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The Tradition of Anonymity in the Andes

This essay examines the longstanding lettered tradition of representing the Andean native as anonymous, and what I view as a potential challenge to this tradition in Claudia Llosa's film *Madeinusa* (2006). By following the gaze of the native as a common thread, I trace a genealogy of the figure of the anonymous native in Peruvian letters since the early twentieth century. Early essays and paintings of the native, I claim, display a basic politics of anonymity, while fictional works explore the narrative implications of and alternatives to this politics. Understood in terms of its formal economy, anonymity redistributes agency from the individual native to the observer, the outsider, the leader, or the community. I argue that the figure of the anonymous native is invoked and refunctionalized in a particular scene of Llosa's film, where the native's gaze is contaminated through associative montage with the gaze of a cow. The film produces a tension between plot and image that poses anonymity as a choice to the spectator, thus tapping into cultural history to expose it and perhaps defy it.

The anonymity of Aureliano Buendía's would-be executioners in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* suggests or at least opens up the possibility of alternative patterns of attention. When confronted with these nameless men, we are tempted to construct their story.¹ We take the pause in the novelistic discourse as a possible indication of their reluctance. We ask whether this reluctance is meant to betray them as men without agency, or of limited means for decision-making. We wonder, if so, whose orders they are following, and indeed what if anything these apparent automatons may be thinking. As such, anonymization is conceivable as a potent trigger for political contemplation. But when strategies of anonymization are applied to entire classes, groups, or ethnicities, then those structures by which agency, identity, and individuality are denied to particular social actors become themselves deserving of our critical attention. Especially when those strategies are produced and reproduced, amounting to something like structural discrimination.

That is the case of the anonymization of the native Andean, a narrative *modus operandi* that has become naturalized as a tradition. While in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the anonymity of the executioners arguably prompts interpretation, in Andean letters the figure of impenetrable Indian as a paradigm for the articulation of native agency has only become more consolidated with time, from Antonio de Ulloa's *Relación histórica del viaje a la América meridional* (1784) to Santiago Roncagliolo's *Abril rojo* (2006). In this paper I will turn to a work that engages this tradition purposefully albeit inadvertently, namely Claudia Llosa's film *Madeinusa* (2006), to draw some conclusions about what makes the politics of anonymity elusive, and thereby persistent, to this day. I argue that to understand the mechanism of anonymization and the tradition in which it has become entrenched, it does not suffice to divide writers into those who would seem to employ anonymization favorably and those who do so problematically, but we must also examine the functioning of anonymization as a time-honored system of representation, in which writers from all political stripes have become deeply entangled. To that end, I will demonstrate how *Madeinusa*, a text which

sets out to play with the politics of anonymity, finally illuminates the undeniable weight of a tradition that includes figures as seemingly divergent as Jose' Mari'a Arguedas and Mario Vargas Llosa.

In the first third of *Madeinusa* the camera presents the Andean village of the titular protagonist through the lens of ethnography. But after thirty minutes of depictions of 'everyday life' and preparations for a festivity in a native locale, the film launches into the politics of visibility. *Madeinusa* goes to spy on Salvador, a visiting Limenian geologist languishing in an improvised jail in her small Andean village. Suddenly, the close-up of her eye looking at the prisoner is interrupted by a cow's eye (figure 1).

At one level, the montage interpellates spectators to associate the images of animal and human eyes; at another, it summons the instincts that have been trained by the tradition I will explore. Claudia Llosa's experiment taps into the history of representations of the native Andeans as having a 'lost gaze,' of being too illegible (or legible as illegible), and of living 'natural' lives. In a gesture that seems to honor and carry to an extreme the longstanding tradition of depersonalizing the native, the montage suggests a kinship between *Madeinusa*'s gaze and the characterless stare of a bovine.

But the context of the scene suggests another, competing representation of the native Andean. In the first third of the film leading up to the prison visit, spectators have come to understand at least some of the protagonist's expectations, desires, and fears. They know about *Madeinusa*'s plight: she has undergone the trauma of being abandoned by her mother, and now is verbally attacked by her jealous sister and in imminent danger of being abused by her father. So whereas the filmic image generalizes the protagonist's gaze (she is like an Andean), filmic plot particularizes her story (she is one of the teenaged daughters of the mayor of Mayayaycuna; she has been selected as this year's immaculate virgin for a religious festival, etc.). Upon facing the animal eye, then, spectators are at a crossroads. Armed with enough narrative material to individualize *Madeinusa*, will they fall back to regarding her as another anonymous native when they are invited to do so by the human/cow eye sequence? The way the question is posed here is perhaps as crucial as the answer. For the anonymization of Andean native has been exposed as a choice, now in the hands – in the eyes – of the audience. While invoking the most persistent gesture in representations of the native, the sequence appears to challenge its normative status. But will it, can it, live up to that ambition?

This question frames my examination of what might be called the discursive rules of anonymity, its history and its function. In Peruvian cultural history, anonymization has been a strategy with defined ends from late-nineteenth-century essays on the 'problema del indio' (Indian problem) to indigenista novels, from fictions by *Ciro Alegria* and *Jose' Mari'a Arguedas* in the 1940s and 1960s to recent essays and fictions by *Mario Vargas Llosa*, *Iva'n Thays*, and *Santiago Roncagliolo*. Among Bolivian representative texts on Andean natives, we see such tendency in *Alcides Arguedas'* *Raza de Bronce* and, since the 1960s, in films by *Jorge Sanjine's*.² Yet for all its ubiquity in the lettered and filmic tradition, anonymization has not been recognized as a rhetorical device.

When examining an indigenous text or a text about the indigene, questions of description, representation, and contextualization offer valuable keys to the politics of oppression. In this essay, I would suggest that we combine these insights with a consideration of the formal mechanism that reproduces the Andean even in countercultural depictions. The anonymity (and anonymization) of the Andean, I argue, can be understood as a formal economy that has enabled 'racism' to be persistent and

systematic. As I will show, anonymization as a form is not tied to a specific politics. No matter how different the texts and how variegated their politics, anonymity functions in the same way: it denies, implicitly or explicitly, not only the Andean natives' individual capacity to observe or to act, but to carry out a plan, that is, to be an agent of narrative. Whereas rendering the natives anonymous does not imply a shared politics, it does imply a particular configuration of the hero in the context of a plot. In other words, anonymity has played (and continues to play) a significant role in determining the types of narratives that can take place in the Andes.

Implicit in my argument is that formalism is a necessary supplement to studies that tend to emphasize mimetic accuracy and representational fallacies over narrative possibility. Recognizing genre and media specificity is, then, key to the analysis: whereas early essays and paintings of the native already display a basic politics of anonymity, and while literature can explore the narrative implications of and alternatives to this politics, cinema (as Claudia Llosa's film suggests) is a medium uniquely suited to complicate the relationship of representation to story, by placing image and plot in tension. Madeinusa's ability to show and enact possibilities of the gaze allows us to reread the figuration of the native Andean in literature anew.

