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The Double Bind and the Reverse Side of the International Legal Order: Talking with Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and El Colectivo

Paulo Ilich Bacca *

Abstract
This article analyses the complexities of the double bind between colonial domination and Indigenous resistance in conversation with anarchist sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui. The functioning of the double bind appears in the article at three levels: first, by exploring the encounter between Western and Indigenous jurisdictions in the context of colonial meetings and across imperial networks; second, by analyzing the way in which Rivera develops an epistemological program based on daily life practices; and, third, by showing one example in which Rivera develops a double bind epistemological framework in order to read the colonial encounter between Western and Indigenous jurisdictions in the Americas in the sixteenth century. The interaction with Rivera allowed me to better understand the complexities of an Andean world that operates through the double bind of being Indigenous and non-Indigenous at the same time; while on the other, it enabled me to test out the academic tradition that depicts history, in particular the history of the international legal order, in a linear and progressive trajectory. With this approximation at hand, I analyze the relationship between past, present, and future within the social life of Andean Indigenous communities.

Key Words
double-bind - pä chuyma; ch'ixi epistemology; Andean cosmologies; western and indigenous jurisdictions; international legal order

1 Introduction
This article, inspired by the work of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, explores a twin-track anthropological approach characterized by the possibility of interacting between worlds that are both contradictory and complementary. The exploration of the epistemological and heuristic potential of the double bind takes place when there are two demands in conflict and neither can be ignored. Thus, this encounter supposes an insoluble dilemma: whenever the subject position chooses one of the imperatives of the aporia, it cancels, in fact,

* Centre for the Study of Law, Justice and Society – Dejusticia, Bogotá, Colombia. pbacca@dejusticia.org
the possibility of fulfilling the other one.\(^1\) And that is why the subject position is always interacting between the two-aporetical poles.

For Spivak, the \textit{double bind} takes place when social inheritances are complementary and contradictory at once. This is, for example, the case of our postcolonial international legal order, where the universalism of human rights coexists in a self-contradictory fashion with structural racism and discrimination of the same field.\(^2\) By following this twin-track approach, Aymara sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, has \textit{indigenized} this crucial reflection. Rivera has translated the Spivakian term \textit{double bind} using the Aymara word \textit{pä chayma},\(^3\) which means to have the soul divided into two mandates impossible to fulfil.\(^4\) Rivera has termed this \textit{double bind} situation \textit{ch'içi epistemology}—a recognition of this fold and the capacity to live it creatively.\(^5\) Consequently, \textit{indigenizing the double bind}, the soul of this article—divided between Indigenous jurisprudence and Indigenous peoples in Western jurisprudence—is always relational.

I illustrate the potentialities of this twin-track anthropological approach in a conversation with Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and \textit{El Colectivo}, a self-organized group of cultural action and critique, based in La Paz, Bolivia. Rivera, an anarchist sociologist and public intellectual of Aymara descent, is a leading scholar of Andean and subaltern studies and an exemplary thinker of the \textit{double bind} (see Figure 1.1). Indeed, in her political and academic interventions, Rivera has been ‘learning to live with contradictory instructions.’\(^6\) \textit{El Colectivo}, founded in 2008 by a group of students at the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés together with Rivera, according to what Álvaro Pinaya (co-founding member) has told me, was born as an initiative to continue strengthening Andean roots of thinking. Specifically, Pinaya together with Juan Vaca, Eduardo Schwartzberg, Mercedes Bernabé and Marco Arnáz, wanted to encourage Rivera to promote something similar to what the Oral History Workshop (Taller de Historia Oral Andina, THOA) did in the 1980s. Rivera had also co-founded this workshop; a worldwide icon of Andean history, ‘which explored the communitarian and anarchist current of struggles,’


\(^3\) \textit{Pä Chayma} is literally a double core. See Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, \textit{Sociología de la Imagen. Miradas Ch'içi Desde la Historia Andina} (Tinta Limón Ediciones, 2015) 326.


\(^5\) Rivera Cusicanqui (2015) 326.

\(^6\) Ibid, 3.
which was circulated in pamphlets and radio dramas and had repercussions in the popular movements in the following years, especially in the organization of the *ayllus* of western Bolivia, the CONAMAQ.7

Figure 1.1 Tambo El Colectivo with Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui commenting on her course on the sociology of the image.

Courtesy of Sandra Nicosia

The ‘functioning’ of the *double bind* appears in the article at three parts. To begin with, this article is an exploration of the *double bind* between Western and Indigenous jurisdictions in the context of colonial meetings and across imperial networks. I pay particular attention to the way in which colonial rule is constantly the object of resistance, hybridity, and accommodation.8 Taking the emancipatory potential of Indigenous thought as the basis for transforming the narratives about international law, the first part examines both the strategies used by international law to colonize Indigenous jurisdictions, as well as Indigenous peoples’ practices of resistance to preserve their own laws. In so doing, it explores the *double bind* that exists between constant attempts at silencing Indigenous jurisdictional speech and the importance of listening to Indigenous jurisprudences as law.

