

Migration and Reconfiguration of the Socio-Economic and Cultural Landscape in Contemporary Peru

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During the last decades of the 20th century the Peruvian government waged a violent war against the guerrilla movement Shining Path ending the lives of approximately 70,000, mainly indigenous, Peruvians. The conflict transformed the south-central Andean region into “what Quechua-speaking villagers called *manchay tiempo*- the time of fear” (Starn 419) causing the migration¹ of nearly three hundred thousand indigenous people from the regions of Junín, Ancash, and Ayacucho into the outskirts of Lima. The novel *La hora azul* and the film *La teta asustada* examine the transformation of Lima’s socio-economic and cultural spaces due to the significant displacement of the indigenous population. In both works the female protagonists escape from Andean war zones seeking safety in Lima, where they must learn to navigate the evolving social landscape while maintaining their own cultural roots and traditions. This study juxtaposes the migration, the sexual relationships, and the exploitation of the female characters during Fujimori’s neoliberal dictatorship with the cultural displacement, rape, and the mistreatment of the indigenous population during the Spanish conquest. In *La hora azul*, Miriam’s affair with the successful lawyer Adrián Ormache ends tragically with her suicide. By contrast, Fausta, of *La teta asustada*, overcomes her trauma and is able to initiate a romantic relationship with the Quechuan gardener. These heroines are victims of racial discrimination inherited from the colonial period, as well as the harsh economic realities of Fujimori’s neoliberal regime. Despite this they are able to forge spaces of agency for the indigenous female by preserving their own cultural values. Collectively these works present alternative forms of resistance to colonial and neoliberal structures of power, by proposing the integration of indigenous culture into the national project.

¹ “In the period 1988-2003 Lima/Callao gained 351, 670 people by internal migration (INEI, 2002), the majority from the Sierran departments of Junin (net loss of 66, 519), Ancash (43,956) and Ayacucho (34, 615) where the guerrillas were most active” (Chambers 205).

Historical Background

The Maoist group Shining Path has been erroneously depicted as an indigenous uprising akin to the rebellion led by Tupac Amaru II in 1780 against the Spanish. Some critics have also incorrectly portrayed the Andean population as an intrinsically violent culture to explain the extreme violence in the Peruvian highlands during the internal war. In all respects Shining Path's ideology disregarded indigenous culture and history. Instead they "replicated the colonial stratification of regional society: a privileged elite of white professionals commanded a mass of brown-skinned youth of humble origin" (Starn 405). Furthermore their leader Abimael Guzman was not of the Andean peasantry, but a light-skinned philosophy professor from the Universidad Nacional de San Cristóbal de Huamanga where he founded the party in 1970. The vigilante justice employed by the Shining Path against corrupt authorities at the outset of the movement proved successful in gaining loyalty among a historically oppressed indigenous population, "in the first years, the Shining Path was unquestionably successful in winning a measure of village sympathy in the war zone. Many peasants were happy to see the departure of inefficient and corrupt authorities, and the punishment [. . .] of adulterers and thieves seemed to validate the promise of a new, more just order" (405). In conjunction with their vigilante justice, the Shining Path offered hope of social mobility, and they strategically manipulated kinship ties in the indigenous communities to advance their agenda. For example, the party promised a better future to young students from the slums of Ayacucho, who as victims of oppression and racism were rightfully resentful at the lack of opportunities. Once they gained the youth's support the party deployed them to proselytize the rest of the rural peasantry into joining the movement (Starn 406).

The disdain among the leadership of the Shining Path towards Andean culture, their increasing reliance upon extreme violence, and their inability or unwillingness to provide protection for the population led to the eventual withdrawal of indigenous support. First, the Shining Path did not take into consideration the social structures of the Iquichano communities who were still governed by the vara system:

A hierarchical and ritualized structure of authority at the pinnacle of which sat the varayoc or alcalde vara who personified the community and who assumed that post at an advanced age, having ascended via a community ladder of civic-religious posts or cargos (see Vergara et al. 1985). The replacement of the varayoc by young senderistas was an affront not only to

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*communal organization but to the community's whole cosmovision.
(Degregori 134)*

Even though the youth were able to convince their parents to join the organization, the leadership angered the older generations when they carelessly placed young recruits in positions of power bypassing the appointed elders. Secondly, the Shining Path saw violence as an absolute necessity in contrast to peasant law that only applied the death penalty in egregious crimes (139). Lastly, the Shining Path followed Maoist guerrilla principles that selfishly favored the protection of its own members over the unprotected masses, “after attacking and killing two guards they escaped through here and they screwed us; they turned us over; they practically sold us out. Well, this is not manly [eso no es de hombres, pues] (Walter, peasant)” (141). Betrayed by the cadre of the party, the Andean communities either tried to remain on the sidelines of the conflict, abandon the volatile areas, or organize themselves into *rondas campesinas* (peasant patrols).