Blank stares and immutability

Let us begin our history of anonymity in the Andes with a poignant maxim: 'When you know one Indian, you know them all' (García Calderón 1907: 16, my translation). With that sentence, borrowed from Antonio de Ulloa's 1784 *Relación histórica del viaje a la América meridional*, in 1907 Francisco García Calderón summarizes his outlook on native Andeans while revealing the persistence of an attitude towards them. During the century that separates García Calderón's *Le Pérou Contemporain* from Ulloa's chronicle, Peru gained its independence (1821), the indigenous population was freed from tributes (1854), and after the disastrous war with Chile (1883) intellectuals like Gonzalo Prada began to vocally denounce the complicity of church, landowners, and government officials ('the brutal trinity') in the continuing oppression of the Andean native. Despite these political and economic changes, 'indio' remained a homogeneous and collective noun to denote a population paradoxically opaque and easy to understand. García Calderón's 'insight' was to declare the Andean indigene different from the Spenserian 'primitive': the latter can be brutal and voracious, whereas the Andean is instead tenacious, monotonous, and prone to abstraction.³ Lost in pensiveness, the very gaze of the Indian is idle due to, according to Calderón, 'poverty of perception' caused by the immutable landscape (1907: 20). The image of the Indian staring without seeing reappears a few years later in Hildebrando Castro Pozo's *Nuestra comunidad indígena* (1924): 'He does very little, he doesn't even see or, rather, sees poorly, imprecisely And in this lazy drowsiness, in this dilation of the soul towards inconcreteness or nothingness, he lingers and wastes time away' (1979: 92, my translation). The Andes are not just the sublime backdrop to this petrified gaze, but a reason for it. It is because of the mountainous wall, the logic goes, that Indians have been slumbering outside history – they are like mountains themselves, as suggested in José Sabogal's and Julia Codesido's iconic paintings published in *Amauta* (figure 2).

Maria tegui, the most prominent intellectual in the legendary journal, claims in one of his 1928 essays that in four centuries the Indian 'soul has undergone almost no

change. In the jagged highlands, in the distant canyons where the law of the white man has not reached, the indio follows his ancestral law' (1995: 222, my translation). Isolation is such a given that in all of Luis Tord's overview *El indio en los ensayistas peruanos* (1848–1948) it is almost impossible to find any forceful call for the building of roads or railroads, even though the essayists often advocate economic and educational advances for the Indians, and their inclusion in the national process of modernization.

Opaque, melancholic, isolated from history. Through these motifs the lettered intellectual of the early twentieth century articulates and sometimes justifies the failures of the modern nation, while carving a space to speak both of and for the enigmatic Indian subaltern, all the while invoking a topographic determinism. The symbiotic relationship between inhabitant and habitat is reminiscent of the language of early anthropology.⁴ And this literature can be encapsulated in purely anthropological terms: the gestalt of the native Andean is associated with sullenness and the lost gaze, the latter read as either a sign of existential sadness (in Luis Valca'rcel)⁵, stoicism (in Maria'tegui), or impassivity (in Castro Pozo, among many others).⁶ While better informed about the realities and cultural life of the indigenous population, pro-indi'gena associations, such as Dora Mayer's, and Andean intellectuals, such as the contributors to the avant-garde *Boletín Titikaka* in Puno, themselves reproduced some of these images.⁷ The same is true of writers like Jose' A'ngel Escalante, a self-proclaimed indio, who underlines resistance to change ('resistencia a toda absorcio'n extran'a') as a major trait of his race (qtd. in Castro 1976: 45).

Observing the landscape as destiny

The essayistic output on the 'problema del indio' found a literary correlation in early indigenismo fiction, where endurance, impervious wisdom and stares abound. In principle, indigenista narratives seem to correct anonymization, as they often concentrate the struggles of the community in the names and voices of representatives: *Raza de bronce* (The Bronze Race, Bolivia, 1916) ends with the lament of the wise old man, Choquehuanka; *Huasipungo* (Ecuador, 1934) draws to a close with the defiant and bloodcurdling screams of the leader Andre's Chiliquinga; *Tungsteno* (Tungsten, 1931) concludes with the eloquent discourse of Servando Huanta, the community's organic intellectual; *El mundo es ancho y ajeno* (Broad and Alien is the World, 1941) follows the generational transition from one leader (Rosendo Maqui) to the next (Benito Castro). The impulse to individualize is clearly present in this passage from Lopez Albuja's *Nuevos cuentos andinos* (New Andean Tales) (1937) that openly distinguishes the hero from the community through the leitmotiv of the gaze: 'Aureliano was not like those pusillanimous Indians who give sidelong glances when threatened by their landlords' (62, my translation).

But Aureliano (and Choquehuanka, Huanta, Maqui) are somewhat 'un-Indian' – like Romantic heroes, they stand out, alone, and outside their society. These heroes are often so exceptional that any promise of change begins and ends with them. Wise men like Choquehuanka and Rosendo Maqui are too old, living past their time. An intellectual like Servando Huanta directs his arguments in favor of the revolution not to his people, but to an outside interlocutor (a land surveyor). Aureliano dies for love while escaping from the landlord, and his pregnant wife Avelina follows him by jumping down the fatal cliff – which effectively ensures that there will be no change, at least in the imminent future. And Benito Castro, the one who could 'import' progress

in Alegrí'a's novel, will inevitably die at novel's end. If these indigenista Romantic plots challenge anonymity, they do so by paying a steep price – the individual fails as such, and the larger community remains unperturbed. The Romantic hero belongs in a cycle that reasserts anonymity.⁸

Further proof that anonymity triumphs in indigenista narratives is the fact that they often resort – very much like the essays – to the landscape as a cipher of human history (the highland on fire in *Raza de bronce*, the redemptive cliff in Lo'pez Albu'jar's 'Huayna-Pishtanag', the invocation to Utek'pampa in Arguedas' first published short-story 'Agua', the avalanche in *El mundo es ancho y ajeno*). Indeed, the role of topography in indigenista literature and film⁹ and in its essayistic brethren is similar: it provides an isolated space, the mountains being both witnesses and enclosures of local history. If in the essays the mountains that impede the entrance of modernity are stared at blankly, in the narratives the gaze tends to become a scrutinizing one that reveals the landscape as an omen. The effect is similar: the Andes function as barriers to modernization in one genre, and as contours of narrative possibility in the other. *Ciro Alegrí'a's El mundo es ancho y ajeno* provides perhaps the most rotund example. Its final chapter – significantly entitled '¿Ado'nde? ¿Ado'nde?' [In what direction?] – narrates an impending massacre from which the Indian villagers cannot escape. For them the outside world, with its promises and opportunities, will remain broad and alien. The very road the State forces the natives to build ends up paving the way to their destruction.¹⁰

Looking around, seeing the network

If in indigenista novels the road is often the emblem of the nefarious impact of modernization on traditional life, in Jose' Mari'a Arguedas' fiction it can be a source of local communal pride – as in the case of *Yawar fiesta* (1941). Let us examine a dialogue between two mestizo bystanders as they observe Indians in action early in the novel:

- The ayllu [village] is determined to go after [the bull] Misisu, even if it takes 500 Indians to do it. The bull's going to have his heyday up there on the puna. What a gutting there's going to be!
- When the Indians have their minds made up there's no stopping them. Didn't you see how they built the road to Nazca in twenty-eight days?
- That's because there were more than 10,000 Indians working, too.
- They got road fever [*fiebre del camino*]. You should have seen them. They looked like ants.
- And they'll bring that bull in. You'll see. It's true that it's only one ayllu, but there's 2,000 of them. He might be dead, but they'll put him in the bullring.
- The Puquio Indians have determination, [*tienen resolucio'n*] whatever else. (Arguedas 1985: 26)
- No doubt about it. Those Indians are really stubborn [*son unos fregados*]. (Arguedas 1985: 26)

These spectators express pejoratively ('they look like ants') what is undoubtedly a feeling of admiration, perhaps envy. As the mestizos see it, the natives' tenacity is devoted to what in the indigenista framework would be incongruent ends: the modernizing project on one hand (the construction of a road), and the preservation of a tradition (the transportation of a dangerous bull for the *turupukllay*) on the other.¹¹ If

the natives wanted to preserve their tradition, why do they facilitate the arrival of forces that may destroy it? Where does that fever come from?

