

7. Rethinking spectacle and indigenous consumption: commercial *huayno* music in Peru

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At weekends, dozens of venues across Lima open their doors to tens of thousands of Andean migrants who come to experience commercial *huayno* spectacles.¹ These are multisensory events where melodramatic songs boom out from huge PA systems, accompanied by choreographed dancing, comic routines, mesmerising light displays, smoke machines and sometimes fireworks. As audience members watch and listen over the course of several hours, they also drink, dance and socialise. Tickets are bought at the door and prices range from around 10 soles (roughly US\$3.95) to around 35 soles (roughly US\$13.75) for star-studded line-ups. Throughout the night, vans arrive carrying spectacularly dressed *huayno* stars who are whisked through the crowds to the stage by overbearing bodyguards, concerned managers and jealous partners. On leaving the stage, singers are ambushed by fans desperate to have their photograph taken with a *huayno* celebrity. The biggest stars often perform two or three times back-to-back in different parts of the city, and each concert may present up to a dozen different artists or groups.

In Lima, there are rarely any concerts during the week, so this is when performers typically journey north, south or east to perform in cities, towns and villages in the interior. Many artists travel for hours to Andean hinterlands to entertain rural indigenous audiences that are frequently just as familiar with commercial *huayno* as their urban migrant counterparts. Besides live performances, audiences primarily become acquainted with commercial *huayno* through the radio, but in addition vast numbers of music video discs are pirated and sold cheaply nationwide, along with a rapidly growing quantity

1 Most Andean Peruvians would refer to what I call commercial *huayno* simply as *huayno* or *folklor*. However, such terms rely heavily on context as they are also used to refer to a vast array of Andean musical practices, including distinct regional styles as well as genres perceived to be more traditional or more sophisticated. For the purposes of this chapter, commercial *huayno* can be read as more or less synonymous with what Tucker calls 'northern *huayno*' (2013) and Ferrier calls '*huayno con arpa*' (2010). I employ the term commercial *huayno* in a bid to be more inclusive of stylistic variations within Peru's massified and commercial *huayno* scene.

of material accessible on the internet. This home-grown music industry offers a rather different picture of Latin American cultural production and consumption from the one painted by García Canclini, who describes the 'endogenous production of electronic media' as underdeveloped (2001, p. 25), in part because of a transfer of 'economic and cultural control to transnational corporations' through 'the digitization and mediation of rural processes of production, circulation, and consumption' (2005, p. xxxix). This chapter explains how commercial huayno contests the uniformity of these trends, constituting a sphere of cultural production where local forms of folkloric spectacle, mass-mediated popular culture and business converge to produce a kind of indigenous agency.

Commercial huayno also offers an alternative to the view that folkloric spectacles are exterior facing, moulded by and for the attention of outsiders. Huayno stars do not inhabit a world of indigenous performance that is commodified and spectacularised so that it can be manipulated by the state and international corporations, or consumed by tourists and the middle and upper classes. Indeed, such groups may believe that huayno exhibits a commercial crassness and represents the bad taste of an inferior indigenous or *cholo* (defined below) take on modernity that is not in keeping with stereotypes of a timeless, 'authentic' Andean culture, New Age Andean spiritualism, or modern and sophisticated international 'cool'. Instead, commercial huayno presents a situation where commodity and spectacle are primarily created for and consumed by indigenous audiences, both rural and urban.

This chapter explores and problematises the perceived relationships between indigenous culture, folkloric representation and capitalism. In debates about how these different domains impact on each other, it is common for observers to highlight how indigenous agency is compromised in some way, whether through appropriation, essentialism, commodification or spectacularisation (Guss, 2000; Hellier-Tinoco, 2011). Familiar arguments critique the processes whereby indigenous cultural practices become repackaged as cultural products, performances and spectacles directed towards the needs and desires of non-indigenous groups or entities. While such cultural appropriations do not preclude indigenous agency or enjoyment altogether (Bigenho, 2002, pp. 111–2; Mendoza, 2008, pp. 33–4), they are frequently perceived to be conditioned by unequal relations of social, economic and political power, generating fears about the cooptation of indigenous culture for capital gain. This chapter argues, however, that the assumption must be resisted that capitalist logics are the natural and exclusive property of hegemonies and thus inherently non-indigenous. Commercial huayno presents audiences with commodified, spectacularised and massified musical forms that rely on the capitalist endeavours of indigenous entrepreneurs and the complicity of indigenous



