

Are *Mestizos* Hybrids? The Conceptual Politics of Andean Identities*

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Abstract. Through a genealogical analysis of the terms *mestizo* and *mestizaje*, this article reveals that these voices are doubly hybrid. On the one hand they house an *empirical* hybridity, built upon eighteenth and nineteenth century racial taxonomies and according to which ‘mestizos’ are non-indigenous individuals, the result of biological or cultural mixtures. Yet, mestizos’ genealogy starts earlier, when ‘mixture’ denoted transgression of the rule of faith, and its statutes of purity. Within this taxonomic regime mestizos could be, at the same time, indigenous. Apparently dominant, racial theories sustained by scientific knowledge mixed with, (rather than cancel) previous faith based racial taxonomies. ‘Mestizo’ thus houses a *conceptual* hybridity – the mixture of two classificatory regimes – which reveals subordinate alternatives for mestizo subject positions, including forms of indigeneity.

A genealogy of values, morality, asceticism, and knowledge will never confuse itself with a quest for its ‘origins’, will never neglect as inaccessible the vicissitudes of history. On the contrary it will cultivate the details and accidents that accompany every beginning; it will be scrupulously attentive to their petty malice; it will await their emergence, once unmasked as the face of the other.

*M. Foucault*¹

... it frequently happens that even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems that intersect in a hybrid construction – and consequently the word has two contradictory meanings, two accents.

*M. M. Bakhtin*²

In the year 1838 Johann Jakob Von Tschudi, a natural scientist born in what is now Switzerland, arrived in Peru for a visit that was to last six years. An

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¹ Michel Foucault, ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,’ p. 144 in Donald F. Bouchard (ed.), *Language, Counter-memory, Practice. Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault* (Ithaca, NY, 1977), pp. 139–64.

² Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin, 1981), p. 305.

intellectual of all trades, Von Tschudi travelled across the country collecting zoological, geological and social data with equal keenness, utilising both the indigenous Quechua and Spanish languages. Reading his *Testimonio del Perú* (which he published in 1846 in German, and which the Swiss Embassy in Peru translated into Spanish only 120 years later) one gets the feeling that he was both fascinated and revolted by what he saw in the country – then a fledgling republic, in its early post colonial years. Equipped with nineteenth century hiking gear and scientific theories he set off to classify social and natural geographies. Describing mestizos, he said,

They prefer to hang out with whites, and dislike to be around Indians whom they treat badly. There are fewer mestizos in Lima than in the rest of the country, where they represent the larger population of small towns. There, they self-identify as ‘whites’ and confront Indians with superiority. Nothing can be more flattering than to ask them if they are Spanish, a question that they answer affirmatively, even as all their features are obviously indigenous. Mestizos’ colour is light brown, sometimes dark.³

Beyond the description, this statement is richly textured. It shows Von Tschudi’s ability to pick up local hierarchical identity feelings. It also highlights the discrepancies between his racial definitions and those held locally; and, all too easily, Tschudi subordinates local understandings of identities to his own interpretations of them. Too many Peruvians self-identified as whites, he tells us, and they were wrong indeed. He knew better. From looking at their indigenous phenotypic features they were mestizos, which he defined as a racial mix between Indians and Spanish.⁴

In the nineteenth century discrepancies such as this were routine in encounters between Peruvians and their European (or North American) visitors, but they were not innocuous differences in opinion. Emerging from the budding yet highly influential science of race, North Atlantic interpretations swayed demographic representations of Latin American cities, regions, and nations. Certainly, subordinating local definitions to the dictum of the science of race required negotiation, and in some cases even training. For example, in 1912 the US economist in charge of conducting a census of the city of Cuzco taught the survey interviewers about the universal importance of skin colour to identify local racial identities. This, he thought, was

³ Johann Jakob von Tschudi, *Testimonio del Perú 1838–1942* (Lima, 1966), p. 117.

⁴ Tschudi prepared a table that recorded the labels of the twenty-three possible mixtures that he had identified in Peru. I found it in Robert Young’s *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (New York, 1995), p. 176. Young, in turn copied it from *The Races of Mankind: Being a Popular Description of the Characteristics, Manners, and Customs of the Principal Varieties of the Human Family* (London, 1873–9). I could not find the table in the Spanish edition – and this may reflect a different conceptual politics in relation to classification of mixture.

necessary because ‘the mestizo will try to be included as white, and many Indians [will choose] to be [considered] as mestizos’.⁵

Rather than being mistakes, such examples illuminate the multiple meanings of identity labels as well as the efforts at separating and classifying – that is ‘purifying’ identities – by suppressing this heteroglossia (or delegitimising it) via, in this specific case, the authority of the European science of race. Despite the efforts, the heteroglossia persists and ‘mistakes’ continue to occur. In 1994 – shortly after I had migrated from Peru to the United States – I met a man in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was an artist, wore his hair long in a ponytail, and spoke what struck me as ‘fluid English’. Trained in the Peruvian cultural perception of race (which I had not yet revisited) I had no doubt that the man was ‘mestizo’. Weeks later I learned I was mistaken: ‘I am a Native American’, he told me, and added: ‘Aren’t you a Peruvian Indian too?’ I answered that I was not – and my explanation confused him. Although my skin is brown, and I have ‘Indian looking’ features, in Peru most people consider me white. Perhaps some would accept it if I self-identify as ‘mestiza’, but everybody would laugh at me if I claimed to be ‘Indian’.⁶ Taxonomies and labels belong to interconnected histories ranging from the personal to the collective and from everyday, to artistic and academic practices that connect Europe and the Andes. Emerging from this complex discursive formation, a multiplicity of meanings can be uttered through the same word, *at the same time* – yet mostly only some of them get to be heard. Likewise, two ‘similar looking’ persons can claim different identity labels, also at the same time. Inherently heteroglossic in a Bakhtinian sense, my experience as subject and object of mistakes, has reinforced my view that the ascription of identities (as well as the ‘misunderstandings’ such process may provoke) belongs in the sphere of conceptual politics, where the dialogue is endless, as is the power negotiation it implies.

I have no intention, therefore, of correcting ‘foreigners’ mistakes’ from a ‘Peruvian viewpoint’, for this would only imply a futile effort to stop the dialogue. Worse still, this would replicate, albeit from a different subject position, the story of the first two gentlemen – the German traveller and the US economist and Census Director – who did believe they had the authority (maybe even the mission) to set the record straight. Thus, rather than adopting their unitary mode of knowing, and aiming at opening a conceptual space for suppressed meanings to emerge, I turn towards dialogism as epistemological mode to explore the multiple meanings inscribed in the

⁵ Alberto Giesecke, ‘Informe sobre el Censo del Cuzco,’ in *Revista del Universitaria*, vol. 2, no. 14 (1913), pp. 6–11.

⁶ The rest of the article will explain the genealogy and cultural definition of these categories – and the reader will realise why my brown-ness can be considered white or mestizo, but not Indian.

genealogy of the identity label ‘mestizo’, and its related political ideology, *mestizaje*. The fact that in Peru and in Latin America some of these meanings became ‘evident’ while others sound ‘oxymoronic’ has resulted from a conceptual politics, in which ‘definitions’ of racial or ethnic labels are one among a set of tools used to classify, separate and, in so doing, to subordinate a dialogue that, mostly unseen and unheard, stubbornly continues to take place. An analysis of conceptual politics can reveal suppressed meanings and show the self-evident (i.e. the ‘definition’) in a different light, as it exposes the social relations through which it was established, de-naturalises it, and thus allows for legitimate re-signification.

