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**TITLE: ‘The mountain ate his heart’: Agricultural Labour and Animate Land in a Protestant Andean Community**

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*ABSTRACT: In the small Bolivian village of P’iya Qayma, the Baptist conversion of the mid-1980s put an end to the overt worship of the animate and powerful land. However, while previous religious practices may have been subverted, the mysterious death of a villager triggers rumors that expose a continued belief in, and engagement with, the powers of the local land. The ethnographic data presented in this article demonstrates that rural, Protestant communities experience cosmological continuity post-conversion, suggesting that this is because it is the everyday agricultural activities that animate the land, rather than religious practice. The paper further argues that paying attention to the simultaneous shifts and continuities that are part of processes of conversion, significantly contributes to our understanding of the dynamic vernacular production of pan-Andean human and non-human relationships.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Andes. Indigenous people. Religion, Social Anthropology, Identity*

One Monday afternoon in April 2009, the busy *cañawa* harvest in the small Andean village of P’iya Qayma was suddenly interrupted by the arrival of the local *dirigente* (village-level union representative). He had come out to the fields to deliver the news that there had been a death in the village and all work must be suspended. The threshing and cutting stopped, bundles of food and belongings brought along for a day in the fields were gathered, and under the still-strong sun, all returned to their homesteads. The deceased was Don Facundo who, after a short period of illness, had passed away at the comparatively young age of 45. In the days after Don Facundo’s death, people began to discuss what had happened. Don Tomás and Doña Nieves, husband and wife and two of my key interlocutors, told me that Don Facundo was a mean man

and tight with his money. Apparently, he was one of the wealthiest men in the village. In addition to his reputation as a miser, Don Facundo was also widely recognized as a *curandero*, a person who reads the past and the present, has the power to heal, and can communicate with powerful non-persons. The day after the funeral, Don Tomás explained to me that Don Facundo had been in contact with a local mountain, an *apu*; it was from the *apu* that he had gained his powers and his riches. He added that it was Wayna Tanka, the *apu* that hovers over the village, who had now killed Don Facundo. As he put it: ‘*El sonqo de Don Facundo, este apu, mikhurqa*’ (the mountain ate his heart).

Don Tomás’ explanation of Don Facundo’s death is consistent with a salient aspect of everyday cosmology in rural Andean communities: that land is animate and has the power to act upon, and even kill, humans (see Allen 2015, 2002; De la Cadena 2015, 2014; Gose 1994; Harris 2000; Sax 2011). This paper builds on a long tradition of research on Andean animate land, elements of which have more recently been consolidated into the so-called ontological framework (e.g. De la Cadena 2014, 2015; Mannheim and Salas Carreño 2015). What is particularly interesting about this case is that the community of P’iya Qayma were Baptist converts and so, in contrast to nearby Catholic villages, their modes of engagement and communication with the land they lived on did not include overt discourses, or practices of worship. By investigating the relationship between the local Baptist population, *runakuna* (Quechua) (*Runa* translates as person and *kuna* is the plural suffix in Quechua. *Runa* is an emic category of persons, referring specifically to indigenous people of Andean, rural, kin-territorial communities - *ayllus*) and powerful, animate elements of the land or ‘earth beings’, *tirakuna* (Quechua) (*tira* is a derivative of the Spanish *tierra* and translated as earth/land), I examine how agricultural labor works as a practice that enables the converted Baptist *runakuna* and the *tirakuna* to take part in a mutually constitutive in-*ayllu* relationship. In so doing, I extend the scope of regional concerns by employing the theoretical concepts of ‘vernacular landscape’

and ‘taskscape’ as developed by Catherine Allerton (2009) and Tim Ingold (2000: 189-209), respectively.

In particular, I consider the physical, everyday practice of agricultural labor as a central process through which people and land come together, and one that is crucial to the development of both local personhood and the land’s own role within the *ayllu*. Labor has been given less analytical attention than the roles of kinship, commensality, and religious ritual in these engagements; my aim here is to emphasize the role of labor within these interconnected, and ultimately indivisible spheres of social and productive life.

While the dramatic passing of Don Facundo appears to invite an analysis where the shifts in religious practice, and scaling back of ritual and quotidian sacrifices has resulted in an angry *apu*, which is now taking life, my argument is in fact the opposite: the presence and actions of the mountain confirms that the *ayllu* has maintained its vitality, and the changes in religious practice has not seriously impacted on the relationship between people and land. Both revenge and violence are well-documented elements of ‘normal’ interactions between *runakuna* and *tirakuna* (e.g. Harris 2000, Salas Carreño 2016, Sax 2011). Instead, I argue that continuity has been maintained through a vernacular relationship predicated on agricultural work, thus the Protestant experience of human and non-human relationships is not so different from the previous Catholic one.