Figure 7.1. Dina Paucar is escorted to the stage at a performance in the town of Chupaca, Junín, during the San Juan de Bautista festival, June 2012. Photo: James Butterworth.

audiences. How can we respect and give voice to indigenous difference, then, while not denying indigenous actors the legitimacy of participating in, and exploiting, particular opportunities afforded by capitalism and the language of spectacle? In considering the production and consumption of commercial huayno as a potential site for subaltern self-representation, this chapter destabilises commonplace assumptions regarding the hegemonic appropriation and commodification of indigenous cultures, offering instead an example of indigenous agency.

A note on indigeneity in Peru and beyond

Today, the dominant intellectual framework for understanding Peruvian indigeneity is informed by a transnational discourse sustained by academics, activists, NGOs, governments, international bodies and indigenous groups. While the concept of indigeneity has almost global coverage, it is imperative that scholars contextualise it according to specific times and places. They must think critically before reducing the local meanings and contexts of diverse forms of autochthonous subalternity to a universalising discourse of the concept. Although over recent decades there has been 'a globalization of the concept of indigeneity itself' (Canessa, 2005, pp. 4–5, following Hodgson, 2002), sparking a host of transnational connections and contingencies, it seems that a 'nationalised' indigeneity model still dominates; that is, indigenous discourse, identification and mobilisation tend to be directed towards securing change and recognition at the national level (see Jackson and Warren, 2005, p. 554).

In the Andes the concept of indigeneity varies considerably from North American and Australian models, for example, where the categories of indigenous and non-indigenous appear less porous, due in part to the smaller-scale and less intense nature of processes resembling *mestizaje*. Even within the Andean region, however, the politics, rhetoric and nomenclature of the concept vary enormously. While indigenous Bolivian Andeans primarily self-identify as *originario* (roughly, originary) and their counterparts in Ecuador usually call themselves *indígena* (indigenous), Peru's Andean indigenous populations tend to opt for the term *campesino* (peasant). This euphemistic term was introduced under the presidency of Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968–75) in an attempt to displace the toxicity of the term 'Indian', though it has largely maintained the same connotations. Moreover, *campesino* has a particularly rural ring to it, meaning it is a label with which urban migrants of indigenous origin rarely identify (Tucker, 2011, p. 393). Urban indigenous Andeans are often discussed as *cholos*, but this incredibly complex moniker tends to be more a term of ascription than self-identification and ethnic identities are primarily articulated with reference to particular Andean villages, towns and departments

(Paerregaard, 2003, p. 275). However, the diminutive form, *cholito/a*, is part of common Andean parlance and is typically used as a term of affection. This usage is, in turn, potentially problematic in the way that it conceals latent paternalistic attitudes regarding racial difference.²

Unlike in Bolivia where indigeneity plays a central role in mainstream media and political discourse (to the extent that the president labels himself as indigenous along with 66.4 per cent of the population), indigeneity as a concept in Peru is peripheral and fragmented. And while the discourse of the concept has political traction in Peru's Amazonian region, it is frequently absent or muted in the Andean public sphere. In a country where the politics of indigeneity is complicated by centuries of miscegenation, migration and the gradual unravelling of any neat categories of race, geography and culture, the issue of defining who is and is not indigenous is not only fraught with difficulties, but is also not a particularly enlightening line of enquiry. More useful and nuanced approaches might attend to the ways in which discourses and symbols of indigeneity are contingent and contested, and how these are mobilised and challenged through performance (Bigenho, 2002; 2012; Tucker, 2011; 2013).