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In the second part, I show how Rivera is experimenting with the *double bind* by ‘transferring’ the personal into the epistemological. In so doing, I have a conversation with Rivera about her work, intellectual trajectory, and political activism during the last four decades as a way to unveil the *double bind* of her own Indigeneity. In this turn, the *double bind* operates within the Indigenous world depicted by Rivera in our conversations as plural, diverse, and contradictory; indeed, a world where Indigenous identity is torn between the simultaneity of being Indigenous and non-Indigenous at once. By following Mari J. Matsuda’s mobilization of W.E.B. Du Bois’s revolutionary endeavors, one can understand this multiple consciousness as a jurisprudential method. This legal technique, however, ‘encompasses more than consciousness shifting as skilled advocacy. It encompasses as well the search for the pathway to a just world.’ As Métis scholar Zoe Todd maintains in the following, this *double bind* is inherent to Indigenous identity nowadays:

There was a part of me that suddenly stepped into the ‘explicitness of my category,’ as an Indigenous woman, as an outsider. [Then] I realized I could make things, that I could insert my indigenous self into white spaces without apology or shame. Ever conscious of my complex position as a white-passing Métis woman and scholar, I insert here a note about the ways that my identity is contradictory, and acknowledge that the very act of occupying white spaces as someone who *looks white* courts the simultaneous familiarity and distance that comes with ‘passing’ in non-Indigenous contexts.

In the third part, I show one example in which Rivera and *El Colectivo* have contributed to the development of a *double bind* epistemological framework in order to engage with the colonial encounter between Western and Indigenous jurisdictions in the Americas and the birth of the so-called international legal order in the sixteenth century from an Andean perspective or in ‘Indigenous terms.’ As a backdrop for discussion, I use the dissident component of the curatorial project *The Potosí Principle. How Can We Sing the Song of the Lord in a Foreign Land?* carried out by *El Colectivo* as a response to the approach of the ‘official’ German curatorship. Taking into consideration the emancipatory potential of Indigenous thought as the basis for transforming the first narratives of the encounter between European and Indigenous jurisdictions in the Americas, this part examines the strategies used by the colonizers to subdue first-nation jurisdictions as well as the practices of resistance of Indigenous peoples to keep their own laws alive. In so doing, it

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explores the double bind that exists between colonial domination and Indigenous resistance.

2 Jurisdictional Double Binds

Among the many lessons I have learnt from Indigenous peoples and organizations around the world, I would like to begin by pointing out one of special relevance in the framework of my research. Whether during fieldwork or in workplace meetings with Indigenous organizations, I have always been impressed by Indigenous peoples’ expertise in the discourse and practice of international human rights law, and their acute awareness of the associated responsibilities. Briefly put, Indigenous peoples take international law seriously and the task of my research is, in fact, a very simple one: to take Indigenous jurisprudence seriously. Towards this goal, my research proposes the idea of indigenizing international law by considering Indigenous law as law. It is by directing Indigenous jurisprudences to the framework of international law and by recognizing the constitutive relationship between Western and Indigenous accounts that the possibility of transforming international law becomes possible.\footnote{Paulo Ilich Bacca, \textit{Indigenizing International Law: Inverse Legal Anthropology in the Age of Jurisdictional Double Binds} (University of Kent, 2018).}

By following Luis Eslava’s theory of the daily life operation of international law, the study of the legal and cultural tensions posed by the interaction between Indigenous jurisprudence, domestic legal orders, and international law is key for the discussion advanced here.\footnote{Luis Eslava, \textit{Local Space, Global Life. The Everyday Operation of International Law and Development} (Cambridge University Press, 2015).} In that regard, it is imperative to trace these tensions over a network of practices of colonial domination and Indigenous resistance. In this article, I offer a double-sided setting of appropriations and reappropriations of Western law by Indigenous peoples in colonial times, by addressing the encounter between Western and Indigenous jurisprudence in terms of a permanent confrontation rather than applying the legal pluralism logic for which state-centric sources are official-law and Indigenous jurisprudences are unofficial-laws.

Specifically, my research aims to reassess the epistemological trajectory by which Western jurisprudence in general, and international law in particular, have shaped legal doctrines and jurisprudential concepts in relation to Indigenous rights. They have done so by assigning to Indigenous laws, and to the very existence of Indigenous peoples, an apparent Western essence and appearance in order for them to be worthy of ‘recognition’—a process that results in an obliteration of those very people as people and their knowledge. Although this enterprise is
enormous, that is in the attempt to examine and understand more than five centuries of colonialism, the particular endeavor of my work is modest. My objective lies in looking at Indigenous laws as an affirmative possibility of the double bind between Western and Indigenous jurisprudence, which is to say, the reaffirmation to maintain Indigenous jurisprudences and their modern reappropriations alive, instead of recognizing only state-centric and international laws. Towards this end, I follow an epistemological trend that not only values the opportunity of training ‘the imagination to reimagine a specific situation,’ but also considers that the ‘basic principle for social action is the ability to see another’s position as potentially substitutable for one’s own in the script of life.’\textsuperscript{13} In that sense, my reading of a variety of double-sided interactions between colonial domination and Indigenous resistance enables seeing Indigenous law as law, allowing at the same time, the possibility of indigenizing international law.\textsuperscript{14}