The aim of the article is obviously not to reiterate that the voice mestizo has many meanings – that has been repeatedly stated.⁷ Rather, I explore the historical circumstances that have allowed for the evidence of some of its meanings, while concealing others that circulate either marginally or cloaked under dominant meanings. Ultimately, as will be clear as the argument unfolds, I want to rescue mestizos from *mestizaje* – and thus challenge the conceptual politics (and the political activism) that all too simplistically, following a transitional teleology, purify mestizos *away* from indigeneity.⁸

The claim that will run through this article is that mestizos can not be contained by the notion of *empirical hybrids*, a plain result of the biological or cultural ‘mixture’ of two (formerly discrete) entities. Rather, they evoke a complex *conceptual hybridity* epistemologically inscribed in the notion mestizo itself. This is not as difficult as it sounds. The voice mestizo has a long genealogy that starts, roughly, in the sixteenth century and emerges in the present. It is a conceptual hybrid for – connected to such genealogy – it houses social taxonomies embedded in different forms of consciousness and regimes of knowledge. Among these, the two most obvious Western ones are ‘Holy faith’ – later known as religion – and ‘scientific reason’. Holy faith arrived in the ‘New World’ with the Conquistadores, and met Enlightened reason in the last decades of Spanish control of the Americas. Ever since they have intertwined to organise a classificatory order that expresses itself through modern idioms of civilisation and progress (race, class, culture, sexuality, ethnicity, geography, education and so forth), and which continues to house colonial faith-based taxonomic moralities and feelings even in our global, neo-liberal era. From this viewpoint ‘mestizo’ articulates a complexity that exceeds a dictionary-like rendition as ‘racially/culturally mixed’. Emerging from an epistemologically hybrid lineage, ‘mestizo’ (and its later

⁷ See, for example, Charles R. Hale, ‘*Mestizaje*, Hybridity, and the Cultural Politics of Difference in Post-revolutionary Latin America,’ *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1996), pp. 34–61.

⁸ See Marisol de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos. The Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco Peru, 1919–1991* (Durham, NC, 2000).

extension ‘*mestizaje*’) respond to pre-Enlightenment orders of difference while they also accommodate nineteenth-century notions of ‘hybridity’ that describe the organic mixture of (two or more) discrete entities. As with a genealogy, the earlier manifold faith-based features imputed to ‘mestizos’ were not simply displaced by notions of ‘racial mixture’ dictated by rational science. Instead, through a dynamic of ‘rupture’ and ‘reinscription’⁹ emerging from the previous faith-based taxonomies, ‘mestizo’ acquired new scientific racial meanings without necessarily shedding the old ones. Hence mestizo and *mestizaje* house several hybridities. We are used to its empirical version: the scientific observation of ‘mixture’ in mestizo’s bodies, cultures, races, and so forth. More inconspicuous is the hybridity inscribed in the discursive formation of *mestizaje* – and thus in the ways Latin Americans *think* about mestizos and *mestizaje*, and about race for that same matter. Genealogically instilled in racial thought itself, awareness of this conceptual hybridity may cancel, or at least destabilise, the latent purity that, as Robert Young has warned us, empirically defined hybridity seemingly continues to repeat.¹⁰

A theoretical-methodological caveat is in order. This article is rather chronologically organised, and my stated goal is to investigate the historically layered and multiple meanings of ‘mestizo’ and ‘*mestizaje*’. Yet I am not looking for traits of the past in the present, nor intending to prove their active and pristine currency. Neither am I presenting a historical periodisation. Instead, I use a genealogical perspective to disrupt directional histories and to seek for continuities through interruptions: new ideas break up previous ones, and become part of them, even if in so doing they switch into something different, while claiming the same name. I want to depict the current prevalence of mestizos’ ‘many beginnings’, their constant emergence from (alleged) oxymoronic situations: faith meshing with reason, ideologies of progress with authenticity, difference with sameness, disorder with order. In order to achieve historical and ethnographic depth the notions and characters that I discuss here emerge, perhaps in eclectic fashion, from texts (dating from colonial, post-colonial and the neo-liberal eras) and from fieldwork situations.

The conceptual lineage of mestizos:

Garcilaso de la Vega: We, the sons of Spanish man and Indian woman, or an Indian man and Spanish woman, are called mestizos, meaning we are mixtures of both nations. This name was imposed on us by the first Spaniards who had children of Indian women and because it is a name imposed on us by our fathers and because of

⁹ Ann Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC, 1996), p. 61.

¹⁰ Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 52.

its meaning I call myself thus clear and plain (*a boca llena*), and I am honoured by it. *Cuzco, 1609*¹¹

Guamán Poma de Ayala: The *caciques principales* who married their daughters to Indian *mitayos* lose their honour and primacy as cacique principal of this kingdom. [...] The man, by marrying a mitaya Indian, is mestizo, as are his children and descendants. *Ayacucho, ca.1615*¹²

‘Mestizo’ is an early colonial label. In the above quote, Garcilaso de la Vega (born in Cuzco in 1539, shortly after Francisco Pizarro arrived in the Andes) provided one of its meanings: mestizos resulted from the mixing (*mezcla*) of Indians and Spaniards. Some years later, Guamán Poma (another elite colonial chronicler, also bilingual in Spanish and Quechua, self identified as Andean) stated that (non-tributary) Indian caciques who married tributary Indian women, became *themselves* mestizos, even as they were racially pure in nineteenth-century terms. By introducing this section with these two definitions, I want to draw attention to the variety of connotations of the colonial category ‘mestizo’, highlighting its semantic instability. Its meaning shifted, not only through the colonial period – but also from one person to another, within the Spanish administration, and among indigenous intellectuals and laypeople.

There is a general, and mostly implicit, tendency among academics to identify the notion ‘mestizo’ with the nineteenth-century notion of ‘hybridity’, and thus translate it as the mixture of two (sometimes more) formerly different identities.¹³ Similarly, we tend to match our definition of mestizo with that of Garcilaso de la Vega and, engrossed by nineteenth-century hybridity, impute to his utterance of ‘mestizo’ the categorical meaning of cultural or biological mixture. Yet, biological or cultural hybridity does not exhaust the semantic field of mestizo even if only because neither

¹¹ Garcilaso de la Vega, *Comentarios Reales de los Incas* (Lima, 1991) vol. 2, p. 627.

¹² Don Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (Mexico, 1980), p. 734.

¹³ And this happens even as we are aware of the complex historicity of colonial identity labels. Thus, for example, in a recent excellent and erudite article, Stuart B. Schwartz and Frank Salomon cite the chronicler Bernabé Cobo’s 1653 description of ‘El Cercado’, an Indian neighbourhood in Lima: ‘its residents ... are so hispanicised that all of them, both men and women, understand and talk our language, and in their bodily grooming and the ornamentation of their houses they seem Spanish.’ Evidence of their ‘culturally mixed’ behaviour seduced these contemporary authors to label these Indians ‘intra-indigenous mestizos.’ Yet Bernabé Cobo, writing in the seventeenth century, did not call these individuals mestizos even as he remarked their Spanish ways. They were Indians because, among other things, they lived where they had to live, in an Indian enclosure. S. Schwartz and F. Salomón, ‘South American Indigenous Societies (Colonial Era),’ in Stuart Schwartz and Frank Salomon (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, vol. III, part 2 (Cambridge, 1999). They quote from Bernabé Cobo, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo [1653]* (Madrid, 1964), vol. 2, pp. 352–5.

‘biology’ or ‘culture’ were what early colonial writers – indigenous or Spanish – had in mind when they identified mestizos. These notions had yet to become the conceptual fields that enabled (and were enabled by) modern ideas of hybridity, miscegenation or *mestizaje*. The ‘mixture’ that the label mestizo implied, then, might have meant something different.