### **P’iya Qayma – a Baptist village**

The village of P’iya Qayma is a quiet place nestled between a lone mountain peak, Wayna Tanka, to the west, and a low and sprawling mountain range to the north. Sitting at an altitude of about 4000 meters above sea level, it is one of the more remote communities in the Bolivian province of Bolívar, Cochabamba department. Home to 25 families, the population subsists on farming and herding, with some villagers occasionally taking paid work in urban centers. P’iya

Qayma has the legal status of indigenous community (*Tierra Comunitaria de Origen*, TCO) and is part of the larger *ayllu Kirkiyawí*; more than just a group of ‘communities’, *ayllus* are Aymara and Quechua-speaking collectivities that combine territory and kinship into a single socio-political entity (Harris 2000: 1-26, 77-90, 91-111).<sup>1</sup> *Ayllus* are at the center of Andean rural society; their rotative organization of political power and fiesta sponsorship (the *cargo* system), alongside ideals and practices of exchange and reciprocity, as well as intimate relationships with the immediate and animate landscape, are generally cited by both academics and indigenous rights movements as crucial to indigenous highland identity (Albro 2006, Allen 2002, Arnold 1988, Harris 2000).

The religious conversion of P’iya Qayma’s inhabitants from Catholicism to Baptism took place in the mid-1980s. In addition to P’iya Qayma, about ten other villages in the province have converted to Protestantism in the last 35 years. According to municipal data, the Protestant population of the Province of Bolívar stood at 16% in 2007 (PDM 2007). The last 40 years have seen an explosion in the growth and number of Protestant churches in Bolivia and Latin America generally, leading to a pluralization of religious society, and a concomitant increase of academic interest in the subject (e.g. Gros 1999; Lehman 1996; Levine 2009). A main focus of this research has been the relationship between new Protestantism and established religions and beliefs, as well as its effect on sociality in indigenous communities, including the relationship between people and land (e.g. Abercrombie 1998; Allen 2002; Canessa 2000; Carter and Mamani 1989; Gill 1990; Van Vleet 2011). This concern is not new with regards religion in Latin America; scholars have frequently asked similar questions about the impact of Catholicism on worship practices and wider society (e.g. Gose 2008; Mills 1997). But the conversion to Protestantism from Catholicism entails at least two new major changes to extant cosmological perspectives with regards land. The first is the demand that the sacred is shifted from the earth and instead placed in the heavens (Cannell 2006: 14). The result of

this purging transfer is that the religious worship of the converts becomes consolidated towards one Christian omnipotent God, as opposed to allowing for engagement with multiple divine sites that offer spaces where telluric powers can still creep in, a flexibility Catholicism affords through the cult of the saints (Harris 2006). The second major change brought about by conversion concerns the attenuation of the communication between people and land as rituals and sacrifices conducted in honor of telluric powers are banned, particularly those involving blood or alcohol. Thus, whereas Andean Catholicism is characterized by syncretism, Protestantism appears to be more difficult to syncretize with existing beliefs and practices (Canessa 2000).

While these scholarly debates are concerned with the possible effects (often negative) of conversion for the given community, they also acknowledge the flexibility and hybridity of Protestantism in practice. Indeed, it has been argued that there is potential compatibility between aspects of Protestantism and indigenous Andean culture. Protestantism can be perceived to in many ways support the re-validation of indigenous lifestyles through, for instance, a liberation from local community and ecclesiastical power hierarchies, and the validation their of Christian identity by global evangelical churches (Bradby 1982; Dow 2001; Canessa 2000; Gros 1999; Muratorio 1980). While the scholarly consensus is that Protestantism is not necessarily destructive of human and non-human relationships in the *ayllu*, there is little ethnographic evidence regarding the shape of these relationships, or analysis of why conversion does not obliterate *tirakuna*. This piece intervenes in these ongoing discussions by providing an investigation into human and non-human sociality in a post-conversion, rural Baptist community; in addition, it employs the conversion and the resulting shift in ritual practices, to examine the role on labor in the production of an animate *ayllu*.

### **The killing of Don Facundo**

During the first ten months of research in P'uya Qayma, I saw little evidence of the animate land of which many authors have written; Baptism appeared to have swept away the rituals tied to the agricultural year through which people are said to coax, worship, feed and manage the land they live in. During periods when other, non-Baptist communities would erupt with life, P'uya Qayma remained quiet: during the season of *toro* and *runa tinkus* (ritual fighting between bulls or humans) when blood is normally spilt as an offering to the land; at the yearly festivities of *Semana Santa* or the *carnaval*, when the local maize drink of *chicha* is sacrificially splashed on the earth; when llama fetuses and *coca* leaves are burnt or buried to bring blessings and luck; when drunkenness and dance go on for days in the nearby Catholic villages, people in P'uya Qayma kept working as usual. The elimination of such rituals and festivities appeared to have had serious consequences for people's relationship with the land. There was explicit denial of the earth beings such as *apus*, *achachilas* (often described as ancestor spirits linked to geographical features) and *pachamama* (a telluric power, mother of earth and time), as sacred deities. As Don Valentín, a man in his early 50s, put it:

Before we all used to worship *Pachamama*, sometimes we would just pick up a stone that might resemble the shape of a bull and sacrifice things to it. But now we know that this is idolatry and sinful. (*Manarap Pachamamata yupaychach kapatinku, wakin kutipi rumita uqharispa rikch'akupta urgu wakaman, chayman jaywaspa tukuy imata. Chanta kunan yachanchiq kay kasqanta idolatria nisqa jucha ruway.*)

Don Tomás made a similar point:

People still respect *Pachamama* or *Santa Tira* because from her everyone lives. But God made *Pachamama*, she is not God. The traditions we had of worshipping *apus*

are completely gone. (*Runaqa Pachamamata yupaychachkallankupuni imaraykuchus paymanta tukuy kawsanchik, Diosninchiqmanta jamun pachamama payqa mana Dioschu. Ñawpa yuyanakuna tiyarqa chay tukupapunña.*)

Nevertheless, the death of Don Facundo demonstrated that despite this apparent ‘demotion’ of *tirakuna*, animate land that could involve itself in human affairs remained a present possibility. Conversations with villagers revealed that a vast majority was convinced that the *apu* Wayna Tanka had killed Don Facundo. Indeed, while Don Valentín and Don Tomás stated that their earlier practices of earth worship were gone, they did not claim that *tirakuna* had ceased to exist. In other words, while there was a discontinuity in *techniques* of engagement with the land, a conviction in its power to act upon the human world remained, as did the possibility of a continued relationship. Throughout this article I argue that this continuity exists because the relationship between people and land in an *ayllu* is not premised on sacrality; rather the relationship is rooted in a vernacular co-creative process of *ayllu* -making.

### **Animacy in the Andes**

The mirrored relationship between humans and non-humans is a recurring theme in Andean ethnography. Ontological perspectives in the area have confounded Western ideas of animal and human, body and personhood. Amongst other things, evidence from this region demonstrates that kinship often acts as a blueprint for relationships between human and non-human subjects. The well-documented usage of kin terms in reference to animals, plants, and landscape in the highlands suggests that people include animate non-humans into their familial and non-divine worlds (Allen 2002; Canessa 2012; Salas Carreño 2016). Allen (2015), and Mannheim and Salas Carreño (2015), persuasively argue that *wak'as* (generally defined as a sacred thing or place) are beings that are kin, rather than spirits. Allen notes that ‘to pre-

Columbian Andeans, all material things, be they “natural” or man-made, possessed a kind of personhood’ (2015: 24).

Across the Andean region, we find this spiritual equivalence between humans and elements of the landscape. In his work on the ‘hydraulic mountain,’ Joseph Bastien describes how people equate the workings of the human body to the workings of the local *apu* – both are locations of fluids and hearts that pump (1985). Similarly, Marisol De la Cadena has described how indigenous movements approach non-human beings such as mountains as entitled actors, akin to people, in the political and legal arena (2010, 2014, 2015). Thus, there exists a long-term and persistent vernacular relationship between people and land in the Andes.

This vernacular relationship has been recognized as crucial to the very existence of the *ayllu* itself. Allen, for instance, insists that ‘Only when *runakuna* establish a relationship with place by building houses out of its soil, by living there and by giving it offerings of coca and alcohol is an *ayllu* established’ (Allen 2002: 84). De la Cadena develops this further by arguing that ‘reciprocity is not a relationship between entities as usually understood in the Andean ethnographic record; it is a relationship from where entities emerge, it makes them, they grow from it.’ (2015: 103). Thus, not only does a relationship between *runakuna* and *tirakuna* create the *ayllu*, but the two constituent parts are themselves relationally produced. Likewise, Mannheim and Salas Carreño argue that humans become persons through a ‘web of social interactions with beings and entities, including places’ (2015: 60).

In P’iya Qayma, I found that *runakuna* and the *ayllu* were perceived to be mutually dependent and that the full and proper animation of both people and land did not exist a priori, instead it was brought into existence through their relationship with one another, through the changing physical and developing person and the shifting cultivated landscape. In consideration of the filial character of human and non-human relationships, it is notable, but not surprising, that *tirakuna* in P’iya Qayma remain in everyday, non-sacred relationships with

the community during the post-conversion time. However, while other authors have emphasized building houses, living in the soil and giving offerings of alcohol (Allen 2002), caring, rearing and respect (De la Cadena 2015), as well as feeding and cohabitation (Salas Carreño 2016; Sax 2011) as the central components of this productive relationship, I wish to draw the analytical gaze to the role of agricultural labor.

Of course, these elements of commensality, religious ritual, work and feeding cannot easily be separated - agricultural work produces food and is therefore essential to acts of feeding. But the process of labor is not simply about the production of food; it also transforms land and people through the physical activity that it demands.