The two communal projects are not oppositional because for Arguedas Andean tradition rejects immutability as much as acculturation. This is a complexity that gets brushed over if the novel is read as squarely indigenista – something that Vargas Llosa does in *The Archaic Utopia*, where he labels *Yawar fiesta* a conservative novel and Arguedas a ‘cultural ecologist’ who wanted to ‘freeze time, stop history’ to preserve Indian culture (1977: 7, 29). That reading misses the point that the Indians in Arguedas’ novels like *Yawar Fiesta* do not resist modernization, and they never did – there is dynamite in their traditional festivity.

This flexible dynamic does not demand, as in the case of indigenismo, narratives with a singular hero. Arguedas’ novel does not have one, and the choice signifies a very conscious rejection of what I above called ‘Romantic’ indigenista narratives. Since 1950, all editions of *Yawar fiesta* are preceded by an essay in which Arguedas explains that his novel is about a Puquio community that exists not in isolation but in a complex social world.¹² One way of resolving the literary difficulty of capturing this world was precisely to not name the native. He writes: ‘There are scarcely any Indian names [casi no hay nombres de indios] in *Yawar fiesta*. It tells the tale of several heroic deeds performed by Puquio’s four Indian communities; it is an attempt to portray the communities’ soul’ (1985: xiv). This is a risky maneuver – it is close to the homogenizing anonymization of the native that was deployed in the essays against which indigenismo had pitted the native singular hero. And taking this risk produces an ambivalent result.

The Indian subject is never an individual in Arguedas’ *Yawar fiesta*. Arguably, in all of his novels set in the Andes the native’s agency can only be communal. In the bildungsroman *Los ríos profundos* (*Deep Rivers*, 1958), the protagonist is a mestizo who by novel’s end can admire (at a distance) the Indian community’s capacity to make demands and act in unison. In the realist novel *Todas las sangres* (*All Bloods*) (1964) the protagonist is the native leader Rendoñ Willka, who undergoes a process of unindividuation through which he learns that his own death is a small one in the communal scale, the only scale that truly counts.¹³ In contrast, in the only novel by Arguedas set in the coast – *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (*The Fox from up Above and the Fox from Down Below*, 1971) – there is no unified collective action that would amount to the irrepressible river of blood (*yawar mayu*) of *Todas las sangres*, but a proliferation of diverse passions and cultures that ‘boil’ and never coagulate into concerted action.¹⁴ Quite the opposite from what we find in the Andean Puquio of Arguedas’ first novel, where the protagonist is an active, homogeneous, and single-minded community. This is not to say that anonymity in Arguedas’ novels set in the Andes (*Yawar fiesta*, *Los ríos profundos*, *Todas las sangres*)¹⁵ has the same function as in the ‘problema del indio’ essays. Rather than denying agency, in these works anonymity diffuses it. I will return to the different functions of anonymity at the end of this study. Before leaving *Yawar fiesta*, it is important to examine how the novel deals with the question of the gaze. It appears, not surprisingly, in the opening page:

‘Indian town!’ exclaim the travelers when they reach this summit and spy Puquio. Some speak contemptuously; on the summit the coastal people shiver with cold and say:

‘Indian town!’

But on the coast there are no mountain passes. They do not know how their towns look from afar. A mere inkling of it they get on the highways because the roads widen when a town is close by, or from the look of the facade of a nearby hacienda,

from the joy of the heart that is familiar with distance. To see our town from a pass, from a mountaintop where there are magic heaps of stones the travelers leave, and to play an arrival huayno on a quena or charango or on a harmonica! To look down upon our town, to gaze at its white tower of stone and lime, to see the red housetops along the slopes, on the hill or in the valley, where roofs glitter with wide streaks of lime [. . .]. And to sit for a while on the mountain-top to singing with joy. This is something those who live in the coastal towns cannot do. (1–2)

The perspective is quite different from the one in Alegrí'a's novel. The 'alien world' is not the broad space beyond the mountains that threatens the Indian community. It is, rather, the village that the visiting city dweller cannot comprehend because of his inability to see from a distance. This is a far cry from the sullen stares in indigenismo. Here the native Andean, instead of being oppressed by the mountainous landscape, is the joyous subject – a collective subject that, by looking at 'our town', can appreciate the network of exchanges, possibilities, and the vibrancy of social interaction.¹⁶ In that respect, it is relevant that the narrator compares (favorably) a mountain pass to a city highway. Mountain passes, roads, paths, as well as festivals, dance, and music are at the core of Arguedas' narratives, where the Indian community is on the move.

Witnessing horror

Reading Vargas Llosa's *Lituma en los Andes* (1993) (*Death in the Andes*, 1997) produces the almost opposite effect: the setting is stagnant, asphyxiating. The roads to Naccos, the village where most of the action takes place, are either broken, flash flooded, or saturated with danger. And whenever the protagonist, Corporal Lituma, observes or imagines the natives' eyes, he encounters threatening, horrified, or evasive glances: 'Lituma pictured the blank faces and icy narrow eyes that the people in Naccos – laborers at camps and comuneros, the Indians from the traditional community – would all turn toward him [. . .]' (1997: 4); 'Sometimes he thought that behind those blank faces, those monosyllables spoken reluctantly, as if they were doing him a favor, those opaque, suspicious, narrow eyes, the serruchos [Andean inhabitants] were laughing at him' (27).¹⁷ As is well known, there is a historical background and a seminal moment that help explain the despair, paranoia and even horror that informs not only Vargas Llosa's *Lituma en los Andes*, but also a number of other writings set in the Andes he produced during a twenty-year period: his visit to Uchuraccay on February 11, 1983.¹⁸

The few hours he spent in that small village would haunt Vargas Llosa, who wrote versions of that visit, each time pointing to an inscrutable other: an old native anonymous woman he saw in the village.¹⁹ She is present in the official *Informe de la comisión investigadora de los sucesos de Uchuraccay*, in a *New York Times* article published in July, 1983, titled 'The Story of a Massacre' where he revisits his investigation, and in *Lituma en los Andes* ten years later. One may even trace the episode of Uchuraccay and the aging native woman to one of the fragments he wrote for the 2001 coffee table/National Geographic book titled *Andes*. In this book, Vargas Llosa wrote vignettes inspired by a series of photographs by Pablo Corral Vega. One of them tells of how the writer conceives the native Andeans as utterly other, detached from the modernizing process and prone to magical thinking (figure 3). Like Arguedas, he does not name the native.

Woman With No Name.

