The Glacier, the Rock, the Image: Emotional Experience and Semiotic Diversity at the Quyllurit'i Pilgrimage (Cuzco, Peru)

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ABSTRACT

The Quyllurit'i (Shining Snow) pilgrimage is the most important of the Southern Peruvian Andes. The shrine is located at the bottom of a glacier and currently attracts all the sociocultural diversity present in the regional society of Cuzco. During the main days of the pilgrimage this usually quiet place is inundated by innumerable groups of musicians and dancers and by tens of thousands of pilgrims. These particularities also attract foreign New Age pilgrims, as well as researchers and film crews. I claim, discussing Durkheim's elaboration on "collective effervescence," that the strong emotional experiences of the pilgrimage are functional to the reproduction of coexisting heterogeneous ways to experience and understand the pilgrimage. Most pilgrims are vocal in expressing their experience of transcendence in Quyllurit'i, though they have different ideas about who the transcendent agents addressed by the rituals are, what their relation to the materiality of the shrine is, and how to recognize their agency. The article analyzes the different ways in which New Age pilgrims, Catholic priests, and pilgrims of a highland Quechua community frame and experience the pilgrimage through different assumptions about the nature of society and how signs function in the world.

The Quyllurit'i pilgrimage, celebrated the week before the movable feast of Corpus Christi around May, has been growing over the past century and is now the most important one in the bilingual Quechua/Spanish

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society of the Southern Peruvian Andes.[1] The shrine is located about seventy kilometers east of the city of Cuzco in the district of Ocongate and the province of Quispicanchis. It is close to high glaciers, at an altitude of 15,800 feet, in the Sinaqara moraine valley area at the bottom of the Qulkipunku (Silver Gate) glacier and is relatively close to Mount Ausangate, the highest peak in the Cuzco region. It is at the same time a Catholic shrine and one deeply associated with the indigenous ways to relate to the landscape.

The main processions and the access to the shrine's church are managed by the Hermandad del Señor de Qoyllurit'i (Brotherhood of Lord Shining Snow), which has Jesuit priests as its official nexus with the Catholic Church. The pilgrimage is attended by people from all the sociocultural diversity present in the region, from rural highland communities to the current majority urban pilgrims. During the main days of the pilgrimage this usually quiet place is inundated by more than a hundred groups of musicians and dancers. It also attracts noncorporate pilgrims who come to the shrine to listen to the Mass, light candles, and perform their petitions through stone miniatures, as well as those who go primarily to observe the pilgrimage.[2] While smaller in numbers, there is also a noticeable presence of foreign pilgrims or tourists, New Age practitioners, researchers, and film crews. The pilgrimage has turned out to be a business opportunity for the people of the town of Ocongate and the surrounding communities, who have installed restaurants, sell souvenirs and cloths, and provide other services. In doing so, the people of Ocongate moved their pilgrimage to another time of the year. Others, mainly people of the surrounding rural communities who rent their horses or sell food, are Evangelicals. While they regard the pilgrimage as an idolatrous practice, they do not miss the monetary opportunity to gain income.

In this article I explore the "semiotic diversity" present in this shrine during the main days of the pilgrimage and elaborate on how such diversity coexists and is reproduced. By the word *diversity* I do not refer exclusively to the different political tensions that are present in the pilgrimage (Sallnow 1987, 1991). While some aspects of the different ways of experiencing it can become involved in tensions and conflicts, they also can pass largely unnoticed.

I claim, discussing Durkheim's elaboration on "collective effervescence," that the strong emotional experiences of the pilgrimage are functional to the re-

1. *Quyllurit'i* means 'white shining snow' in Quechua.
2. Regarding the performances of petitions through stone miniatures, see Allen 1997; Stensrud 2010.

production of coexisting heterogeneous ways to experience what the pilgrimage is about. Most pilgrims are vocal in expressing their experience of transcendence in Quyllurit'i, but there is an absence of agreement about who is or are the transcendent agents addressed by the rituals, what their relation is to the materiality of the shrine, or how to recognize their agency. The same event is experienced through different assumptions about the nature of society and how signs function in the world—that is, they emerge from different ontological perspectives.

The narratives of the shrine's origins involve part of the diversity present in the pilgrimage and are relevant to the coming discussions. Sad and overwhelmed by false accusations, Marianito, an indigenous shepherd boy, left his alpacas in Sinaqara and started to ascend toward the glacier. He met a white boy who comforted and played with him while the flock of alpacas miraculously improved and increased. Having heard about these events, the priest and neighbors of the town of Ocongate went to investigate. When they got close to the white child, he turned into a shining light. The official version stresses that the light briefly turned into a crucified Christ over a tree (the origin of the movable image of Señor de Quyllurit'i housed in the church of Ocongate). Shocked by this vision, the indigenous child died and was buried in front of a large rock that is at the center of the shrine. Oral Quechua versions, however, tell that the light disappeared into the rock without mentioning the crucified Christ on the tree (Gow 1976; Sallnow 1987; Ramírez 1996; Flores Lizana 1997). While in the first half of the twentieth century the Brotherhood tried to frame the movable image as the miraculous center of the pilgrimage (Salas Carreño 2006), for most people the rock is the core of the shrine. Located behind the main altarpiece of the church that has been gradually constructed since the 1930s, the rock has a painting of a crucified Christ, which is the only part that most pilgrims can see. The majority of pilgrims regard this Christ painted on the rock as the Señor (Spanish, 'lord') or Taytacha (Quechua, 'dear father') Quyllurit'i.

In the next section I describe the climatic moments of the main days of the pilgrimage and discuss Durkheim's notion of collective effervescence in dialogue with some previous scholarship on pilgrimage. I pay particular attention to the role of emotional experience in contexts of congregations of people coming from distinct ontological positions. In the following sections, I elaborate the ways in which New Age pilgrims, different Catholic priests, and the pilgrims of the Quechua community of Hapu frame the pilgrimage, and then finally move to the conclusion.

Pilgrimage, Contestation, and Collective Effervescence

While the main processions and the access to the shrine's church are organized and controlled by the Brotherhood, the number of people who attend the pilgrimage is so large that it is impossible to control the parallel practices that are carried out. Pilgrimage is a ritual that challenges canonical practices and dogmas of churches, which attempt to centralize authority and to impose a doctrine through professional priesthoods and the routinization of practices. Pilgrimage shrines are usually arenas of contestation between the different groups attempting to control them (Eade and Sallnow 2000). The source of the strength and popularity of a shrine, usually associated with objects, is related to powers that tend to be beyond the control of the priesthood and sometimes have little to do with the canonical doctrine of the religious organization that attempts to control it (Coleman and Elsner 1995, 208).