In 1990 Alberto Fujimori was elected president by running a campaign that promised the complete eradication of terrorism. The Fujimori regime kept that promise by instituting extralegal counterinsurgency tactics that violated basic human rights. The dictatorship alarmingly increased the violence the country was already experiencing:

*En el caso peruano, la violencia política tuvo múltiples fuentes y fue ejercida a escala masiva tanto por el Estado como por los grupos insurgentes. El estado y sus agentes fueron responsables cerca del 40 por ciento de las matanzas. . . Estas cifras no atribuyen responsabilidad y tampoco cuantifican otras formas de violencia empleadas durante el conflicto, tales como la tortura —incluidos actos de violencia sexual—que no terminaron en asesinatos, el desplazamiento forzado de personas y comunidades, y la detención arbitraria.
(Burt 26)*

Caught between the crossfire of the national forces and the guerrillas thousands of indigenous migrated to the capital settling in the *barriadas* (squatter settlements) in the outskirts of Lima. In his article “The Barriadas of Lima: Slums of Hope or Despair? Problems or Solutions,” Bill Chambers traces the stimulus for the establishment and exponential growth of the *barriadas* in the capital explaining that “almost no low-cost housing has been provided in Lima in recent decades, either by the government or by other public bodies, or on a smaller scale by middle class enterprise” (207). The *barriadas* of Lima demonstrate the lack of social programs

available in the neoliberal system while at the same time they represent the resilience of the indigenous community in their fight for survival.

The Fujimori administration manipulated the nation's fear of terrorism. Peruvians allowed their constitutional rights to be signed away as the dictatorship maintained that that a *mano dura* (strong hand) was necessary to exterminate terrorism. The efforts of the Fujimori administration to weaken the country's democratic institutions facilitated the implementation of a unilateral neoliberal economic regime. Under this new neoliberal system a select group of corporate powers were able to steer government policies to benefit their narrow economic interests: "it also comes in the form of direct (but almost always invisible) interventions in politics in which major corporations exercise their veto over almost any area of public policy that affects their interests" (Cameron 23). In the case of Peru the right to strike was severely limited enabling private companies to lower wages with no recourse for the workforce, "the Ministry of Labor ceased to facilitate collective bargaining or uphold workers' rights, and began to do just the opposite—it worked to promote a flexible workforce and a labor market with minimal regulations and safeguards. In the rural areas, efforts were made to continue to promote the parcelization of land, and the breakup of peasant cooperatives" (25). In 1993 the Fujimori dictatorship amended the constitution to empower private business, decrease the government's regulatory role in the economy, and offer equal treatment to foreign and national corporations.

The impact of neoliberalism in Peru's economy is portrayed in *La hora azul* and *La teta asustada*. Both works juxtapose the extreme poverty of the *barriadas* with the residential neighborhoods of the elite. Cueto carefully depicts the privileged world of the wealthy lawyer Adrián Ormache in *La hora azul*:

Filtrado por la perspectiva del narrador entramos a un mundo privilegiado de cócteles, largas cenas de lujo, viajes a Miami y al Caribe, ropa impecable y sobre todo, de preocupaciones frívolas. Se describe una sociedad de élite que vive en las zonas más cotizadas de Lima, sintiéndose cómodo por residir en esa especie de "gueto dorado". (Saxton-Ruiz 133)

The narrator Adrián confesses his satisfaction with his privileged life; he basks in the fact that he owns a lavish mansion of five hundred square feet in the highly coveted neighborhood of San Isidro, with enough rooms for their two maids, cook, and chauffeur. To highlight the country's economic disparity, the director Claudia Llosa juxtaposes Fausta's mountainside shantytown with the impressive villa of her

employer Aída. In a sequence of shots, Fausta roams through various rooms of the residence furnished with opulent decor:

The decorative objects inside Aída's mansion—a grand piano, Victorian furniture, carved pedestals, renaissance paintings and sculptures—are displayed the same way such objects are displayed in museums. For the owner, these objects are valuable relics that, to the eighteenth- and nineteenth- century Latin American aristocracy, represented social prestige, wealth, and power. (Rueda 459)

This conspicuous display starkly contrasts with Fausta's crude dwelling, or *chosa*², which she shares with numerous family members.