I don't know what my name is by now, I've forgotten over the years. Because – just take a look at me – I am a tired old woman. I don't remember how old I am, either, but who's going to care? The important thing is that I was born in Paucartambo, and here I am going to die – if in fact I die some day. Sometimes I think that God Our Father has had me live so long because he wants me to be immortal like him

(Vargas Llosa and Corral Vega, 2001: 57).

This is almost expected in a book of this sort: the exotic other, ageless, immutable and immobile (she will die where she was born). A creature without a name, alien to history and stuck in its geography. She does not see past Paucartambo, nor has she ever left her native village. Notice how the power of the glance, even at the moment of self-affirmation when the native is saying who she is, is ambiguously relinquished to the observer: 'just take a look at me'.

Compare the Paucartambo woman with no name to the anonymous woman at the end of 'The Story of a Massacre':

[W]e were preparing to leave when a tiny woman from the community began to dance. She was murmuring a song that we could not understand. She was an Indian, as small as a child, but with the wrinkled face of an old woman, and the scarred cheeks and swollen lips of those who live exposed to the cold in the mountains. [. . .] a woman who seemed to have come from a different Peru from the one in which I live my life, an ancient and archaic Peru which has survived among these sacred mountains despite centuries of isolation and adversity.

(Vargas Llosa 1997: 197)

This passage again affiliates the primitive with the underdeveloped (as small as a child) and with the old (wrinkled, old, ancient and archaic). The anonymous woman who survives 'among sacred mountains' stands for a culture that, in its isolation, can only persist outside history – a static culture – perhaps with Vallejian 'imperial nostalgias' and 'sclerotic eyes'²⁰ – as immortal as the old woman with no name in the vignette. There is no communication between the modern writer that comes to investigate the crime and this subject who has no name or personal history. Through anonymity, Vargas Llosa integrates the native into a narrative of modernity without attempting to negotiate a dialogue. She is Peruvian, yes, but only as an apparition – she has come from a different Peru.

As Ubilluz (2009: 34) points out, a version of the woman in 'Story of a Massacre' reappears in *Lituma en los Andes* – where she arrives to report the absence of her husband to a modern observer. She appears at the door, 'mumbling in Quechua while the saliva gathered at the corners of her toothless mouth', and provides information in 'indistinguishable sounds that affected Lituma like savage music' (Vargas Llosa, 1997, 3). Lituma is utterly uncomfortable with her presence, which he endures until he decides it is time for her to leave:

Lituma attempted a smile and gestured to the Indian that she could go. She continued looking at him, impassive. Tiny and ageless, with bones as fragile as a bird's, she was almost invisible under all her skirts and the shabby, drooping hat. But there was something unbreakable in her face and narrow, wrinkled eyes. (6)

Not unlike the dancing and murmuring woman in 'The Story of a Massacre,' not unlike the undead woman in the vignette, this Andean native (again old, again decaying, again anonymous) can barely produce communication, or have any agency. Note also how she appears expressionless, timeless, glacial, not an individual but an emblem. The observer is again uneasy and saddened by the encounter with the

ontological other and/or by the failures of civilization.²¹

The novel ends with a disturbing revelation: Lituma extracts from a local the confession that the three disappeared men – significantly, men that stood out²² in the community – had been killed and cannibalized, in an abject liturgy to appease the spirits of the mountains (apus) in times of war. Cannibalism is an impassable wall for the modern observer, who in the last paragraph of the novel is left looking for the truth about human nature in an Andean cloudless sky.²³ Lituma en los Andes is not just a fictionalization of the ‘Informe de Uchuraccay’ and the ‘Story of a Massacre’, but also a continuation of a logic that remains at play in the exoticizing vignette ‘Woman with No Name’. This progression of the observer’s identity – from investigator (in February 1983) to journalist (in July, 1983), to narrator (in 1993), to vignette writer (in 2001) – suggests a cycle in Vargas Llosa’s texts set in the Andes that goes from evaluating and recommending action to narrating fictions of despair. Neil Larsen traces similar trajectories in other writings by Vargas Llosa, whom he describes as a bad faith ideologue whose fiction ‘is essentially the afterthought to his political [neoliberal] philosophy’ (Larsen 2000: 177).²⁴ In every instance, when this permutating observer assesses, scrutinizes, or extracts narratives out of the same expressionless eyes of the anonymous aging Andean woman, he monopolizes all agency.

Looking forward: Madeinusa’s adventure

In Vargas Llosa’s texts, the native Andean can only look towards the past: her eyes have seen (history, horror, mountains, tradition). Her sensorial numbness to the present is akin to that of the Western sages – except that in her case all wisdom is opaque and points backwards, to atavism. In recent films, such as *Madeinusa* (2006), *La teta asustada* (*The Milk of Sorrow*, 2009), *Altiplano* (2009), and *Tambie’n la lluvia* (*Even the Rain*, 2010) the gaze of the native suggests a rather different temporality: she (or he, in *Tambie’n la lluvia*) looks ahead, is young, and enacts change (figure 4).

One actress epitomizes this forward-looking native: Magaly Solier, who plays the leading role in a growing number of films. Is it a coincidence that this actress’s right eye looks permanently bloodshot due to an accident she suffered as a child? Perhaps – in any case, the result of this peculiarity is that her gaze (thus the gaze of the native Andeans she paradigmatically represents in twenty-first-century Latin American film) is marked as different. A lot can be said about the role of the gaze in other films,²⁵ but the case of *Madeinusa* is particularly striking because the film explicitly qualifies that gaze by association through the cow/human eye montage. In order to understand Claudia Llosa’s experiment and how it reformulates anonymity as a question of recognition, we have to look at the properties of cinema, a medium where image (or representation) and plot (or narrative) do not need to collaborate with each other.

Cinematic image

The invitation to anonymize that I mentioned at the beginning of this study results from the combination of the close-up and the quick cut: a different kind of shot or a longer one would dramatically alter the effect. Quickness is of the essence, since it impedes a rationalization or domestication of the shots. The close-up is even more important, as it

questions the very act of viewing. Let us begin by analyzing the first element: speed.

The sudden cuts in Claudia Llosa's experiment exploits a property of film called 'associative montage' – a well-known cinematic effect theorized by constructivist Soviet filmmakers in the 1920s – that counts on the participation of the viewer's intuitions and emotions.²⁶ In our case, anonymity is evoked by a quick succession that can contaminate Madeinusa's human-but-different individual eyes with the cow's eye. The participation of the viewers is key, because it is possible to not participate: the intercut of the cow's eye could be processed differently, since there is in fact a cow standing behind Madeinusa in the scene. Understood as a contextualizing snapshot, the cow eye would just be a commentary on the milieu, or it could simply show the animal looking at the protagonist looking, or it could be just a pun on the iconic relationship between human and animal eyes. Unlikely as those readings may be – especially for those whose perception is informed by the tradition of anonymity – they are evidence that while anonymity in fiction can only be represented to the reader, in the cinematic medium it can be proposed to the spectator.

