RACISM EXPOSED:
CHRONICLES OF COLLABORATION

CHUMBIVILCAS

> *When the far, far away government of Lima decreed the end of the haciendas, the great families and the landowners fled from that world. The Indians were free and the land was divided. But they are still as poor as ever. Chumbivilcas entered the 21st century carrying all its inheritances: the Takanakuy, the waylias, poverty, alcohol.*[1]
>
> Marco Avilés

Chumbivilcas ('Chumpiwillka' in Quechua) is one of the 13 provinces of the Cusco Region, in the Andes in South Peru. According to the 2017 census, there are 66,410 inhabitants in the province, 76% rural, 88% Quechua native speakers, and 92% self-identified as Quechua. Chumbivilcas is divided into 8 districts, there are around 77 *comunidades campesinas* [peasant communities], and the seat of the province is Santo Tomás, located at 3660 meters above sea level,[2] and roughly 7 hours away from the city of Cusco, through a mostly unpaved and extremely curvy road, prone to accidents.

After the invasion of the Spanish in the 15th century, what is now known as Latin America suffered a *catastrophic de-structuring* of social relations, cosmovision, and territorial organization, with common but also particular traits and temporalities in each region. In terms of labor, the Spanish imposed different models of exploitation and slavery that still mark the configuration of land and social relations in the continent.

> "The colonial structure in Peru involved an elaborate *encomienda* system in which the Spanish enslaved and forced native groups to labor and give tributes to their Spanish overlords […] Out of this idea of the encomienda system came a system based on commercial agriculture: the hacienda which developed in the 17th and 18th centuries. [...] In the hacienda system, a hacendado or owner of the hacienda would employ

[1] "Cuando el Gobierno lejano, muy lejano, de Lima decretó el fin de las haciendas, las grandes familias y los hacendados huyeron de ese mundo. Los indios eran libres y se repartieron las tierras. Pero siguen siendo tan pobres como siempre. Chumbivilcas entró en el siglo XXI cargando todas sus herencias: el Takanakuy, las waylias, la pobreza, el alcohol." Avilés, *De donde venimos los cholos*, 45p [translation is mine]

[2] Some regions of Chumbivilcas reach more than 5000 meters above sea level.

> indigenous (sic.) laborers to do agricultural work. In return, the laborers would receive a place to live and a portion of produce for their own consumption. This system ultimately led to the same issues of the encomienda system: the reliance of indigenous (sic.) laborers on the landowners, the potential for abuse of the system, and the inability of indigenous (sic.) laborers to move beyond this system. These haciendas remained after the collapse of colonial rule, continuing the maintenance of the *indios* as the lowest caste and as manual laborers."[3]

While–as in most of Latin America–formal colonization in Peru ended with the Independence War in the early 19th century, *coloniality* or the *colonial matrix of power* (Quijano 2000) continued, and still persists, as does the organization of the territory based on the hacienda system. According to François Chevalier, historian of Latin America, the predominance of the hacienda system in the southern Andes of Peru–where Chumbivilcas is located–is largely a phenomenon of the 19th and early 20th centuries, which can be explained in part by the geographical, economic and political isolation of the area. "Located in a geographic area of difficult access, during the 19th and 20th centuries the province of Chumbivilcas remained largely isolated from the modernizing changes that began to transform Peru after its independence […] During most of the 20th century, the province maintained this condition of isolation, together with the hacienda system […]"[4] It wasn't until the Peruvian Agrarian Reform of the late 1960s-early 1970s–a late reform when compared to other Agrarian Reforms in Latin America, specifically the reform that came with the Mexican Revolution of the 1920s–that the hacienda system was finally–although incompletely–brought down. Before the Agrarian Reform, campesinos lived under the rule and oppression of hacendados, and didn't have a territory of their own to graze their scarce cattle. The Reform's governmental mandates that 'eliminated' the latifundios (Poole 1988) and distributed land

[3] Wilson, *Spiritual Tourism*…, 8-9p.

[4] "Ubicada en una zona geográfica de difícil acceso, durante los siglos XIX y XX la provincia de Chumbivilcas permaneció, en gran medida, aislada de los cambios modernizadores que comenzaron a transformar al Perú después de su independencia […] Durante gran parte del siglo XX, la provincia mantuvo dicha condición de aislamiento, aunada al sistema de hacienda […]" Cárdenas. *Vigencia de la banda típica*…, 13p [translation is mine]

amongst peasant communities, 'liberated' the campesinos from the rule of the hacendados but not from poverty or marginalization, racism or isolation.

In Chumbivilcas the convoluted classist/racist divide between the Spanish-speaking urban *mistis* [from the Spanish term *mestizo*: 'mixed-race'], and the rural Quechua-speaking *campesinos* [peasants]–racialized by *mistis* as *indios* [Indigenous]–has prevailed after the Agrarian Reform. *Mistis* are usually former hacendados that have made their fortunes mainly by raising Lidia breed cattle (bulls for bullfights), thus, identifying with the Spanish toreros, the Mexican charros or the Texan cowboys, proudly calling themselves *qorilazos*[5] ('golden lassos' in Quechua). While *mistis* live in more urban areas such as Santo Tomas and Colquemarca–both seats of their municipalities–campesinos live in peasant communities in the peripheries and in the mountains. Although campesinos also identify with the *qorilazo*, their cowboy persona is connected to grazing cattle such as sheep, cows and llamas.

But the geopolitical landscape of Chumbivilcas radically changed over the last decade.; when its territory began to consistently be mined for gold[6], the region finally entered the national scene, emerging from centuries of invisibilization. The previous oblivion wasn't accidental or unique to Chumbivilcas, it is linked to a historical process of ethno-racial discrimination of Indigenous populations. In Peru, there are many 'forgotten' or invisibilized places–in the Puna, the Andes and the Amazon–that are only 'noticed' when their resources are wanted. Hegemonic/official discourses aim at 'infantilizing' Indigenous peoples, labeling them–still using a colonial categorization–as 'savages.' This invalidation allows unrestricted neoliberal incursions by transnational mining companies in their territories, almost cynically depicted as aid, benefit and development, but carried out without consultation or dialogue. In the case of

[5] Deborah Poole (1988) performs a critical and complex analysis of the historical connections amongst *abigeato* (cattle raiding), bravery, manliness and the construction of the *qorilazo* in Chumbivilcas.
[6] Mines have existed in the area since pre-Columbian times, but the industrialization of mining is a recent phenomenon.

Chumbivilcas, the main exploiting companies are: Hudbay (Canada), Las Bambas (China), Hochschild (Britain-Peru), and Anabi (Peru).