These characteristics of pilgrimage sites are even more salient in those sites that attract large congregations. The crowdedness of shrines makes it harder to discipline ritual appropriateness and to impose a top-down order. One of the first proponents of this approach to pilgrimage was Michael Sallnow (1981) in an article discussing the Quyllurit'i pilgrimage. He showed the flaws of the then-dominant view of pilgrimage elaborated by Victor and Edith Turner, according to which pilgrimages were portrayed as contexts of momentary dilution of social hierarchies and the emergence of a contextual sentiment of egalitarian shared humanity (Turner 1969; Turner and Turner 1978). Sallnow's (1981, 1991) characterization of Quyllurit'i as a site of contestation tended to simplify it to a basic opposition between two seemingly bounded racial-ethnic groups: mestizos (racially and culturally mixed people) and Indians. He tended to associate the Catholic framing and practices in the pilgrimage with the urban mestizo population and indigenous ones with rural Quechua communities. However, just like class differences, racial-ethnic ones are constructed relationally and negotiated in the pragmatics of particular interactions (Bourdieu 1984; Irvine 2001). Semiotic practices and interpretative resources cannot be understood as distributed along clear racial-ethnic divides.

Rather than focusing on the contestations present in terms of imposition of racial-ethnic labels and hierarchies associated with the control of the shrine or its main rituals, I examine a ritual sequence that constitutes the strongest moments of what Durkheim called the "collective effervescence" of the pilgrimage and how they are differentially interpreted by different participants in the pilgrimage. Furthermore, I point out that even though these are very different

interpretations, for reasons that go beyond the scope of this article, they do not necessarily lead to open contestation.

This pilgrimage's moments of collective effervescence are deeply related to the role of the dancers in it. Until the 1970s most pilgrims came to the shrine from the surrounding rural Quechua-speaking communities in corporate groups, each one carrying a small image of the Señor de Quyllurit'i escorted by dancers (Sallnow 1981). It is usually called *apuyaya* (Quechua, 'lord father') and consists of a small wooden box containing a small image, a drawing or a printed photograph, of the crucified Christ that is painted on the rock. Currently there are many more dance troupes than in the 1970s, and the majority of them come from the cities of Cuzco, Sicuani, and Juliaca, and from the many towns in the region, each one escorting an *apuyaya* belonging to neighborhoods, clubs, merchants associations, or unions (Salas Carreño 2006).

These dance troupes have two types of dancers. The first type performs a stylized portrait of certain spatial and temporal "otherness," such as the merchants of the high southern plateau or indigenous peoples of the Amazon (Poole 1990; Cánepa 1998, 334). The second type is called *ukuku*, *pawlucha*, or *pablito*. They accompany the former and are similar across all dance troupes. Some communities frame these dancers as being bears of the rainforest (Randall 1982; Allen 1983), llamas and alpacas (Gow 1976, 203; Flores Ochoa 1990), or even being both alpacas and bears (Ricard 2007, 283). Others do not make references to animals but rather characterize them according to their roles in the pilgrimage (Salas Carreño 2010, 84–85).

The *ukukus* tend to be young adults who are in charge of keeping the discipline within the dance troupe and the order in the pilgrimage, yet are also subversive and burlesque characters who mock—usually resorting to sexual jokes—fellow pilgrims or people with whom the troupe interacts. They are associated with superhuman force, animal sexuality, extreme appetite, and subversive behavior. These are "liminal" beings, that is, between humans and beasts (Gow 1976, 203; Sallnow 1987, 218; Ricard 2007, 271). They have to help out their group of pilgrims carry the heavy loads or distribute food, always in a good-humored fashion. They are also, on a rotating basis, at the service of the Brotherhood in order to control the entrance and exit of the pilgrims into the church, to clean it, or to remind people to take off their hats during the processions of Catholic images.

On Monday and Tuesday before Corpus Christi—celebrated on Thursday—the number of people in the shrine reaches its maximum. On Monday night all dancers perform incessantly in the *velada* (soiree) before the main day. Around

2 a.m. the *ukukus* of all troupes congregate according to eight different *naciones* (nations), broadly corresponding to the provinces from which they come. So grouped, they climb the glacier to known areas, where they "accompany" each nation's cross. At dawn each nation returns from the glacier bringing its nation's cross. Each nation can be seen as a long line descending from the glacier.[3] The rest of the dancers, also grouped by nations, await the arrival of their nation's cross below the line of permanent ice. Together they bring their cross to the shrine, dancing and blowing their small bottles at the rhythm of the favorite melody of the Taytacha Quyllurit'i.

The eight different crosses accompanied with endless lines of thousands of dancers start arriving at the church at almost at the same time. This confluence of so many dancers and musicians is one of the most intense moments of the pilgrimage. Each group of musicians performs the *wayri ch'unchu* (the first word is Wachupairi for 'chief'; the second is Quechua for 'lowland savage') melody that is the favorite of the lord (Salas Carreño 2010). They do so independently, overlapping each other in an uncoordinated heterophony creating a constant and impressive sound experience. As an ethnographer, it is very confusing as to where to look, what to watch, and how to figure out what is going on, as one gets involved in this tumultuous and unstoppable dancing human avalanche arriving from the glacier and inundating the area close to the church. When all the crosses have arrived from the glacier, the main Mass of Blessing starts outside the church. Many pilgrims make efforts to have the framed pictures of Taytacha Quyllurit'i touched by the blessed water that the priests sprinkle at the end of the Mass. After receiving the blessing, most pilgrims quickly leave the shrine.

In Durkheim's classic discussion of religious ritual as constructing social solidarity, these are contexts of collective effervescence when "the vital energy becomes hyper excited, the passions more intense, the sensations more powerful. . . . Man does not recognize himself; he feels somehow transformed and in consequence transforms his surroundings" ([1912] 2001, 424). Following Durkheim, this overwhelming experience can be seen as socially constructed by the attendance of each and every person at the pilgrimage. The extraordinary congregation of the diverse people present in the shrine becomes in itself an index of the power that resides there. The number of people performing in diverse ways, at the same time, in the convergence of the crosses from the gla-

3. Many *ukukus* used to come down from the glacier carrying blocks of ice on their backs. Since 2003, due to concerns with glacial retreat, the Brotherhood has been forbidden from taking ice from the glacier.

cier toward the church is so impressive that the actual sensorial experience of something extraordinary taking place could not but be real.