In this regard, connecting Indigenous jurisprudences with the work advanced by jurisprudents such as Shaun McVeigh, Shaunnagh Dorsett, Genevieve Painter, and Olivia Barr,\textsuperscript{15} among others, I trace the meeting between Western and Indigenous jurisprudences as a jurisdictional arrangement ‘in terms of the crafting of repertoires of lawful conduct—or of ways of belonging to law.’\textsuperscript{16} It is an encounter in which the living laws of Indigenous peoples call into question ‘the representation of everywhereness’ of the place of the Western rule of law, which ‘amounts to a form of spatial and legal enclosure.’\textsuperscript{17} According to this perspective, jurisdiction operates as a technology, a notion with a polysemous character, for in fact, ‘it connotes not only technique, but also encompasses the idea of devices and organizational strategies.’\textsuperscript{18} Therefore, technologies of jurisdiction allow us to capture the knowledge comprised in the manufacturing of lawful relations. This practical knowledge of the law understands technology in its classical meaning of craft,\textsuperscript{19} and the placement of a technology of jurisdiction as a craft enables the


\textsuperscript{14} Paulo Ilich Bacca, ‘Indigenizing International Law and Decolonizing the Anthropocene: Genocide by Ecological Means and Indigenous Nationhood in Contemporary Colombia’ (2020) 33:2 Maguarí, Revista del Departamento de Antropología de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia 139.


\textsuperscript{17} Olivia Barr, ‘Walking with Empire’ (2013) 38 The Australian Feminist Law Journal 59, at 61.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 62.
acknowledgment of multiple forms of jurisprudences (narrative and non-narrative) as law.

Thus, as a legal technology, jurisdiction interacts with ‘the way in which relations of law are shaped through forms of conduct’ such as the activities of daily life in which the power to speak the law is inscribed. By considering the epistemological potential of Indigenous textual systems, I contend that the writing technologies of the Indigenous world, which are encapsulated in both narrative and non-narrative forms that can simultaneously interact, such as dance and pilgrimage, are true legal archives. According to Renisa Mawani these archives act ‘not solely as a repository of sources through which to retrieve and/or assemble the past but as an uneven effect of power and a set of contested truth claims through which history itself has been a site of struggle.’

By interacting with Indigenous writing technologies, this article aims to contribute to the making of a legal anthropology able to transform the classical and critical history of the international legal order by placing Indigenous thought and cosmologies at the heart of international law. It implies, first, to fully acknowledge the legal, political, and ontological self-determination of Indigenous nations and, consequently, of their jurisdictions; second, to remark the epistemological potential of Indigenous cosmologies as true sources of law and, in this regard, their epistemological value to transform international law discourses; and, third, the power of Indigenous thinking to change ‘our’ legal imagination and, therefore, its unquestionable condition as a key ally in the decolonization of international law and in the invigoration of the counter-hegemonic dimensions of international law.

In Rivera’s view, the contemporaneity of Indigenous thinking resides precisely in its potential to transform state-centric narratives and logic through Indigenous peoples’ histories of survival and resistance. First, it is a memory that has been able to conceive colonialism as a matter of the here-and-now. In this regard, Rivera’s reading on Andean memory links present, past, and future. Second, it is a memory that has resisted in a creative way by staining the capitalist market, turning it into a colorful Andean modernity. Indeed, as Rivera remarks,

> The condition of possibility for an indigenous hegemony is located in the territory of the modern nation—inserted into the contemporary world—and is once again able to take up the long memory of the internal colonial market, of the long distance circulation of goods, of networks of productive communities

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20 Ibid.


This is because the designation of the ground rules of what ‘Indigenous law’ means has been enunciated according to the ‘anthropological game.’ This mainly discursive game differentiates unambiguously between the discourse of the ‘legal anthropologist’ and the discourse of the ‘native.’ They could be equal de facto in the sense that the anthropological idea of culture locates the anthropologist and the native subject in the same footing. However, according to Viveiros:

[I]nasmuch as it implies that the anthropologist knowledge of other cultures is itself culturally mediated, [what happens de jure is that the] anthropologist tends to have an epistemological advantage over the native [...] While the anthropologist’s capacity to produce meaning does depend on the meanings produced by the native, the prerogative to determine what those native meanings mean remains with the anthropologist.