The question has to be sudden. But whereas speed is an important factor to elicit an emotional and unmediated response, the close-up is crucial for its content. Associative montage draws an unchecked reaction – but, according to Eisenstein, it is the close-up that gives an 'affection image' to the entirety of the film (see Deleuze 1986: 87). In discussing this kind of shot, Deleuze elaborates on the terms proposed by Eisenstein to assert that 'the affection-image is the close-up, and the close-up is the face' (87). The close-up/face conflation leads him to the following comment about the 'face to face' encounter the viewer experiences when confronting a close-up shot: 'There are two sorts of questions that we can put to a face [in a cinematic close-up], depending on the circumstances: what are you thinking about? Or, what is bothering you, what is the matter, what do you sense or feel?' (88). Correcting and elaborating on Deleuze's statement by looking at the case of Madeinusa provides us with some useful hypotheses:

- (a) When a viewer (Deleuze) confronts a close-up (by Griffith or Eisenstein, his examples), he imagines a thought or a feeling. But when spectators see a native face, a 'kind' of face, the close-up suggests, rather than an affective image, a cultural one informed by a tradition.²⁷
- (b) The close-up combines the illusion of dialogue (we 'put questions' to the face, according to Deleuze) with the certainty of its impossibility – since only the viewer has a voice. The tradition of anonymity is, as seen through the close-up, a tradition of rhetorical questions.
- (c) Deleuze's examples are of whole faces (he emphasizes features like their 'outline' or 'brightness.') An eye is a very particular face because it looks back at the viewer. An eye looking directly at the camera challenges the viewers' prerogative and monopoly to see. Claudia Llosa's close-up seeks affiliation with classic avant-garde films that interrogate the spectators' gaze by acting on the eye, by superimposing the human eye onto a camera lens (the kino-eye) in the case of *Man with a Movie Camera*, or by slitting the human eye (and turning it into an oozing dead cow's eye) in *Un chien andalou*. In fact, both Vertov's and Bunuel's gestures are partially evoked in Llosa's sequence: the quick cut almost 'superimposes' the cow onto the human eye, and the threatening presence of a door latch 'slits' Madeinusa's eye.²⁸

In *Madeinusa*, the quickly juxtaposed close-ups mobilize reactions that put into play the traditional perception of the Andean as anonymous, inviting viewers to participate in its (re)production. The native eye – a 'kind of eye' that looks 'in certain ways' and is

prone to ‘abstraction’ – is, moreover, looking at the viewer and at Salvador, redoubling the effect. Spectators ask the Deleuzian questions to the close-up (‘what are those eyes thinking? how are they feeling?’) with the pre-established knowledge that there will be no other answer but the one they themselves impose/imagine/write onto the eyes.

Cinematic plot and dialogue

Madeinusa is framed as a narrative about looking. After the opening credits, there is a Medieval memento mori: ‘You passing, look and observe how wretched you are. That this land imprisons us all the same. Mortal, whoever you are, stop and read. Consider this: I am what you will be and what you are, I have been’ (my emphasis). The disembodied enunciation has two possible addressees: us spectators (extradiegetic ‘passers-by’) and, we will realize later on, Salvador (intra-diegetic visitor to the village). This ambivalence squarely places Salvador in a potentially vicarious position to us. Although not quite: the temporal distance between our arrival and Salvador’s is significant – we contemplate the circumstances of Madeinusa before he enters the narrative fifteen minutes into the film. The belatedness of Salvador’s arrival produces a set of questions in anticipation of the unfolding plot. Will the film continue as a pseudo-documentary exploration (the life in Mayayaycuna, its habits, celebrations)? Will it become a coming-of-age narrative (Madeinusa’s)? A voyage of discovery (Salvador’s)? Or will a romantic story ensue?

There are a number of elements pointing to a plot of discovery – the basic plot of Vargas Llosa’s novel. Salvador is an outsider like Lituma, Madeinusa’s village is reminiscent of Naccos (walled from contact, primitive, backward and immutable, and with a perverse understanding of Christian traditions), and its very name suggests that the ‘discoverer’ is visiting the forbidden territory of the dead (Mayayaycuna means, in Quechua, ‘the town no-one can enter’).²⁹ On the other hand, we know through the first scenes that Madeinusa wishes to go to Lima and escape an oppressive and threatening environment. When the human/cow montage occurs one of the potential protagonists, and one type of narrative, begins to take over.

A dialogue that directly follows the montage reveals the kind of plot that will follow – a development that the spectator, and Salvador as spectator, may not see. When Madeinusa’s eyes observe him in the barn, Salvador thinks she is naively curious about him and his modern tools (a Polaroid camera, a tape recorder). They talk:

Madeinusa: I don’t know who brought me here.

Salvador: You’re Cayo’s daughter, aren’t you?

M: [Pause] What is that?

S: Do you have the key?

M: [Pause] [Secretly lifts a rock covering the key, then puts the rock back.]

S: It’s a recorder. I use it for work. [Records, replays.] This way I remember everything.

M: This way I remember everything.

S: How old are you?

M: [Silence]

S: Madeinusa, right?

M: [Pause] Are you from Lima?

S: Yes, that’s right.

(30:57)

The claim of non-agency ('I don't know who brought me here') is quickly dispelled by the ensuing dialogue, which amounts to an interrogation directed by Madeinusa. She does not answer a single question that Salvador asks; he answers all of hers. His questions end up being, indeed, rhetorical – just not necessarily because she does not understand them, or think of an answer, or because she cannot overcome her shyness.

The spectators have to choose between operating as Salvador does or conceiving the possibility that Madeinusa is indeed gathering information and plotting, being an agent in her own adventure. The film will develop unexpectedly for viewers who at this point predict a narrative where Salvador evolves as an adventurer-ethnographer while Madeinusa will fall to the background as an anonymous primitive or rise as a sort of Andean Pocahontas. Salvador eventually becomes a savior in the native village, just not as he (or as a national modernizing project) may expect, but as a criminal's alibi. The film ends with Madeinusa killing her father and accusing Salvador of the crime, then travelling in the same truck that took Salvador to Mayayaycuna, this time going in the other direction, to Lima.

Madeinusa's road to the coast, far from collective as Arguedas' road, is built on stratagems and murder – a murder that is also an individual's violent rejection of a patriarchal and oppressive system of traditions.³⁰ But does not this ending – that of the native Andean finding her way to the city through deception – reaffirm ingrained stereotypes? Isn't the character of Madeinusa, after all, a version of the traditionally duplicitous Indian with untrustworthy eyes? Aren't her eyes similar to those 'opaque, suspicious, narrow eyes' Lituma saw in Naccos (see note 17)? The answer may be in the affirmative. My point, however, is not to defend an 'ethics' in Claudia Llosa's film. What interests me is how it formulates anonymity not as a representation but, through the tension between plot and image, as a question of recognition. But how much of this reformulation is a challenge to the tradition of anonymity? To find an answer to that question, it is useful to retrace this tradition and its functions.

The functions of anonymity

The early essays on the 'problema del indio', and Vargas Llosa's texts more recently, anonymize the native Andeans, transferring agency to the viewer or observer (the essayist, the lettered intellectual, the distant observer) who speaks for and of them.³¹ In indigenista fictions there is a reaction to this use of anonymity. In those narratives, anonymity of the indigenous population does not transfer agency out of the community but channels it to a hero that represents the 'will of the people'. The members of the community become a fairly homogenous mass of spiritual, physical and cultural support.