In recent years, artisanal/informal/small-scale mining has also grown exponentially, allowing campesinos to make their own ‘fortunes’ and ascend socially, something that *mistis* don’t see with good eyes. Former hacendados have, of course, also dabbled in the profitable enterprise, so it’s not the ecological consequences of such activity that they have an issue with, but with the *declassed transgression* of the campesinos. This intricate scenario of racism and classism caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy (Santos 2014) can also be observed in the perception of cultural practices and festivals of both *mistis* and campesinos. According to their origin and location, syncretic rituals and cultural traditions from Chumbivilcas are valued differently. Some of these traditions have a colonial/Spanish origin–bullfights, cockfights, horse taming–and have become a central component of the *qorilazo* cowboy identity that Chumbivilcans are so proud of. Other rituals have Indigenous/peasant origins–notably *huaylias* (traditional dances, music and complex costumes that allow the embodiment of different historical tropes) and *Takanakuy,* a form of wrestling that originated when hacendados and their *gamonales* (caciques) forced, first their slaves and then their *peones* [laborers], to fight each other for their entertainment, imitating cockfights. While the former, due to their Spanish origin, are presented as respectful and honorable, the later, with Indigenous roots, are perceived as violent and uncivilized, both in Chumbivilcas and in other parts of Peru. The complex layers of discrimination of these assessments show how the *coloniality of power* (Quijano 2000) operates in the postcolony through the *zombification* of subjects driven into the realms of fantasy (Mbembe 1992): in this case the classist, racist and misogynist fantasy of being a Spanish-Mexican[7] *qorilazo*.

[7] Cowboy films from the Golden Age of Mexican cinema became popular in Peru and Latin America since the 1940s. In Chumbivilcas, *qorilazos* identified with the charros portrayed in such films, and coined the nickname of *Mexico chico* [‘small Mexico’] for the region.

IMPOSTOR SYNDROME

> *In the regional identity of Cusco, Chumbivilcas occupies a peculiar place: a wild, remote and violent territory; a region of refuge, populated by real and imaginary criminals [...] Chumbivilcas is also a sort of "wild west" whose inhabitants in some sense also represent the authentic, free and rebellious serrano.*[8]
>
> Deborah Poole

Before setting foot in Chumbivilcas, Claudia and I already carried the heavy baggage of racist presuppositions and stereotypes passed down, sometimes forcefully, in a diverse array of conversations with filmmakers, artists, documentarists, anthropologists, activists, taxi-drivers and friends in Lima and Cusco. Many people we talked to didn't even know where Chumbivilcas was–or *what* it was–, and many others didn't understand why we wanted to travel, let alone do research, to such a remote and 'savage' place. Most of these conversations revolved around the extreme cold weather of the *sierra* and the unwelcoming, macho, and even violent character of Chumbivilcans, their traditions and rituals. We, of course, decided to travel anyways, and, after our first field trip, we were surprised that none of our previous interlocutors had mentioned the intense heat, the overwhelming dust, the witty character of 'violent' rituals, and the social pressure to drink alcohol that we would encounter. Since we had been told that Chumbivilcans were very hermetic and that no one would open up their doors to us, we were also astonished by the hospitality and care of most people we met. We knew that our position as female outsiders had an effect on the access we had, for example, to male 'drinking circles'. Ritually sharing a small plastic cup to drink beer from 1-liter Cusqueñas–counterclockwise passing it to the following drinker after offering the remaining beer foam to the Pachamama–also meant we had to bear with the occasional double-sense commentary inspired by the assumed manliness and bravery of the Chumbivilcan

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[8] "En la identidad regional cusqueña, Chumbivilcas ocupa un lugar peculiar: un territorio agreste, remoto y violento; región de refugio, poblada por criminales reales e imaginarios [...] Chumbivilcas es también una especie de "salvaje oeste" ("wild west") cuyos habitantes en algún sentido representan también al serrano auténtico, libre y rebelde." Poole, "Paisajes de poder …", 11p [translation is mine]

male–which we were told numerous times by them, is based on their capacity to drink large quantities of alcohol, tame horses, fight bulls, and their sexual stamina–, and with conventional assumptions about marriage. As unmarried women, men would constantly try to match us with unmarried men, in a serious invitation disguised with laughter. But drinking and sharing the plastic cup, we soon found out, was the first step in building trust (Bety, our host at the hotel, made it clear to us when she mentioned that people didn't trust the photographer that had just joined us because she didn't drink with them) and, unsurprisingly, in getting to know both men and women better. And so, on that first field trip to Chumbivilcas–which we made coincide with the celebrations of the Mamacha Santa Ana, patron saint of the peasant community of Ccoyo–we drank a lot of beer, chicha, and sweet wine (or what looked as wine) and, consequently, we met a lot of people.

I met Claudia, from Cusco, through another anthropologist, Gustavito, who is based in Lima. Right before I traveled for the first time to Chumbivilcas with Claudia, I had coffee with Gustavito, in Cusco. On the verge of crying, I opened up my fears to the unknown nature of what was about to come, but also to the failure of my 'impersonation of an ethnographer' and my ostensible *ethnographer-envy*–that which consumes the *quasi-anthropological artist* (Foster 1996) who "may seek to work with sited communities with the best motives of political engagement and institutional transgression, only in part to have this work recoded by its sponsors as social outreach, economic development, public relations...or art."[9] The conversation with Gustavito was long and emotional, but the two things he said that lingered in my head were: "don´t travel with a fixed idea; be open to what you encounter" and "whatever you do, listen to Claudia." Through the more than six months that I have worked with Claudia, the later has proven, once and again, vital. One of the more notorious moments was when we recently had to take the difficult decision to postpone the shooting of the film and leave Santo Tomás stealthily in the middle of the night,

[9] Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?", 303p

one week after a coup of the Congress to the president took place, plunging the country in a violent political crisis.

As I sat in the bed of my hotel room overlooking the main plaza of Santo Tomás, I could simultaneously listen to the media condemning the protests that had been taking place in the country–especially in the south, including Chumbivilcas–and to the *comunerxs* arriving to the plaza from the peasant communities of the province, using megaphones to organize their mobilization to the *corredor minero* [mining corridor] to block the highway. The polarization of the country and the radicalization of political positions was evident in the rhetoric and histrionics of both addresses. On the television, I could see the host of a show–impersonating a journalist–lifting from the streets of Cusco a stone that was supposedly used to break the store window of a small business, while dramatically accusing protesters of the violence taking place in the country. Meanwhile, in Santo Tomás' Plaza de Armas, a campesino leader, also shouting, called the *comunerxs* to war, and expressed his lack of fear to die. People were mad: some because of the arbitrary removal of an elected president who came from rural Peru; some because of the blockages and 'vandalism' condemned by the government and its repressive–the army–and ideological–mainly the press–state apparatuses. A national strike was summoned by numerous guilds, unions, and other social, peasant, student and workers' organizations. In Santo Tomás all stores and restaurants were closed–only allowing people to buy groceries for 30 minutes every morning and every evening, reminding everyone of closures

due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic–and all roads were blocked with rocks, tires and huge branches and patrolled by members of the organizations. The confrontations escalated in the coming days, and also the radicalization of the official discourse: Dina Boluarte, the imposed president and former vice-president to Pedro Castillo, the impeached president, called protesters *violentadores* [agitators], criminalizing the right to protest, while imposing a *state of emergency* which allowed the unrestricted use of violence by the police and the army. The government and its apparatuses also drew upon *terruqueo*, a rhetorical political strategy usually used by conservative and right-wing sectors to discredit and target left-wing, progressive and Indigenous groups, by calling them terrorists, in a crude and tragical association to Sendero Luminoso [Shining Path], the terrorist group that terrorized the country and killed hundreds of people–especially peasants–in the 1980s and that still exists in some regions today. This rhetoric of power legitimized the use/monopoly of violence: in only 15 days of government, Boluarte had been responsible for the assassination of 27 people, including 10 deaths and 61 injured during the Ayacucho Massacre of December 15, when demonstrators tried to take over the city's airport and troops responded by firing live ammunition. Some sectors of the population–middle to upper class, mainly–endorsed the sanctioned violence as a strategy to ‘pacify’ the country and ‘tame’ *violentadores*–meaning *terrucos*, meaning ‘savages’, meaning Indigenous people. This polarization of the country has clear racist and classist implications: while in a WhatsApp group former students from an upper-middle class school in Cusco raise money for the National Police arguing that “they are struggling to protect *us*”, in a Facebook live transmission of the Takanakuy festival in Llusco, Quechua influencer