Historical perspectives on Andean music and spectacle

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'spectacle' as a 'person or thing exhibited to, or set before, the public gaze as an object either (a) of curiosity or contempt, or (b) of marvel or admiration.' Leslie Kan, in a 'Keywords' essay on spectacle, also stresses its captivating qualities: 'much of the spectacle's appeal (or repugnance) derives from its visual power and ability to hold the gaze of the viewer' (n.d.). Beyond these elementary definitions, literature on spectacle tends to demonstrate that people are often suspicious about its authenticity; in other words, they may believe that spectacle is something other than 'real', despite its purporting to be so. According to such a viewpoint, spectacles obscure, distort and distract audiences from some kind of truth. While such a reading of spectacle as artifice sits comfortably within a long history of European thought about theatricality (Bush, 2011, p. 18), its distractive qualities are especially important to Marxist perspectives such as that espoused by Guy Debord ([1967] 1983). For Debord, spectacle is the material manifestation of an ideological framework rooted in capitalist accumulation and commodity fetishism. As the spectacle advances, it supposedly erases the traces of the human labour that brought it into being, generating alienation and blinding its audience to the structural inequalities created and sustained by capitalism. Although Debord's

2 For an in-depth discussion of the term 'cholo', see de la Cadena (2000); Seligman (1989); Weistmantel (2001).

observations remain apt for explaining many of the mechanisms of capitalism and spectacle, his totalising pessimism seems inadequate today in its inability to account for change or spectator agency.

During the 20th century, spectacle came to form an important element in the development of Andean music, particularly in relation to processes of folklorisation and commercialisation. From the late 1920s, Andean – and specifically Cuzqueña – music came to be included in official contests and public performances in Lima, the coastal capital (Mendoza, 2008, pp. 44–8, 59–63; Turino, 2008a, p. 100). Many of these performances took place at the Pampa de Amancaes, attracting huge crowds, with some sources reporting audiences as large as 50,000 (Alejandro Vivanco, cited in Mendoza, 2008, p. 45). Here regional (predominantly Cuzqueña) music was exhibited before the public gaze, which, via a process of extrapolation, came to represent *lo incaico* (Incaness) and *lo andino* (Andeanness). The driving forces behind these spectacles during the first half of the 20th century were the intellectual movements known as indigenismo and neo-Indianism. Indigenistas were concerned with safeguarding their ‘traditions’, not only in the face of the perceived threat of cultural imperialism from abroad but also, perhaps more importantly, as a means of forging a regional nationalism that would challenge the dominance of the coastal creole elites’ vision of the nation. This was effected by positioning Andean, and specifically Cuzqueña, culture as the basis for an emerging *peruanidad*, or Peruvian identity (Lloréns Amico, 1983; Mendoza, 2008). These activities led to a folklorisation of indigenous music, dance and theatre through which cultural expressions were formalised, stylised and presented as representative of regional and national identities. However, for the most part indigenistas were concerned with representing indigenous culture as a pure and unmediated continuation of Incan lifeways, and Incaic imagery and rhetoric were fundamental to their output. This amounted to the valorisation of a glorious Inca past, while they implicitly rejected present-day indigenous realities. Reflecting similar intellectual shifts among indigenistas in post-revolutionary Mexico (Hellier-Tinoco, 2011, p. 58; Knight, 1990, pp. 71–113), a connected, but distinct, movement of intellectuals known as neo-Indianists became sceptical about the indigenistas’ preoccupation with *lo incaico* and were much more concerned with cultural practices and knowledge pertaining to the lived experience of contemporary Indians. This meant recognising and even celebrating the already-hybrid nature of those populations and cultures. Notwithstanding, the process of folklorisation brought their music into the public sphere, mediated through staged performances and spectacular presentations that had been stripped of their ‘original’ ritual and participatory significance and aesthetically adapted to urban mestizo and elite tastes. While some indigenous musicians possessed discernible agency in the

design of such folkloric spectacles, they were still largely conditioned by mestizo aesthetic ideals and, later, by the effects of tourism. In the minds of Cuzqueño performers, Mendoza writes, spectacles were held 'as a way of proving their modernity and to outline national identities':

These spectacles, which try to simplify for the tourist – and therefore present in concentrated fashion – the otherwise complicated task of deciphering the intricacies of the everyday life of culture the tourists are approaching ... are essentially an attempt to establish what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls a 'touristic realism' in order to convey the illusion that these are nonmediated events. (Mendoza, 2008, p. 67; see also Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, pp. 8, 59)

This outward-facing dynamic remains integral to a range of folkloric spectacles, yet, as this chapter will show, the more internal orientation of contemporary commercial huayno provides a rather different model.