In "Crisis del estado y desborde popular en el Perú," José Matos Mar traces the history of, as well as the tensions between, two very different yet parallel national realities. On the one hand stands the Official Peru constituted by the government, the banks, large companies, the armed forces, and the church; on the other hand the Marginal Peru looms in stark difference, "plural y multiforme; del campesinado y la masa urbana, de las asociaciones de vecinos... los ambulantes y de las economías de trueque, de reciprocidad y de mera subsistencia, de los cultos a los cerros... bilingüe, analfabeto y a veces monolingüe quechua, aymara o amazónico" (382). During the colonial period Lima was established as the headquarters of a criollo, and urban Peru in opposition to Cuzco the former capital of the Tahuantinsuyo and symbol of the rural and indigenous Peru. However in the 20th century this paradigm started to shift due to the considerable migration of the indigenous population. Their presence in Lima lead to intermingling of the Andean culture with the dominant culture; altering the configuration of established socio-economic and cultural spaces.

Representations of Physical and Cultural Migration in Literature and Film.

La teta asustada and *La hora azul* portray the marginalization of the indigenous population by structures of power in the tradition of the colonial period. These works simultaneously demonstrate the tensions between classes, and the emergence of a more inclusive Peruvian identity in the capital's social landscape.

² "Almost all *barriada* homes follow the same identical sequence of development from start to finish... The process starts with the assembly of the *chosa*, a hut of four sheets of *esteras* (reed matting), with a roof made of another sheet of *esteras* or other materials such as cement bag or polythene. In exceptional cases, the *chosa* may be made of other assembled materials such as wood and flattened metal cylinders" (Chambers 210).

Adrián the narrator of *La hora azul*, and Fausta, the female protagonist of *La teta asustada*, sojourn to the “other” world seeking to bury their mothers metaphorically or literally. To find closure for his mother’s death Adrián delves into the poor marginalized areas of Peru, whereas Fausta seeks employment as a maid in the luxurious villa of the acclaimed musician Aída in order to afford her mother’s burial. The barrister’s journey from his affluent neighborhood to the shantytowns of Lima underscores the disparity between the capital’s elite and the dislocated indigenous immigrants, “saqué el mapa de Lima. San Juan de Lurigancho era el distrito más poblado, tenía un millón de habitantes, era una franja enorme al norte de la ciudad... Para mí todo eso era un territorio lunar” (Cueto 135). Even though he has lived in Lima all his life he needs a map to find Miriam’s barriada. As Adrián intimates the inequality between their social classes is analogous to the distance between the earth and the moon.

In the film the finality of death is contrasted with everyday pragmatism. Using irreverent humor the film conflates the reality of poverty with death in a burlesque manner. Fausta and her cousin shop at a funeral store that offers coffins decorated with scenic landscapes, popular football teams, patriotic symbols, and even pornographic illustrations. Her cousin, impressed with a casket painted with a nude woman over the sign *Arde Papi*, jokingly says “éste está buenazo. Como para cuando yo me muera.” The vendor zealously oversells his product and his position by claiming to be the owner, but he cannot even afford to give them his business card, “además yo soy el dueño de la funeraria, esta es mi tarjeta, no te la doy porque es la única que me queda.” Meanwhile Fausta stares at the body of a child lying next to a small blue coffin; her consternation turns into relief when she realizes it is a little boy playing with cars on the floor. In this scene the characters are unaffected by the idea of death, the boy plays next to a child’s coffin, the cousin mocks the whole funeral process, and the owner of the store tries to appeal to any interest of the buyer to the point of offering caskets with pornographic innuendos.