As a result, I propose indigenizing international law by refuting the ‘anthropological game’ through the recognition of Indigenous peoples’ ontological self-determination to characterize the legal anthropological meanings embodied in their jurisprudences. This process through which ‘we’ can learn from indigenous jurisprudences in order to change ‘our’ laws is what I call in my research inverse legal anthropology. In indigenizing international law using an inverse legal anthropology, I remark the power of indigenous thinking to counteract international law’s colonial legacies and indigenous peoples’ ongoing genocide. And, as stated, this article in particular, explores the double bind that exists between silencing and listening to indigenous jurisprudences, drawing attention to the interaction between indigenous and non-indigenous worlds.

3 Conversations with Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui

Evoking the work and life of Gamaliel Churata (1897-1969), a Peruvian novelist and philosopher who skillfully mastered the double bind between European avant-garde (taking seriously the foundations of critical Western philosophy) and Latin American indigenism (assessing the contribution of Andean cosmologies with particular emphasis in the conceptual richness of the Quechua and Aymara


25 Ibid.
languages),

my conversation with Rivera began by exploring the double bind between Indigenous and non-Indigenous identity.

Talking about indigeneity with Rivera is to speak of a world that is Indigenous and non-Indigenous at the same time. She recounted growing up in an environment where the understanding of Aymara language is a spontaneous experience:

I grew up in La Paz and there were two women who took care of the home. They spoke Aymara all the time and one of them took care of me and while holding me in her agayo (multicolored woolen cloth) would tell me stories. Somehow, I was bilingual by means of my sense of hearing—I could not speak but I was very familiar with the sounds of Aymara (there was a lot of onomatopoeia). I was eight-years-old when she passed away and I have felt an orphan since then; indeed, my mother was never able to ‘replace’ this woman.

According to Rivera, her instinctive appreciation of the Aymara world was the legacy she received during that moment of her childhood. She related that period with a lot of affection since it shaped her temperament and determined her vocation for Andean cosmologies as well as her spiritual connection with Aymara mythical beings such as the fox and the condor. However, Rivera noted that this ‘learning curve’ has always been an unfinished process, indeed, a practice of life that is always to come: she was around sixteen when she began taking Aymara lessons, but feels that she does not speak the language well and is in an unending process of learning. Interestingly, her conclusions regarding this route are inextricably connected with the possibility of developing the social sciences using a double bind logic.

In Rivera’s view, behind the physical elimination of Aymara Amaw’as (philosophers) and Yatiris (healers) during the sixteenth century Spanish conquest of the Americas, lies the ‘spiritual’ annihilation of the philosophical uses of the Aymara language. Thus, she considers it necessary to reinvent the words’ philosophical meaning by taking into consideration their metaphorical senses in daily life. And this is precisely what Rivera has done in her unparalleled work: departing from the pragmatic use of Aymara words, she has been ‘scratching’ their allegorical connotation in order to project a philosophical reflection based on Indigenous sources of knowledge. In so doing, Rivera is working with an Aymara

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26 Gamaliel Churata, *La Resurrección de los Muertos* (Universidad Nacional del Altiplano, 2010).
27 In addition to the interactions developed over the course of my stay in La Paz and subsequent epistolatory dialogues, I conducted two complementary interviews with Rivera. The first took place in La Paz and was recorded by Bolivian filmmaker Alejandra Zorrilla, and the second was carried out via Skype. La Paz, Bolivia (9 August 2016), Bogotá, Colombia (3 March 2018).
idiosyncratic translation of what Spivak has termed ‘concept-metaphors,’ that is to say, the possibility of unveiling the deep philosophical roots of expressions that tend to remain unnoticed for most anthropologists and ethnographers although they are fundamental in day-to-day Indigenous activities.

The metaphorization of daily-life concepts is inherent to the polysemous character of Aymara language and, it is by using this polyphony that Rivera has been working with the contradiction (located at the very heart of double bind logics) as an epistemological tool to explain Indigenous social realities. One of Rivera’s key concept-metaphors is encapsulated in the Aymara concept of the ch’ixi. Rivera told me:

I have reinvented the practicality of this concept by exploring its allegorical and epistemological power. Pragmatically, ch’ixi is the stained sheep, the spotted toad, the smudged snake. It is a descriptor, a keyword; however, its most abstract and philosophical dimension has not been developed and this is because after the assassination of the amaut’ar and yatiris in colonial times, the language has been impoverished by the translations conducted by priests such as Ludovico Bertonio (1557-1625) and Domingo de Santo Tomás (1499-1570), who have expurgated Aymara concepts and ideas that were incomprehensible to them, subsequently removing the philosophical potential of indigenous languages.