Durkheim's claims about the emergence of social solidarity in such contexts presupposes that those participating in collective rituals share the same semiotic resources, in a similar way that Saussure ([1915] 1983, 19) illustrated in what he meant by *langue* by using the simile of an exact copy of a dictionary present in the minds of all the members of a linguistic community. The consequences of collective effervescence become problematic when assuming a nonplatonic conception of culture that presupposes diversity rather than homogeneity in the semiotic resources that individuals use. In this view, the stability of meanings, rather than being assumed, has to be accounted for through particular semiotic mechanisms (Mannheim 1991). The diversity of semiotic resources becomes markedly higher in contexts such as the Quyllurit'i shrine during the main days of pilgrimage when all the sociocultural diversity of the regional society is congregated, including people coming from faraway countries.

Given the diversity of people congregated, the pilgrimage's experience of collective effervescence can be lived through very diverse semiotic frameworks, thus reinforcing—due to the strong emotions involved—very different and parallel ways of making it implicitly or explicitly comprehensible. These multiple lived interpretations of this event are to a large extent constructed through presuppositions that are taken for granted, that is, located below the level of awareness (Gumperz 1979; Silverstein 1981; Goffman 1983). It is not only that the experience of a *ukuku* who has spent most of the night on the glacier is different from that of a member of a foreign film crew but that the *ukuku* renders his participation meaningful through different presuppositions about the world than those used, for example, by the film crew member.

These strongly charged contexts—marked by grandiosity, complexity, and density that overwhelm the senses and blur clear understandings—not only tend to "render contextual sign processes as if they were . . . transcendently authored" (Parmentier 2002, 299) but also make them suitable for working as "ideological sublimes," as events particularly suitable to hold multiple interpretations, signs "in the pure state, and therefore capable of becoming charged with any sort of symbolic content" (Lévi-Strauss 1950, quoted by Derrida 1978, 290). The extraordinary nature of these events that index transcendence works in such a way that the diversity of semiotic processes and interpretations become to a large extent unnoticed. Not being sure of what actually happened, each pilgrim tends to reproduce his or her own certainties or beliefs about it and, to some extent, to assume that these are shared by the others.

Seeking Spiritual Reconnection with Nature

During the past twenty years tourism has been steadily growing in Cuzco, with an increasing interest in what is usually called Andean "shamanism." Travel agencies, guides, and other organizations, local and foreign, offer authentic Andean mystical experiences (Flores Ochoa 1996; Hill 2007). It is easy to find on the Internet offers of spiritual tours and healing workshops given by authentic Andean shamans carried out in Cuzco's Sacred Valley or in California. Most follow a rhetoric similar to the following advertisement for the Inka-Q'ero Medicine Seminars:

> For thousands of years my Peruvian ancestors have lived in perfect harmony with nature. This has helped them to feel that nature, and especially the "Earth" itself, has a great energy force that can cleanse, cure and renew our life energy. . . . During the past 28 years I have had the great good fortune to enter into the incredible world of the Peruvian "Curandero"—or healer—living, learning and sharing the true wisdom of Pachamama (Mother Earth) and the Apus (the mountain spirits),[4] and the wisdom of Nature itself. . . . It gives me great pleasure to present these Seminars of Inka-Q'ero Medicine, dedicated exclusively to teaching this ancestral wisdom.[5]

There is a relatively small presence of what I call New Age pilgrims in Quyllurit'i. Most of them are foreigners who have learned about the pilgrimage through New Age networks interested in indigenous practices in relation to the environment. For New Age pilgrims this journey is an experience to reconnect with nature and to purify themselves from the contaminated and alienating modern life of the industrialized metropolis (Povinelli 2001). New Age discourse consistently frames *apu* (an honorific usually translated as 'lord') as "mountain spirit" and *pachamama* as an encompassing "Mother Earth." This is coupled with framing Quyllurit'i as an ancient Inka ritual that renews the balance with nature and whose essence has been preserved despite the Catholic appropriation of it:

4. The contemporary use of the word *apu* refers almost exclusively to mountains. During the early colonial times it was an indigenous title of nobility translated as 'lord.' It is currently used by some Amazonian peoples to refer to their leaders. It can also be found in the lyrics of Quechua Catholic hymns for referring to God or Christ (e.g., "Apu yaya Jesucristo, qispichiqniy Dios nillay" [Father Lord Jesus Christ, my only God who makes me free]).

5. Inka-Q'ero Medicine seminars, http://www.urpichay.it/ingles/Kallpa10English.htm.

> This year . . . tens of thousands of indigenous andinos will trek to the 16,000 ft. Sinakara Glacier surrounded by four important mountains or Apus . . . that the Inca and their present day descendants believe are sacred spirits . . . to celebrate the transition of time from the past world to the new world, which is the significance of the Qoyllor Riti festival. . . . [It] is also celebrated by the Catholic Church who would have you believe it is a Christian holiday founded in 1780. It is not[;] the Catholic version is a myth designed by the Church to superimpose a foreign belief system on the local indigenous population.[6]

This comes from a web page of a filmmaker promoting a documentary. In it he also advertises a tour to Quyllurit'i in which he justifies the relative high fees due to the comforts he ensures.

I encountered one of the first groups of New Age pilgrims at the shrine in 1998. It was composed of about fifteen people and was led by a Peruvian woman who had been living in the United States for eighteen years. Their camp included a "restroom" tent and a dining tent and was surrounded by spaced, big peacock feathers. I asked her why they were there:

> I am here because I want to teach to my people . . . about the *pachamama* and the *apus*, the ancestral fathers. This is a very ancient religion, the first religion of the world, the religion of loving the Earth, loving the Sky, the Sun, the Moon. . . . It originated in different parts of the world, as here in the Andes of South America. I am doing shamanic training and the people that come with me want to learn how to arrive at a superior spiritual level and also recover their ancestral knowledge, their spirits' experiences, for teaching other people. I do training here because I consider that this is the most holy and sacred place, where our ancestors left much of their ancestral wisdom. We have to listen to them here.[7]

For her, while mentioning Quechua categories, these are but instantiations of a preexistent and translocal religion of loving nature in which she is an expert. This love for nature is conceived as something spiritual (i.e., immaterial), as are the beings that she came to listen to. The sacredness of the shrine is framed as a container of the ancestors' wisdom, and the core of the shrine is to reconnect with the knowledge left there by the ancestors.