From the 1950s onwards Andean music in Lima underwent further important changes, particularly in relation to the development of the commercial recording industry (Romero, 2001, pp. 109–21; 2002). Solo singers emerged and soon became stars, signalling the growing relevance of ideas about fame, performance and individuality, where there had hitherto been an emphasis in Andean music on community, participation and anonymity (2002, p. 221).³ Here, in addition to elements of display and performance, the concept of spectacle resonated as a function of nascent celebrity culture. The phenomenon of stardom has continued to develop and is today at the heart of the contemporary commercial huayno scene. The initial move towards solo singers was facilitated by the introduction of the microphone. In the Debordian sense, the spectacular took on an aural dimension as a split emerged between representation and 'unmediated' reality via the technological mediation of the voice. Crucial to both these processes is what Turino identifies as a shift from participatory to presentational performance, where the value attached to community music-making during feasts and rituals is superseded by distinctions between audience and performer and a greater emphasis on achieving high aesthetic standards (2008b).

While the processes of folklorisation and commercialisation that began earlier in the 20th century have undoubtedly impacted on contemporary Andean music, commercial huayno is emblematic of more recent political, economic, social and cultural transformations in Peru. Since the beginning of the 1990s, neoliberal reforms, in addition to a rapid increase in the accessibility and affordability of new technologies, have encouraged the development of cultural

3 Mendoza argues that the trend toward popular soloists began as early as the late 1920s, even though soloists did not achieve widespread fame until the 1950s (2008, p. 102).

industries and aided the production and circulation of subaltern cultural forms – including articulations of indigenous experience – that would otherwise be largely ignored by the state and its apparatus as well as by ‘mainstream’ national media and international cultural brokers. It is in this context that commercial huayno has flourished. Although one of the strongest musical indices of the Andes in Peru, it has reached its current form and popularity principally through the development of a large music industry in the coastal capital, Lima. Its activity is primarily sustained by urban Andean migrants and companies based in that city, although there are also many studios, radio stations and disc vendors in provincial towns, and the voices of commercial huayno stars are likely to be found animating the remotest of Andean villages.

Most singers were born in the Andes (both rural and urban), but increasing numbers are now being born to Andean parents in Lima. This mix of rural and urban influences challenges the naturalisation of the link between indigenous peoples and the rural environment that was at the heart of indigenismo, ideologies of mestizaje and nation-building projects (de la Cadena, 2000, pp. 63–5; Bigenho, 2002, p. 116), and which still tends to be a default position for global imaginaries of indigeneity. To consider how commercial huayno further engages, feeds off and contests dominant and default characterisations of indigenous agency and spectacular performance, this chapter now turns to some of the sonic, visual and social intricacies of commercial huayno performance.



Figure 7.2. Huayno concert in Chorrillos, Lima, June 2012. Photo: James Butterworth.



Figure 7.3. Spectators at huayno concert in Chorrillos, Lima, June 2012. Photo: James Butterworth.

Commercial huayno and spectacle

One Saturday evening in August 2009, a steady stream of people is arriving at El Huarcocondo, a music locale in the migrant neighbourhood of San Juan de Lurigancho, northeast Lima. Music and stage-talk boom out from the open-air venue but those congregating outside are unable to see in past the high concrete walls and vast iron doors. Spectators buy their tickets through a narrow hatch in the wall, little more than a foot wide, before proceeding inside through a small doorway. Over the course of several hours the crowd gradually grows and performers come and go, building up to the appearance of the headline artist, Rosita de Espinar, a huayno diva from southern Peru. Soon after 1 a.m., Rosita's entrance is announced by deafening, ethereal synthesiser sounds, hyperbolic exclamations from the *animadores* (compères), and flashes of light from the stage. The audience hears Rosita's voice but she cannot yet be seen. Then, heads begin looking up to the left where she suddenly comes into view. With fireworks exploding in the skies above, Rosita hovers high up in the air inside a carriage draped in silky, pink material. As she sings to the crowd below, the diva's carriage is gradually lowered to the stage by a mechanised crane. Still singing, Rosita steps out of the carriage before disappearing within a multicoloured explosion of confetti and clouds of smoke.