This is not to say that the role of agricultural labor in local cosmology is a neglected field of study in Andean anthropology. Peter Gose, for instance, has addressed the productive aspect of labor for *ayllu* organization, demonstrating that work practices throughout the agricultural cycle are ritually bound up with symbols of death, and constitutive of local cosmology (1994). In the Peruvian *ayllu* where he works, labor activities of the agricultural year related to the tension between the domestic appropriation and community cooperation. Gose argues that work and ritual are interdependent and intertwined, and at the level of everyday practice, they are almost indistinguishable. Henry Stobart has made a similar argument about the ritual character of agricultural calendar in *ayllu* Macha, Northern Potosí (2006). Understanding agricultural work as ritual supports the present argument that laboring the land can work to maintain a relationship with the local earth beings even when other rituals have been banned due to religious conversion. It also contributes to a deeper understanding of categories of sacred and profane in Andean cosmology.

While I am in agreement with Gose that there exists no clear divide between working the fields and dousing them with alcohol or blood, it is also important to understand *how* agricultural labor is ritualistic in character. Here, my ethnographic data diverges from that of

Gose. In P'iya Qayma, I did not find the rhythms of domestic appropriation and community cooperation that Gose describes. While harvest in his study is household focused, the sowing time of the agricultural cycles is marked by communal work. In P'iya Qayma, fields were always worked for domestic use and communal work exchanges (*ayni* and *chuqhu*) occurred throughout the year, regardless of season. In contrast, communality and ritual labour in P'iya Qayma is created in the experience of working side by side, on the same crops, in the same weather, and digging into the same soil, rather than through the communal organization of labor.

In her work on Indonesia, Catherine Allerton has developed the concept of the 'vernacular landscape' to think about the relationships between people and the land they work (2009a, 2009b). A vernacular landscape is one that is worked and lived in everyday; juxtaposed with a sacred landscape, the concept specifically emphasizes the existence of non-divine, animate land. Allerton interrogates the separation of the natural from the supernatural in order to demonstrate how people engage with spirit-beings and energies within landscapes as their intrinsic, everyday characteristics rather than paranormal or unnatural phenomena (2009a). As in Allerton's Indonesian field site, P'iya Qayma can be said to have a vernacular landscape in that it displays resilience across religious change due to an ongoing relationship between people and land that is rooted in daily agricultural work. Following the next section of ethnography, we will return to Allerton's vernacular landscape, as well as Ingold's taskscape in order to further analyze animate land in P'iya Qayma.

### **Agricultural labor, personhood and *q'ara* land**

Agricultural labor is the occupation that fills people's days in P'iya Qayma. The villagers' repetitive and familiar activities move, shape and transform the surrounding landscape and the ground beneath them. Making the dry mountain soil into fertile land demands

a great deal of work. The dry and cold winter months of May, June and July and the rainy summer months of December, January and February determine and constrain the activities of the agricultural year. Few plants can flourish in the short window of opportunity that the summer months afford. Agriculture is thus ecologically limited to tubers, grains and pseudo cereals. The villagers work with basic tools, using hacks and picks, and bull-driven plows. While there is currently sufficient land for the local population, a good harvest demands immense input of labor and time, both of which are finite resources. For fields coming out of fallow the extensive preparation begins in January. These 'virgin fields' (*tierra wirjin*), as they are referred to, must be cleared of stones. Thick gloves, bought from town, were used, but the sharp stones still cut tired hands. Towards the end of the summer months, in April, the villagers burn the tufts of thick grass, *ichu*, which grows in abundance in the highlands, in order to clear the ground.

In August, the fields that have come out of fallow that year were fertilized with sheep dung, and plowing could commence. That these practices of work were seen as 'feeding the land' was made explicit when Don Tomás and his teenaged son, Pedro, fertilized their virgin fields. Over the year, an almost meter thick layer of dung had built up in the sheep corral. Don Tomás and Pedro worked for hours filling sacks with sheep manure and then walked the laden donkeys up the side of Wayna Tanka to one of their virgin fields. As the work continued the fields on the hillside changed color from a dusty yellowish grey to a deep brown. Pleased, Don Tomás exclaimed: '*Ya, bien sumaj mikushanku*' (now they are eating very well), referring to the satisfactory feeding of the land.

Once the fields had been fertilized and the earth turned, it was time to sow the crops. During sowing and planting time, in September and October, the whole family, including members of the extended family who have arrived from the urban centers, worked the land together. For a few weeks, everyone in the village, old and young, spent the days in the fields.

It was a joyous time of the year; most villagers considered collective working and eating a pleasure and days were full of talking and laughing. The cold nights had come to an end, cracked hands and feet began to heal as the dry air filled with soft moisture and bodies relaxed in the warmth. From November to March, the rains saturated the ground and green grass and tiny flowers filled the landscape. Women returned to herding and took to weaving; many of the men travelled to the urban centers in search of temporary paid work.