Throughout the film a desperate Fausta is forced to devise various strategies to bury her mother with limited resources. She attempts to check in her mother’s body as baggage on a bus ride to the highlands, but they revoke her ticket when they discover her intentions. Another merchant suggests Fausta rent the grave for a few days, and once she accrues the amount necessary for transportation she can disinter the corpse and bury her in their hometown. These scenes reflect how the neoliberal system worsened the inequality between social classes leaving the destitute without even the means to bury their dead with dignity. The decades of violence at the hands of the state and the Shining path have so hardened the indigenous people that death

is made mundane; a practical matter to be dealt with. Similarly Cueto's novel addresses the repercussions of the internal war in the highlands of Peru; countless citizens of Ayacucho lost family members to violence. When Adrián travels to Ayacucho he learns how the other Peruvians experience life and death, "la gente de aquí no es como la de otras partes –dijo lentamente—. Nadie aquí cree que estar vivo es lo normal" (Cueto 162). Even though Adrián lived in Peru during the internecine war he grows up untouched by the violence due to this privileged social position. Only when he migrates from his social circle to the other marginalized Peru does he learn that the inhabitants of Ayacucho consider life a privilege or not "normal."

The quests of Adrián and Fausta simultaneously expose the country's social inequality while advancing the possibility of a more inclusive and tolerant Peruvian society. In "Senderistas, militantes y las voces de los desaparecidos: el crepúsculo de la muerte o *La hora azul* de Alonso Cueto," María Paradas notes that the indigenous consider death necessary for the regeneration of life. The lawyer attends the performance of the traditional Dance of the Scissors accompanied by the educated Ayacuchana Guiomar who explains that, "Gracias al danzante, la vida de un árbol, de una montaña, de un arroyo, se preserva y nos pertenece. Por eso, cuando el mundo se termina, nuestro deber es volverlo a crear. El baile lo crea. La música lo crea. El cuerpo es cada uno de nosotros" (Cueto 166). Ayacuchanos believe that when the dancer performs he renews life by recreating the world. Thus Miriam's death can be considered a catalyst of change in the capital's social hierarchy, her death provides Miguel with a life of more opportunities. After her death Adrián takes on the role of informal guardian to Miguel who will grow up with ties to both cultures. Miguel's frequent exposure to Lima's elite society forces them to confront the abuses perpetrated on the indigenous population during the internal war.

Unable to afford the limited burial options available in a neoliberal economy, Fausta ultimately chooses to give her mother a natural and communal burial. Perpetua's exequies are communal and free since the women of the community gratuitously embalm the body, afterwards her own uncle provides the transportation. Indigenous culture emphasizes the importance of the community in direct opposition to neoliberalism, "a technique of governance based on the use of rules and incentives to promote self-interested utility maximizing in all spheres of life (. . .). These measures also serve to discourage collective action and collective identification" (Cameron 22). In this scene one of the women comments that this practice was common during the civil war. She recounts how families embalmed the corpses so they could use them as evidence of the crime, "cómo íbamos a demostrar

su existencia a las autoridades si ni foto teníamos, menos DNI teníamos, no había prueba que habíamos nacido, menos que nos habían matado.” Fausta avoids the burial fees by laying to rest her mother’s remains in the ocean, Perpetua returns to the mother earth Pachamama. Llosa’s work demonstrates how the immigrant indigenous resort to communal forms of economy to offset the limitations of consumerism of the modern metropolis.

Sexual-Cultural Encounters

Since the Spanish Conquest there have been various literary representations of the sexual-cultural encounter between the western world and the indigenous culture; among them Clorinda Matto de Turner’s novel *Aves sin Nido, Amor indígena* by Ventura García Calderón, *Matalaché* by Enrique López Albújar, etc. The birth of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, son of the Incan princess Isabel Chimpu Ocllo and the Spanish captain Sebastian Garcilaso de la Vega Vargas, can be considered the quintessential embodiment of the sexual-cultural encounter:

The scene of the sexual or erotic encounter between the Spanish captain and the Incan ñusta, which constitutes the emblematic moment of encounter between two cultures. It is fair to say that this scene travels the whole of Peru’s historical and literary imaginary and can be defined in textual terms. Its narrative structure is actualized in a panoply of forms: as a love-adventure story, and as an account of marriage, rape or sexual exploitation. As this encounter is typically represented from the perspective of the dominant culture, a self/other dichotomy becomes the foundation of the encounter’s structure. (Rivera 854)

The recurrent trope underscores the imbalance of power between the dominant Spanish culture and the indigenous culture, or between an aggressive man and a vulnerable woman. Following this literary tradition, Cueto’s novel relates the rape of the indigenous young woman Miriam by Major Alberto Ormache; as well as the unscrupulous affair his son Adrián Ormache has with her.