In an interview given to Francisco Pazzareli, Rivera explained that the ch’ixi as a concept-metaphor, embodies the quintessence of an Aymara double bind, namely, an Andean gesture to work with the contradiction as a way of moving between opposite worlds. Thus, for instance, the snake is not only ch’ixi for being spotted but also for being an Aymara mythical animal who is undetermined in cosmological terms: it belongs to both the world above and the world below, it is both masculine and feminine, it is both rain and a vein of metal, it is symbolized both as lightning striking from a great height and as a subterranean force. And this is precisely the way in which Rivera traces the epistemological signs of Aymara cosmologies within the contemporaneity of a modern Bolivia that is torn between the (post)colonial legacies and the political force of the Indigenous movement.

By challenging the official discourse, according to which the colonization of the Americas brought about the harmonious mestizo fusion of European and Indigenous cultures (in which Western imaginations overlay Indigenous cosmologies), Rivera projects a reverse process of analysis in which Aymara...

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28 Spivak has been exploring the potentialities of a radical alterity through the use of concept-metaphors: ‘in order to think the other one must be able to imagine oneself as other.’ Spivak seeks not to merely describe this possibility but to demonstrate it. She finds her most useful way to think radical alterity in the Muslim concept-metaphor of the haq, ‘the birthright of being able to take care of other people.’ Without the grounding of haq-like responsibility, and thus to the precomprehension of an instituting culture to the political, the subaltern other remains buried under the “repetitive negotiations” of neocolonial benevolence. ‘The subjunctive can move to an imperative only in terms of that responsibility-as-right fixed by a truth-in-alterity collective structure that happened to have been conceptualized as haq.’ Butt (2012) 294-345.
cosmologies are capable of turning mestizo imaginaries into the embodiment of the Indigenous world—something with Indigenous soul. In so doing, Aymara cosmologies endow Western narratives with a new immediacy by taking the threads of Indigenous laws and weaving them in their own modern way. This does not occur following the mestizo logic of fusion but by making reference to paradoxical structures as the inspiration of a double-bound reasoning. When I asked Rivera if she is Indigenous and non-Indigenous at the same time, her response was categorical: ‘of course, being indigenous is a becoming. It is not an identity, it is a search.’

Rivera’s reflections range from the personal to the methodological and from the epistemological to the collective. She once described herself during our interactions as an ‘abajista’—a Spanish term that she uses in opposition of the ‘arriviste spirit’ that characterizes the Bolivian upper middle class. Even though she belonged to an upper middle-class family, Rivera never expected to join the ‘elite’ but rather to become an urban Aymara woman: ‘We are all Indians as colonized peoples. Decolonizing one’s self is to stop being Indian and to become people. People is an interesting word because it is said in very different ways in different languages.’

The idiosyncratic way of displaying an Indigenous becoming is not only an asset for Rivera but also an Indigenous performative act that can be seen in different practices of the Aymara mind-set. A central Aymara principle that passed from her personal experiences to her methodological endeavors is captured in the possibility of reading Western sources using Aymara rationalities. Thus, for instance, her work clearly demonstrates the principle of selectivity with which Andean communities transform Western properties such as Spanish grammar/syntax as well as the epistemological parity demanded in Indigenous social struggles. This principle of selectivity has also been indorsed in legal terms along the Andean region. One prime example of this reality is the work of Manuel Quintín Lame (1880 - 1967)—a Nasa radical Indigenous leader and an active user and creator of laws, who lived during the first half of the twentieth-century in Cauca, Colombia, a province in the southwest Andean region. His legal work and interpretations follow the path of his ancestor, Don Juan Tama, a legendary chief (cacique), who juxtaposed Nasa cosmology and oral tradition with the Spanish written world back in the seventeenth century.

By using colonial titles to claim Nasa sovereignty over territories in Cauca, the contents of these titles came into force once they were transmitted orally ‘during the formal walk around boundaries [of the indigenous territories] that

29 ‘Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui: Against Internal Colonialism’ (2016).
preceded approval of the title.\textsuperscript{30} It was an idiosyncratic ceremony that included both the Indigenous ritual of walking ancestral territories and the Spanish legal tradition that recognized the existence of these lands through colonial titles. The legal arguments used by Lame drew on the premise that Indigenous peoples are the original owners of the Colombian territory, and in so doing, Lame linked the cosmologies of his people with an Indigenous interpretation of Colombian mainstream laws. Lame proclaimed equity and reciprocity among states and Indigenous nations and, consequently, the legally binding nature of agreements made between them, which is tantamount to a key principle in the framework of Indigenous peoples in international law nowadays.\textsuperscript{31} According to this premise and his understanding of state-centric law, Lame argued that, as constituent subjects, Indigenous peoples must abide by a ‘special law’ whose main objective should be to prevent the dissolution of their territory, specifically, their reiguardos.