6. "*Qoyllur Riti*: An Incan Festival Celebrating the Stars," by Seti Gershberg, http://www.thepathofthesun.com/2013/05/qoyllur-riti-an-incan-festival-celebrating-the-stars.html#more.

7. Quyllurit'i shrine, 1998; originally in Spanish.

In a rather different approach, the tour offered by the filmmaker quoted above included the permanent company of two "Q'ero shamans" who were going to make offerings to the *apus* as part of the tour. The Q'ero people have become famous among New Age circles, as they are characterized as keepers of an untouched ancient Inka wisdom. While the Q'ero have been subjects of the Inka and the Spanish empires, New Age discourses claim that until very recently they have been isolated (Salas Carreño 2006).

The groups with whom I had the opportunity to talk and observe in the shrine did not participate directly in the rituals of the pilgrimage but were only observers. They tend to see the Catholic elements of the rituals as alien and superficial impositions. The rituals of the *ukukus* in the glacier are seen as a proof that the center of the rituals is the glacier, and this interpretation was reaffirmed by witnessing the spectacular arrival of the *ukuku* from the glacier.

New Age groups, rather, use the broader rituals of the pilgrimage as a frame within which they try to relate to the *apu*, whom they regard as the glacier spirit, making offerings to the *apu* outside the shrine and close to the perpetual ice. The image of Christ located on the rock is unimportant for them. As in the tour offered by the filmmaker, they tend to do so by having the services of a Q'ero or other person indexing remote indigenous authenticity. This person leads the making and delivering of an offering to the *apu*. The otherness of contemporary indigenous practices performed by Quechua-speaking Q'ero people donning distinctive indigenous clothing becomes an index of ancient Inka culture, negating Q'ero people's coevalness (Fabian 1983). Their understandings of Quyllurit'i thus simplify the regional society through a dichotomy between the authentic keepers of Inka wisdom who maintain a harmonious balance with nature and those pilgrims engaging in Christian-related rituals, monetary economy, and acculturated practices that ultimately partake in the modern alienation from nature. People such as the Q'ero are seen as the resistance against the ailments of all types of modern alienations.

This dichotomy is aligned with another one at the core of the New Age discourses. In their concerns with the alienation from nature, they could not have this view without the presupposition of a notion of nature opposed to human society. The latter is in turn aligned with the opposition between the material and the spiritual. Their quest for reconnection with nature is repeatedly associated with the strong notion of the superiority of immateriality. The agents that are addressed by their practices are spiritual beings—either the ancestors or the beings inhabiting the material mountains. Their search for

reestablishing a lost balance largely overlooks the material aspects and consequences of human practices in relation to the environment.

This becomes paradoxically indexed by the strong difference in equipment between them and the rest of pilgrims. An Australian residing in Cuzco in 2010 describes one of these tour camps in the shrine as a "roped-off enclave, with a grandly outfitted dining tent, a tour group inside taking dinner on their camp stools," in contrast with the neighboring "group of locals [who] lay in sleeping bags on the icy ground under a stretched out piece of blue plastic."[8] These contrasts seem to be irrelevant to some New Age pilgrims, who have condescending views of the requests that the majority of pilgrims perform in the shrine. For example, I asked the shamanic trainer I quoted above what she thought of the local pilgrims who were more interested in requesting things such as having a house, getting a job, and seeking to alleviate their poverty. She answered, "Poverty exists in our spirit and that is why we ask, ask and ask. Things come spontaneously to us when there is richness in our spirit."[9] A similar attitude is conveyed by a rather disappointed German pilgrim who was working as a volunteer in Cuzco in 1998. When I asked her about her impressions of the pilgrimage, she commented about the performance of desires with stones:

R: I do not know. I think that this is quite commercial and I do not know what people really want. Because . . . all these things: the houses, the cars . . . if you put them you will obtain them the next year. It is really materialistic, isn't it? And . . . I do not like it.
A: Why?
R: Because I think that this is a religious festivity and should be religious but it is very materialistic.[10]

Paradoxically, the reconnection New Age pilgrims seek is inscribed and reproduces what Latour (1993, 33–35) called the "work of purification," the constant and futile attempts to separate humans from nonhumans, society from nature, subjects from objects, the symbolic from the material. Their return to nature is launched from particularly privileged positions within the lifeworlds that have emerged from the modern ways of objectification impli-

8. "*Qoyllur Rit'i*: Beating Drums and Freezing Feet," by Camden Luxford, http://matadornetwork.com/abroad/qoyllur-riti-beating-drums-and-freezing-feet.
9. Quyllurit'i shrine, 1998; originally in Spanish.
10. Ibid.

cated in the work of purification. Having taken for granted benefits of being US or European middle classes, New Age pilgrims seem to be able to disassociate the material means that allow them to be comfortably present in the pilgrimage from their spiritual task of reconnecting with the spirits of nature.

Catholic Priests' Framing of the Pilgrimage

The earliest available text about the pilgrimage was written in 1933 by the parish priest of Ccatca and Ocongate. Secular priests have been fundamental to the ways the pilgrimage is understood today (Salas Carreño 2006). They tend to highlight the pilgrimage's Christian elements while the not clearly Christian practices are framed as unimportant customary practices. Consider the way the parish priest of Ocongate wrote in 1968 about the practices in the glacier:

> The custom of alpinism to the high glacier of Sinaqara the Friday before the festivity . . . was introduced in the Quyllurit'i shrine in 1963. It is a great parade of confraternity, part of the great Christian humanity's essence. Brave men, called *hermanos celadores* [Brotherhood's members] by the maternal Saint Church, climb the snow peak under the light of Christ. They climb up as far as their enthusiasm and force allow, carrying a Cross of eight meters long, led by the priest, the sound of a band, and firecrackers. . . . Once the cross is posted, they put a large banner to be read from everywhere saying *Viva Cristo*. Then they return in a sporting way. The cross remains in the snow until the night between the Monday and Tuesday: . . . sad and melancholic night of deep cold. Under the moonlight, the dreadful *ukukus* go to the cross. After a "war" fought there between those of Paucartambo and of Quispicanchis, the winners carry the cross back to the shrine. (Quoted in Flores Lizana 1997, 48; my translation)

While the text claims that the collocation of crosses in the glacier started in 1963, it suggests that the *ukukus* climbed the glacier at night in order to take down the cross and implies that their practices in the glacier also started that year. The text does not elaborate on why they spent the night in the glacier, or what was this "war" between Paucartambo and Quispicanchis *ukukus*. It is tempting to read it as registering the moment of imposition of a cross and a propagandistic banner praising Christ over preexisting *ukuku* rituals in the glacier.