Luz Maria Barcena claims: "*We* are not terrorists, *we* are working class people, *we* are very far away from Lima, *we* are the deep Peru". This historical us-versus-them logic (*mistis* vs Indigenous, middle-class vs working class, center vs periphery) penetrates into the deepest strata of Peruvian society. It isn't only a confrontation between Cusqueños–'heirs' of the former Inca Empire,– and Limeños–cosmopolitan people from the capital–; it is an observable fact also in the heart of 'far away lands' such as Chumbivilcas, especially now that the current political crisis has brought the (many times concealed) ideological differences, resentments and class struggles to the forefront.

After 4 days stranded in Santo Tomás due to the highway blockages, and 4 days stranded in Cusco due to the closure of the airport as a consequence of the protests, I finally made it back to Lima. I met with Gustavito for a walk downtown. Fearlessness is what stayed with me after those unexpected strike days in Santo Tomás; silence was what struck me the most in Cusco, a city that I had seen in previous trips burgeoning with tourists. But in Lima, it was normality that shocked me the most. Yes, there were military and police tanks at the San Martín Plaza; yes, there were soldiers blocking the entrance to the main square and a bunch of others standing outside governmental buildings. But, in general, life went by as usual in Peru's capital.

My project had transformed enormously since I met with Gustavito more than 5 months before, in Cusco. "Last time I saw you, you were thinking of documenting the Takanakuy festival; now, you are planning to shoot a film with the participation of 400 people, special effects, Mexican charros and 60 horses!?" My initial conversation with Gustavito felt so far away, as did all the biased and spitefully alarming monologues Claudia and I had to endure before our first field trip to Chumbivilcas. My initial fears of impersonating an ethnographer had also dissipated, probably after I undertook the more fitting-to-my-experience role of co-producer (with Claudia) and director of a low-budget film, a project that has organically–but by no means effortlessly–developed in collaboration with many associations, cultural

organizations, community authorities, artistic groups, local producers, artisans and Chumbivilcans interested in participating. Is this a community-based collaborative art project? From the perspective of New Genre Public Art (a term coined in 1991 by American artist, writer and educator Suzanne Lacy), it probably is:

> "The *highlighting of marginalized and disenfranchised social groups* in community-based collaborative art projects is indeed an attempt to *counter (if not compensate for) these groups' lack of social visibility and political power*. And the endeavor to give voice to underrepresented and disempowered groups, often by engaging them in the very process of *creating their own cultural representations*, is understood by most of its practitioners and supporters as not simply an artistic experiment but a *strategy of political importance*."[10]

But I believe the project's goals are not only centrifugal, or towards the outside, but centripetal, towards the inside, meaning: engaging and generating communal knowledge to subvert the consciousness not only of audiences, but also, and more importantly, of participants. This transformation of consciousness is meant to happen through the confrontation of participants with their role in oppressive structures of power (Boal 1974, Kester 2011), a "cognitive movement [that will be] produced through the physical, discursive, and haptic experience of shared labor."[11] But in this ambitious purpose, many questions (and contradictions) remain open: can labor escape the domain of coercion and exploitation (Nancy 1991)? Can collaboration and confrontation ethically coexist? Can the artist/researcher be at the same time a provocateur/instigator and a collaborator? Can research-creation pull from the avant-garde notion of shock to question power in an ethical and effective/affective manner? What is the ethical-political dimension of a triggered self-confrontation?

Gustavito and I concluded our tour of Lima's downtown in Chinatown, eating *chifa* (the amazing Peruvian gastronomy that fuses Chinese Cantonese elements with traditional ingredients from Peru) and looking at passers-by buying Christmas presents. While drinking Jasmin tea, Gustavito convincingly concluded: "your project is an investigation into Peruvian racism." And I had to agree, at least partially.

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[10] Kwon, *One Place…,* 115p. [underscore is mine]
[11] Kester, *The One*…, 90p.

What started as an investigation on fighting rituals and cultural traditions of Chumbivilcas had transformed, by *sharing in the sensible* (Laplantine 2005) but mainly by processes of collaboration, into research of people's desires, ideology, beliefs and concerns, and the racist undertones of such expressions. This transformation of the project was a result of "a kind of toggling back and forth between inside and outside, engagement and observation, immersion and reflective distance"[12] that negated the "fundamentally passive notion of site as either a compliant receptacle for the artist's singular vision, or a set of compositional or scenic elements to be captured for subsequent use in film, video, or installation work."[13] From the beginning of the project, I've tried to avoid "a hollowing out of Latin American history, as well as a detached, delectory relationship to that history as a subject of poetic contemplation."[14] I believe that my practice has outgrown its *representational* character and morphed into a *performance* of violence conceived as a collective/collaborative aesthetic and transformative investigation *against* power. That is why this project isn't intended as a descriptive or static anthropological exercise or as a metaphorical work of art, but it intends to become a transformative, dynamic, and collaborative aesthetical experience and a performance of *Decolonial AestheSis*: "a re-valuation of what has been made invisible or devalued by the modern-colonial order"[15] to make visible decolonial subjectivities and other forms of sensing and perceiving that have been disdained or rejected by the Western canon (Mignolo 2013). Conversations have evolved into discussions and have become negotiations; co-laboring (Kester 2011) has produced co-elaboration in collaboration; and the channeling of desires through art and filmmaking have generated an *immersive criticality* in the site, which has made me feel more comfortable but also infinitely challenged (and exhausted) in becoming some sort of *anthropological artist*, a transformation that would have been impossible without Claudia's insight and sensibility. A *dif-fusion* of an art project into co-creation as

[12] Kester, *The One*…, 90p.
[13] Kester, *The One*…, 89p.
[14] Kester, *The One*…, 70p.
[15] Mignolo, *Decolonial AestheSis*…

transformative research that may reveal that when art loses its autonomy and 'sophistication' and becomes 'impure' and 'contaminated' by (non-Western) cultural practices and other disciplines–the social sciences, for example–, it may stop being a mere orthopedic, didactic or entertaining device for a bourgeoise audience. When "the site is not a resource for the enactment of an a priori vision or a goal already-in-mind"[16], instead of being instrumental, art is envisioned as anticipatory and open; art that 'reattaches' to reality and to politics and that aims to become a tool for the ethical co-creation of useful knowledge. This might be a draft of a definition of art as research or research-creation.

INDIGENOUS MODERNITY

> *The project of indigenous (sic) modernity can emerge from the present in a spiral whose movement is continuous feedback from the past to the future—a "principle of hope" or "anticipatory consciousness"—that both discerns and realizes decolonization at the same time.*
>
> Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui

Víctor was our first interlocutor, informant and guide to Chumbivilcas. Originally from the peasant community of Ccoyo, Victor is an author and professor who works in Cusco's Decentralized Direction of Culture, and has conducted vast research and written extensively about the Takanakuy and other cultural traditions of the province. He is also the owner of a large house–that's now also serving as a hotel, where we stayed our first 2 trips–one block away from the main plaza of Santo Tomas. We later learnt from him that he bought the house from a former hacendado in what he considers an act of class/racial revenge, based on social ascent.