In this way, not only are Indigenous epistemological tools capable of nurturing collective experiences, as is indeed the case with Aymara cosmologies, but also Western epistemological apparatuses can resonate in a homological way with Indigenous cosmological frameworks. This synergy vividly appeared in the course of a face-to-face interaction between Rivera and Spivak, in the context of Rivera’s simultaneous translation of a conference presented by her Indian comrade in La Paz. Gago recounts that in so doing Rivera showcased the undiscipline of the text and of linear translation. Finding no Spanish translation for Spivak’s term double bind, Rivera instead came up with an exact equivalent in Aymara: ‘pä chuyma, which means having the soul divided by two mandates that are impossible to fulfil.’ Rivera says that these translation exercises reveal that all words are being questioned today: ‘This is a sign of Pachakutik, of a time of change.’\textsuperscript{32}

Talking with Rivera spontaneously about this event, she told me that most people in the audience were Aymara speakers, which alerted her to the convenience of translating the idea of the double bind to Aymara rather than Spanish. On the spur of the moment and without any kind of previous preparation, she began to talk about the pä chuyma in Aymara, explaining to the public what Spivak had said. Spivak, double-bind-thinker par excellence, immediately incorporated the Aymara double-bind-pä chuyma in her own English speech, which according to Rivera was a very sympathetic gesture: ‘Spivak once told me that she makes theory with the guts,


\textsuperscript{32} Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui: Against Internal Colonialism’ (2016).
so she fully understood’ (we laugh). Rivera continued explaining to me that the Aymara have a three-way logic: something can be and not be at the same time, which is tantamount to the possibility of having an included third. In this context, Rivera added:

I think that is what makes possible such a compatibility with Gayatri. She also thinks that one needs to live with the pā ch’ixi, that it is necessary to coexist with the contradiction, and that the contradiction must be converted into a purposeful referent rather than an obstacle to the subject’s integrity. For Bateson, the contradictory subject is schizophrenic because it is imprisoned by two conflicting demands that deny each other’s right of communication and it is a collective schizophrenia that produces a sort of paralysis. Instead, for Spivak, the contradictory subject embodies an incomparable creative power.

It is precisely by taking advantage of the epistemological power of Aymara logic that Rivera together with her group El Colectivo has been developing idiosyncratic and motley readings of Andean historiographical accounts based on the contradictory forces present in the double-bind-pā ch’ixi and the ch’ixi epistemology. And it is by talking with them about one of their experiences, while resonating with intercultural sources and letting myself be seduced by Indigenous thinking, that I will narrate in the next sections the configuration of the international legal order in the sixteenth century drawing on Aymara’s history and cosmology.

4 The Reverse Side of The Potosí Principle

The Reverse Side of the Museum

Between May 2010 and April 2011, a team of curating artist-researchers and contemporary artists from La Paz, Beijing, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Barcelona, Buenos Aires, Madrid, Berlin, Huelva, Seville, and London presented an ambitious project called The Potosí Principle. How Can We Sing the Song of the Lord in a Foreign Land?33 The project consisted of a series of exhibitions in which about 20 paintings from the Potosí painting school from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were contrasted with different contemporary artistic trends and proposals. In so doing, the project sought to transfuse the history of the city of Potosí at the onset of the seventeenth century onto local and global political experiences in the twenty-first century. Located in the Bolivian tin belt, Potosí was one of the largest cities

33 Alice Creischer, Max Jorge Hinderer and Andreas Siekman (eds.), Principio Potosí ¿Cómo Podemos Cantar el Canto del Señor en Tierras Ajenas? La Economía Global y la Producción Colonial de Imágenes (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2010).
in the world—comparable to London or Paris,” and its Cerro Rico (Rich Mountain) is the world’s largest silver deposit and has been mined since the sixteenth century: ‘Potosi was the equivalent of today’s Abu Dhabi or some Chinese cities, sources of exploitation and wealth for the global capitalist world.’

While the Potosi silver mines led to the flourishing of the Spanish crown—securing its fiscal sustainability and funding its wars across Europe, the use of Indigenous labor in the mines and their precarious working conditions was a starting point for the global order and the birth of international law’s framework and rules. As a result of the large amount of gold and silver shipped to Europe a new era of accumulation began: ‘[i]t is said that all the silver mined there would be enough to build a bridge from the Andes over the Atlantic Ocean that reached Cadiz—the harbor in Spain where the silver arrived.’

The Potosi Principle was presented as an exhibition and a series of talks in and around the Reina Sofía Museum in Madrid, House of the Cultures of the World in Berlin, and the National Museum of Art in La Paz. El Colectivo, critically responded to the ‘official’ German curatorial team by making a book-catalogue, which operates as the exhibition’s dissident component. Indeed, an epistemological proposal dealing with aesthetics and art theory as well as the history of ideas was headed by Rivera. El Colectivo promoted this dissident component as a result of differences in interpretation with the ‘official’ curatorship mainly in terms of both the historiographical reading of the Andean world and its baroque paintings and the conceptualization of the museum and cultural heritage. This dissident component offers the possibility of reading the configuration of the international legal order from an Indigenous point of view: while critical interpretations have stressed the way in which the colonization of the Americas engineered an international legal order based on the unpaid work of Indigenous peoples, have forgotten, in most cases, how first nations struggled to keep their own political economy and cosmologies in the midst of the colonial genocide.