By April, the rains had stopped and as the landscape dried and the sky cleared, the cold began to set in once more. It was time to harvest. As in sowing time, the harvest weeks brought everyone out into the fields together. Families enjoy usufruct rights to most fields through inheritance and the produce belongs to each family, but the sense of communality created in these moments of the year when people work side-by-side, hacking into the same hard soil and shielding themselves from the same midday sun, should not be underestimated. This is also a time when the land demonstrates its vernacular agency; from the fields people harvest the foodstuffs that the land has grown over the previous months. The making of these foodstuffs is always viewed as a co-creative act; with people and the land they live on playing equal parts. What families receive from the land is never given; at times potatoes are dug out of the ground rotten, other times they tumble out perfectly formed. Either way, the land has been active, something that does not happen when land is left unworked.

In P'iya Qayma there are three main modes of labor exchange that are generally characterized as communal: *ayni*, *chuqhu* and *mink'a*, the rules and norms pertaining to each vary between *ayllus*. In P'iya Qayma, *ayni* is a loose form of exchange between individuals or families. Reciprocity is often delayed and is not necessarily practiced according to a principle of like-for-like (i.e. labor might be exchanged for goods or the use of a bull), but it is considered to be an exchange of things that are equal and which can occur between equals. *Chuqhu* and *mink'a* are similar in that they are the exchange of many people's labor assisting one household

in return for large amounts of food and drink provided by that household. Most studies of agricultural labor in the region tend to focus their analysis on how these forms of exchanges and the organization of labor creates class, or emphasize the economies of households rather than the outcomes of the physical practice of labor itself (e.g. Mayer 2002; Urton 1992). I suggest that a crucial outcome of labor – *runakuna* and transformed, animated land - stems not just from its organization, but also from its phenomenological aspects.

Throughout the year, work is relentless and intensely physical; bodies bear marks of the land in cracked heels, mud under nails and tired backs. Likewise, the land is marked by the work, with trenches and fields cut into the ground, at times filled with growing produce and fed with animal dung. These physical markers emphasize the intimate connection people establish with the land they live on through agricultural labor: substance of people and place become mixed. Here we can see the management and creation of the ‘vernacular landscape’ in tandem with the formation of skilled and knowledgeable *ayllu* person, a *runa*.

People recognized and celebrated the value of their labor. In P’iya Qayma they always spoke positively about the experience of working, and especially of working together (cf Harris 2007). Labor changes the body and imbues the person with knowledge and new skills – teaching the community how to ‘make the earth bear fruit’ (Harris 2000). Each agricultural task mastered brings a person closer to mastering total life, to being able to make all the lands and all the animals, as well as themselves productive. The young teenage boys learn to plow and the girls to weave and cook. All learn to cross hills on foot, manage the animals, sow and harvest. The body is moulded, muscles are grown and stretched, eyes taught to identify animal flocks at great distance and ears to hear changes in the weather. The accumulation of knowledge and experience of agricultural tasks, along with responsibilities in the local *cargo* system facilitates the full development of a *runa*.

Work makes certain bodies and enables people to fulfill themselves as *ayllu* members and particular humans. As mentioned, it is also part of the cycles of feeding and commensality. This is not just in terms of its role in growing produce for human consumption, but also the reverse – the quotidian nurturing of the land by humans through their work; through the clearing of stones and rocks, through the applying of sheep dung, the careful weeding of smaller plants, and the considered planning fallow time for exhausted fields. In P’iya Qayma, where offerings to of the land excluded blood or alcohol, these other means of feeding land were practiced and valued.

A common way of feeding the fields, which reoccurs in the literature, is the spitting of chewed coca leaves on the land. This practice was something that divided the community. While Don Tomás would spit out his coca on the virgin fields, because ‘it probably helps...’ Others stated that this was not appropriate behavior for Baptists and it was a custom of the past.<sup>2</sup> The varying approaches within the village with regards this custom illustrates the more general shape that conversion was taking - while most did not adhere to the strictest of evangelical mores, there has been a significant, but not total, scaling back of more quotidian forms of feeding, as well as those involving blood or alcohol.

In sum, In order to understand the prosaic activities of the agricultural year described above in relation to the cosmological dimension of land – that is, what is going on in the vernacular landscape – it is crucial to consider the antithesis to such productive activities - *q’ara*. In P’iya Qayma, the word *q’ara* was used to refer to non-*ayllu* members as well as agricultural land that was left uncultivated. *Q’ara* is an Aymara and Quechua term widely employed by rural highlanders to refer to non-*ayllu* people. Meaning naked, bare and peeled, *q’ara* is mainly defined by what it is not – it is the lack of embodied *ayllu* sociality, of *runahood*.

The Andean literature has discussed the concept of *q'ara* people extensively (e.g. Allen 2002; Canessa 1998, 2012; Harris 2007; Isbell 1978; Van Vleet 2008; Weismantel 2001), but there is no mention in the regional literature of *q'ara* land. In Andean anthropology, *ayllu* personhood is theorized as processual (Abercrombie 1998; Canessa 1998; Reeve 1988). While a majority of this literature has focused on sociality as key to becoming *runa*, Canessa has argued that laboring the land in an *ayllu* is also crucial to becoming a full person, *runa* (Quechua), *jaqi* (Aymara) (1998, 2012). Harris describes the attitude which subsistence farmers in *ayllus* have towards outsiders:

They even feel sorry for these people who have little or no land, who are afraid of real work, and who depend on others to produce food for them. Mestizos from this Indian perspective are individuals who have lost their identity.