Our initial conversations with Víctor happened on the phone before we arrived to Chumbivilcas. Claudia also met him briefly in Cusco, and he gifted her his book *Cuando la sangre hierve* ['when blood

[16] Kester, *The One*…, 152p.

boils'], a title that references the feeling that Takanakuy wrestlers experiment before entering the ring. From the book and from our conversations with Víctor we understood his (decolonial) position on cultural practices as Indigenous resistance. For example, he considers the Takanakuy as a new form of Taki Onqoy ['sickness of the chants' in Quechua], an Andean movement of resistance to the Spanish invasion that arose in the Peruvian Andes during the 16th century. The Taki Onqoy was based on the belief that the *huacas*–pre-Incan divinities that take the shape of rocks, mountains and other natural elements and that were banned by Spanish priests–could take possession of people through initiatory ecstasy generated by dance to expel the imposed foreign beliefs from them. Not surprisingly, the Taki Onqoy has been regarded as a zombielike phenomenon and 'scientifically' reduced to an intoxication by mercury that inhabitants of the Andes suffered in the 16th century, draining it of its confrontational character: "Taki Onqoy is a syndrome that corresponds to the poisoning from exposure to mercury. It appeared as a result of the exploitation of the mercury mines of Paras and Huancavelica in Peru during the 16th century. […] The Taki Onqoy in 16th-century Peru represents the largest epidemic of mercury poisoning known to humanity".[17] By considering the Takanakuy a form of modern Taki Onqoy, Víctor understands it as a ritualistic tool to resist oppression, hence, dangerous for power–namely the Church, the government, and even terrorist groups, all of whom have tried to ban the Takanakuy at some point. But no matter the risk, inhabitants of peasant communities in Chumbivilcas have always found the way to preserve the tradition in an act of cultural resistance.

The day I met Victor in person, in Santo Tomás, we realized that he was campaigning with the local political party Movimiento Regional Inka Pachacuteq to become municipal president of the province of Chumbivilcas. In his small sedan adorned with a large sticker depicting the Inca Pachacuteq–the ninth ruler of the Inca state who turned it into a great empire, the Tahuantinsuyo, and also the logo of the political

[17] Santa Maria, "Taki Onqoy…", 337p.

party he was member–we traveled together, uphill, to Ccoyo, his hometown, to join the preparations for the Mamacha Santa Ana–patron saint of Ccoyo and also of miners–festival. As we arrived, we shacked hands with dozens of people as Victor introduced us to his relatives and acquaintances. We met Felix, president of the community, Eva, one of the 11 members of the town's *ronda campesina*–the autonomous peasant patrols in rural Peru that originally formed to combat theft, especially cattle raiding, and that during the Internal Conflict era confronted the terrorist group Shining Path and also the army–, traditional musicians, and relatives of the *carguyoq*–people in a rotational charge responsible for the organization and funding of patron saint festivities.

Ccoyo is a small town of about 2 thousand inhabitants, entrenched in the mountains surrounding Santo Tomás. Most young inhabitants of Ccoyo–as it happens in most peasant communities in the area–have migrated to Santo Tomás or Arequipa to be able to access higher education or to find a job–for example, in the mining industry–leaving behind the elderly, who survive harvesting their minimal agricultural land and grazing a few sheep and cows. As we later learnt, even the president of the community emigrated to Santo Tomás, 'ruling' from the distance, a situation that for older members of the communal government was highly problematic.

The main plaza of Ccoyo is located on the top of a hill, with the church on the highest position, overlooking an amphitheater-like circular space enclosed by stone walls, where de Takanakuy takes place. We entered the small and rustic church made of adobes to observe how the tiny figure of the Mamacha Santa Ana, with a little stone in her hand–a trait that for many proves her protection to

miners–, was being dressed with new clothes–a tradition that can be observed all over Latin America as part of patron saint festivities. The table where the dressing was taking place was placed near the entrance of the church and fragrantly adorned with vases of white lilies. People gathered tightly around it while the dressers discussed heatedly, in Quechua, because apparently one of them had fitted the Mamacha's *pollera* [skirt] as a cape. After the Mamacha was put back in the altar, we all exit the church to be received with plates of spongy cake and plastic cups with cola. I also tried my first *chicha*–fermented maize celebratory/ritual low-alcoholic beverage–which was unexpectedly sweet and refreshing.

Taking advantage of the dressing event, a communal assembly was summoned by authorities from the municipality of Santo Tomás to discuss the patrimonialization of Ccoyo's Mamacha festivity and the accompanying Takanakuy. In this discussion, Carlos, the representative of the local Culture Direction–who we initially dismissed as an agent of *folklorization*: "the re-stylization of traditional expressions so that they become less complex aesthetically and semantically"[18], and who later on became our interlocutor with the municipality when we were trying to get funding for the project–, argued/tried to impose rules for the wrestling event based either on institutional conventions or on the 'authenticity' conservative argument–with misogynist/macho undertones–that we would later encounter in numerous conversations with Chumbivilcans. According to Carlos, women and children needed to be banned from wrestling (or at least not documented while doing it), and the use of birds and other animals in headdresses should be avoided due to animal protection concerns and because some of the animals used didn't belong to the 'original' tradition. His speech's tone demonstrated the infantilization of Indigenous populations that official discourses perform, even when the interlocutors belong to the same population. His rhetoric showed how cultural practices of Indigenous origin are frequently subjected to stigmatization or exoticization, or on the verge of folklorization and commodification. Their recognition as *cultural*

[18] Seitel, "Proposed Terminology…", 6p.

heritage, when focused on the demands of the tourist market or on conservative institutional standpoints, and not on the dynamism of culture and the practices' symbolic character, can make them lose their ability to become repositories of collective memory and tools to resist oppression. This and other forms of institutional conservatism and violence reveal a rooted *internal colonialism* (Gonzalez Casanova 1965, Quijano 2000)–many times internalized and also performed by participants–that jeopardize the *performance* of cultural resistance and epistemic disobedience (Mignolo 2000) of these complex rituals. Folklorization depletes cultural practices from their sensoriality and symbolism; and instead of an expression of a utopian liberatory political project (Santos 2014), these festivals can become a static and futile spectacle for tourists. In this meeting, preservation was boasted as necessary to avoid the commodification and extraction of the Takanakuy–which has commercial iterations, for example in Arequipa–but was actually intended as conservative and misogynist control over the peasant community of Ccoyo, revealing the incongruencies of power. Two days later, when the Takanakuy took place, birds and animals were overwhelmingly present but women didn't wrestle. In the *domination triad*–colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy–the last component proved to be more solid in this case.