Álvaro Pinaya, from El Colectivo, told me that the group’s foundation in La Paz, at the end of 2008, coincides in a way with the beginning of the German

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37 Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (ed.), Principio Potosí Reverso (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2010).

38 Ibid.

39 Bartolomé Clavero, Genocidio y Justicia. La Destrucción de las Indias, Ayer y Hoy (Marcial Pons, 2002).
curatorial project: ‘Silvia had travelled abroad, and we had periodical meetings in her house. Upon her return home, she arrived with the news that the German curatorial team asked her to participate in the project as curator of the exhibition Reverse Modernity, the original exposition’s title.’

This was changed to The Potosí Principle due to the influence of El Colectivo, which understood the contentious meeting between Western and Indigenous jurisdictions from an Andean perspective anchored in the history of the Potosí mines. The historiographical record of this encounter has been interpreted by El Colectivo taking into consideration the cosmo-spatial referents of the Andean world that, not only survived the colonial invasion, but were also rearranged around the new places of worship imposed by the Catholic Church. These new shrines were established upon Andean sacred places that have continued to be key strategic points in political and administrative terms until now.

The Spanish process of colonization of the Andean world supposed, in this way, an immeasurable rupture of Indigenous political structures, which are based on cosmological referents. However, it was not a linear process of colonial impositions but also a complex route of Indigenous practices of resistance; indeed, as Rivera has explained in her work, this is a process that operates in a double bind logic. In this context, there are some facts that help us to better understand the differences between the work advanced by the German curators and El Colectivo. On the one hand, the German team was interested in analyzing European modernity in connection to the colonial enterprise, two large-scale social trends that are related in time and space. On the other, they sought to display a political reading of the Andean baroque art in order to unveil the indoctrination techniques used by the Catholic Church vis-à-vis Indigenous interpretations and the configuration of a global capitalist system which prompted both the configuration of the international legal order and the genocide of Indigenous peoples.

The work of Rivera presents resonances with the aforementioned approach and, one could infer, that is why she was invited as a curator of the exhibition. Nonetheless, once El Colectivo began to get involved in the project, it became clear that the theoretical approach of the ‘official’ curatorship was disconnected from Indigenous peoples’ thinking. El Colectivo, for its part, was not

40 I am grateful to Álvaro Pinaya and Ruth Bautista Durán from El Colectivo for their willingness to talk and share their experiences with me. The interview with Pinaya was very detailed because we used a written format: Epistolary dialogue from Bogotá to La Paz (March 20, 2018).

41 ‘Tandeter and Bakewell both stress that the working conditions in Potosí were comparable to those obtaining in other South American mines: blatant disregard of stipulated working hours, retention of wages, debt bondage, arbitrary regulation, ill treatment by overseers, malnutrition, and disease.’ Alice Creischer, ‘Primitive Accumulation, as Exemplified in Potosí’ in Alice Creischer, Max Jorge Hinderer and Andreas Siekmann (eds.), The Potosí Principle: How Can We Sing The Song Of The Lord In An Alien Land? (Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther, 2010) 237.
only interested in displaying a critical reading of the indoctrination process advanced by the Catholic Church in Andean territories, but also in providing an interpretation able to demystify the *mestizo culture*, in which Indigenous cosmological referents ended up being integrated to capitalist and Catholic symbols. This analysis not only explores the colonial past, but mainly the way in which Indigenous communities reappropriate those imperialistic symbols in the present, particularly their current relationship with religious paintings and the *indigenization* of the feasts of Catholic Saints.

Pinaya told me that the German team’s priority was to show the impact of the capitalist system on Indigenous communities; mostly, how the international legal order has plunged them into poverty. In this context, Indigenous festivities were seen as a ‘colonial-capitalist aftertaste’ and it was, under this circumstance, that *El Colectivo* also noted the German team’s sharp folklorist vision of the Andean Indigenous world. In Pinaya’s account:

For example, they understood the issue of time in a very different way. They didn’t quite understand how colonial paintings could be current in the context of indigenous festivities and why indigenous peoples were interacting so actively with those colonial ‘impositions’ in the present. It was there that we became aware of their strong folklorist vision of indigenous peoples. For them, these festivities seemed to be the image of the decline of a culture that could be headed toward extinction. For us instead, these festivities, in which a lot of money is spent, are not only a space to confirm the devotion towards a saint or a virgin but mainly spaces of resistance and resignification.