The novel reveals how the soldiers Chacho Osorio and Guayo Martinez kidnapped innocent peasant women for the major Ormache to abuse sexually; once his appetite was satiated the rest of the troop could rape and kill them. This heinous practice was common during the internal war since the Fujimori leadership condoned rape as a form of control:

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Evidence suggests that the armed forces and police systematically used rape and other forms of sexual violence, such as forced nudity, sexual torture, forced prostitution, abortion, and sexual slavery, to subjugate the population. Shining Path also perpetrated sexual violence against the population, although in a comparatively less systematic manner. Women were both peace activists and Shining Path militants. (Boesten & Fisher 2)

Wartime rape was informed by gender, race, and class; for instance soldiers would claim that indigenous women “wanted it”; according to the country’s racial hierarchy the fair-skinned men believed they were extremely desirable to the darker indigenous women. To illustrate, in 1993 two women from different social classes were captured and raped by the national forces; the peddler was raped by 40 different soldiers by contrast only the captain violated the dentist (Boesten 92-93).

Although Alberto Ormache rapes Miriam like all the other indigenous women, in this instance he refuses to share Miriam with the troop. The inequitable sexual exchange between Ormache and Miriam is a reconstruction of the typical relationship between the dominant western male and the victimized indigenous female. At the same time Miriam exercises power using her sexuality, if we take into consideration Michel Foucault’s assertion that sexuality is a conduit of power:

This is the background that enables us to understand the importance assumed by sex as a political issue... Sex was a means to access both to the life of the body and the life of the species [. . .] Spread out from one pole to the other of this technology of sex was a whole series of different tactics that combined in varying proportions the objective of disciplining the body and that of the regulating population. (145-146)

Since sexuality is an instrument of power, and power circulates in complex social networks³, one can extrapolate that through their sexuality the indigenous women exercised power over the men who desired them. For instance, Miriam’s sexuality saves her from being gang-raped and killed by the troop; the commander risks his own career by protecting her. Later, Miriam escapes by flirting with her wardens;

³ “Power is something that circulates, is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Thus, power is conceived of both as omnipresent, limitless, and constantly generated, and as a practice which is politically constructed and subsequently exerted throughout complex social networks” (Zozaya 451).

she literally and figuratively coldcocks them when they have been distracted with sexual desire and flees to her safety.

The lawyer Adrián desperately tries to find Miriam, “quiero que ella me diga si mi papá fue tan desgraciado como dicen. [. . .] Quiero encontrarla. No quiero que difunda el asunto. A lo mejor la noticia puede trascender y eso no me conviene” (149). This passage highlights his egocentric interest in protecting his public image. His self-absorbed reaction to his father’s exploits lacks any consideration for the victim. When he finally finds her, he harasses her at work even when she asks him to stop coming to the hair salon, “No vuelva nunca, por favor” (212). He forces Miriam to describe her experience with his father without taking into consideration how painful it is for her to talk about her rape. In part Miriam consents to the affair because her past hinders her from having normal romantic relationships:

–Tuve un novio una vez –me dijo–. Un hombre bueno. Pero me dejó cuando supo.

– ¿Cuándo supo?

– Cuando supo todo lo que había pasado. [. . .]

– ¿Y luego? ¿No tuviste otro novio?

– No, ya no, hubo algunos, se acercaban, pero yo nada, yo no quería saber nada. Ya no pienso nunca en eso, en un hombre. Sería tan raro. (Cueto 242)

Miriam’s partner leaves her when he discovers she was raped because in a patriarchal society a rape victim is judged as a tainted woman. Miriam’s acquiescence to Adrián’s advances should not be interpreted as consent but more plausibly as a forced resignation considering her limited romantic opportunities.