For these priests, the image of Christ painted on the rock was an "indexical icon" of Christ's past miracle and the miracles that since then are granted to

those who go on pilgrimage to this sacramental place. Pilgrimage sites were usually understood through the notion of the sacrament: privileged rituals, objects, moments, places through which God relates to humans—the Eucharist being the main one. From this perspective, the glacier did not play an important role, and the dancer's practices were unimportant customs but not religious practices.

These ways of understanding the pilgrimage suppose a distinction between religion and culture, where the former is assumed to be universal and refuses to be place bound, while the latter is understood as local, particular, and place-bounded (Keane 2007, 84–85). This is consonant with considering indigenous practices as superstitious remnants of the past rather than as pagan practices to be persecuted (Canessa 2012, 51). This is how this priest framed the nocturnal practices of the *ukukus* in the glacier, as innocuous locally bounded customs that could not threaten the teachings of the universal church.

Jesuit priests assumed the parishes of the Quispicanchis province in 1968 and brought with them a different perspective (Schlegelberger 1993). These mostly foreign Jesuit priests were strongly influenced by the Latin American Liberation Theology and its "option for the poor" (Gutiérrez 1971) and by the Inculturation Theology, which elaborated that for Christianity to be authentic, it had to be expressed and lived through indigenous cultural forms (Orta 2004). In the words of one of these priests, "It is not about introducing uniform ritual from Western Christianity. Neither is it about 'purifying' the Quechua peasant religiosity but rather discovering its legitimacy within the pluralism of Christian cultures. Then, the main task of the priest is to share the Andean religiosity, deepen it, and find its place in the universal Catholic community in such a way that the Church ends up recognizing itself in Andean religiosity, and that the Andean religiosity finds itself reflected in the official Church" (Hansen 1993, 277; my translation).

These Jesuits carried out different efforts for improving the living conditions of their parishioners as well as a sustained intellectual reflection about indigenous religiosity (e.g., Marzal 1971, 1991; García 1983; Schlegelberger 1993; Flores Lizana 1997). They developed a rather sympathetic view of the pilgrimage's noncanonical practices instead of framing them as unimportant superstitions: "I have been chaplain of Quyllurit'i for eleven years. It is a very impressive pilgrimage. Anthropologists and moviemakers have a way to see it. I see it as a priest, from the confessionary and the ritual. People have deep experiences, of changing their lives, of repentance. It is not folklore. We wait for the sunrise. We kneel when it arrives. We hug each other. Personally, I consider

it a Christian expression in Andean language. It is not paganism" (Herrera 2008; my translation).

Most of these priests know Quechua and celebrate Mass in it. They made efforts to incorporate local practices within the Catholic elements of the pilgrimage—for example, dance troupes' performances within the Mass at the shrine. Some of them even participated as *ukukus* in the pilgrimage.

To some extent, the approach taken by these Jesuit priests is anchored within a semiotic ideology (see Parmentier 1994; Keane 2003) that assumes a sharp distinction between signs and what they signify, associated with a dematerialization of the objects of religious signs. Culture is framed as the domain of material expressions (which is deeply related to the living material conditions of their parishioners). In contrast, religion is conceived as a domain of immaterial beliefs. This allows a way to understand semiotic forms—dance performances, for example—as expressing essentially abstract meanings, and thus it is able to convey Christian values through metaphoric associations (Keane 2007, 111–12). Through this semiotic framing, the pilgrimage certainly can be seen as "a Christian expression in Andean language."

The Pilgrims of Hapu

Hapu is one of the Q'ero communities regarded as the hallmark of indigenous authenticity in urban Cuzco and among New Age visitors interested in Andean culture. As such Hapu community members have been in contact with some New Age practitioners who have arrived at their relatively far away community. While there is some level of bilingualism among middle-aged and young males, Quechua is used in all contexts of interaction, including the practices of Evangelical converts, which includes about half of the community. When I arrived in Hapu in 2007 and accompanied them on the pilgrimage, they were entangled in conflicts between those who were interested in cultivating the customary practices that interested New Age visitors and the converts who regarded such practices as idolatrous. This tension is present in their claims about Quyllurit'i.

In order to elaborate a Hapu perspective on the pilgrimage I introduce a framework elaborated in my previous work for understanding Quechua societies that include nonhumans. While it applies to Hapu, it should not be understood as restricted to remote rural areas. With some differences, it is also relevant for urban contexts embedded in a monetary economy (Salas Carreño 2012, 133–71). I refer to mountains, lands, hills, and any other named places as either "places" (Allen 1988) or "earth-beings" (De la Cadena 2010). From

Quechua perspectives, social relations among humans and the places where they live and work are built upon the same principles through which human social relations are constructed: they presuppose notions of food circulation and coresidence. These notions are present in the construction of the closest kin relations among humans. Food is privileged as the material substance constituting and relating Quechua bodies. Together with continuous coresidence, these are crucial practices in the processes of constructing Quechua kinship (Weismantel 1995; Leinaweaver 2008; Van Vleet 2008).

Quechua people's relationship with places are constituted by the enactment of principles through "diagrammatic iconicity" (*PWP*, 105, 107; Mannheim 2000). For example, "a child is born nine or ten months after a man plants seed in a woman. A child ripens during pregnancy through the *actions* of the woman who nourishes her child, just as Pacha Mama [Mother Earth] nourishes the seed of corn or potatoes, allowing those seeds to ripen" (Van Vleet 2008, 59). Notice that the seeds planted by men[11] become potatoes, and hence food, thanks to the nourishment provided by *pachamama*, an earth-being. This points toward a broader level of iconicity: just as human parents provide food and shelter to their children (and through this process construct their kinship relations), the places where humans live and work provide food and shelter to human beings. It is through their materiality that earth-beings provide food for humans and give them somewhere to live. Hence, as Allen (1988, 41) points out, these beings are not spirits but the places themselves.

Humans acknowledge their dependence on particular earth-beings and try to maintain good social relations with them through different ways of giving food to them: from daily invitations to jointly consume coca leaves and alcohol to complex food offerings made on settled occasions. Illness, poor harvest, and other misfortunes result from not properly feeding or neglecting to feed, and may even be due to the arbitrary will of the earth-beings. Hence, these relations are not necessarily harmonious. They can range from enjoying certain well-being to suffering illness, poverty, and ultimately becoming the food of places (Salas Carreño 2012, 133–71).