After performing several songs, the band strikes up a tune familiar to most of the crowd. Rosita and the *animadores* engage the crowd as the musicians

play, and audience members jump up and down, waving their arms in time to the music. Rosita hassles the women, encouraging them to pump their hands in the air before telling them to 'get down', demonstrating the manoeuvre by coquettishly descending into a squatting position. Then it is the men's turn: 'where are the men?', 'where are the single men?' come the shouts from the stage. After a couple of minutes of build-up, Rosita launches into the song 'Suspiros de Amor' (Sighs of Love):⁴

A mi corazón le debes dos mil quinientos suspiros A mi corazón le debes dos mil quinientos suspiros	You owe my heart two thousand five hundred sighs You owe my heart two thousand five hundred sighs
Si alguna vez lo has pagado enséñame tu recibo Si alguna vez lo has pagado demuéstrame tus papeles	If you've ever paid [your debt] show me your receipt If you've ever paid [your debt] show me your papers
Acaso para que me quieras te puse puñal al pecho Acaso para que me ames te puse puñal al pecho Que te costaba decirme 'cholita yo soy casado' Que te costaba decirme 'cholita tengo mis hijos'	Perhaps so that you want me I put a dagger to your chest Perhaps so that you love me I put a dagger to your chest What would it have cost you to tell me 'cholita I'm married?' What would it have cost you to tell me 'cholita I have my children?'
Amantes somos amantes tan solo fuimos amantes Amantes somos amantes tan solo fuimos amantes Tu eres casado cholito yo soy soltera que pena	Lovers we are lovers We were only lovers Lovers we are lovers We were only lovers You're married cholito I'm single, what a shame

In its romantic cynicism this is a fairly typical huayno. Most of the audience know the lyrics and many spectators – mostly women – sing and gesture along with Rosita as she pounds her clenched fist against her chest. Sometimes she sings directly to an individual near the front of the stage, creating a fleeting moment of intimacy that is necessarily short so as to maintain the interest of the

4 A video of Rosita de Espinar performing 'Suspiros de Amor', which was written by Julia Palma, is available on YouTube (2009).

crowd. Behind her, the dancers and musicians perform tightly choreographed and visually spectacular movements in synchrony. At one point the guitarist and a dancer bend backwards, while using one arm to bounce up and down on the stage in a series of humping gestures, a sight that draws smiles and laughter from sections of the audience. Throughout the performance a myriad of mesmerising lights spin, swirl and flash rapidly across the stage and out towards the spectators, reminding them, as if they had forgotten, where their focus should be. Machines continue to pump out clouds of smoke, shrouding the performers in moving veils that obscure the audience's view and generate a sense of mystique. High above the performers at the back of the stage, a huge illumination advertising Cristal beer conjures modern capitalism in a way that recalls religious iconography, preaching to the crowd about which beer they should buy at the encircling kiosks.⁵ Most spectators duly oblige: sharing and drinking beer is a fundamental aspect of the social experience an event such as this entails. Below the Cristal illumination, Rosita moves back and forth from the main stage to the central walkway, which juts out into the audience, strewn with confetti, its edges adorned with flowers. Although the animadores occasionally move up the walkway, the space belongs principally to Rosita, serving to enhance her star quality and focusing the crowd's gaze even more narrowly on her performance as the spectacle's centrepiece.