In her book *Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race*, Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks explores how the logic of race engages with Lacan’s theory of sexual difference. She posits, as does Lacan, that sex has a missing signifier due to the non-reciprocity of man and woman: “sexed reproduction here is but the failure of Oneness [. . .]Sexual difference is marked by the impasse of signification, and the impossibility of gratifying desire, of love as *jouissance*” (6). However, she adds that race has the signifier of Whiteness which promises a totality to the subject: “race organizes difference and elicits investment in its subjects because it promises access to being itself. It offers the prestige of being better and superior; it is the promise of

being more human, more full, less lacking" (7). Seshadri-Crooks uses the relationship between the nameless captain of *The Secret Sharer* and the fugitive criminal Leggatt to illustrate how racism promises self-fulfillment. After murdering a black sailor Leggatt escapes swimming, and when he arrives at the other ship, its captain will hide him and help him escape. Leggatt does not think he is guilty of murder because of the race of his victim. Leggatt considers himself to be above the law:

To be law-abiding is to be less of a man; therefore the enjoyment of Whiteness [...] also connotes a certain sexual self-sufficiency that we may well term "masculine jouissance" [...] this is the position of the father of the primal horde who is postulated as a being prior to the institution of the moral law (the prohibition of incest) and who is characterized by his fullness, his ability to know no lack, or prohibition of his desire (76).

The captain is described as an insecure man, doubtful of his own identity who after meeting Leggatt becomes self-assured and confident. The captain identifies strongly with Leggatt, "Leggatt in fact has a versatility which promises to address every gap and fill every split in the captain's psyche" (72). By identifying with Leggatt who represents the supremacy of Whiteness, the captain also achieves full mastery of himself.

The relationship between the captain and Leggatt functions similarly to the relationship between the Major Ormache and his son Adrián Ormache. Like Leggatt the Major Ormache places himself above the law by raping indigenous women with impunity. The captain's state of mind, "his doubts about his existence, and his being" are similar to Adrián's feelings of insecurity, "era una ansiedad estable, hilvanada a mi rutina, la sensación de ser un títere de mi mismo" (81) and "la sensación de estar flotando en el universo, la soledad de mi cuerpo a la deriva" (83). Lacan proposes that the gaze stands for a substitute object, "for example, the cotton reel that substitutes for the mother and compensates for her absence in the infant's *fort-da* game, described in Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, is designated by Lacan as the object a. One function of the object a is thus to '[fill] the gap constituted by the inaugural division of the subject' (Scott). Through the gaze Major Ormache becomes Adrián's object a, just as Leggatt stands for the captain's object a, "when the captain first glimpses Leggatt, he is a bright flash of light [...] As a luminous and alluring thing, who delivers a sense of being to the captain by filling his lack, Leggatt represents the captain's scopical drive and its object" (Seshadri-Crooks 67). In *La hora azul* Adrián comes into possession of three pictures of his father and Miriam

engaged in sexual relations, “las imágenes eran algo borrosas pero lo suficientemente claras para que se pudiera ver la cara y parte del cuerpo de mi padre. Estaba desnudo junto a una mujer joven.” (Cueto 95) and “allí estaba ahora con toda nitidez, la cara de mi padre. Me sentía asqueado y vagamente fascinado” (111). Although he feels disgust looking at his father, he also becomes fascinated with his father’s behavior in the pictures. To return his father’s gaze in the images, Adrián needs to reproduce the same scenario with Miriam.

The captain and the lawyer identify with a fellow member of the dominant race who is above the law, “race identity is about the sense of one’s exclusiveness, exceptionality and uniqueness. Put very simply, it is an identity that, if it is working at all, can only be about pride, being better, being the best” (7). Seshadri-Crooks suggests that Leggatt, “represents the fantasy that one need not accept lack (or castration) in order to exist, the fantasy of fullness without risking one’s status as a subject” (77). In the case of Adrián Ormache and his father this fantasy becomes more complex. Adrián’s identification with his father also means that he becomes the “father of the primal horde” by possessing his father’s forbidden woman sexually. However the only reason he is able to break the law of incest without losing his sense of self is because he relies on the law of racial difference at the same time. *La hora azul* portrays the dominant narrative of the sexual relationship between the powerful white male with the dark peasant woman; in contrast, *La teta asustada* reframes this sexual-cultural encounter by portraying a romantic relationship between two indigenous characters.