As many authors explain,¹⁴ early colonial classificatory orders rested on ‘purity of blood’ (*limpieza de sangre*) a faith-based social principle that discriminated against those that it identified as pagans ranking pure Christian lineages higher than lineages stained by *conversos* (baptised Jews, Muslims or Indians). Although further research is necessary on the social formation that *limpieza de sangre* organised in the Spanish colonies, it is apparent that colonial politics of purity were not intolerant of ‘mixture’, as we now know it. They allowed (and even stimulated) some combinations (like, for example, marriages between Inka noble women and Conquistadores) while penalising others. Similarly, not all individuals who we now call ‘mixed’ were, at the time, labelled mestizos. They could be considered Spanish, Criollos, Indians, and up to the eighteenth century, even Inka (a member of the indigenous noble lineage and hence, different from indigenous commoners, the Indians). Moreover, ‘purity’ was not always a symbol of superiority, probably because ‘lineage’ was not something that everybody possessed. ‘Mixed’ people like Garcilaso, who belonged to Inka lineages, ranked higher than the purest, yet lineage-less, Indian, and I am not convinced that any of the latter would have called Garcilaso a mestizo. More of a principle than a rule, ‘purity’ seems to have been a moral measure articulated through the classificatory languages of *calidad*, *clase* and *honor*. Such languages ranked individuals according to ancestral faith and current occupation, dwelling place, social relations, and, as said by a seventeenth-century author, even the breast milk they had suckled as infants: ‘He who suckled liar’s milk, lies, and drunkard’s milk, drinks’.¹⁵ In this context, classificatory practices derived from information on an individual’s ancestral and personal social relations. Since the latter could change with the circumstances, labels could change too, and individuals

¹⁴ Verena Stolcke, ‘Talking Culture. New Boundaries, New Rhetoric of Exclusion in Europe,’ *Current Anthropology*, 36 (1), pp. 1–24; Peter Gose, ‘The Inquisitional Construction of Race: *Limpeza de Sangre* and Racial Slurs in 17th-Century Lima,’ Paper presented at the American Anthropology Association, San Francisco 1996; Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination. Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660–1720* (Madison, 1994); Schwartz and Salomon, *New Peoples*; José Antonio Del Busto, ‘La primera generación mestiza del Perú y una causa de su mal renombre,’ *Revista Histórica*, Tomo XXVIII, (Lima, 1965), pp. 15–32; Kathryn Burns, *Colonial Habits: Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco, Peru* (Durham, NC, 1999).

¹⁵ Cited in Schwartz and Salomon, *New Peoples*, p. 478. ‘*Tener mala leche*’ (to be mean, and deceptive) or ‘*qué buena leche*’ (to be lucky), current expressions in Latin America, belong in this genealogy.

could boast several through their lifetime or simultaneously.¹⁶ Thus, neither labels nor identities emerged from the *sight of bodies alone*; vision did not suffice to classify individuals if isolated from further information (for example, a person's ancestry, as defined by his/her parents' 'origin', i.e. their place of birth and occupation) and 'skin colour' classified religious faith (rather than biologically defined phenotype), and even then it was not necessarily a dominant factor in such classification.¹⁷

Different from *castizo* – from the Spanish *casto*, meaning chaste and therefore originally clean, properly placed, and morally apt – mestizos did connote 'mixture' and 'impurity'. Yet, what mestizos 'mixed' that brought the label upon them was not premised upon their individual bodies. Colonial feelings against mestizos represented more than concerns with their bodily or cultural mixture; they were a reaction against the disorder and political unrest associated with them as a social group. Etymologically, 'mestizo' derives from the Latin *mecere*, to move, to agitate and to mix by agitating – hence its reference to disturbing the social order by mixing, or intermingling with individuals outside of one's categorical status.¹⁸ It has already been argued that mestizos denoted 'nonplacement within the legitimate set' and represented 'a challenge to categorization'.¹⁹ I want here to emphasise that birth as an individual of mixed-blood (like Garcilaso) was not the only or the most disturbing origin of mestizos. Such labels could also reflect a change in status, for it could result from the political decision of an individual (or group) to transgress colonial order and classifications. In Guaman Poma's quote, Indian male transgressor of caste boundaries (via marriage) deserved identification as mestizo himself, not only his progeny. Comparably, Carmen Bernand has stated that in medieval Spain, Christians who preferred to ally themselves with Muslims against King Rodrigo (thus refusing the purity of blood that allegiance to the king granted) were labelled

¹⁶ Karen Graubart, '*Con nuestro trabajo y sudor*: indigenous women and the construction of colonial society in 16th and 17th century Peru,' unpublished PhD diss., University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 2000; Burns, *Colonial Habits*. Similarly, proper bodily appearance resulted also from dress and hairstyle, cleanliness and posture, rather than only from physical diacritics. 'Blackness' seems to have a more complicated field of signification, as it marked Africans – as slaves and as closer to the natural kingdom – as drastically different from the rest of the population.

¹⁷ Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity. A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World* (New Jersey, 1997).

¹⁸ Joan Corominas, *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico* (Madrid, 1980), p. 315

¹⁹ Schwartz and Salomon, *New Peoples*, p. 478. As feminist historians have stated, in the early colonial years the idiom mestizo connoted illegitimacy of birth and unknown origin, María Emma Manarelli, 'Las relaciones de género en la sociedad colonial peruana. Ilegitimidad y jerarquías sociales,' in María del Carmen Feijoo (ed.), *Mujer y sociedad en América Latina* (Buenos Aires, 1991), pp. 63–107; Burns, *Colonial Habits*.

mistos.²⁰ It is not far-fetched to suggest that classification of an individual as mestizo repeated the idea of a deliberate transgression of the political order.

Under such light the stigma attached to mestizos becomes more complex. Seen as promiscuous ‘mixers’, agitators of the hierarchies authorised by the Christian king, mestizos were ‘souls lost to God’, ‘*perros mestizos*’ (mestizo dogs)²¹ closer to the animal kingdom than to humans; they were stained by immoral *political* misplacement. Countering the dominant politics, mestizos seem to have endowed the label with an empowering connotation, one that implied an *active refusal* of the honour of purity of blood in exchange of, for example, freedom of tributary status and ubiquity in the colonial territory – all prerogatives that they might not have enjoyed as Indians. Thus while mestizos’ dishonour was expressed as ‘impurity of blood’, this idiom did not originally refer to a capillary system carrying degenerative biological traits, but to the unruly *political* position that the group represented vis-à-vis the colonial administration. While from a subordinate perspective the social condition as ‘mestizo’ might have been desirable, at this point in history it was not necessarily *superior* to that of being Indian. Certainty about the primacy of the mestizos over Indians was acquired only through the Enlightenment’s notions of evolution and civilisation intertwined in the emerging concept of race and its crucial emphasis on heredity and descent.

But the Enlightenment ‘came second’ as Mignolo has sarcastically suggested in order to highlight the centrality of pre-Enlightenment cognitive orders in Latin American colonialism and post-colonialism.²² The novel politics of race both accommodated to and modified pre-existing regionally idiosyncratic orders, and as local officials and commoners learned new scientific classificatory languages, they translated them to pre-existing faith-based idioms. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – the late colonial period and the years of budding Latin American nations and liberalism respectively – the order organised by ‘blood cleanliness’ and its cognates, as well as the labels attached to them assimilated new meanings, as people and the new states (through their own people) interacted in a national and international system that was being re-arranged around the increasingly pervasive order of scientific race, and racism. Worldwide this order included culture, biology, language, geography, religion, nationality, as well as the continued effort to pull these features apart, and thus to purify ‘race’ – human bodies now conceived as scientifically discernable by biology – from

²⁰ Carmen Bernand, ‘Mestizos, mulatos y ladinos en Hispanoamérica: un enfoque antropológico y un proceso histórico,’ unpubl. ms., 1997, quoted in Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind. The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization* (New York and London, 2002), p. 211.

²¹ Schwartz and Salomon, *New Peoples*, p. 481.

²² Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking* (New Jersey, 2000).

what it was not any more: people defined by faith. Yet the purifying pull did not stop the proliferation of hybrid notions of race, for the new scientific taxonomies continued to evoke language, faith and morality.²³

This is not new – the hybridity of race was not particular to Latin America. David Goldberg makes the explicit point that ‘[race] assumes its significance (in both senses) in terms of prevailing social and epistemological conditions of the time, yet simultaneously bearing with it sedimentary traces of past significations’.²⁴ In related – but somewhat different – fashion, various authors note that early efforts to define race were marked by the tension between ‘biology’ and ‘culture’.²⁵ However, the conceptual politics of race were not identical everywhere. This means that the dynamics between the hybridity of race (its emergence from different regimes of knowledge) and the pull to purify the notion – i.e. negotiate its significance through faith or reason – varied according to specific political-national *formations*. More importantly, the hybridity of race in Latin America did not only comprise the mixture of two nineteenth century concepts, i.e. biology and culture, both belonging to the same regime of knowledge. Oxymoronically to some, race in Latin America was and is an epistemological hybrid: it harboured two regimes of knowledge, faith and science, both of them politically prevalent and promoted by the state. This hybrid genealogy shaped structures of feelings, enabling a conceptual politics where the pull to define race tilted

²³ Bruno Latour has suggested that the modern constitution requires two epistemological and political activities. One, which he calls purification, is separation of humans and non-humans. (Non-humans are identified as nature, and humans hierarchically classified according to proximity – or distance – from it). The other, which he calls translation, is the proliferation of hybrids of these two. The trick is that translation (mixture or hybridity) enables purification – there is nothing to separate if things are not mixed. Non-modern constitutions, by contrast, mix human and non-humans and they disregard purification. Most useful for race studies in this proposal is the way in which it disrupts the temporal relation between purity and mixture. Different to the usual (and mostly implicit) viewpoint, according to which mixture follows purity, in Latour’s viewpoint ideas of purity do not precede mixture; enacted through movements of purification and translation, purity is simultaneous with hybridity. Thus we have never been modern, for efforts to purify require the proliferation of hybrids. Historicising Latour’s suggestions, and moving the modern constitution back to the sixteenth century, I see the Latin America racial formation as genealogically underpinned by two purifying movements. One flowed through faith and required the separation of Christians from pagans. The other movement flowed through reason; it required the separation between nature/biology and culture/history. Both ‘purifying movements’ required all sorts of hybrids – including the mixture of purifying forms of knowledge and of the categories they created. The genealogical hybridity that I am talking about here is thus multilayered, and stretches both vertically (mixing ‘past’ and ‘present’ ways of knowing) and horizontally (mixing the categories these forms of knowing separate). Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, 1993).

²⁴ David Goldberg, *Racist Culture. Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Oxford, 1993), p. 81.

²⁵ Georges Stocking, ‘The Turn-of-the-Century Concept of Race,’ in *Modernism/Modernity*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1994), pp. 4–16; Stoler, *Race and the Education*.

towards culture and was coloured by an active and highly influential tendency to reject – at the very least question– the idea that biology conditioned, let alone determined, races.²⁶

Epistemological hybridity materialised everyday, from street life to the privacy of households, and to state policies. If the population could be morally purified, how could race be purged from culture to become biology alone? Moreover, why would it? Genealogically underpinned by colonial faith-based knowledges, the scientific definitions of race in Peru (perhaps Latin America as a whole) became apparent through law, history and archaeology, and were promoted through the study of civilisations. Moreover, as the United States developed a quasi-colonialist experience in the Philippines, the Caribbean and Central America, culturalist definitions of race may have represented a strategic geo-political conceptual position allowing for a rebuttal of the biologising notions that subordinated Latin American regimes, as well as for the continuation of morally conceived colonial taxonomies, the purities they had sustained, and the mixtures they had tolerated.

Purity of blood sifted through the new racial classifications, selectively skirting skin colour to underpin *decencia*, a classificatory practice which Douglas Cope finds at work in Mexico City as early as the seventeenth century, and which, under the light of the new sciences became a class practice according to which an individual's racial-moral standing was evaluated through his/her imagined sexual behaviour, rather than religious ancestry.²⁷ Mestizos started where the moral-sexual mores of *decencia* ended, and the threat of degeneration loomed over them – yet not upon the elites, no matter how brown their skin was and how biologically mixed they were. Von Tschudi disagreed with local interpretations because he ignored the fact that mestizos' were not identified by their phenotype, but by their moral defects. These caused the darkness of their looks, which they could even share with the elites without, however, sharing their immorality. Biological hybridity was not the exclusive component of the Latin American definition of mestizos; the dangers they embodied were imprinted in their souls. Formulated through historical sciences (archaeology, geography and law), genealogically hybrid notions of race emerged in the conceptual language provided by 'culture' and in tension with 'biology', to re-inscribe past moral orders of difference in the emerging sexualised racial morality of *decencia*. Similarly, faith and reason also meshed to promote a solution: education, the

²⁶ The concept 'structure of feelings' comes from Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, (London: 1977). I want to make it very clear that I am not opposing 'culture' to 'race' and thus identifying 'race' with 'biology', or simply identifying 'faith' with 'culture'.

²⁷ Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination. Plebeian Society in Mexico City, 1660–1720* (Madison, 1994), pp. 22–4. For a detailed analysis of *decencia*, see Marisol de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*.

quintessential technology of the soul, could cure the moral decrepitude of mestizos, and even transform Indians into evolved Peruvians.

Mestizaje(s) and education: a dialogue about 'making live and letting die'

Emerging in the nineteenth century, racial science enabled Western states to control hierarchically organised masses of living humans. Michel Foucault has conceptualised this as bio-power, and described it as the states' authorities to 'make live and let die' a racialised form of power aimed at optimising life.²⁸ Bio-power involved the invention of specific vocabularies, tools and institutions (statistics, health, hygiene, populations, morbidity, mortality, birth and death records, hospitals and clinics) ancillary to the science of medicine, the bio-political discipline par excellence, but not the only one.

Worldwide, projects to build and optimise national life were strongly swayed by the belief that peoples were susceptible of being manipulated, improved, and 'civilised' through education. In Peru, 'education' was a partner of medicine, pervaded by its vocabulary, and engrossed by its disciplinary might 'to make live'. The education of 'retarded populations' was perceived – literally – as a matter of life, as in the opinion of a minister of education in the early twentieth century: 'When a country has, as Peru does, an enormous number of illiterates and such a retarded population, the need to educate them is not only a matter of democracy and justice, but a matter of life.'²⁹ Illiteracy was a burden to a healthy nation; eradicating it was necessary, and since Indians were the quintessential illiterate population, they were the target of education. If 'creating national cultures' – making them live – was the explicit mission of the Peruvian state's politics of life (bio power), its implicit task was to let indigenous cultures die.

In Peru, with 'race' tilting towards 'culture', bio-power had a conspicuous culturalist inflection which, rather than biologically conceived bodies, aimed at modifying racial souls: 'educational disciplines can combat and modify inherited dispositions, because education is the true hygiene that purifies the soul'.³⁰ The capacity assigned to education of building a healthy nation by purifying deviant souls, and uplifting inferior ones, belonged to the genealogy of race: to ancestral purity of blood meshing with reproductive sex, and becoming an inherited blood that, due to geo-political circumstances, needed both to skirt biologically conceived hybridity and to (re)code race as culture. The existence of the nation and the legitimacy of its leaders – which

²⁸ M. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (New York, 1978), and *Genealogía del racismo* (Madrid, 1992).

²⁹ Quoted in Carlos Contreras, 'Maestros, mistis y campesinos en el Perú rural del siglo XX,' Documento de Trabajo No. 80, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, Lima, 1996, p. 13.

³⁰ Humberto Luna, 'Observaciones criminológicas,' unpubl. thesis, Archivo Departamental del Cusco, Libro 12, p. 25.

let us remember, faced Euro-American charges of biological degeneration – required that much. Enabled by culturalist definitions of race, education would legitimise the right of the state to exercise its own racism, its normalising grip – namely, its patriotic call to uplift the populace to modern standards. The right to free education gradually emerged as a right, granted by the state at the turn of the century to all its inhabitants. This alleged right had a very seductive aspect indeed: education was a means to acquire citizenship. Energised by culturalist bio-power, the state set out on its civilising mission and schools were built in remote areas and equipped with the necessary tools.

Thus, in 1907, a huge ultramarine shipment arrived in the remote province of Cangallo (Ayacucho), which as in García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* promised to revolutionise the future. A long mule-train deposited in a far away Andean village: 750 individual writing boards, 60 pencils, 6,000 copybooks, 45 boxes of pens, 3,000 first grade books and 175 for the second grade, 41 boxes containing chalks, and 4 whistles for the teachers, all imports from Hachette, in Paris.³¹

The budget of the Ministry of Justice, Belief, Instruction and Welfare, then in charge of disseminating education across the country, increased 16.5 times between 1900 and 1929. The funds continued growing, and in 1936 the eloquently hybrid Ministry of Education and Health was created and assigned 10 per cent of the national budget. It would reach a peak of 30 per cent in 1966. Identified as essentially Peruvian but also as retrograde rural dwellers, Indians and mestizos were the target of education projects intended to civilise the countryside and improve their lives by incorporating them into the national community.

