial and feminist examination of Indigeneity demonstrates that its construction remains embedded in and encoded through violence in the Peruvian imaginary, still haunted by the shadows of terrorismo. Despite the increasing political agency of Indigenous groups seeking new signification and their active participation in neoliberal multiculturalism, the history of Indian play and misrepresentation raises limitations and contradictions. Although the material and symbolic displacement and dispossession ensued by the years of terror might seem like distant memories, Indigenous groups now face more sophisticated forms of violence as the nation-state privileges its economic interests over the rights of many of its citizens.

By treading carefully both the modern Peruvian nation-state *and* Western academic research as exclusionary discursive structures immersed in colonial figurations brings about a broad perspective on Indigenous women's gendered experience of colonialism across constructed spaces and registers. Additionally, a gender perspective that considers the contested relationship between Peruvian identity politics and Indigeneity reveals the previous strategic neglect of race in the Peruvian imaginary, specially when gender disrupts the usual centralized, urban and male-dominated circuits of power. While Indigeneity continues to be reclaimed through and against the dictates of multicultural nation-states and markets, emerging Indigenous cultural and political mobilities have also renewed certain Peruvian unresolved anxieties in the face of a racialized landscape no longer recognizable.

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