Aware of the drawbacks of indigenismo fiction and writing against early twentiethcentury essays, Arguedas, a writer and anthropologist with direct knowledge of Andean life, also represented the natives through anonymity – not to transfer or channel agency, but to diffuse it. The casualty of his deployment of anonymity is significant: individual agency. When the mestizo observers in the novel see Puquio comuneros 'work like ants' they are seeing a community of anonymous members guided by common ends. And indeed that is what the narrator wants the reader to see: a communal solidarity so powerful that individual wants are required to coincide with communal needs. Arguedas' consecration of communal subjectivity opposes conceptualizations of the individual as self-affirming and self-motivated.

In the story I have just sketched, the function of anonymity is to redistribute agency by transferring, channeling, or diffusing it. Anonymity is, in each case, a representational strategy where the Indian subject is successively rendered fungible ('When you know one Indian, you know them all'), inscrutable, cohesive, or choreographed to act in unison. Represented through anonymity, the Andean native can only enter certain kinds of plots: the ethnographic plot (the Indian-as-mountain to be observed), the Romantic plot (the Indian protagonist as a transcendent hero), and the epic plot (the Indian as a collective that carries out communal deeds). Anonymity forecloses the possibility of growth and adventure, two types of plots centered on an evolving identity.

This tradition is both honored and challenged in Claudia Llosa's film. 'Madeinusa' is both a name and a non-name. Similarly, Madeinusa is a fiction that both revisits the usual plots (with an ethnographer, a communal festivity, a 'typical' protagonist) and goes beyond them: as a fiction of personal growth and differentiation, the film contains narrative elements of the bildungsroman and the psychological thriller.³² If Madeinusa is considered an individual character, the way of assessing whether the film calls into question the tradition of anonymity is by looking for another character from whom agency may be redistributed to her.

Why do you look at me that way?
You don't know where I am from.
I am a provincial girl
Mayayaycuna at heart.
When I sing to you this way,
Look at me look at you how you are.
Lost in the horizon.
Lost with your gaze.
(43:45–44:40)
¿Por que' me miras así?
No sabes de dónde soy.
Yo soy una provinciana,
mayayaycu'nica de corazón.
Cuando te canto yo así,
mi'rame mi'rate cómo esta's:
perdido en el horizonte,
perdido con tu mirar.

There is one: Salvador. The answer is so evident as to be even sung in a huayno, during a scene that takes place ten minutes after the cow/human eye montage. What seems to develop as a love scene in which Madeinusa seduces Salvador is, if taken at face value, a warning to the Limenian that begins with a commentary on his gaze:

The provincial Andean girl has the voice, makes the requests, theorizes, asks, and (in Quechua) warns,³³ whereas the modern ethnographer is, very much like the Indians in early twentieth-century anthropological essays, 'lost in the horizon'. In a drastic inversion, here the one who is intoxicated (Salvador smokes marihuana in the scene), staring blank, looking without seeing, suffering from 'perception poverty' is the non-Andean. Conversely, Madeinusa's gaze is motivated and, as it were, Deleuzian: she cannot help posing questions. She is self-conscious ('Look at me look at you how you are') and she will, ultimately, actively build her personal road. Madeinusa, while gesturing an opening to the tradition of anonymity, ends up operating – through a radical role-reversal – within its confines.

The persistence of anonymity in narratives set in the Andes might suggest that strategies of anonymization are limited to texts from areas where cultural encounters are traversed by a long history of oppression. But as a rhetorical strategy, anonymity is not bound by geography or history in Latin America, which makes it a rich concept to examine narratives formally and comparatively. By focusing our attention on the stories of anonymous characters (like the members of the firing squad) we can re-examine the discourse (the ‘total novel’) from the perspective of what is de-emphasized. Cannot anonymity perhaps illuminate the dilemmas of naming in narratives that brave the archives of state-violence, as does Rodrigo Rey Rosa in *El material humano*? What can the structure of anonymity tell us about the economy of empathy in fictional accounts of mass violence like Roberto Bolaño’s exhausting chronicles of the femicides of Ciudad Juárez in 2006? And by studying the repeated anonymization of larger groups, we stand to gain insights on habitual ways of structuring how some individual or class acts on behalf of or instead of others. How does testimonio, for example, structure agency through a proposed dialectic between the named individual and the anonymous collective? How does anonymity help us understand the faceless mass in dictator novels, the invisible subjects behind the fraternal grammar of revolutionary poetry, the background crowds in portraits of the popular square, and the filmic choreographies of the pueblo representing the cumulative agency of the nation?³⁴ This essay proposes examining anonymity as a way of rethinking how agency is distributed through narrative form and how texts, through their configurations, are themselves political actors in the social life of Latin America and beyond.

Notes

1 As Alex Woloch points out, ‘narratives themselves allow and solicit us to construct a story – a distributed pattern of attention – that is at odds with, or divergent from, the formed pattern of attention in the discourse’ (2003: 41).

2 Because of its abundance, the corpus of this study is constituted mainly by Peruvian texts set in the Andes. The Bolivian texts I will mention demonstrate that the anonymous native Andean can be read as a regional figure. Andean fictions of Ecuador like Huasipungo can be included, unproblematically, in the section on indigenismo.

3 ‘[C]e qui le se´pare surtout des primitifs, c’est l’abstraction’ (1907: 21).

4 I am referring specifically to Ruth Benedict’s *Patterns of Culture* (1934) and more broadly to the tradition that goes from Franz Boas (*The Primitive Mind*, 1911) to most early works by Margaret Mead. Starting with Clifford Geertz’s *Writing Culture*, anthropology would revise these assumptions. According to Tobias Rees, Geertz set out to eliminate the ‘constraints’ of early anthropology that ‘affirm, if only implicitly, colonial perspectives and asymmetries of power in so far as they lead ethnographers to construct timeless others who have presumptively lived in the same way for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years; to construct spatially bound cultures and thus deny mobility; and to speak for the other, thus denying the natives a voice of their own’ (2008: 5). Many of these terms appear in the essays about the Andean Indian: timelessness, immobility, lack of agency and expression.

5 See, for example, Valca´rcel’s *Mirador indio* (1939), where the highlands are described as ‘a world without smiles’ [un mundo sin sonrisa]. José Santos Chocano ties this sadness to alcoholism, as he rather unambiguously describes Indios as being ‘sad drunks’: ‘Drunkness exacerbates Indian sadness’ (854, my translation). For an analysis of the figure of the ‘drunk Indian’ and his existential sadness, see Rebecca Earle’s ‘Algunos pensamientos sobre “El indio borracho” en el imaginario criollo’.

6 Racist essays by the ‘generación del 900’ in which the impassivity is tied to a biological

determinism also belong in this category. That group of writers confidently deployed Darwinian plots, perhaps none more clearly than Alejandro Dustu´a, who in 1930 writes: ‘The disgrace of Peru originates in an indigenous race which has reached, in its psychic dissolution, the biological rigidity of beings that have definitively closed their evolutionary cycle’ (Ante el conflicto nacional, qtd. in Degregori: 1979, 234; my translation).

7 For Grupo Orkopata authors publishing in the *Boletín Titikaka*, recovering the Indian tradition was often a call for spiritual awakening. The native Andean often becomes an almost mythical being, living in a different temporality. Pablo Palacios, a prominent member of Grupo Orkopata, writes: ‘The spirit of the ayllu, the ancestral customs, the collective organization, the cooperation in all social acts [. . .] are manifested every day in such a meticulous way that they seem like rituals’ (*Boletín Titikaka* XXXII: 2, my translation). Gamaliel Churata’s massive *El pez de oro* (1957) is a compendium of Andean traditions, an ode to the Tawantinsuyu, and a spiritual manifesto, where being indio is a metaphysical and cultural choice: ‘Our true aesthetic capacity is to make America an Indian world; which will be always Indian if the population provides the origin of culture, its nature and its legacy’ (1957: 9, my translation).