In 1950 the Ministry of Education published 'Pedro', allegedly an adult literacy book. Local wisdom, trained in the hybrid genealogy of race, would easily recognise Pedro as an *indio*, an Indian man – albeit colourless and with blurred phenotype. He is represented as a peasant, living in the highlands, wearing woollen hand-woven clothes, and rubber sandals called *ojotas* – all attributes easily identifiable as 'typically Indian' throughout the country. Married to an unnamed indigenous woman (also identified by her clothes, occupation as agriculturalist, dwelling place and long braids), they have two children, a boy named Pancho, and a girl, whose name (we learn at the end of the book) is Julia. The book opens with a map of Peru, and inscribed in it, an invitation-assertion of Pedro's Peruvianness:

Pedro, you are Peruvian because you have been born in this wonderful land. [...] You live in Peru with your family. Your plots and your herds are in Peru. Peru is your Patria – your Fatherland.³²

³¹ Carlos Contreras, 'Maestros, mistis y campesinos'.

³² Ministerio de Educación Pública, *Pedro* (Lima, 1950), p. 2.

In the first pages, the readers – Pedro, and all Indians like him – are presented with the backwardness, difficulties, poverty, and discomfort of their traditional material life. They are nice, hard-working people, yet they live in misery, they are told. They lack education. As the reading progresses, Pedro learns, and gradually everything improves. What does Pedro learn? ‘Everything is possible’, he is told, including abundant water, high yields, fatter cattle and his family’s happiness, and education is the ‘principal means’ to achieve it all. In order to do that Pedro – and all the Indians like him – have to make a pact with the state: if they build schools, the state will bring development and progress will spill from classrooms to the region. As a result there will emerge a new rural town inhabited by spotless, well-nourished people working in workshops and large farms, attending churches, and building their healthy bodies in sport courts. The town will also be home to technicians, Indians are told, who will teach them everything they need to improve their production. Gradually, they will become members of agricultural cooperatives – and improve their agricultural technological knowledge.

The surprise comes at the end: Pedro’s children have undergone cultural changes that effect visible bodily transformations. Neatly combed, Julia has got rid of her braids, and Pancho does not wear his *chullo* anymore, and wearing industrial cotton clothes they make their way to school. Pedro’s children are not Indians any more – they are Peruvians. This promise has not been channelled through some programme of matrimonial/reproductive eugenics but through a ‘*programa de desarrollo integral*’ with education as its crucial component.³³ With this evolutionary tale ending happily, Pancho and his sister Julia have been transformed into mestizos, the category that awaited improved Indians. Plainly, ‘Pedro’ was not the simple literacy book that its title announced. Rather, it represented the state’s call upon Indians, its offer to make them modern Peruvians by educating them. This was not unique to Peru, nor was it recent. Since the turn of the century, politicians around the world had been lured by images of civilisation that linked education to progress. In those Latin American countries in which Indians were a main concern for rulers – for example, Mexico, Guatemala and the Andean countries – ideas about uplifting through education overlapped with an intellectual movement called *indigenismo*. A regional intellectual formation that rooted the nation in the pre Hispanic past, *indigenismo* encouraged an intense

³³ ‘*Integral*’ referred to the idea that, because it had to flow through culture, ‘indigenous development’ should consider the interrelatedness of aspects of life otherwise disconnected from each other in modern cultures. For a view associated with the reform of the 1970s see Augusto Salazar Bondy, ‘El problema del indio: estudio de Luis E. Valcárcel. El proceso de la instrucción pública,’ p. 42, in *Presencia y proyección de los siete ensayos* (Lima, 1980), pp. 38–50.

discussion known as *mestizaje*. *Indigenistas* agreed that their desire to civilise Indians could be achieved through education. But should this mean their conversion into mestizos? Answers to this question were never settled, and uncertainty continues to be at the crux of *mestizaje* proposals, which were set in motion by nationalist projects of Latin American elites, implementing culturalist bio-power state policies. Manuel Gamio, an influential Mexican anthropologist and leading *indigenista*, was a trendsetter among *mestizaje* champions: national programmes for indigenous education would wipe away the vices and cultural deficiencies of Indians – ritual alcoholism, lack of hygiene and ‘superstitions’.³⁴ This would transform Indians into mestizos, and smooth the path to progress, which Gamio considered a right for Indians. Sharing in similar beliefs, the Nicaraguan César Augusto Sandino, when interviewed by a Spanish journalist in the midst of his struggle against the US marines, disclosed his egalitarian desire, of making ‘real men out Indians’ by schooling them.³⁵ Luis Eduardo Valcárcel, probably the most influential Peruvian *indigenista*, shared Sandino’s redemptive patriarchal wish. Education, he believed, would transform miserable Indians into ‘free men, who face you eye to eye, with their heads held high, ready with a friendly handshake of equals’.³⁶ Unlike Sandino however, Luis Eduardo Valcárcel was a recalcitrant opponent of *mestizaje*, and a prolific contributor to the dialogue. Highly influential, his purist *indigenismo* peppered the inconclusive debates on the topic in Peru.

As a discursive formation comprised both by the assertion and the denial of its re-generative, nation-building potential, *mestizaje* is best characterised as a multi-layered and open-ended political discussion articulated across a thick intertextual network comprised of literary and scientific texts, political and artistic events, murals and paintings, museums and state policies. The following statements are illustrative of the intense disagreement that characterised *mestizaje* as a political dialogue. They are both taken from the same publication, *Tempestad en los Andes*, Valcárcel’s anti-mestizo manifesto, with a comment by Luis Alberto Sánchez, a literary writer and a politician heavily influenced by continental champions of *mestizaje*.

Luis Eduardo Valcárcel: The race of El Cid and don Pelayo mixes its blood with the blood of America. The tranquil possession of the Indian woman succeeds the violence of the assaults of the (*lúbricos*) invaders. The two cultures have mixed. A new hybrid being is born from the womb of America: it does not inherit the

³⁴ Guillermo de la Peña, ‘Mexican Anthropology and the Debate on Indigenous Rights,’ Paper presented at the *American Anthropology Association*, San Francisco 2000.

³⁵ Jeffrey Gould, *To Die in this Way: Nicaraguan Indians and the Myth of Mestizaje, 1880–1965* (Durham, NC, 1998).

³⁶ Luis E. Valcárcel, *Tempestad en los Andes* (Lima, 1978 [1927]), p. 30.

ancestral virtues but rather the vices and defects. *The mestizaje of cultures produces but deformities*.³⁷

And the second replied:

Luis Alberto Sánchez: '[T]he *mestizaje of cultures produces but deformities*', rallying cry, passionate improvisation that escapes from Valcárcel in his noble wish to empower the Indian and give back the situation that he claims. One can see that it is a vehement saying. The same 'new Indians' that he paints for us reveal the trickery of mestizos apart from Indian shrewdness [...] there is no better human product than the mestizo. Ricardo Rojas (*Eurindia*) and José Vasconcelos in Mexico (*Indología*) make evident the necessity of *mestizaje* in America. *Lima, 1927*³⁸

This debate was never resolved, and *mestizaje* has continued to be endlessly produced through its assertion and denial. Depictions of mestizos as evolved Indians and as potential degenerates had supporters and detractors. As in the first quote, those that opposed *mestizaje* described it as a pathological condition, a deforming racial-cultural option; those that embraced it, like Luis Alberto Sánchez, declared mestizos 'the best product of humanity'. Inconspicuous to the non-genealogical eye, either embracing or rejecting *mestizaje*, both projects are underpinned by scientific and faith-oriented beliefs. In each, the mestizo is the racially mixed individual, as well as the transgressive colonial character that refuses purification – a commuter between city and countryside, relatively bilingual and somewhat literate, a rascally Indian who eludes the clear classifications required by both modern science and colonial administration.

'Pedro', the state alternative for indigenous Peruvianness, was also a bid to make mestizos out of Indians. Promoted in the 1950s, 'Pedro' was a proposal for an 'integral development project' harbouring the belief that to succeed, rural modernisation had to touch the cultural nerve of the indigenous population and connect it with the economic and physical aspects of 'development'. Education projects led by the state could do this job, and 'Pedro' was part of this effort. Paradoxically, it was modelled on a proposal for rural schools produced by the anti-mestizo champion, Luis E. Valcárcel.