Harris 1995: 369

Work is valued as it makes you a physically skilled and knowledgeable *runa*, bound up in social relationships of reciprocity, support, and communal agricultural events that are experienced as positive. But *ayllu* personhood is also something that can be lost. People who leave their *ayllus* and cease to work their land become *q'ara* (Canessa 1998). In P'iya Qayma, agricultural land that is left unworked is also at risk of becoming *q'ara*, a condition that creates anxiety amongst people. The predicament of Doña Juana illustrates this point well. Originally from the neighboring village of Jachavillque, Doña Juana lived in P'iya Qayma, the village of her husband, with their nine children. Her family had all migrated to La Paz and she was the only one left with access to the family fields in Jachavillque. Her husband also has access to several fields in P'iya Qayma, meaning in effect, that they had a surplus of land. Despite their many children, they did not have the labor power to work all their fields. Yet, every year the family made many treks to Jachavillque and spent days working the land there.

On one occasion when I had travelled with her to her home village I watched her desperately trying to hand her land over to her cousin, but he declined, himself weary from the burden of all his many fields. So Doña Juana continued to work the land in an effort to fulfill her role in the upkeep of the *ayllu*; that is, to mitigate the risk of it becoming *q'ara*. As she said to me one evening, after a long day's work – 'My family are all in La Paz, I have to come here because someone has to work this land; there is nobody else, just me.' While abandoned land is returned to the community for redistribution, the reality is that due to high levels of out-migration, there was not enough villagers to distribute land to. Similarly, there was not enough manpower to organize regular *chuqhus*, communal work parties, when families were unable to manage all their fields themselves. Doña Juana was well aware that should she return her land to the authorities of Jachavillque, the land would be left unworked. Abandoning the *ayllu* risks undoing both land and people.

Returning to the specific interplay between Protestantism and pre-conversion cosmology, I also want to suggest that agricultural labor, and therefore local animism, is if anything boosted by Baptist conversion, as it has created a shift in values that establishes agricultural labor as a Godly vocation. Andean Protestantism was thought to valorize agricultural work and emphasize its link with eternal salvation (cf Weber 1976 [1905]). In P'iya Qayma, people rejoiced in recognizing themselves in the pastoral imagery of the Bible. They eagerly informed me many times that the pastor from Oruro had told them that in Jesus' time most people were herders and shepherds and they expressed a belief that their basic, subsistence farming lives are congruent with what is needed to secure one's entry into heaven. Baptism appears to them as a religion that specifically values simple rural life, and which views the Andean peasant, not as a second-rate worshipper but as the archetypal and ideal church member. This is a religion that they are 'better' at than the urban *mestizo* (those of mixed Spanish and indigenous descent), by virtue of their 'simple, farming lives,' the rural

highlanders ‘naturally’ excel at being Baptists. In short, where Catholicism has come to be experienced locally as a religion which the indian does not do ‘well’ and therefore is not guaranteed salvation (cf Harris 2006:66), I argue that the villagers are convinced that Protestant Evangelism places the practice of agricultural labor above that of other work.

The villagers’ belief that laboring the land is a Protestant thing to do can be espied in everyday Baptist practice in P’iya Qayma. Only a handful of people regularly go to church and few see Sunday as a day of rest. Amongst the reasons given to me why individuals chose not to attend the Sunday service, the imperative to work was most common. God, I was told, was in the fields too, not just in the church. This was even true during seasons when the pressures of daily agricultural tasks were at their lowest, such as during the rainy season, or the winter. Similarly, at times of religious festivals, such as *Semana Santa*, (Easter), and *Todos Santos*, (All Saints Day), the celebrations were minimal and the villagers would swiftly return to their agricultural tasks. In this way the conversion has increased the value of agricultural labor, and I argue, as opposed to taking the place of animate land, has assisted in maintaining the in-*ayllu* relationship between humans and non-humans.

As we have seen in the literature, places have ‘personhood’, and as the present data demonstrates, like people they can also lose their ‘personhood.’ This is clear in P’iya Qayma where the word *q’ara* denotes both non-people and land that is left unworked. I have argued that agricultural labor is key to the co-emergence of animate land and *runakuna*; this is why we still encounter the full gamut of *ayllu* characters in the Baptist village of P’iya Qayma, *runakuna* and *tirakuna*, including an *apu* which can kill.