After the patrimonialization 'workshop' ended, I was invited to present our project in the ad hoc assembly. This first 'pitch' of the project was, predictably, received with skepticism. Why is a Mexican artist interested in making a film in/about Chumbivilcas? How profitable would the project be for the producers in contrast to the participants? What would be the benefit for the community? These valid questions are a logical response to the recurrent extractivism peasant communities in the region–and elsewhere in the country and in Latin America–face. One women–in the clearly spatially split gendered audience–whispered, in Quechua: "they always come to film and get rich in their countries", as Claudia later translated to me. I responded to the questions as honestly as I could; this session was the first one of

a long journey of trust-building conversations with communal authorities and inhabitants of Ccoyo, many of whom are now major collaborators of the project.

A few days after the Takanakuy in Ccoyo took place, Claudia and I came back to the peasant community for a *petit comite* meeting that Eva had summoned with the vice-president of the community and two other members of the communal government, all of them elders. We all sat on the grass, under one of the only trees' shades in Pampa Ccoyo, a large plot of land in the downhill area of the town where the only school is located (that day we learned that, due to the intense migration to urban areas, the elementary school had only 7 students, and higher-level education didn't exist in the town, another cause of migration). In a combination of Quechua and Spanish, our 4 interlocutors, calmly but sadly, narrated the struggles that they face as a peasant community due to isolation, poverty, lack of water, mining and generational changes: cattle raiding, governability issues, teenage pregnancies and single mothering, dying crops and cattle, and a strong migration that has transformed Ccoyo into a ghost town…except when the Mamacha festivities take place and *everyone* comes back, revealing the power of pagan-religious traditions in Chumbivilcas. They also narrated their struggle to be recognized by the federal government as an Indigenous community instead of as a peasant community, despite the pejorative/racist charge that the term 'Indigenous' has in Peru (the cause for the rural Andean population in the country to usually prefer to self-identify as peasants). Such status would legally allow them more access to land and resources. This deliberation steered the conversation to Indigenous sovereignty and to the possibility of learning from autonomous Indigenous communities in Mexico. Our long-term commitment to the elders was a *trueque de saberes* ['knowledge exchange'] with Cherán, the first and largest P'urhepecha community in Michoacan, Mexico, to gain political autonomy back in 2011 in an armed movement led by women. This exchange is planned as a two-way visit with conversations centered on governability,

sustainability and cultural identity. Hopefully we will find funding to make this exchange happen in the near future.

In our second field trip to Chumbivilcas in September, Felix, Ccoyo's president, asked us to meet him in his house in Santo Tomás to further discuss the community's participation in the project. But the conversation rapidly diverted to the exchange that we had discussed with the elders. Since he was about to finish his term as president, he urged us to make the exchange happen as soon as possible (so that he could travel to Mexico), arguing that the following communal government might have a different standpoint regarding the film project and could disapprove it. Although his support to the project felt conditional and self-interested, after we explained the (lack of) funds situation and our condition as researchers without support from a corporation, he understood the state of affairs and the conversation ended on a positive note, with the agreement to present a concrete proposal of participation to the community's general assembly on October 1st[19]. Claudia had to travel on her own for this meeting, and I 'joined' through live WhatsApp communications since the internet wasn't reliable enough for a video conference. We prepared a document to be presented and discussed in the assembly, which included a

proposal for the general narrative of the scene, based on our previous conversations with inhabitants of Ccoyo, the conditions for participation, the intended benefits for the community and the compensation for each participant. The proposal was received with plenty of questions, but also with

[19] All community members from Ccoyo are summoned to meet on the 1st of every month to discuss all aspects of communal interest, resolve conflicts, plan for the following month and, when timely, elect their authorities. This form of communal decision making and government is a form of political sovereignty rooted in ancient traditions that can be witnessed in most peasant communities of Chumbivilcas.

enthusiasm. The compensation was negotiated, the number of participants was agreed, and by the end of the general assembly (which lasted a couple of hours), the memebres of the *ronda campesina* (main participants of the scene), Ccoyo's authorities and Claudia, as our representative, signed the document sealing the collaboration. Eva was appointed as our main interlocutor to discuss further details of the shooting, including the final narrative, dates, food, animal participants, outfits, etc. In our following (and numerous) phone conversations with Eva, we learnt that the members of the *ronda* had been thoroughly discussing the scene's narrative and how they wanted to re-present themselves. Through these conversations, we agreed on a date, food for the crew and cast was arranged with a local cook, and outfits were also decided.

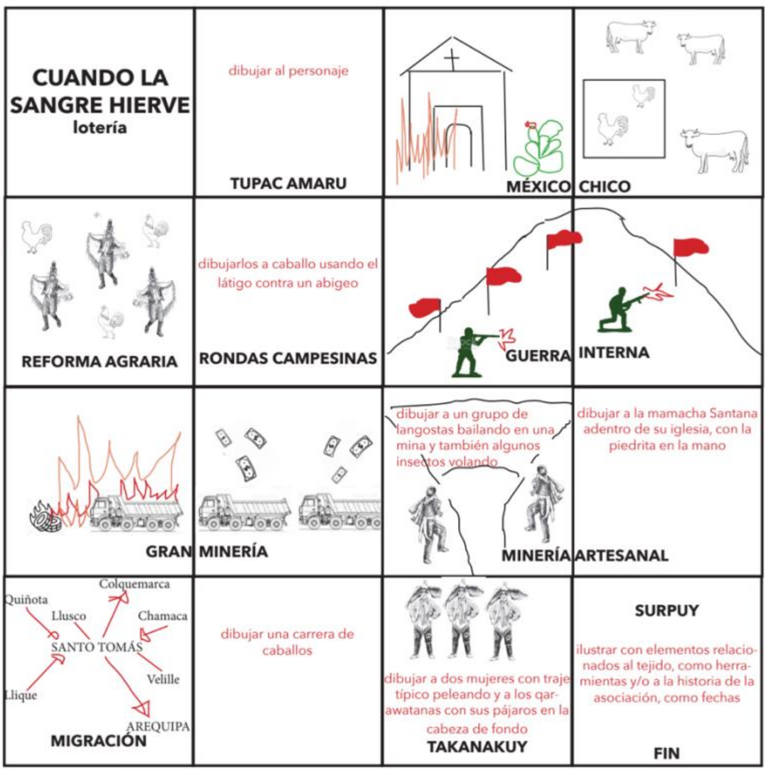
We met Eva in person again on our fourth visit to Chumbivilcas (when we had planned on shooting the film) at the textile cooperative of women Surpuy, of which she is also a member. In that encounter we had a brief conversation about the narrative of the scene in Ccoyo. In the past weeks I had been thoroughly discussing with Johan, the cinematographer of the film, the visualization of the script and the shooting list of each scene. Months before, I wrote the initial draft of the script in collaboration with Claudia, based on our conversations with Chumbivilcans and on our research, trying to be at the same time critical and respectful of the desires of each participant, and accurate to the aesthetic proposals that, as an artist, I had expressed, discussed and agreed with each group of participants. These processes of *collaborative writing* can be paralleled with the *aesthetics of disappropriation* that Mexican author Cristina Rivera-Garza argues for when proposing *writing in communality* (Rivera-Garza 2014). Collaborative writing *and unwriting*, for after that last encounter with Eva my shooting list/visualization had to be changed/unwritten based on the *rondas'* visualization to generate a collaborative/communal vision. In these negotiations we all implicitly respect each other's expertise and desires, and they become some sort of *trueque de saberes*, where everything from the actions to the camera position is explained to each other so that aesthetical but

also political–or aesthetic-political–decisions can be taken jointly. Our collaboration with Surpuy is another example of these processes of collective/communal writing (designing) and unwriting, sharing knowledge and discussing, from the aesthetical, the political.