The year 1945 was important worldwide, marking as it did the end of World War Two, anti-colonial insurgence and the installation of the development era under the leadership of the United States and President Truman. That same year, the Peruvian and the Bolivian states signed an official agreement to coordinate their efforts towards indigenous education. The Peruvian representative was Luis Eduardo Valcárcel, recently appointed minister of education. Openly rejecting what he saw as the efforts of the

³⁷ Luis E. Valcárcel, *Tempestad* p. 10.

³⁸ Luis Alberto Sánchez, *Epílogo* p. 98 in Luis E. Valcárcel, *Tempestad*.

Mexican project to ‘assimilate’ the indigenous population into a homogeneous national mestizo identity, the Bolivian-Peruvian agreement imagined the nation as ‘the vital accord and active coordination among dissimilar groups – rather than the sum of homogeneous units’. The Bolivian and Peruvian states would seek to achieve such coordination through programmes for indigenous education. An important goal of the programme was to preserve Andean culture, a fundamental right of indigenous peasants, which, according to Valcárcel, was a precondition for their successful participation in ‘national life’. This pronouncement can be interpreted as a precursor of some trends of multiculturalism: ‘The conservation of the cultural personality of indigenous groups does not mean their fatal exclusion and segregation of national life; on the contrary, it means, their inclusion in it, without renouncing to such personality.’³⁹ However, preserving Andean culture did not mean leaving it unaffected by modernisation. Rather, improving standards of living in the countryside in an effort to contain indigenous migration to the cities would prevent the alteration of Andean essence for the ‘Peruvian man (sic) has been above all an agriculturalist since its remote history, and will have to continue as such to a large extent.’⁴⁰

Using the slogan of ‘unity within diversity’ to promote his pioneering multiculturalism Valcárcel’s political goal was to prevent the formation of mestizos. He defined these as demoralised indigenous peasants, misplaced – and unemployed – in the city, deformed by the resentment provoked by their incapacity to participate in Western culture. Valcárcel believed ‘An incorporated man is a slave’,⁴¹ and mestizos were such. They were ex-Indians, de-essentialised and deformed by urban livelihood, enslaved in it. To prevent indigenous degeneration in the cities, the programme would bring civilisation to the countryside, where peasants would be able to choose what was held to be more convenient to their improvement. To implement a rural development respectful of Andean culture, the ministry of education would support the training of indigenous teachers, spiritual rehabilitators of the Indian soul. In his *indigenista* manifesto *Tempestad en los Andes*, Valcárcel had written: ‘The Indian teacher knows what to teach to the offspring of his race, and whatever he teaches, he does with love, with the ideal of rehabilitation in mind. [...] Like a drill, the voice of this teacher penetrates into the depth of those souls, and shakes up the spiritual underground of these men who have forgotten who they are. The new school is the nursery where the seedlings of the resurrected race can grow.’⁴² When, twenty years later, as minister of education, he had the opportunity to transform his beliefs into state policies he declared in Congress,

³⁹ Luis E. Valcárcel, *La educación del campesino* (Lima, 1954), p. 10.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴² Valcárcel, *Tempestad en los Andes*, p. 89.

The teacher is a friend who, belonging to the indigenous community, will show the advantages of certain knowledges and practices that are better than their own. Science and technology is the key to the big door that will communicate the modern world and the Andean world.⁴³

Trained in scientific knowledge, and yet innate possessors of the agricultural essence of Andean Culture, indigenous teachers could naturally distinguish right from wrong for their kin, and thus modernise indigenous communities without altering their bucolic spirit.⁴⁴

Inaugurating the development era in Peru, Valcárcel's proposal for a rural school system, which he named *núcleos escolares rurales*, was unanimously accepted despite his anti-mestizo stance. Proposing a spatial organisation modelled on the solar system, the rural schools would radiate progress. The system of *núcleos escolares* consisted of single-classroom elementary schools (the planets, located in indigenous communities) around a central multi-classroom agricultural school (the sun-like centre of the system) located in a larger rural town. In the minister's words:

A central school or Nucleus, and around it ten, fifteen, twenty minimal or one-classroom schools will receive the light, the vigilance, and the attention of the nuclear one. In addition to the teacher, the latter will also house, a health expert, an agricultural technician, and a social worker.

Connected by a road to the planet-like schools, and housing a collective educational farm the central school would provide indigenous communities with technical assistance and health education – in sum with modernisation and a dynamic commercial circuit. Articulated into this system, the single-classroom school would represent 'the micro atomic energy that will transform Peru'.⁴⁵

Through rural schools, and using the students as its entry point, the state would reach indigenous households, and thus penetrate the countryside to its core, and effectively change it, while respecting its racial-cultural agricultural roots. Consequently, in rural schools reading, writing and arithmetic would be offered in Quechua, the indigenous language, and, moreover, literacy would follow (rather than precede) agricultural training. 'The school and the State should be especially careful [with the indigenous population]: nothing should hurt its spirit strangling it compulsively. Teaching should start in the Indian language.'⁴⁶ Some of these ideas are included in 'Pedro' – yet the book represents the defeat of purist *indigenismo*.

⁴³ Luis E. Valcárcel, *Historia del Perú antiguo* (Lima, 1946), p. 1304.

⁴⁴ Non-Indian teachers would fail – they were abusive mestizos, whose contempt for Indians prevented them from being real educators; Valcárcel and his team had witnessed this. José Antonio Encinas, *Un ensayo de escuela nueva en el Perú* (Lima, 1932).

⁴⁵ Valcárcel, *Historia del Perú antiguo*, p. 1306. ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1304.

Purist *indigenismo*, albeit contemptuous of *mestizaje*, offered an education system that champions of *mestizaje* were glad to accept. Both groups aimed at containing the ‘Andean population’ in the countryside and *núcleos escolares comunales* promised that possibility, as well as the modernisation of rural areas. These schools were an official population-making project that used literacy, language, clothing, and agricultural technology to shape indigenous life and develop the countryside, allegedly the essential dwelling place of Indians, in turn racially defined as agriculturalists. The model of *núcleos escolares* finally faded in the 1960s.⁴⁷ Yet, its guiding belief – that culturally sensitive educational approaches were crucial for the successful modernisation of densely indigenous areas – survived successive official developmental models, even if often as mere lip service.⁴⁸ These projects similarly repeated the inveterate notion that education would improve Indians, whose main difference with non-Indians, it was stated, was cultural rather than physical.⁴⁹ Through this rhetoric, purist *indigenismo* continued to colour the implementation of ‘development projects’ even as these were clearly determined to transform Indians into mestizos. As in the early twentieth century, education remained a widely used nation-building tool – able to ‘change the Peruvian mentality’ as under the reform implemented by the left-oriented military rulers who governed Peru from 1968 to 1976.⁵⁰

The reform made Quechua a national official language along with Spanish, and implemented programmes for indigenous bilingual education, thus drawing from Valcárcel’s pro-Quechua stance, albeit in a somewhat different version.

Indigenous oxymoronic hybridities: a response to culturalist bio-power

The statements that follow depict some results of the state efforts ‘to educate Indians’. The author was a US journalist – Norman Gall – who travelled throughout the Andes in the 1970s to report on the educational reform.

In Mallma, the school is located to the east of Hacienda Lauramarca, on a dirt road that cuts the desolate mountains of Cuzco, and gradually descends [to the

⁴⁷ Tracy Devine, ‘Legacies of the Indianist Imagination and the Failure of Indigenist politics: “Indians,” “Intellectuals,” and “Education” in Peru and Brazil, 1910–2000,’ unpubl. PhD. Thesis, Duke University 2001. Jorge Basadre, the author of the most widely known official history of Peru, who was minister of education before and after Valcárcel, reported that while the project had started in 1946 with 16 *núcleos* and 176 schools, in 1956 the project encompassed 45 *núcleos* and 490 schools. See Jorge Basadre, *Historia de la República del Perú* (Lima, 1964–1966) According to Luis Eduardo Valcárcel, there were more than 1,500 of these schools in the 1960s. See L. E. Valcárcel, *Memorias* (Lima, 1981).