The lovelorn narratives contained in Rosita's lyrics – like most commercial huayno acts – are brought to life through her gendered interaction with the male animadores. These performers act out the song scenarios in time with the lyrics, or the animador chips in with romantic reflections, advice and jokes that give light to a series of gender stereotypes, including *la mujer sufrida* (the suffering woman), *la mujer luchadora* (the struggling/fighting woman), *el hombre ingrato, traicionero y mentiroso* (the ungrateful, betraying, lying man) and *el hombre pisado* (the kept man), to name some of the most common tropes. Rosita jokes with the animadores about how she is looking for a new man. Drawing a parallel between romance and materialist desires, she cheekily insists she is not interested in anything 'second hand' (*cosa usada*) but, rather, wants 'something brand new' (*algo nuevecito*). Meanwhile, the animadores continue to encourage the crowd to keep drinking beer and perpetually shout out the names of audience members' home towns and regions in the Andes: 'Hands up Espinar!'; 'Where are all the people from Apurímac?'; 'Who's in from Ancash?'

5 Cristal occupies the greatest share of the Peruvian beer market and its branding is intimately connected to national identity. The brand is owned by Backus and Johnston, a company that also owns almost all beer brands in Peru except Bramha. Most Peruvian beer drinkers are unaware that Backus and Johnston is itself a subsidiary of the London-based SABMiller group, which is a prime example of the monopolistic tendencies and stealthy expansion of global capitalism.

Although some singers of commercial huayno are male, the majority – and the most successful – are women, meaning that they are the ones who most commonly play the protagonists of huayno's lovelorn and suffering narratives. A female singer's presence on stage is emphasised by the fact that the musicians, backing dancers and animadores are invariably all male. Female singers also tend to be the only performers wearing folkloric dress, albeit often heavily stylised. Unlike the majority of huayno divas who favour luminescent and elaborately embroidered costumes worn with high heels, Rosita de Espinar tends to wear more understated dresses based on typical patterns from her home region, along with her trademark black high-top boots and customary Andean braids. The stylised, folkloric capes worn by her musicians also go against the general tendency for male commercial huayno performers to wear plain monotone suits. This striking difference in the gendered use of folkloric dress has the effect of making the female singer a more powerful index of Andean custom and seems, at least in this narrow sense, to reinforce the maxim that 'women are more Indian' than men, as proposed by Marisol de la Cadena (1995; see also Crain, 1996). While the female singer demands empathy for externalising her inner emotional sorrows, and represents a respectable Andean girl who maintains some vestiges of tradition, the male backing dancers (dressed in suits) perform spectacular hybrid choreographed routines that bare minimal resemblance to any particular Andean tradition or international style. Thus, among the cosmopolitan influences and hybrid aesthetics, particular Andean symbols remain integral to the genre.

This description of Rosita de Espinar's show is partly based on a live music video, albeit supported by my own experiences of attending dozens of similar live huayno shows, including several by Rosita. With recording technology comes the possibility of the spectator becoming divorced temporally and spatially from the spectacle (Kan, n.d.). In Debord's terms, this may lead to a respective categorisation of the video as mere 'representation' and the live spectacle as unmediated, 'directly lived' experience ([1967] 1983, p. 1). This division, however, is problematised by the fact that technological mediation is already part of the live spectacle, with different layers of mediation combining to form a sort of meta-spectacle: the numerous cameramen filming on stage, from the crowd and from the mechanised crane above, become part of the very spectacle that they are trying to capture. At one point, too, Rosita looks firmly down the barrel of the camera lens in a close-up moment of heightened televisual intimacy, which is reserved for the video viewer and largely lost on the audience present on the night. The sense of emotional 'authenticity' that this technological channelling of intimacy engenders is manifested as a direct result of televised spectacle rather than in spite of it.