We first approached Felipa, a member of Surpuy collective, in our first field trip to discuss the participation of Surpuy in the confection of attires for the film. But as our conversations with other participants took place, we realized that traditional garments were not only owned by most Chumbivilcans, but that they were objects of pride that everyone wanted to show off in the film. But we wanted to collaborate with Surpuy anyways, the main reason being that we wanted to get to know better their personal and collective struggles and successes as women from peasant communities (although Surpuy's workshop is located in Santo Tomas, most of its members belong originally or travel every week from peasant communities away from Chumbivilcas' capital). Surpuy is as example of a communal project that *delinks* (Mignolo 2007) from Western modes of exploitation, memory making, and patriarchal organization, and represents an Indigenous modernity that challenges the modern/colonial world-system, taking advantage of current capitalist trends–in this case, the re-value of traditional/artisanal textiles. Surpuy sells their textiles in a high-end boutique in Cusco, targeting tourists, while preserving their traditional weaving technique which, as in most Indigenous communities, is a tool to conceal and preserve their culture, traditions and narratives: a device for epistemic decolonisation. For example, as Surpuy members explained to us in our first group meeting–which took place during our second field trip in September–weaved motifs are used to represent their ties with the land and territory, animals, flowers and other nonhuman beings, and capture their cosmogony and history in order to preserve and transmit it. "Craft knowledge is discursive and transmissible. It is a skill that can be taught and passed on, and in doing so it provides a platform for shared labour that can be used to mobilize new relationships."[20]

[20] Kester, *The One*…, 91p.

All the members of the collective–15 female and one male member, who was accepted after his wife died–attended the meeting. They showed us the textiles that they fabricate for commercial purposes but also some more narrative and intricate designs that they have shown in exhibitions around the country. I was very impressed by the narrative power of one of these designs–which was divided into squares or vignettes–and proposed that for our project, they could use a similar technique to pair the textile with the film's narrative so that each vignette could function as the cover for each chapter of the film, each one based on a past or present event or struggle from the region. After we explained some of these chapters–Tupac Amaru's revolt, the dissolution of the haciendas during the Reforma Agraria, the foundation of *rondas campesinas*, the Internal Conflict era, the exploitation of the territory by mining companies–we faced some resistance from some members to represent some of the events because they didn't feel qualified to tell someone else's story. But after they recounted the history of the collective and shared with us some personal experiences, the strong connections between Surpuy's history, their members' and the history of the region and of the country were palpable. We ended the group session with the agreement that the textile would include 16 vignettes–each one weaved by one member of the collective–, and that each one of them would choose which one to weave based on the connection that they had/felt to the scene represented. We also agreed that I would send an initial design proposal based on our conversation, and that they would make a counterproposal based on



their expertise. Based on the final design, they would also propose a remuneration for the fabrication of the textile.

We sent the design via WhatsApp a few weeks before Claudia's third field trip to Santo Tomás, when she had a second group meeting with the collective. They were ready with questions and suggestions for the design, and with a proposal for the remuneration. We agreed on everything they proposed, gave them an advanced payment and signed a document to seal the collaboration.

On our fourth visit to Chumbivilcas, in December, we met with all of them again. We knew that they were done with the fabrication of the textile and also that they wanted to renegotiate the final remuneration because of the amount of labor they devoted to it. Unsurprisingly, the textile was beautiful; the dedication and creativity that each one of the weavers had put into her vignette was tangible. We negotiated the remuneration so that everyone felt comfortable, took a bunch of commemorative pictures, and arranged to have a group dinner after Christmas to celebrate together and also to document their weaving processes and to interview them to integrate those materials to the film. Unfortunately, this gathering had to be postponed, as was the shooting of the film. But in the near future we will be drinking chicha together.

MEXICAN FANTASIES

[Lucy Lippard] presents a holistic vision of place as a kind of text of humanity, "the intersections of nature, culture, history, and ideology," that one understands as such from a position of an insider.
Miwon Kwon

We met Arnold, musician and singer from the Huayno band Pancho Gómez Junior, in Cusco, right before our second field trip to Chumbivilcas, when his band was performing as part of a homage to his late father Pancho Gómez Negrón, an icon of Chumbivilcan music. Arnold invited us to the backstage where we witnessed the time and dedication that Huayno singers put to their *qorilazo* outfits. Each band had a different style of shirt–some of them more traditional, and others more modern–but they all used the characteristic poncho, *chaparreras* [leather chaps], boots and hat of the Chumbivilcan cowboy.

We experienced the concert from a balcony, from where we could also see most of the audience and notice the fervor that Chumbivilcans that have migrated have for their musical traditions, confirming what we had been told before. The clapping was overwhelming, and the bands had to come back on stage to perform once and again. It was also a very formal event: the audience dressed up, a master of ceremonies with a never-ending list of appreciations, and the interminable handing out of diplomas and presents to all the performing musicians and in the audience.

The following day, Arnold took the same van back to Santo Tomás as we did. As we shared some coca leaves to avoid motion and altitude sickness, we told Arnold more about our project–we had already invited him and his band to participate as musicians–and he offered to introduce us to the president of the Asociación de Caballistas ['horse riders association'] in the following days.

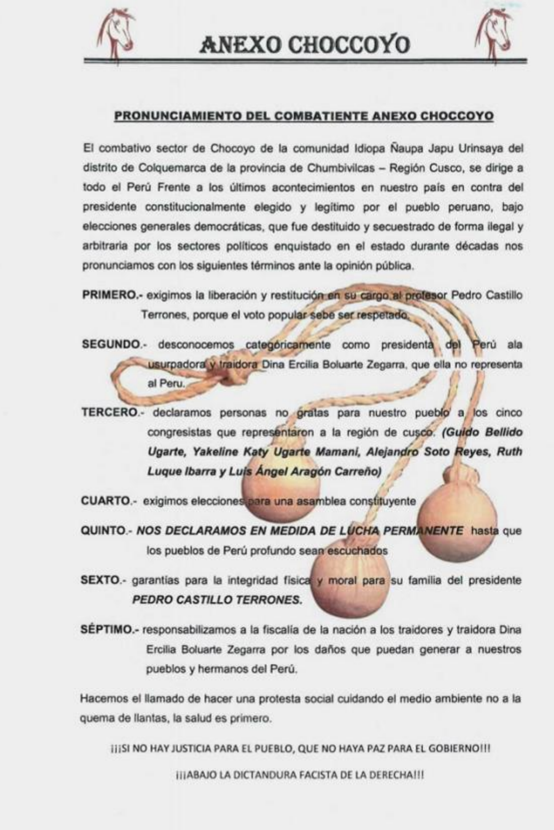
We met Gustavo at the Asociación–which we later learnt was adjacent to his house–in the center of Santo Tomás. I had prepared a short presentation of the project, which included a few clips from Mexican cowboy films from the Golden Age of Mexican cinema, which became popular in Peru and Latin America since the 1940s. In Chumbivilcas, *qorilazos* identified with the *charros* portrayed in such films,