Hapu people who have not converted to Evangelicalism regard themselves as Catholics and take the existence of God for granted. In contrast to their Evangelical neighbors, Hapu Catholics regard God as a distant being living in *hanaqpacha* (the world above) and uninterested in human affairs. Images of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints, located in parish churches or pilgrimage sites

11. Given the femininity of the fields, planting is a masculine task and is often talked about in sexual terms.

such as Quyllurit'i are, however, located in the same world with humans and earth-beings. Hapu Catholics, as well as other Quechua Catholics, tend to regard the Christ images, especially those in stones that are at the core of pilgrimage sites, as more powerful than saints' images (Sallnow 2000).

When I asked to don Luis, one of my Hapu Catholic acquaintances if Taytacha Quyllurit'i was God, he was quite clear about their difference. For him Quyllurit'i was the "*apu* [lord] of the Catholic people of *pampapacha* [the world of the surface]," [12] tacitly asserting that he was not the lord of Evangelical converts. Don Luis spoke of "dear father" Quyllurit'i as a person emplaced in the landscape, in the *pampapacha*, rather than framing him as indexical icon of a being who is in *hanaqpacha* or who has an immaterial existence.

This difference between Quyllurit'i and God becomes, in the words of Isabel, one of sharp opposition. She is knowledgeable about giving complex food offerings to the earth-beings, and she became familiar with Evangelical discourse, as her husband wanted to convert, and both attended some services. She explains what she understands to be Catholic in opposition to the Evangelical discourse:

A: Is Lord Shining Snow an *apu*? Or is not an *apu*?
I: Lord Shining Snow, now we say [is] Satan, right? . . . That miraculous Satan Shining Snow.
A: Really?
I: Yes. [He is] not from the side of God Our Father. [He is] from the side of the world of the surface. From the side of Satan. Lord Shining Snow is miraculous. Yes. Also the Lord of Crag.[13]
A: Really?
I: Yes. Miraculous. . . . Those are miraculous satans. They are adored in the world of the surface. They are the Catholics' adoration.

God belongs to the world above and satans to the world of the surface. Evangelicals adore God, while Catholics adore satans, which are the Christ images at the core of pilgrimage sites. There is no doubt, Isabel stresses, that these satans are miraculous and provide for Catholics. Note that she refers to two different pilgrimage sites that have Christ images as their core as two different beings (see also Sallnow 1982).

12. Conversation with don Luis, Hapu, 2007; originally in Quechua.

13. Señor de Wanka (Lord of the Crag) is another important pilgrimage shrine in the region. The core of the shrine is a crag that has a painted Christ being flagellated.

While these pilgrimage sites are beings localized in the landscape, the ways humans interact with them are very different from those used for greeting the earth-beings. Humans engage with earth-beings by offering coca leaves or the first drops of any alcoholic beverage on a daily basis and through complex food offerings on special occasions. However, Taytacha Quyllurit'i does not consume them. Rather, he prefers candles and enjoys hearing Mass and the dances performed for him. While people can make a special request to the places through people knowledgeable of delivering complex food offerings, Catholic priests are the legitimate mediators of Taytacha Quyllurit'i.

Hapu people go to the Quyllurit'i shrine collectively with a dance troupe escorting their *demanda*, a wooden box containing a miniature Lord Shining Snow, which is treated with the same etiquette as the image of the rock. It is regarded as the local body of Lord Shining Snow. Performing his favorite music and carrying their small image of him with them, Hapu pilgrims traversed the landscape by foot and by truck. They make solemn stops at crucial points of the path: the first, at the last point from which they saw the civic-ritual center of the community, and the second, when they reach the high pass marking the boundary of their communal lands. Solemn stops are made at all the high passes. These are crucial places because, arriving there, the pilgrims cease interacting with a large set of earth-beings and start doing so with a new one. Similarly, they stop when they reach points where a town appears in sight or when they arrive at a cross or a chapel. In all these stops the pilgrims take off their head cloths. They and their *demanda* face the places they are encountering while the musicians perform *alawaru* (from Spanish *alabado* [praised]). This can be seen as a human salutation to these places but also as a salutation of Hapu's Quyllurit'i to the places encountered on the path. This is a widespread pattern (Sallnow 1987, 185–88; Allen 1988; Mendoza 2010).

The Hapu dance troupes enter the shrine dressed in full regalia accompanying their small Quyllurit'i in his encounter with the rocky Quyllurit'i. They salute him with the *alawaru* and are briefly allowed to dance for him. While many dance troupes leave their small Quyllurit'i next to the "original" one, due to the difficulties of entering the church and being afraid of losing it, Hapu pilgrims prefer to keep it in their camp. While some Hapu people told me that they danced as *ukukus* when they climbed the glacier, when I accompanied their pilgrimage, Hapu *ukukus* just stayed dancing in their camp. Using the appropriate dance for Catholic images and accepting the mediation of the Brotherhood and the priests, Hapu pilgrims wait until the end of the Mass of Blessing after the *ukukus* come down from the glacier in order to

return home. They arrive on Thursday to celebrate Kurpus (Corpus Christi), which is the celebration of the return of their small Quyllurit'i to the community, and those who could not go to the shrine can receive Quyllurit'i's blessings.

Who is Quyllurit'i for the Hapu people? Which is the center of the shrine? How do they frame the practices of the *ukukus* in the glacier? It is difficult to answer these questions relying on "metapragmatic" discourse. Quechua does not have a strong tradition of "regimented" metapragmatic exegesis, and, hence, exegetical discourse is heterogeneous (Mannheim 1986).

For example, in the following fragment, don Sebastian seems to be framing Quyllurit'i as the glacier rather than as the rock.

A: Why do the *ukukus* go to the snow?
S: They go to the snow. Always it was so, right? All, all our fellow humans always go there in penitence. They continue going—right?—in order to request. All those people request from the *apu*, right?
A: From the *apu*?
S: Umhu.
A: Which *apu*?
S: Certainly the *apu* Sinaqara is in our shrine.[14]
A: Is the lord Shining Snow an *apu*?
S: Yes.
A: Or is not an *apu*?
S: *Apu*, he is an *apu*.[15]

While he refers to a Catholic trope of penitence associated with pilgrimages, he primarily frames *apu* Sinaqara as the being who receives the *ukukus*' requests. Then, referring to Shining Snow as an *apu*, it is possible to think of him as a glacier. The following fragment of the same conversation, however, complicates this association.