This performance event, then, constitutes a multilayered spectacle that makes little explicit reference to stereotypes of cultural authenticity or profound reified difference. Its appeal stems, instead, from visual excitement and high-energy performance as well as the intimacy and identification generated by dancing, drinking and sharing in a discourse of complicated romance and Andean roots. The ‘hybrid modernity’ that Tucker (2013) identifies in commercial huayno music is not in keeping with many historically dominant and internationally circulating representations of Peruvian Andean indigeneity. For middle-class detractors, traditionalists and, I suspect, many tourists too, commercial huayno fails to conform to commonplace perceptions of cultural authenticity, based on atavistic stereotypes of Andean culture almost frozen in time. Such views follow the logic of the phrase ‘*incas sí, indios no*’, which forms the title of Cecilia Méndez’s 1996 article, highlighting a tendency to legitimate only indigenous behaviour and aesthetics that seemingly perpetuate pre-modern ways of life. However, as Tucker convincingly argues, ‘little is achieved by reversing polarity, and pitching hybrid styles as palliatives for a dated, oppressive folklorism’ (2013, p. 64). Therefore, commercial huayno’s adoption of spectacular performance and hybrid aesthetics, which play with symbols of global sameness and Andean difference, does not necessarily make it any less a form of indigenous expression than performances of indigeneity that avow profound exceptionalism. This chapter argues, following Tucker, that diverging performance styles and corresponding discourses are best viewed as representing ‘different aspects of indigenous experience’ (p. 60).

Music, markets and contemporary Andean experience

While commercial huayno music performance rarely entails self-conscious or overt performances of indigeneity, its star protagonists can be taken to represent a voice of contemporary indigenous experience in Peru. This has not gone unnoticed by corporate marketers, as evidenced by a TV advert for the mobile communications firm Movistar (owned by the Spanish company Telefónica) in which the company enlists huayno’s two biggest stars, Dina Páucar and Sonia Morales, in a bid to help sell (indigenous) Quechua and Aymara language phone services in the rural Andes.⁶ Both of these stars are examples of a rags-to-riches narrative wherein their entrepreneurial spirit, struggle and hard work qualify them as successful Andean icons and neoliberal citizens. These qualities are arguably as – if not more – important to their status and image as their music, a point accentuated by the fact that instead of using the divas’ huayno songs, the advert features a reorchestrated instrumental version of the song

6 The advert, entitled ‘Movistar Quechua’, is available on YouTube.

'You Get What You Give' by the US rock band The New Radicals.⁷ These performers are seen to have navigated a path through unforgiving economic realities, while being doubly marginalised on the grounds of ethnicity and gender. Dina and Sonia may have abandoned a range of practices and markers of indigeneity but they have also retained some and adapted others. This fact recalls Andrew Canessa's assertion that one can be indigenous in some contexts but not others (2005, p. 19). In the advert, Dina and Sonia both speak in Quechua with Spanish subtitles – a practice that remains very rare on Peruvian television. An English translation of the transcript reads as follows:

DINA: When I was young I had a happy childhood. However, I think everything would have been easier if more people had understood me when I was speaking Quechua.

SONIA: Happily, Quechua and Aymara peoples will not have this problem now, thanks to the telephone exchange in Quechua and Aymara at Movistar.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: Once again, Movistar is the first mobile operator to unite Peruvians in the most remote places in their own language, putting communications at your service regardless of distance or language.

SONIA: And it's because for Movistar, you come first!

DINA: Therefore everyday that passes...

SONIA: There're more of us/we are greater! (*Somos más*)

DINA: There're more of us/we are greater! (*Somos más*)

CROWD: There're more of us/we are greater! (*Somos más*)

Alongside the foregrounding of Quechua language, it is also striking to see Andean faces presenting to camera as opposed to the ubiquity of the whiter faces that typically address the viewing Peruvian public. This refreshing visibility of indigenous language and Andean bodies is, one suspects, motivated largely, if not completely, by the potential financial rewards of an emerging market, rather than Telefónica's social conscience. However, even if increasing the market share and profits are the primary motives here, one cannot ignore the opportunities such spaces provide for the subaltern to be visible, to be

7 Whether or not the Peruvian public, or certain sectors of it, are aware of this musical reference is unclear. It may be that the use of commercial huayno music is avoided so as not to alienate middle- and upper-class audiences who are likely to find such sounds unpalatable.