and coined the nickname of *Mexico chico* [‘small Mexico’] for the region. The first time that Claudia and I heard of the term *Mexico chico* we felt that it was some sort of signal: apparently, besides the interest in the Takanakuy as a performance of cultural resistance and epistemic disobedience, intuitively I had sensed other coincidences amongst Chumbivilcas and some regions of Mexico where I had worked in the past. Or maybe this was simply an opportunity to research how those cultural coincidences are part of a shared history of colonization. This realization happened in the peasant community of Llique Curahuata, where Victor had invited us to join him for a football tournament (once we arrived, we learnt that it was actually a campaign visit, and that our presence, as foreigners, was helpful for his purpose). It was our first time entering a male drinking circle, and we first thought that *Mexico chico* was either an invention from our drunken new friends, or a hallucination of ours. But we soon realized that *Mexico chico* was a real thing: every time I mentioned that I was a Mexican artist making a film in Chumbivilcas, someone responded with the question: “do you know Chumbivilcas is the *Mexico chico*?” The romanticized version that Chumbivilcas have of Mexico and their exoticization of the Mexican ranchero culture has become a motif of the film and another important thread in our research. For the shooting of the film, my Mexican collaborators Vito, Assistant to the Cinematographer, and Waldo, Acting Coach, traveled to Peru with 2 charro outfits: one for Jorge, our local producer and driver, partner of an artisanal mine and coming actor in one of the mining scenes of the film–where he will be using the charro suit and the iconic charro hat (as he suggested), the latter with a Chumbivilcan adaptation: a stuffed bird. The other outfit is for Betzy, a female singer of Mexican rancheras, who I met in a cockfight in the town of Chamacca, where she was performing in between fights. The outfits never made it to Chumbivilcas: they got stranded, with my collaborators, in Lima; but eventually, they will help fulfill the *Mexican fantasies* that me and my collaborators have been jointly imagining.

Another important component of these 'fantasies' will be the use of artisanal pyrotechnics as special effects, but also as allegorical elements in the narrative vignettes. Pyrotechnics were introduced in the Americas by Franciscan priests in the 16th century as a tool to frighten and punish Indigenous populations, but have been integrated since into popular festive traditions (including effigy-burning rituals) as a form of catharsis, purge, celebration, and even criticism and protest: violent tools of the oppressor that have been subverted and turned into tools for resistance. Taking advantage of the international networks of my previous collaborators from Tultepec–Mexico's capital of pyrotechnics–I asked them to put me in contact with Peruvian pyrotechnicians that they thought could adapt to the needs of the Mexican pyrotechnic tradition. That is how I met Luis, from Huancayo, 8 hours away from Lima, who was very enthusiastic about trying new techniques and creating new effects to fulfil *our* fantasies. Since I explained the project to Luis in early November, we have been in constant WhatsApp communications: every time he tests a new effect, he sends me a video and then, together, we decide the modifications that are needed to perfect it. Pulling from his expertise and my experience from previous projects, in 5 weeks, we managed to perfect all of the effects needed. Since, according to Luis, Peruvian aniline dye is not as strong in color as the Mexican, last December I traveled to Peru with 8 kilograms of Mexican aniline dye for our colorful smoke bombs. I met Gustavito at Lima's airport so that he could help me send the aniline to Luis on time for the smoke bombs to be ready for the shooting. Getting rid of 8 kilograms of colored powder made my luggage much lighter, although I still had to carry with me 10 kilograms of prop money (100 dollar bills) to be used in one of the mining scenes, with pyrotechnics that would make them 'fly', and 3 liters of tequila for the *canto campero* [singing while horse riding] scene, which would have Arnold in the leading role. The smoke bombs turned out amazingly colorful, and are already packed and ready to travel to Chumbivilcas when we reprogram the shooting of the film. Regarding the tequila, I'll have to bring more bottles on my next trip.

After watching the clips from the Mexican films, Gustavo also ‘fell into the fantasy’, became very enthusiastic about the project, and offered to help us summon and organize the 60 horse riders we had in mind to reenact the dramatization of one of Tupac Amaru’s battles that was filmed in Chumbivilcas as part of the iconic Tupac Amaru film of 1984–a subversive meta-dramatization of the battle. Claudia and I were at first a bit skeptic about Gustavo’s organizational skills, but, 3 months later, thanks to his initial management, we had a meeting at “Antojitos”, our go-to restaurant in Santo Tomás, with 10 regional coordinators for the scene: Atilio, from Colquemarca; Oscar, from Santo Tomás; Yuri, from Llusco; Luis, from Choccoyo; Herberth, from Livitaca; Fernando, from Sainata; Marina, from Colquemarca; Heber, from Quiñota; Juan Valencia, from Velille; and Elizabeth, from Santo Tomás. In this hybrid meeting that took place on December 11, each coordinator committed to gather, in average, 10 horse riders. We also decided, after some discussion, that participants from each region would be free to wear a combination of traditional and modern *qorilazo* outfits, and that they would also have the option to use the Mexican or traditional Chumbivilcan saddle for their horses, according to their preference. I committed to pay for the transportation of the horses, which would be managed by each coordinator, and also to the payment of people’s transportation as needed. We also overtly discussed the compensation for each participant: I was very honest about how the number of participants had exceeded the original plan, and that funding was unfortunately limited. Our interlocutors were very understanding of the situation, and thankful for our interest in Chumbivilcas’ history and traditions. We also expressed our sincere appreciation for their participation in the project, emphasized the collaborative nature of it, and then reached an agreement about compensations that everyone was comfortable with. We were also very open about the ‘adjustments’ to the original narrative of the film–and to the historical account of the battle–that we were proposing. These ‘changes’ are based on a *Bakhtinian subversion* of roles and endings that is a trope in the film. For the new scene, women would have the main roles, including a female Tupac Amaru, and two Spanish soldiers

would be represented by piñata-like effigies or Judases[21]–one of them would explode as a traditional Judas, and the other one would be lassoed by women horse riders, his head and arms detached from his body (letting red candies fall from his trunk) and then dragged to represent/subvert Tupac Amaru's dismemberment and the distribution of his limbs all over the country. This proposal generated some initial discomfort amongst some of the attendees, based on their perception of such actions as parodic. But after I explained the seriousness and critical character of the Burning of Judas rituals and of the breaking of piñatas–mainly as allegorical actions to collectively purge evil–they were not only convinced, but enthusiastic about the proposal. The 3-hour meeting ended with a toast with passion fruit juice. We were all very happy about what would happen only one week from that date. But things moved pretty fast in the following days. Communications with the coordinators continued over the phone and also through a WhatsApp group of which Gustavo and other participants of the scene–all of them members of the Asociación de Caballistas–were also part of. But what originated as an organizational tool, because of the coup, transformed into an ideological site of discussion. On December 12, the first concerns about the mobility of participants to the location of the shooting due to the blockages was vocalized. That same morning, Luis, one of the coordinators and president of the peasant



ANEXO CHOCCOYO

PRONUNCIAMIENTO DEL COMBATIENTE ANEXO CHOCCOYO

El combativo sector de Chocoyo de la comunidad Idiopa Ñaupa Japu Urinsaya del distrito de Colquemarca de la provincia de Chumbivilcas – Región Cusco, se dirige a todo el Perú Frente a los últimos acontecimientos en nuestro país en contra del presidente constitucionalmente elegido y legítimo por el pueblo peruano, bajo elecciones generales democráticas, que fue destituido y secuestrado de forma ilegal y arbitraria por los sectores políticos enquistado en el estado durante décadas nos pronunciamos con los siguientes términos ante la opinión pública.