A: Where is the *apu*?
S: The *apu* is at the highest [summit]. The *apu* who raises us is the very icy height. All those are *apus*.
A: Only those?
S: That Sinaqara.

14. Sinaqara is the name of the broader place where the shrine is located. Here don Sebastian is using Sinaqara as also including the glacier.

15. Hapu, 2007, originally in Quechua; my translation.

A: *Apu* Sinaqara.
S: Yes. All are of Sinaqara. . . . That has power, that Sinaqara, right? Yes.
A: And Lord Shining Snow?
S: There, in the church.
A: But is he also an *apu*? Or not?
S: [He] is an *apu*. Certainly [he] is an *apu*.[16]

Don Sebastian points to certain type of iconicity between Lord Shining Snow and the high glaciers by treating both with the same honorific (*apu*), while clearly stating their difference in location. Father Shining Snow is located in the church, and hence he is not a glacier. Don Sebastian might be referring to his maleness, power, authority over life and death, and ownership of fertility—qualities that he shares with the high glaciers without himself being one.

Even though the rock and the glacier can be seen as different places, there are several ways in which they are related to each other. The first one is the location of the rock. It is so close to the glacier that the latter's presence is hard to ignore while in the shrine. The second relation is given by the very name Shining Snow, which also points to the glacier. These relations make the rock/image of Christ an index of the glacier, that is, the rock points to the unavoidable presence of the glacier.

The third relation is more complex and is elaborated by Allen (1997), who points out the resemblance of the relation between the glacier and the rock with that between the mountains and the small stones in form of domestic animals (called *illa* or *khuyarumi*). These miniatures, present in Hapu and in many other communities, contain the animating force, given by the mountain, that allows the healthy reproduction of a particular flock (Flores Ochoa 1979). They are living beings that are fed with alcohol and coca during the celebrations for the fertility of the flock. While mountains give *illas* to some people, *illas* can also be obtained in a different way. When a particularly beautiful animal is found close to a high lagoon it is likely that it is one of the *apu*'s animals. If a human can throw a cloth over this animal, it suddenly transforms itself into an *illa*. As Allen notes, this transformation resembles how, when the priest and town notables got close to the white boy, he transformed himself into a blinding light and then disappeared/transformed into the rock that now bears the image of Lord Shining Snow (Allen 1997, 78). Note, also, the association with the glacier and with fertility. The white boy appeared when the shepherd boy approached the glacier. While the shepherd child and the white child

16. Ibid.

played together, the flock of alpacas reproduced miraculously. Following the logic of these stone miniatures, the shrine's rock would be a way through which the glacier establishes a privileged means to channel his powerful animating force. Hence, instead of being a sacrament of God, the rock can be seen as a sacrament of the Qulqipunku glacier. While there are many differences between the *illas* and Lord Shining Snow, this structural similarity explains why the rock is alive and why it is so miraculous.

A fourth relation between rock and glacier is given by the very noticeable sequence in the main rituals. The crosses carried by the *ukuku* dancers remain at the glacier during the night and at dawn they descend to the church. Once they arrive there, the main Mass of Blessing is celebrated. In this way, Our Father Shining Snow only gives his blessing when he has received the crosses that remained at the glacier during the night.

If Lord Shining Snow were exclusively the glacier, there would not be any reason to treat him as Christian images have to be treated, namely, with Masses, dances, and candles. If the Lord Shining Snow was exclusively the rock in the church, then there would be no reason for the *ukuku* dancers to spend the night on the glacier.

For Hapu people, while the core of the shrine is the rock/Christ image, its power is inextricably linked to and dependent on the glacier. However, it is also clear that the human relationship with this powerful being is mediated by the forms that have to be followed when dealing with Catholic images and by the institutional mediators with whom he approves, that is, the Brotherhood, the priests, and the dancers.

Conclusion

In 2001, after the *ukukus* arrived to the shrine but before the beginning of the Mass of Blessing, the Jesuit priest in charge addressed the congregation of pilgrims with the following words in Quechua:

1. My brothers, my sisters,
2. [It is] already 222 years since our father *señor* [Spanish, lord] Shining Snow, Our Snowy Father, our High Father, *Cristo Campesino* [Spanish, peasant Christ] came to us. He is together with us like in 1780. When Marianito had sadness in his heart, our father, with his sweet heart, healed him.
3. Just like then, today, our father *señor* Shining Snow is with us. He is soothing our hearts either if they are full of sadness or happiness.

4. Our father's command is that we fix our lives and live correctly. Some have healthy and good lives. Others maybe are sick in hospitals. We do not know what sufferings others might be facing. But our father walks with all of us.
5. Hence, we come with all our hearts. From very far communities, from very far towns we come to visit our father remembering that he made our hearts flourish by coming here 222 years ago.
6. [Addressing Lord Shining Snow:] We are remembering/thinking of you with all our hearts! Our father *señor* Shining Snow, *Cristo Campesino*, *Cristo del Nevado* [Spanish, Christ of the glacier], remain with us!
7. We also see that the Brotherhood of Lord Shining Snow, with your help, with the saint charity that you give, is doing many things to enlarge what we call the house of *señor* Shining Snow. And now the main altar of our father Snow is shining beautifully, like stars do, with this gold leaf altarpiece.
8. Now the Lord Shining Snow might be found very happy looking to us, to all his children.
9. All of us, as his children, have come by ourselves from very distant towns. We have come to our father *señor* Shining Snow from very far places, walking through mountain passes, we all have arrived. Some of us are coming from very far towns, some from very far communities; some of us are coming from far nations.
10. *Señor* Shining Snow loves us. Then, my brothers, let's begin already and listen to our celebration of the Saint Mass of Thanksgivings and then inaugurate our father's main altarpiece.[17]

Assuming that Quyllurit'i is Christ—a spiritual being—one can interpret that Christ appeared to console Mariano long ago (2) and that in the present he blesses the congregation of the faithful who come together to celebrate his love for a humble shepherd's indigenous child and request the same for themselves (3). Thanks to the profound spiritual experience of the pilgrimage, Christ "walks with all of us" when "we fix our lives and live correctly" (4). To make a pilgrimage is to break from the daily routine and travel in order to remember Christ and what he has done for us (5, 6, 9) so that he might remain present in our lives (6, 8). The references to the new altarpiece and the church as

17. Words of a Jesuit priest in the shrine before the Mass of Blessing in 2001; originally in Quechua; my translation.

the house of Christ point toward adorning a sacramental place, following a long tradition of using iconic representations of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints (7, 10). This attitude toward images is one of the ways in which Catholicism is usually contrasted with the reformed churches (Belting 1994).