Figure 7.4. Dina Paucar features on a billboard advertising Movistar outside the airport in Juliaca, January 2009. Photo: Marcos Granda Portilla.

heard and to feel included. In a restricted sense, capitalism is doing positive social work by increasing subaltern visibility, audibility and inclusivity – an achievement that successive hegemonic groups have failed to realise or even desire. This requires indigenous subalterns to buy into consumer culture and global capitalism, but does this *always* have to be something to be so anxious about?⁸ There is something uncritical about the reflex that can prompt (non-indigenous) observers to identify the perpetuation and expansion of global capitalism as the ultimate, if implicit, system conditioning human action and, in turn, disavowing subaltern agency. Such a logic potentially naturalises the link between capitalism and non-indigenous people, which is in no way innate or inevitable. Furthermore, the default assumption arising from this position tends to characterise capitalism as an exploitative and cooptive force that undermines indigenous agency. As with most economic systems, there are winners and losers, but these cannot be mapped simply on to (pre-existing) social categories and hierarchies. While there remain real and present threats across rural Andean and Amazon regions from the encroachment of transnational resource extracting industries, the case of commercial huayno offers an example of Andean agency and a form of economic and cultural

8 This is not to suggest we should not be anxious about the effects of capitalism.

empowerment. Thus, just as a discourse of indigeneity needs to be understood in relation to specific times and places, it is important that one's understanding of capitalism is qualified by attention to issues of scale as well as its various manifestations and meanings in particular contexts.

The contemporary Andean-Peruvian situation is summarised perfectly by Jason Bush:

Urbanizing migrants have fashioned an alternative public sphere that increasingly contests exclusive articulations of the nation by the Creole aristocracy. As the imaginary of a new Peru has shifted from an oppositional vision of the national popular to the 'performative society' of neoliberal globalization, it has acquired a fragile hegemony that constitutes Andean subjects as citizens in ways they rarely experienced before. (2011, p. 33)

Bush successfully puts his finger on a tangible shift in the balance of power in Peruvian society that has been enabled, in part, through the emergence of a form of neoliberal multiculturalism (Hale, 2005). However, as a burgeoning literature on this topic attests, this shift does not constitute any absolute democratisation of access to the means of cultural production or the uniform emancipation of consumers. Indeed, 'neoliberalism's professed multicultural neutrality' has the potential to gloss over historically rooted forms of oppression and inequality (Jackson and Warren, 2005, p. 553). The market, too, has the power to distort performers' and consumers' preferences and the choices available to them. Tucker documents, for example, how performers can be led to certain types of aesthetics and performance based on what makes money rather than as a result of personal musical convictions or identitarian projects (2013). However, such dilemmas are in no way unique to indigenous performers and caution must be practised in relation to assuming any natural link between the power of the market and the interests of hegemonic groups. Similarly, this chapter argues for the need to resist any naturalised notion that capitalism – including its apparatus of commodity and spectacle – is incompatible with indigenous identity, expression and agency.

Conclusion

The danger of critiques concerning the commodification and spectacularisation of indigenous culture is that they potentially cast capital and spectacle as inherently non-indigenous, and depict capitalist processes as having a distorting effect on an essential indigenous lived experience. The case of commercial huayno highlights that indigenous, capitalist and consumer are not mutually exclusive subject positions. Moreover, it helps to denaturalise any perceived relationship between the interests of hegemonic groups and the mechanics of capitalism. Assuming that capitalism is a coercive force,

indigenous people and culture may be absorbed by capitalism but they are not naturally or necessarily coopted any more than anyone else across the globe; in other words, the question of indigeneity may not always be relevant. Although there remain tangible and serious inequalities of power with regard to many indigenous communities, commercial huayno demonstrates that capital can also be a driving force behind increasing certain types of subaltern visibility and agency. The economic context for commercial huayno's hybrid aesthetics and spectacular performance should not exclude it from being an expression of contemporary indigenous experience, or an expressive form with which indigenous Peruvians identify and consider their own. If we only legitimate indigenous cultural expressions that are self-consciously about performing indigeneity as profound essential difference, and that supposedly exist *a priori* of capitalism and spectacle, we will be severely limiting what indigeneity can mean.

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