PRIMERO.- exigimos la liberación y restitución en su cargo al profesor Pedro Castillo Terrones, porque el voto popular sebe ser respetado.

SEGUNDO.- desconocemos categóricamente como presidenta del Perú ala usurpadora y traidora Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra, que ella no representa al Peru.

TERCERO.- declaramos personas no gratas para nuestro pueblo a los cinco congresistas que representaron a la región de cusco. ***(Guido Bellido Ugarte, Yakeline Katy Ugarte Mamani, Alejandro Soto Reyes, Ruth Luque Ibarra y Luis Ángel Aragón Carreño)***

CUARTO.- exigimos elecciones para una asamblea constituyente

QUINTO.- ***NOS DECLARAMOS EN MEDIDA DE LUCHA PERMANENTE*** hasta que los pueblos de Perú profundo sean escuchados

SEXTO.- garantías para la integridad física y moral para su familia del presidente ***PEDRO CASTILLO TERRONES.***

SÉPTIMO.- responsabilizamos a la fiscalía de la nación a los traidores y traidora Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra por los daños que puedan generar a nuestros pueblos y hermanos del Perú.

Hacemos el llamado de hacer una protesta social cuidando el medio ambiente no a la quema de llantas, la salud es primero.

¡¡¡SI NO HAY JUSTICIA PARA EL PUEBLO, QUE NO HAYA PAZ PARA EL GOBIERNO!!!

¡¡¡ABAJO LA DICTANDURA FACISTA DE LA DERECHA!!!

[21] The Burning of Judas is a pagan carnivalesque tradition of Catholic origin that includes the creation and violent destruction of effigies with pyrotechnics, and is very popular in central and southern Mexico and other parts of Latin America. Judases were originally named after Judas Iscariot, the archetypal Catholic traitor, and portrayed as a devil with horns and a tail. Over time the Burning of Judas ritual transformed into political commentary, characterized by the public and cathartic destruction of 'evil' politicians and other public figures.

community Anexo Choccoyo–where the location of the shooting is situated–, posted a statement signed by all communal authorities of his town, demanding what many other social, peasant, student and workers' organizations were demanding at that moment (and are still demanding): the resignation of the *golpista* [coup leader] Dina Boluarte, the liberation and restitution of president Pedro Castillo, a call to elections, and they also declared themselves in permanent struggle until 'deep Peru' was given a voice. In the following days, Luis posted videos and photographs documenting the protests that his community and other peasant communities of the Colquemarca district were conducting in Choccoyo, very close to the proposed location of the Tupac Amaru scene. Meanwhile, other members of the chat posted memes mocking Pedro Castillo, and Henry–a former hacendado now living in Arequipa who had agreed to lend us his property (in ruins) to shoot another scene of the film, and editor of the magazine "Chumbivilcas, Presencia del Qorilazo"–insistently asked Claudia and I to join him for a live interview in his radio program. After this public invitation, I got two private WhatsApp messages from people in the group chat warning me of Henry's intentions: "he will try to use you", "he will try to turn the interview into political propaganda." On December 14 we decided to hold the shooting of the scene–programed for the 17–for a few days, still optimistic about the political situation getting better, and communicated our decision to the group (we also talked on the phone with each coordinator). Our message was received positively, as it was clear that it was impossible to continue with the original plan in view of the political situation. The polarized communications in the chat continued, while Claudia and I wondered how could people with huge ideological differences be part of the same association. On December 16, after 3 days of general strike and faced with the impossibility of the rest of our crew arriving to Santo Tomás due to the intense blockages, Claudia and I took the difficult decision to indefinitely postpone the shooting of the film. We communicated our decision–which was probably anticipated by everyone since by then the political situation was critical–to the group and also to all the other participants of the project. Henry took the

announcement as an opportunity to insist about the interview and to express his position regarding how the current situation of the country was damaging Peru's image worldwide. From an interview Claudia had with Henry and two of his relatives, also former hacendados, we already knew his racist, classist and misogynist position, so we decided to follow the advice offered previously and kindly rejected his proposal for an interview. In the following days the group chat continued active, with photographs of unexpected snow in the mountains, memes, and finally, Christmas and New Years' messages. Claudia and I felt the need to express our political stance–in this and other group chats–by posting a statement expressing our concern over the political crisis, our solidarity with the relatives of the victims and our admiration for the courage of the Peruvian people to raise their voices, and even more so of the Chumbivilcans. The last image to be posted in the chat is a promotional flyer of a corrida de toros. The answer to our question about ideology was apparently simple: the love for horses, roosters, and bulls–the *qorilazo* culture of Chumbivilcas–was stronger than any political difference and brought together all of its inhabitants, no matter their social class, profession, financial situation, or level of education.

Back in Cusco, at Claudia's place, after an adventurous night escape from Santo Tomás, we received a phone call from Chumbivilcas. Rolando, one of the *caballistas*, who Claudia had met on the third field trip, was very mad about being 'excluded' from the shooting of the Tupac Amaru scene. It took us a few minutes to understand the situation and to explain to him that there had been no exclusion, but that, due to logistical

practicality, communications about the shooting had been taking place directly with the 10 coordinators, and via the WhatsApp group of which he was part of. He finally admitted being in *traguitos* [drunk] and that his anger had to do with the inclusion of peasant *comuneros* in the scene, especially as coordinators, when it was *them*, the (former) hacendados, the owners, who had brought all of the horse-riding ad bullfighting traditions to Chumbivilcas, while the peasants had appropriated the traditions. According to him, it was also the hacendados, 'people with education', who contributed more to the Tupac Amaru revolution, and not the Quechua speaking peasants who didn't have the intellect to do it.

This was probably the harshest and most difficult conversation that we had had until that moment. In a previous interview, Dina, another former hacendada had called the peasants '*igualados'* [one who feels equal], and Gustavo, on our first meeting, had identified the negative changes taking place in Chumbivilcas with the peasants becoming miners and ascending socially without the education needed for it. But the level of racism and classism of this last conversation was way beyond. After hanging the phone, we were mad, and sad, but we were also certain that the work we had just postponed was not only relevant, but crucial. After all, I have to agree with Gustavito: this project is indeed an investigation into Peruvian racism. But in this 'digging-in', it also 'splatters': it aims at changing racist consciousness through the revelatory aesthetic experience of becoming Other and exposing oneself through collaborative artmaking and co-laboring.

"Do we really believe a performance in which an illegal worker sits in a cardboard box for four hours in a gallery is going to change anyone's consciousness of racism or class oppression?"[22] After Kester's (sarcastic) question about Santiago Sierra's work, I feel the need to ask: Do we really believe that subverting historical narratives through reenactment or that channeling exoticizing fantasies and desires is going to change anyone's consciousness of racism or class oppression? Can the embodiment of conflict–

[22] Kester, *The One*…, 170p

though drama/performance/filmmaking–transform consciousness? Can the social/political consciousness of self be critically analyzed and transformed by the embodiment of the Other through reenactment/drama? To be able to answer these questions a great deal of co-laboring will still need to be done together.

NOTE: all photographs by Adriana Peralta and Adela Goldbard

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