8 In the ‘Author’s Preface’ to what is considered the first indigenista novel, *Aves sin nido* (Birds Without a Nest, 1889), Clorinda Matto de Turner writes: ‘I love the native race with a tender love, and so I have observed its customs closely, enchanted by their simplicity, and, as well, the abjection into which this race is plunged by small-town despots, who, while their names may change, never fail to live up to the epithet of tyrants. They are no other than, in general, the priests, governors, caciques, and mayors’ (1996: 1). Notice the reference to the names of the oppressors that ‘may change’, while the Indian heroes belong to a ‘race’ somehow destined to repeat the same, tragic plot.

9 I include in this category works by Jorge Sanjine´s such as *El coraje del pueblo* (1971), where the vast landscape acts as both backdrop and enclosure for the inevitable massacre. In this film, the leader (Domitila Chungara) follows the Guevarian model of the consciousness-raising vanguard intellectual, which is not distant from the leaders of indigenista fiction in general.

10 ‘The work of the Indians had, as established by the transportation law, built a highway that reached the village. A batallion comes by truck and advances over Rumi’ (2000: 633, my translation).

11 Significantly, the structure of the novel insists on juxtaposing this duality: chapter 7 describes the construction of the road from Puquio in the Andes to Nazca in the Coast, a historical event that took place in the 1920s; chapter 8 describes the painful dragging of a feral bull from a nearby valley to Puquio’s improvised bullring.

12 The essay is titled ‘The Novel and the Problem of Literary Expression in Peru’ (1985: xi-xvi). The Indian, Arguedas claims, is just one of the five character types in his novel set in the Andes: landholders, new landowners, mestizos, national authorities, and even university students who migrate to Lima (xii).

13 Consider Willka’s speech when he is about to be executed: ‘Keep on shooting. We do not have factory weapons, those don’t count. Our soul is made of fire. It is here, and everywhere! We have known the homeland in the end. [. . .] We are men that will live eternally. If you want, if you’d like to Captain, go ahead and kill me, give me the little death, the small death’ (Arguedas 1973: 442, my translation). We should note that the narrator indicates, somewhat in passing, that these words are said in Quechua – a language with an ‘exclusive we’ (a ‘we’ that doesn’t include the addressed party). For a thorough discussion of the Andean concept of ‘nation’, see Florencia Mallon’s ‘Nationalist and Antistate Coalitions’.

14 In *El zorro* . . . there is no distinct protagonist and no common purpose but, instead, an

unresolved buildup of interaction and tensions. In the 'Second Diary' included in *El zorro . . .*, Arguedas laments that whereas *Todas las sangres* was his victory ('the Andean yawar mayu [bloody river] conquers, and it conquers completely. It is my own victory'), he can construct no triumph in his new novel, 'because although I'm eager to do it, I do not have profound understanding of what's happening in Chimbote and in the world' (83). Rather than building up to the apotheosis of communal will, *El zorro . . .* is constructed as a series of 'boilings' [hervores], 'coagulations of lives and words woven together and unwoven through the text' with no discernible teleology (Rowe 2000: 287).

15 We could add to the list 'Diamantes y pedernales' (1954) [Diamonds and Flint]. This novella follows a mentally handicapped harpist whose patron is a young landowner who kills him out of cultural jealousy. The musician's death unites the community in sorrow and prompts the regretful patron to go into self-imposed exile. The filmic adaptation, *Jarawi* (The Ballad, 1966), retells the story as the rise of political communal agency out of the (sacrificial) death of an individual. In *Jarawi*, the landowner is instead a politician and, when the harpist dies, the peasant population rises up against the politician (Middents 2009: 86).

16 Interconnectedness is, for Arguedas, intrinsic to indigenous social formations. Sociologists studying the increased interaction among communities in the first half of the twentieth century, on the other hand, attribute it solely to extrinsic investments and new industries. This passage from Handelman's *Struggle in the Andes* is representative: '[M]iners who returned to the comunidades would have established contacts with peasants from other villages whom they had met in the mines. They could serve as links between communities that shared common problems and thereby end their villages' traditional isolation' (Handelman 1975: 50). Arguedas, by mentioning a road that was going, as it were, 'in the other direction' (from the Andes to the coast), emphasizes the initiative of the margins.

17 These quotes illustrate another tradition of representation: that of the Andean Indians as *indios taimados* – the paranoid notion that the native, behind silences, apparent obedience, an unintelligible language, and oblique glances, is plotting to betray and overcome the oppressor. This is an image that we find in the López Albuja quote in this essay, and throughout *Lituma en los Andes*.

18 Vargas Llosa had been commissioned to investigate the killings of eight journalists in this small town in the Andean region of Ayacucho. At the time, the Maoist guerrilla group Shining Path was fought with equal brutality by the government, leaving locals, especially in small towns, exposed to heavy attacks by the two forces. The journalists had been killed presumably by confused natives that took them for terrorists, and Vargas Llosa and a team of scholars were sent by president Belaúnde Terry to investigate the circumstances.

The team's report was to become infamous because of how it attributed the crimes to native Andeans. Beyond reporting the immediate causes of the killing (which were traceable to the internal armed conflict), the 'Informe' contained a lengthy section on 'non-immediate' ones: the killings, said the report, were the result of the irrational action of primitives incapable of communication, used to violence, and sadly abandoned by civilization. The report was roundly criticized later, even officially, in several pages of the 2003 Truth and Reconciliation Commission report that investigated the deaths of over 69,000 Peruvians during the internal conflict. The literature on the 'Informe' is abundant. For a discussion of its persistent impact on the Peruvian imaginary, see the collection *Contra el sueño de los justos: la literatura peruana ante la violencia política*. Lima: IEP, 2009.

19 Ubilluz makes an insightful Lacanian reading of the recurrence of this old native

woman in Vargas Llosa's works. According to him, she represents the Real: 'neither natural nor premodern, the Indian woman, as well as Uchuraccay, is the unwanted outcome of Peruvian modernity' (2009: 33).

20 Ce'sar Vallejo's use of an old Indian woman in 'Imperial Nostalgias' may have different aims, but is not radically different. The poem has been read as an attack on indigenista 'Romantic' ideas, and indeed the description of the native woman is as ruthlessly naturalistic as Vargas Llosa's: 'Like a relief on a pre-Incan block,/ the pensive old woman spins and spins;/ in her Mama fingers the thin spindle/ shears the gray wool of her old age.// A blind, unlit sun guards and mutilates/her sclerotic snowy eyes . . . !/ Her mouth is scornful, and with a deceptive calm/ her imperial weariness perhaps hold vigil' (Vallejo 2007: 77).

21 A profound sadness also overwhelms the Andean world in Santiago Roncagliolo's *Abril rojo* (2006), and Iva'n Thays' *Un lugar llamado oreja de perro* (2008). These contemporary fictions follow Vargas Llosa's in establishing an impassable cultural and existential distance between the modern lettered observer/hero/investigator, and the native Andeans. What remains is the anguished voice of the former.