### **The agency of land - *Apu* Wayna Tanka, the ‘taskscape’ and the ‘vernacular landscape’**

Now we can return to the dealings between the late Don Facundo and the *apu* Wayna Tanka that was outlined at the beginning of the article. Considering the shift away from an earlier

relationship that was nurtured through rituals and sacrifice, Wayna Tanka's motive for Don Facundo's murder could be the anger it harbors as a mountain now hungry and deprived of sustenance. Recall that Don Tomás described the mountain as 'eating Don Facundo's heart.' However, there was no suggestion of communal guilt or fear that another villager might be next. Equally there was no rush to sate the mountain through any other form of feeding in order to ensure it claimed no more victims. Instead, people placed the blame on Don Facundo personally; it was his specific relationship with the mountain that resulted in his death. As mentioned, many of his neighbors considered him an unscrupulous character and villagers even empathized with the motive of the mountain: it was not strange that the mountain, just like many of Don Facundo's friends and family, had turned against him in anger. In this way, people equated his relationship with the mountain to one of kinship or friendship/enmity, a vernacular relationship.

The co-creative relationship between land and the people who inhabit it that exists in P'iya Qayma, and the meaning of a vernacular landscape, can be productively explored using Tim Ingold's concept of 'taskscape' and his discussion of Heidegger's notion of 'dwelling' (2000). These approaches encapsulate the indivisibility of the landscape/land and the society that lives and works in it, showing how dwelling connects the person through physical activity to the place where she lives. In his writings, Ingold generates an understanding of a temporally inflected landscape that avoids 'the scientific study of an atemporalised nature, and the humanistic study of a de-materialized history' (Ingold 2000: 208), and demonstrates how worlds are made through embodied practice. The taskscape as a temporalized, historicized, and crucially worked land, is the opposite of *q'ara* land.

Place names in P'iya Qayma can be used to explore this distinction as they indicate how the land is used and thought of, and also provide a constant reminder of the many previous generations who have lived and interacted with the land in the area. There are three different

types of place names in P'iya Qayma. One denotes how a place looks or what it does, such as 'wet riverbed'; another describes the activities performed by people in the place, for instance, 'little observation point,' or 'agricultural packing field'; and a third refers either to the character of the animacy the place, or associated myths – such as 'trembling uncle' or 'song of the fox.' The Andean literature has regularly noted the link between toponyms of fields, streams and outcrops, and temporality, showing how named places provide indexical powers to myths and historical events (Canessa 1998; Martinez 1983; Rappaport 1994).

These names serve as constant reminders of what it is that people do in these places, and the activities of their parents and grandparents before them. The names bestow places with a history that reaches back to pre-colonial days, creating a taskscape and an already 'dwelt-in', temporalised world (Ingold 2000: 172-209). In this sense, the land has character and culture, which has been accumulated and shaped over time. This is a process analogous to the one that creates *runakuna* out of *q'arakuna*. Vernacular land is cultured and not *q'ara* because it is 'dwelt' in and formed as a taskscape, because it is worked and engaged with as a fellow *ayllu* member, where communal laboring creates sociality and culture.

In sum, the land is named and it holds history, it is a cultural place. In addition, it is a place that enacts things, including taking the life of people. But it also performs acts that we might consider less remarkable but which nonetheless are viewed as proof of agency. Key to appreciating the existence of non-divine, animate land is to appreciate what type of activity the local population considers as proof of animacy. The land in P'iya Qayma is constantly productive as it grows food in its soil, freezes and dries potatoes, feeds animals, makes the grass and bushes grow, creates shade and protection, lets the springs run to provide water, and so on. The villagers consider this production of food and habitat as proof of its agency.

*Ayllu* members' recognition of this productiveness as something remarkable is instrumental to the local ontology of agentive land. This everyday 'non' spectacular agency,

the fact that places have effects on the world, has been highlighted in the comparative literature (see Allerton 2009; Ingold 2000: 172-209). As Ingold puts it, agency does not necessarily imply ‘magical mind-dust’ (2007: 11). Allerton, echoing Ingold’s work and his merging of ‘practical-technical’ and ‘mytho-religious’ worlds through the taskscape, points out that: ‘To speak of ‘sacred landscapes’ would imply a perception of the environment set apart from the profane activities of daily life’ (2009: 5).

When we hear about a mountain eating a man’s heart it does not strike us as an everyday act, and in certain senses, it is not, for it is not a common occurrence. However, it would neither be true to say that it belongs to a mytho-religious world for it is not a supernatural event, rather it was completely explainable, albeit shocking. Just as a man or woman can kill another human, or animal, so too can a mountain. This speaks to the statement that Mannheim and Salas Carreño make in their recent work – that it does not make sense to speak of Andean sacrality when the practices we consider sacred are imbricated in the profane and the quotidian realms of life (2015: 47). In Allerton’s fieldsite, the landscape is powerful but not supernatural, instead it is full of ‘energy of the land’ (*ghas de tana*) (2009: 11). I argue that in P’iya Qayma the land is similarly filled with ‘doing power,’ which manifests both in the production of potatoes and the killing of people. But crucially this doing power is predicated on the land being part of an *ayllu*, that is not *q’ara* but in a productive relationship with *runakuna*.