⁴⁸ Valcárcel, *Memorias*, p. 349. ⁴⁹ Valcárcel, *La educación del campesino* (Lima, 1954), p. 11.

⁵⁰ *Diario Expreso*, 28 February 1971. The *Reforma Educativa* was conceived as a complement to the Agrarian Reform that the same military group implemented, and that was the most radical among similar measures in Latin America.

Eastern lowlands] to Puerto Maldonado [an Amazonian city] located two days away. The school, a flimsy adobe structure whitened with chalk, with two small windows and a thatched roof, is at the bottom of the T'ink'i Valley; the river descends through a grey-green landscape made of grass and iced stones that starts in the white foothills of the Ausangate, an almost 7,000 metre high mountain, the spiritual and ecological lord of Lauramarca. According to the people who live there, the white mountain is a god that has abandoned his people. This feeling of abandonment runs across the population of Lauramarca, a hacienda transitioning from its usual traditional productive processes to an incipient and maybe already stalled modernisation.

The founder of the school of Mallma is Constantino Condori Mandora, an 86-year-old Indian, who wears a goat leather hat and a raggedy brown poncho when he hikes between his adobe hut and the school, two landmarks around which the Mallma peasants have built their houses in the last years. The old man walks with difficulty, and has the eyes covered by a glaucoma that has almost blinded him. When I asked Don Constantino why the people in Mallma sacrificed themselves in order to send their children to school, he explained: 'We want them to learn a few Spanish words. We do not want our children to be illiterate like we are, or that they suffer like we do because of our ignorance. We cannot engage in businesses, or go to governmental institutions alone because we do not know anything. If we want to write any letter or document we have to pay a *tinterillo* [a degreeless lawyer] to sign it for us. I decided to organise the school forty years ago when the hacienda manager ordered me to go to serve in his house. When I told him I wanted to send someone instead of me, the manager sent me to [the city of] Cuzco with a note to the chief of the police station telling him that I was an enemy of the hacienda, that I did not want to work, and that I had to be jailed. Since I did not know how to read, I did not know what the letter said. Fortunately, I showed the letter to a friend of mine, who showed it to a lawyer, who said that there was no legal reason for me to go to the police station, and that I should return to my community. It was then that I decided to put an end to our ignorance and organise the school. Initially we paid the teachers' salaries ourselves, then the Adventists came. The ministry of education took over in 1961. The school has helped us out because now our children can at least say Buenos Días, Buenas Tardes.'⁵¹

It is evident from this report that 'Indians' were not the inert victims depicted by the state in the adult literacy book 'Pedro'. Nor were they reluctant to join literacy projects and further their education. On the contrary, considering reading and writing to be important tools against the exclusion and exploitation that led to destitution, indigenous leaders sometimes built schools in rural areas before the state. They organised to hire teachers and solicited the state presence in their communities. Indigenous goals broadly coincided with the state's pledge for 'education' albeit from a different position.

I met Don Mariano Turpo some years ago in the same site that Norman Gall visited: Tink'i, a high altitude valley in the southern Andean region of

⁵¹ Norman Gall, *La reforma educativa peruana* (Lima, 1974).

Cuzco, where people own small potato fields and alpaca and sheep herds, the wool of which represents their main monetary income. The distance between Tink'i and the city of Cuzco – the dwelling place of the above mentioned hacienda manager and regional state representatives – is relative: five hours in a four-wheel drive vehicle, a one-day journey by public transport, and two full days on foot. Until the 1970s the whole valley belonged to Lauramarca, one of the largest haciendas of the Southern Andes. When Gall visited the area, it might have been in the process of being transformed into an agrarian cooperative. For generations the hacienda was infamous throughout the region for exerting violent control of the *colonos*, alpaca shepherds like Don Mariano and Don Constantino who struggled against the successive land-owners and campaigned for education. Illiterate and monolingual in Quechua, Don Mariano is now close to 93 years old. A witness to the struggle since he was a child, his community members chose him as a local leader in the 1950s, when he started his pilgrimages to Lima to deliver official communications, accompanied by his partner in the struggle Mariano Chillihuani, who was exceptional among his peers in that he knew how to read and write.

We walked two days to Cuzco [the city] and then we took a bus to Lima. We always went together, I knew how to speak – I could say things the way they were, but I could not write them. Chillihuani could, and we were both fearless. The *hacendado* persecuted us; he did not want us to build the school. We built it with our own money. He sent his peons to burn it. He feared that we would open our eyes, and that we could send letters to the government.

Mariano recalled all this, as I read to him the documents that he and Chillihuani had co-authored with the lawyers who acted as their scribes and, of necessity, as intermediaries between 'illiterate Indians' and the legal, and written, state sphere. One of the communications said:

Struggling against many obstacles, the legislative body of our community managed to build a school in 1926, which was destroyed by order of Don Ernesto Saldívar, who at that time represented our province (Quispicanchis) in the National Congress. As such, he deployed his power to control the local authorities – and hence Dr Saldívar destroyed the school that we had built, and furthermore he used his employees to deploy extreme hostility against the teachers we had hired; he had them persecuted, imprisoned and even terrorised them to the point of having them expelled from our villages. Once he achieved that, he set our school locale on fire – we present this to your office as Peruvians with the right to education according to the Constitution (1932).⁵²

And another one, written ten years before Norman Gall published his report, reads:

According to the *Ley Orgánica de Educación*, we have the right to have at least one elementary school, and the state, not the hacienda, is obliged to build it. We demand

⁵² Mariano Turpo-Personal Archive.

the creation of such a school and commit ourselves to donate the lot on which it should be built. We also oblige ourselves to build the locale, donate the necessary construction material and the labour – including the tools the teachers need, and whatever would be necessary to put into service small-scale agricultural industries according to the *Ley de Núcleos Escolares* (1960).⁵³

As Mariano Turpo interpreted the documents for me, it was clear that rather than a bid ‘for a superior stage in the evolutionary ladder’ (as portrayed in ‘Pedro’), the indigenous request for education was a demand for civil rights, a decolonising struggle for citizenship. Citizenship required literacy because the relationship with the state was mediated by written documents. Illiteracy translated into the inability to represent themselves, and so it diminished ‘Indians’ vis-à-vis the state whose local representatives ‘read’ the orders of literate citizens, like the manager who framed Don Constantino as an enemy of the hacienda. Achieving citizenship through literacy and Spanish did not imply shedding indigenous culture or becoming mestizo, as some state education projects projected. Don Mariano was very clear in this respect:

those who want to be like *misti*, can be *misti*. Reading and writing alone does not do it, if you do not want it to happen. Reading allows us to be less Indian, it allows us to defend ourselves, to have a piece of paper in front of you, and know what it says – and we need to learn Spanish. We teach our children Quechua, we speak Quechua. Why learn Quechua at school and not Spanish? The *hacendado* did not want us to learn Spanish, because he wanted us to be Indians – ignorant, abused, isolated in this corner of the world. I went to Lima; I spoke in Lima and someone translated for me. It would have been easier if I could speak by myself.

(Misti is the local word to identify foreigners, local non indigenous individuals, and local individuals of indigenous origins who have rejected indigenous ways of being, or sometimes behave as such).

In 1960, fifteen years after Valcárcel had launched *núcleos escolares*, Mariano Turpo and Mariano Chillihuani were continuing the quest for schools that their predecessors initiated early in the twentieth century. Their demand for Spanish literacy derived from the need to demand state intervention against the landowners’ attempts against their lives, not against their ‘culture’ or ‘identity’. Don Mariano’s demands did not coincide with any of the state’s literacy projects; it was not a bid to ‘preserve indigenous culture’ offered by purist *indigenismo* or an attempt for assimilation as in the invitation to *mestizaje* proposed in ‘Pedro’. Rather, it articulated an alternative proposal, according to which indigenous individuals could selectively appropriate non-indigenous practices and remain who they were. It was a political proposal resting on a conceptualisation of indigeneity that comfortably allowed for the ‘mixture

⁵³ Mariano Turpo – personal Archive.

of orders' and implied a rejection of social positioning based on identity purification.