New Configurations of Lima’s Social Landscape

At first Fausta refuses to have the potato that she has inserted into her vagina removed but eventually she will change her mind when she overcomes her fear of rape. As a beautiful young woman Fausta has many admirers but she only reciprocates Noé’s advances in part because he speaks to her in Quechua. Fausta is bilingual but speaks Quechua with her mother and prefers to interpret songs in her native tongue. When she ventures into Lima’s affluent world, the gardener’s use of Quechua comforts her because it creates an Andean cultural space within the modern metropolis. Fausta sets the rhythm in their relationship. When they are together Noé modifies his behavior to make her feel safe. On the other hand her cousin’s friend forcefully wants to walk her home, and verbally assaults her at the party, “si el color rojo es color de la pasión, báñame con tu menstruación.” The symbolism of the color red appears again when Fausta opens the door for Noé

holding a bright red flower in her mouth, but in this case it is the woman who demonstrates passion to the male. Noé and Fausta's flourishing relationship is a manifestation of her burgeoning agency.

The use of the Quechua language in the film demonstrates recent innovations in Peruvian cinematography, this practice has in turn influenced the public's perspective of Quechuan culture:

Los flujos migratorios y las nuevas identidades, a los que aludía Franco, son los que en parte vienen representados en estas películas. Como plantea Olivia Casares, existe un contexto sociopolítico favorable para la apertura del cine latinoamericano hacia dichas lenguas, lo cual genera una serie de preguntas sobre términos de viabilidad, público y aceptación. (Cisneros 53)

The migration of the indigenous population to the modern metropolis enabled Quechuan culture to permeate that of the metropolitan elite and slowly undermined the colonial structure of power. The increase in films that incorporate the Quechua language —Llosa's *Madeinusa* (2006), *Dioses* (2008) directed by Josué Méndez, John Malkovich's *The Dancer Upstairs* (2002), *Altiplano* (2009) by Peter Brosens and Jessica Woodworth, and *Reminiscencias* (2011) produced and directed by Juan Daniel Fernández— attests to the formation of a new Peruvian identity. In *La teta asustada* the employer Aída appropriates Fausta's original songs, "this deal creates a relationship reminiscent of the colonial period in Latin America; the young indigenous woman becomes metaphorically enslaved to the white upper class woman of European descent" (Anderson 17). The film reproduces the traditional roles of a dark skinned woman working as a maid for the white famous pianist but with an unexpected twist. Aída is unable to produce new material for her upcoming concert, in contrast to her maid Fausta who effortlessly composes original songs while doing menial work. Aída recognizes the young woman's talent and steals her original compositions; she performs Fausta's songs as her own creations at a lavish concert attended by Lima's elite. Standing behind the stage Fausta watches the public's reception of her songs. Even though she does not receive monetary compensation she witnesses the elite's enthrallment with Andean art. This scene illustrates how the indigenous culture infiltrates the exclusive spaces of Lima's elite, since the artistic source of the songs that the crowd loves is actually Andean.

La hora azul and *La teta asustada* depict modified versions of the allegorical sexual-cultural encounter between the western and the indigenous cultures. The film offers an Andean representation by portraying a romantic relationship between two

characters with a common indigenous background. Their relationship is a disavowal of the historical rape of the indigenous culture. Since the novel recycles the conventional love story of the light-skinned male with the dark peasant woman, it follows that it would end tragically for the female, in this case with Miriam's suicide. Although *La hora azul* reproduces the conventional sexual-cultural encounter, it challenges the traditional vindication of the white conqueror. By committing suicide Miriam takes revenge on her oppressor. After her death Adrián is painfully haunted with her memory, "ahora su cuerpo aparecía como una alucinación. Durante esas semanas, Miriam había respirado cerca de mí... Había pensado en ella con un deseo y una tristeza inexplicables. Su voz me roía el corazón. El cuerpo se reconstruía con una delicada perfección. Sus ojos estaban mirándome desde dentro de mí" (Cueto 270). During her life Miriam suffered the loss of all her family members. With her death she teaches him the excruciating pain of losing a loved one. In spite of its tragic ending, Cueto's novel bestows the indigenous woman with power over her own life, which in turn awakens the political consciousness of the oppressor.