22 The three men that are sacrificed to the tutelary spirits (apus) are an albino, a mute, and a ghostly construction foreman, former mayor and secret survivor of a Shining Path raid.

23 The novel ends with these sentences: 'He stumbled to the door of the barracks and walked out. He felt a blast of icy air, and despite his confusion, he could see the splendid half-moon and the stars shining in a cloudless sky, still shedding their clear light on the craggy peaks of the Andes' (276).

24 In his essay, Larsen reserves his most acerbic criticism for *Lituma en los Andes*: 'That Vargas Llosa is capable of prostituting his narrative skills for dogmatic imperatives is beyond dispute. Consider, for example, the sensationalized, horrors-of-the-Shining Path tableaux interspersed throughout *Death in the Andes*' (162).

25 One particularly striking image in *Tambie'n la lluvia* shows the Western observers (a film director and his producer) examining in a monitor the physiognomy of a native staring blankly. The empty stare of this character at the beginning of the film changes throughout the narrative, as he becomes a leader of the Cochabamba water wars.

26 Filmmakers started exploring the value of montage with the Kuleshov experiment, designed to prove the tendency to associate consecutive images. The most remarkable experiment was the film *The Man with the Movie Camera* (1929), where all the possibilities of association were explored. Vladimir Petric explains the disruptive/associative montage in the film as follows: 'The metaphorical linkage between the two disparate topics occurs through an associative process that takes place in the viewer's mind. Through such dialectical intercutting, the initially presented topic acquires an additional meaning that complicates the already achieved thematic integrity of the sequence. But this apparent complication is only momentary: the instant the inserted "disruptive" shot is perceived, it begins to function retroactively, providing more information about the surrounding shots than about itself' (1987: 95–6). In the case of the dialectical montage in *Madeinusa*, the metaphoricity of the cow eye (as bovine simplicity) can contaminate the gaze of the native Andean in a disturbing dialectic.

27 Whereas Deleuze seems blind to different 'kinds of faces' in his film book, he does observe, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, that 'the face, the power of the face, engenders and explains social power', as it defines 'zones of frequency or probability, delimit[ing] a field that neutralizes in advance any expressions or connections unamenable to the appropriate significations' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 175, 168). Deeply inflected by Bergsonian universalism, Deleuze's cinema books lack a necessary exploration of power and politics of oppression.

Anthropologist Peter Benson explains that certain ‘kinds’ of faces index different ‘kinds’ of humans. In *Madeinusa*, this kind of indexation appears in a conversation between the protagonist and her sister about Salvador’s eyes:

Madeinusa: Have you seen his eyes?

Chale: Why should I go about looking?

M: They are clearer, did you notice? Like in the magazines.

C: And yours are the color of your own shit. So don’t get all excited. (26:25–26:35)

28 But perhaps a film that can better dialogue with the content in Llosa’s sequence is Julio Medem’s *Vacas* (1992), where the impassive gaze of a cow confronts spectators both with the imagined stagnation of a culture and with their own indolence.

29 As Beasley-Murray points out: ‘*Madeinusa* turns around the systematic destitution of authority: religious, lay, and liberal, each of which is represented in turn by the three male figures who die as the plot unfolds. Christ, the mayor, and the ‘gringo’ all have to be killed if *Madeinusa* has any hope of liberation. And each is necessarily undone by treason, rather than by frontal assault or counter-hegemonic persuasion.’

30 Here locals believe in ‘Holy Time’: a three-day period between crucifixion and resurrection when God is dead and can see no sins – including incest. *Mayayaycuna* is certainly not the Arguedian post-indigenista village that can gestate a dialogue with modernity through networks of interconnection.

31 Indeed, the fundamental critique of subaltern studies about the dangers of speaking for and of the oppressed must consider that whenever a subaltern is involved, there is a politics of anonymity and a formal structure behind it.

The denial of agency through anonymity in ‘problema del indio’ essays has persisted, for example, in some contemporary essays. The most notable case is Vargas Llosa’s ‘Questions of Conquest’ (1990), where he equates modernization to assimilation: ‘Modernization is possible only with the sacrifice of the Indian cultures’ (52–3).

32 The difficulty in determining whether the film coincides or breaks with usual plots may explain why the film was so controversial in Peru. In 2006, *Madeinusa* was voted both the best and the worst national movie of the year (‘*Madeinusa* es la mejor y la peor’). In most reviews, representation – whether the film depicted accurately or not the life and culture of Andean life – was the measuring stick. The plot was valued, then, on the grounds of its verisimilitude – a clear indication that fictionalization of Andean life is a risky proposition and that the ‘problema del indio’ is still a live one. The debate on the question of representation hides a deeper one about the kinds of plots where the Andean native can be integrated.

33 The warning comes in Quechua:

Very soon by singing this song Quaynata n̄uqaqa takispaqa

I will steal your heart from you sunquykitam suwasqayki

Very soon by singing this song Quaynata n̄uqaqa takispaqa

I will carry away your heart sunquykitam apukasaq

I will steal your heart from you Sunquykitam suwasqayki

I will carry away your heart sunquykitam apukasaq.

(44:40–45:15)

Since the Spanish original version of the film does not carry subtitles, the audience is subject to the same inability to understand the subaltern as Salvador. Monolingualism (more precisely, not knowing Quechua) is presented as a hermeneutical impediment in this film, as well as in other contemporary films, such as *Dioses* (2005). Recent films about the native Andean deploy the ‘bilingual games’ analyzed by Doris Sommer in *Bilingual Aesthetics*. For the English-speaking audience, both the Spanish dialogues and the Quechua song in *Madeinusa* are subtitled, flattening the experience with languages and domesticating the scene.

34 For an exemplary formal study of the ‘royal we’ (‘plural mayesta’tico’) and the choreographies of the national-popular in film, see Gonzalo Aguilar’s ongoing research, developed in his forthcoming text *El pueblo como lo real: hacia una genealogía del cine latinoamericano*. (The Real as People: Towards a Genealogy of Latin American Cinema).

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FIGURE 1 Madeinusa's (and the cow's) stare (30:40–30:45). Reproduced by permission. © 2006 Obero'n Cinematográfica and Claudia Llosa.



FIGURE 2 Jose' Sabogal's 'Amauta' (Amauta III:16, 1928, p. 10); Julia Codesido's 'Indio aimara' and 'La quena' (Amauta II:2, 1928, p.10). Sabogal: reproduced by permission. © 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/APSAV, Lima. Codesido: Not known ©



FIGURE 3 Reproduced by permission. © 2012 National Geographic Society.



FIGURE 4 Magaly Solier plays, from top to bottom, Madeinusa, Fausta (in Milk of Sorrow) and the lead role of Saturnina (in Altiplano, directed by Peter Brosens and Jessica Woodworth). Each film emphasizes the intense (and bloodshot) eyes of the native Andean staring forward. In Altiplano, Solier plays a villager suffering from the effects of mercury contamination – one of which is blindness. Reproduced by permission. Madeinusa, © 2006 Obero'n Cinematogra'fica and Claudia Llosa; Milk of Sorrow, © 2009 Obero'n Cinematográfica and Claudia Llosa; Altiplano, q 2009 Peter Brosens and Jessica Woodworth.