I have elsewhere explained a similar project proposed by individuals whom I called 'indigenous mestizos', because they implement an identity project that is not meant to be resolved in an 'either (indigenous) or (mestizo)' situation.⁵⁴ This project is not a bid for *mestizaje* for it disregards the purity that the empirical mixture implied in *mestizaje* demands, and it includes ways of being indigenous that do not fit the modernist demands for 'Quechua authenticity' that modern 'mestizos' allegedly leave behind when they become such. 'Mixing orders' has been an indigenous approach for centuries, and Don Mariano's quest for literacy is analogous to colonial mestizos' active option for a hybrid social location that 'does not fit' within a dominant order with a vocation for purified categories. A similar alternative is currently implemented by market women in Cuzco – known as mestizas and seen by the local elite as the embodiment of political and categorical urban disorder. For them, appropriating literacy and other resources (computers, video cameras, learning how to drive and bookkeeping tools) enables citizenship, overcomes colonised Indianness, and preempts the cultural-ontological denial implied in the forceful invitation to evolve into a third category – neither Indians or white, but mestizos. The indigenous strategy implies the relentless mixture of things 'foreign' and 'local' in such a way that, rather than producing a third set of things – a hybrid in the dominant sense of the word – the 'foreign' becomes undistinguishable from the 'local'. Don Mariano's specific struggle for schools was a quest to 'mix' Spanish literacy into local ways of being, and thus empower them without however creating a third different category, for example, a hybrid of 'Spanish' and 'Quechua'.⁵⁵

Such a hybridity emerges from (and thus requires) purified categories. Indigenous hybridities, by contrast, ignore purified categories. In some cases, like colonial mestizos and contemporary mestiza market women, they even reject it. Don Mariano smiled at me when I asked if mixed Spanish and Quechua would be a third way of speaking; he gently said, 'Why?' Of course these hybrid categories – oxymoronic to the dominant senses – bear the materiality of history and politics. Thus they are replete with tensions – including the purifying strain that speaks of the 'improvement' attained when things indigenous are shed. Yet, I suggest that challenge of these beliefs is best achieved by rejecting purifications of all sorts, including those demanded by the political activism implemented with categories intolerant of conceptual ruptures and mixtures of orders.

⁵⁴ De la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*.

⁵⁵ Harvey, 'Speaking Otherwise: The Politics of Language in the Andes' (unpublished ms.).

By way of conclusion: rescuing mestizos from the politics of mestizaje

I have used the notion of hybridity to investigate the mixture of faith and science, two distinct ways of knowing and classifying nature and humans that intertwined genealogically to shape current ideas and practices of race. The hybridity that I am claiming for race is epistemological. It goes beyond the mixture of the nineteenth-century discourses of ‘culture’ and ‘biology’, that several authors have already identified as shaping notions of race.⁵⁶ Highlighting the epistemological hybridity of race provides a better view of the connections between the concept of race and ways of knowing, and thus enables a better grasp of the idea that *race* does not only claim bodies, and neither does racism. Both saturate modern institutions, colouring a gamut of practices, from the state and its most ‘innocuous’ mandates (such as ‘education’ in the example that I gave here) to the neo-liberal markets and pharmaceutical research in laboratories (via ideas of ‘racial medicine’). The connection between race and (what qualifies as) knowledge also shapes intimate subjectivities. As a concept, race exceeds the classificatory empiricity that it enacts through ‘biology’ or ‘culture’, as much as it exceeds the bodies to which it also lays claim. Its power to disqualify is genealogically instilled in a structure of feelings that intertwines beliefs in hierarchies of skin colour and beliefs in the natural superiority of ‘Western’ forms of knowledge, ruling, and being.

Understanding this structure of feelings requires pushing the temporal landmark back to the sixteenth century, a world-creating historical moment when (the articulating force we conceptualise as) power, acquired what Aníbal Quijano has labelled its *coloniality*.⁵⁷ This feature has its origins in Iberian colonial regimes in the Americas but outlasts it; it articulates national regimes, even democracies. Legitimised by beliefs in (self) declared superiority, it consists in the right and might (self) assigned by a privileged social group to impose its image among those it deems inferior. In Latin America, the coloniality of power was enabled by Iberian beliefs in the Absolute superiority of Christianity vis-à-vis indigenous forms of being. If the crown assigned Iberians the right to possess the American territories that they stepped into, Christian faith assigned them the duty to change the peoples they found there into their own image, and correspondingly to eliminate their beliefs. Charged with certifying ‘purity of blood’ and religious orthodoxy, the Spanish Inquisition was the colonial state institution that using diverse means, including violent ones, persecuted indigenous, Western, Muslim, and

⁵⁶ Goldberg, *Racist Culture*; Stocking, ‘Turn of the Century’; Stoler, *Race and the Education*; myself, see de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*.

⁵⁷ Aníbal Quijano, ‘Colonialidad y modernidad-racionalidad,’ in Heraclio Bonilla (ed.), *Los conquistados, 1492 y la población indígena de las Américas* (Bogotá, 1992), pp. 437–47.

Jewish forms of knowledge and ways of being that supposedly threatened Christian faith. Labelled ‘heresies’ and ‘idolatries’, their status as knowledge, and their power to de-stabilise the dominant regime, was recognised.⁵⁸

The emergence of scientific reason challenged Christian faith as the ultimate means to knowledge, yet it reaffirmed the coloniality of European institutions. Redressed with science and modern politics, European institutions and forms of life continued to disqualify other forms of knowledge and their ways of being. The coloniality inscribed in scientific notions of evolution, for example, enabled liberal campaigns for the effective reproduction of European sameness. In Latin American countries where governments were concerned with the fate of indigenous populations, this policy visibly flowed through education. Elementary and technical schools spearheaded the modernisation of rural areas, including the eradication of indigenous knowledges – they hindered progress. Liberalism rejected the power practices of the Inquisition; rather than making heretics die and letting converts live, educational campaigns were directed to make converts live, while implicitly letting heretics die. Pedro, the invitation that the state extended to Indians to become mestizos (or die as Indians lacking development) is a colourful example of how the new forms of conversion would work.

Obviously, state-led ‘education’ did not do away with heresies. As Mariano Turpo’s efforts demonstrated, while literacy and schooling have become necessary tools, defying their normalising mandate remained a clear possibility. Consequently, heretics were never terminated. Some of them are currently leading indigenous social movements. Self-identified as indigenous intellectuals, they are lawyers, physicians, or artists versed both in allegedly disqualified knowledges and competent in European languages. As heretics they are experts in the oxymoronic, the label ‘indigenous intellectuals’ is eloquent in this respect. It is tensed by beliefs in reason as a means to superior ways of being, while it also disfigures the idea that education does away with Indianness. Like colonial mestizos, indigenous intellectuals do not fall into dominant classifications and they reject purification. As W. E. B. Dubois explained about African Americans’ double consciousness in the United States, so indigenous intellectuals think from inside and outside European and indigenous forms of knowledge.⁵⁹

‘Double consciousness’ is not an historical accident, or the result of some current multiculturalism; rather it has a long genealogy that has been masked by the dominant politics of sameness characteristic of the coloniality of European institutions since the sixteenth century. Revealing this genealogy

⁵⁸ Irene Silverblatt, *Modern Inquisitions. Peru and the Colonial Origins of the Civilized World* (Durham, 2004); Jorge Cañizares E., ‘Demons, Knights and Gardens in the New World: Toward an Atlantic Global Perspective,’ (unpublished ms.).

⁵⁹ See W. E. B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York, 1989).

can undo the division between ‘Indians’ and ‘mestizos’ and rescue the latter from the teleology of *mestizaje*, which requires the notion of purity, even as it denies it. Colonial mestizos represented the active rejection of purification; they enacted a politics through which they remained different, unclassifiable, slippery, and belonging to more than one order at once. The heteroglossia of Andean mestizos continues to house this alternative, the rejection of simple sameness and an active appropriation of tools that connect indigeneity with non-indigeneity, thus rendering their separation futile, or an exercise of dominant rhetoric and policy making. This separation, which continues to organise state policies and to condition citizenship, is what indigenous social movements challenge and eventually have the potential to erase.