Miriam's death disrupts the social landscape of Lima in an insidious manner. Adrián disrespects various members of the elite, Claudia is forced to change her racist attitude, and Miguel experiences upward social mobility. Adrián spills a cup of coffee on Mrs. Arteaga on purpose because she represents a decadent society that is only interested in material things. When his father in law suggests a trip to Miami just so they can try seafood at this new restaurant he retorts, "no te conviene comer arroz con mariscos porque te sube el colesterol, y mira que te has engordado. Más bien, haz dieta y ejercicio. Tienes que entender que tirarse a putas caras no es lo único que hace quemar grasa. Aunque te has tirado a varias, y muy buenas, en ese lugarcito en Surco" (265). Adrián used to enjoy the lavish vacations funded by his father-in-law, but after Miriam's death he exposes his father-in-law's sordid behavior in front of all the family. At first Claudia emphatically orders her husband to hide the existence of Miguel, and kicks him out of the house when his behavior threatens their privileged life, "¿Quieres que me tranquilice? Primero te metes con una india cualquiera y quieres que me tranquilice. Quiero que llegemos a la casa ahorita, que cojas tus cosas y que te largues" (Cueto 267). Throughout the novel Claudia refers to Miriam as an "india cualquiera" which shows her deep racism towards the indigenous woman. Later on she takes Adrián back and allows him to have a relationship with Miguel, "El primer día que llevé a Miguel a la casa, Claudia lo trató con cariño y ahora a veces, sin mirarme, me pregunta por él" (Cueto 271). After Miriam's death Adrián starts helping Miguel when he gives him a weekly stipend for his room, board, books, and clothes. He finds a psychologist to help

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Miguel deal with his trauma, and he visits Miguel's teachers to track his scholastic development. He also brings him to his house in San Isidro. In a way Miriam takes her life so that Miguel can have a better life. She senses that Adrián will take care of her son providing him with opportunities for social mobility.

As the barrister muses "sus ojos estaban mirándome desde dentro de mí," the indigenous culture has penetrated Lima's social landscape. The indigenous migration provoked the transformation of the cultural panorama in the metropolis. The national identity of contemporary Peru is no longer solely representative of the official culture:

El Perú contemporáneo ya no se presenta como un archipiélago territorial de enclaves urbanos de la oficialidad, más o menos aislados en un inmenso hinterland de marginalidad rural... En un espacio mayoritariamente dominado por la presencia migrante de representantes de toda pluralidad y multiplicidad de situaciones que configura el país; donde los reductos de la vieja dominancia se retraen, ocupando un espacio cada vez más disminuido. (Matos Mar 384-385)

The fictions of Alonso Cueto and Claudia Llosa demonstrate the influence of the indigenous culture on the national identity. Miriam and Fausta migrate to the capital to escape the violence of the highlands of Peru. At first they face uncharted territory but in the end they irreversibly imprint the indigenous culture in the national consciousness. Miriam exposes the affluent lawyer, who represents the official Peru, to the poverty and suffering of the Andean communities:

Al presentarse la completa inversión del mundo de Adrián, se establecen las condiciones para que el protagonista-narrador puede realizar un nuevo papel dentro de la sociedad... Empero, es preciso indicar que la concientización que experimenta el protagonista en la novela tampoco se plantea en términos idealistas. El narrador no cree que él como individuo pueda o vaya a cambiar la situación social del Perú... [pero de todos modos] notamos la toma de conciencia de Ormache. La experiencia de acercarse al Otro va a permanecer en su memoria. (Saxton-Ruiz 144).

Fausta's original songs are enjoyed by the elite audience showing how Andean music styles have permeated into the once exclusive cultural spaces of the elite. When Fausta rejects the burial options that her economic station excludes her from, she ends up burying Perpetua in a much more communal and indigenous tradition.

Indigenous culture foments communal interests that are in direct opposition to the neoliberal ethos, “a technique of governance based on the use of rules and incentives to promote self-interested utility maximizing in all spheres of life... These measures also serve to discourage collective action and collective identification” (Cameron 22). Jointly, these fictions promote the inclusion of the indigenous culture into the imaginary of the national identity. These works propose the indigenous ideal of solidarity with the community as a form of resistance against post-colonial and neoliberal power structures in contemporary Peru.

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