Wayna Tanka is a mountain, not a field that can be plowed, and made to produce crops, as such it less obviously at risk of agricultural abandonment; although, there are cultivations along its foot, and the mountainside is used for grazing - the small, stone-built, herding huts scattered across it clearly marks it as a taskscape. But my argument is not simply that mountains too are worked upon land; instead I suggest that earth beings should not be understood as discreet entities, the mountain is not cut off from the fields below, nor does it stand outside the relationship that people and land co-create in labor – instead its vernacular power is implicated

in the wider taskscape. While De La Cadena's discussion of 'earth beings', or '*tirakuna*', does help to an extent in my analysis of how people and land become non-*q'ara*, and their emergence through 'intra-action' (Bared 2007), the word is suggestive of discrete beings. People admittedly speak of *pachamama*, *apus* and *achachillas*, specific entities which come across as analogous to spirits or saints who simply inhabit the land. But to only conceive of animacy as existing in defined places ignores the broader agency that is intrinsic to the workings of all *ayllu* land. This is where Allerton's vernacular landscape and Ingold's taskscape is useful as it pushes us to appreciate the total animacy of all *ayllu* land and crucially, links it to everyday labor.

Comprehending the different categories of beingness the *ayllu* is not a simple thing. In addition to *runa* and *q'ara*, categories of 'wild' and 'domesticated' have been used to unpick the meanings of personhood and landscape in the Andes (e.g. Harris 2000: 180-200; Isbell 1978; Molinié Fioravanti 1982). In this earlier work, the 'wild', uncultivated land, such as mountaintops and rough terrain, are the areas connected most with supernatural forces. Unlike the analysis of the literature referenced in this article, these forces are not described as co-emerging with people, but as independent powers. It is true that in P'iya Qayma the animacy of the *apu* is not simply understood as a direct result of human practice, the process of co-emergence in the *ayllu* is subtle and something that occurs over time. Lack of agricultural engagement with the land does eventually result in people losing their *runahood*, land becoming *q'ara*, and the destruction of the *ayllu*. And for these Baptist villagers, it also places them further away from eternal salvation. But, in *q'ara* land rivers may still flow and *q'ara* people do not die, instead they unravel as *ayllu* members and their skills and 'doing powers' wanes.

## **Conclusion**

The death of a village member at the hands of the local mountain provides an analytical access point into the cosmology of the small Baptist village of P'iya Qayma. The analysis that followed necessarily linked various diverse themes, including the impact of Protestant conversion on animate land; the role and local evaluation of agricultural labor in Andean *ayllus*; the relationship between animate land and the personhood of people; *ayllu* ontology; and categories of sacred and profane in the Andes.

The ethnographic data presented demonstrates that while a significant religious shift has taken place, the now un-worshipped land has nevertheless retained its animacy and power. This is a significant finding that provides important insight into Protestant communities in the rural Andes. I have argued that land has remained powerful because its animacy is not of a sacred kind that is bound up in religious practice – but rather relies on an agricultural relationship with the people that live in interdependence with it. Agricultural work is the process by which people gain their full personhood and through which land gains its animacy; it is a co-creative practice that sits at the heart of the Andean *ayllu*. Agricultural work is an under-theorized area in Andean anthropology and my aim here is to demonstrate the central place it occupies in the local cosmology, and by extension argue that any definition of *ayllus* must include the relationship between people and the land they live in. I focus in particular on the phenomenological and everyday aspects of this relationship, as opposed to how work is organized and politically inflected. Agricultural work changes people and land through intense physical activity where bodies and fields are molded and developed into ideal versions of themselves.

Throughout the article I have borrowed the terms ‘vernacular landscape’ and ‘taskscape’ from Allerton and Ingold respectively in the discussion of *ayllu* land. These two concepts can help us conceive of the type of agency that exists in *ayllu* land, as well as how its inhabitants experience this – the everyday and practice-based ontology of *ayllu* communities.

These concepts draw us away from sacred and discrete mountain peaks and instead connect this ethnography with literature arguing in favor of the underexplored profane nature of animacy in the Andes. As such, this article advances an alternative approach to the commonly dichotomised categories of sacred and profane.

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1 From 2007 to 2009, I conducted 22 months of fieldwork in the area. The population are Quechua speakers although many of the women, who were originally from one of the neighboring Aymara-speaking department of Potosí, are bilingual. Spanish, Quechua and Aymara were used interchangeably during conversations. At times, Spanish was included specifically for my benefit but it also readily occurred in conversations between villagers. My own Quechua was more than conversational yet still relied on additional explanations in Spanish. Key informants who became familiar with the extent and limits of my language skills provided this.

2 The population who did chew coca always did so with lejia (burnt quinoa stalks or limestone chewed with coca in order to help activate the alkaloids in the leaves). This is in contrast with some ethnographic evidence that suggests evangelicals who continue to chew coca do so without lejia (see Canessa 2000:136).