Assuming Quyllurit'i is a localized being, the priest's first references to him—"Shining Snow, Snowy Father, High Father"—stress his relationship with the glacier (2). Later he refers to him, in Spanish, as the "Christ of the glacier," further stressing this association (6). He refers to the moment in which Quyllurit'i became the rock and since then is in Sinaqara, so he is "with us" in the present (2, 3). Having the *demandas* of the dance troupes stay close to the Lord Shining Snow and having the framed pictures of individual pilgrims touched by the holy water sprinkled by the priests, he remains with the devotees and hence "walks with all of us" (4). The mentions of the pilgrims' travels from faraway lands, traversing the landscape, stress the localized nature of Our Father Lord Shining Snow (5, 8). This is further stressed by framing the church as the Quyllurit'i house (7). The golden Baroque sculpted altarpiece that is to replace the previous one of painted wood is a present to Quyllurit'i from all the pilgrims so that his house might be embellished (7, 10). Quyllurit'i's happiness can be interpreted as a consequence of these new presents (8). The priest's speech, addressing directly the Lord Quyllurit'i, underscore his role as Shining Snow's mediator in front of all the pilgrims (6).

Yet the first interpretation is tinted by the continuous references to the glacier and the second one by similar references to Christ and Catholicism. The peculiarity of this shrine that has, as a core, an image of Christ painted on a rock but that is closely associated with a glacier is one instance of the particular configuration of Cuzco's regional society. This society cannot be understood as two distinct worlds, an indigenous versus a Western one. Neither, however, can it be characterized as a stable synthesis or as a hybrid of both. As Abercrombie (1998) has shown in detail for an Aymara community, contemporary indigenous Andean practices carry the imprint of a long dialogue with Catholicism. Currently, these dialogues also include, in religious terms, those launched by Evangelicalism and, in secular ones, those pertaining the nation-state's institutions and rituals (Harvey 1997; Salas Carreño 2012).

While not usually mentioned, the opposite is also true. Those in the regional society of Cuzco who do not regard themselves as indigenous also have cultural peculiarities that emerged through the long history of their sustained interactions with indigenous peoples and practices. For example, all Spanish, Quechua, and bilingual speakers in Cuzco are familiar with the Quechua word

apu. A professional middle-class monolingual Spanish speaker who has grown up in the city and has little interest in indigenous practices is likely to say, similar to New Age pilgrims, that an *apu* is a mountain's spirit. Hence, for this person, even though the Quyllurit'i shrine has Christian aspects, its association with a glacier relates it to indigenous beliefs about mountain spirits. In contrast, a monolingual Quechua speaker from a rural highland community is likely to use the word *apu* as an honorific, roughly corresponding to "lord," for greeting powerful mountains endowed with personhood. The *apu* Qulqipunku is associated with Catholic symbols and priests, being the legitimate mediators of the powers associated with the glacier but channeled through the rock housed in the church.

Hence, both the ideal extremes—the urban monolingual Spanish speaker and rural monolingual Quechua speaker—live within worlds that inevitably include elements from the other. This is also the case for the New Age pilgrims, who, by their attempts to purify the pilgrimage from Catholic symbols and practices, keep pointing out their undesired presence. Between these ideal poles lies the vast majority of Cuzco's population, which has different types of familiarity and command of the semiotic forms coming from different traditions but has been in continued yet hierarchically laden dialogues for several centuries. The diversity of Cuzqueño pilgrims, regardless of their way of framing the purpose of going to the pilgrimage, engages both with the powers of the living landscape and with the Catholic idiom of devotional penance—and these two forms are inseparable (Sallnow 2000, 150–51). This type of copresence cannot be reduced to a third hybrid synthesis, such as one conveyed by the notion of syncretism. While these different worlds appear within each other and are interpreted through different assumptions about the nature of the world, they remain distinct (see De la Cadena 2013).

New Age pilgrims and Jesuit priests, as people living within worlds differently shaped by the work of purification, tend to presuppose a world in which, for some practices, signs are independent of their objects. In contrast, Hapu people live in a world that violates the work of purification in several ways (see also Allen 1997, 75). However, it should not be understood that, while New Age pilgrims and Jesuit priests inhabit worlds shaped by the drive of purification, Quechua people necessarily live in a world diametrically opposed to the work of purification. Quechua worlds are not necessarily constructed as oppositions to how Westerners assume their worlds are (Keane 2007, 12). While the work of purification has come to be a "social fact," it does not exhaust the complexities of Western societies. After all, the materiality implicated in

"semiotic mediation" always makes the work of purification unattainable. In similar ways, Quechua worlds have forms of objectification that are constructed through modalities that cannot be subsumed within the drive for purification.

The semiotic diversity present in the regional society, and the copresence of distinct worlds within particular lived interpretations of events such as the pilgrimage, can be possible only through the existence of the actual mechanisms of "regimentation" at play. On the one hand, they are present in practices carried out, for example, by the Catholic church, the school system, and the state institutions, and, on the other hand, they are inscribed and reproduced in the instantiation of Quechua poetic forms (Mannheim 1986, 1991). For instance, the very etiquette of the pilgrimage that involves salutations to shrines and earth-beings already frames the Quyllurit'i shrine as another, yet particularly powerful, instance of these beings.

Pilgrimages, due to their particular characteristics, are prone to the coexistence and reproduction of different interpretations regarding the nature of the transcendence to be found in them. These multiple interpretations are allowed and even promoted by the strong emotional experiences present in them. While collective effervescence is associated with the experience of transcendence, the diversity of interpretations about it is facilitated by the extraordinary quality of the experience. Collective effervescence can paradoxically promote feelings of social solidarity that are, however, not necessarily homogeneous. Quechua pilgrims and Catholic priests have different interpretations of the rituals as long as there is no conflict among them. This diversity, however, can also be entangled in opposing and contradictory visions that can become expressed in contestation and conflict. For example, future changes in the pilgrimage can culminate in a scenario of contestation between New Age pilgrims and the Catholic priests. Thus, contexts of collective effervescence do not necessarily reproduce homogeneous feelings of social solidarity but rather heterogeneous experiences of the transcendent.

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