Indeed, in such a space, there is a *double bind* between capitalist and religious symbols and Indigenous political resistance and cultural reappropriations. Thus, for instance, an eighteenth-century painting of hell by José López de los Ríos, located at the Church of Carabuco near La Paz, portrays with precision both the miseries of capitalist-religious indoctrination and the power of Andean Indigenous cosmologies that keep Indigenous thinking alive (see Figure 1.2). Caquiyaviri, one of the places where the Spanish colonial regime recruited miners for Potosí, plays the symbolic role of hell. The demons have a *double bind* spirit since, as it is true that they torture worldly people, it is equally true that they represent the beings of the Andean underworld in proper Indigenous manner. In this way, Andean Indigenous peoples did not see and did not represent those demons as evil forces but as key allied deities, who resonate with their own cosmological beings. In such a context, the Indigenous world not only made the birth of an international legal order based on a global economy driven by the silver obtained from Potosí.
possible, but also adjusted such an order to its own geographical space, where the Incas had formed a powerful confederation, able to resist colonial impositions openly through Indigenous uprisings and covertly through Andean cosmologies. The differences in interpretation were not minor. In fact, what turned El Colectivo’s readings into folklore rather than epistemology, following the mainstream curatorship approach, was precisely their idea of reading colonial history through current Indigenous cosmologies—mostly represented by an Andean indigenization of popular Catholic culture. Importantly, this tension resonates with international law’s mainstream visions of indigenous identity, among them, the most progressive trends, where the strong influence of liberal multiculturalism has ignored the power of Indigenous cosmologies to counteract international law’s colonial legacies, transforming and enriching its anthropocentric matrix. For such approaches the imaginary of a premodern Indigenous subject is still current: ‘In this discourse, indigenous peoples are represented as endangered species who ought to be protected.’ Following this argument, there were strong reasons to corroborate the subordinate role that the ‘natives’ (El Colectivo and the Indigenous communities involved) began to acquire in the project. First, the Museum of the Americas refused to move the Melchor Pérez de Holguin painting of the 1716 Entry of Viceroy Morcillo into Potosí from Madrid to La Paz (see Figure 1.3). This painting is crucial to understand the eighteenth-century colonial microcosms, which surrounded the Potosí imperial village.

42 In the eighteenth century, such silver allowed Spain to pay its debts in Europe, purchase slaves from African slave traders, and buy silk and porcelain from China. See Bernd M. Scherer, ‘Prólogo’ in Alice Creischer, Max Jorge Hinderer and Andreas Siekmann (eds.), The Potosí Principle: How Can We Sing The Song Of The Lord In An Alien Land? (Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther, 2010) 4.


Afterwards, the Ethnological Museum of Berlin denied the loan of four khipus requested by El Colectivo (see Figures 1.4 and 1.5). The khipus were record-keeping devices used during the Inca period to register different services, obligations and products, and, according to the hypothesis of El Colectivo, they are a cornerstone technology to trace the system of administration of the Incan state and the role played by silver as mediator and catalyst between the economic, social and religious system.\(^\text{45}\) The museums have taken these Andean devices out of context: on the one hand, by enclosing them in glass cabinets, without investing any learning effort into connecting them with the Indigenous territories to which they still belong; and on the other, by minimizing their conceptual scope to a ‘primitive calculator,’ when they embody a complex writing system associated with a sacred Andean economy.

As a matter of fact, during Incan times, both silver and gold were offered at the places of worship to the deities (\textit{waka’s}) at key particular times within Andean solar and lunar calendars.

The first event opened up discussions about the importance of respecting the decision of the Indigenous communities who did not want to lend their communal art for the exhibition, which is an ethical and political commitment that ‘challenged key aspects of the colonization process, like the state and ecclesiastical control in decisions dealing with the destiny and location of the paintings.’\footnote{Ibid.} It was corroborated by the second event, because the German Gallery’s refusal was selective; they accepted lending the khipus to Madrid and Berlin but not to Bolivia. According to Eduardo Schwartzberg, member of El Colectivo, this reveals the paranoia and distrust of European institutions, which have expropriated sacred objects and Indigenous art for centuries.\footnote{Ibid.} There is a double paradoxical effect in this fact: First, the paradox of the guilt of accumulating material objects as a product of a systematic process of colonial plundering; and second, the paradox of the double morality which surrounds the ‘cultural transaction.’
Within the context of the project, there was an implicit colonial logic insofar as it was necessary that the Bolivian museums remain silent about the position adopted by their European ‘partners’; nevertheless, the European museums exerted symbolic and economic pressure to compel the Indigenous communities to accept the loan. In a previous work, Rivera employed the powerful metaphor of indio permitido (tolerated Indian) in order to highlight the World Bank’s strategy to present the Indigenous population as an acculturated sector within the market.48 This is, indeed, the sort of culturisation of indigeneity enacted by the international law apparatus since colonial times: ‘Indigeneity,’ Wolfe reminds us, ‘it is not just a matter of self-adscription. It is also, among other things, a matter of settler imposition.’49 Operating like a bank, the Ethnological Museum of Berlin has accumulated approximately 400 archaeological khipus, ignoring their cultural context and philosophical meaning. In both cases, ‘[t]he strategy of the indio permitido enshrines a reified, postcard image of the indigenous culture while preserving the unquestioned cultural hegemony of the elites in the daily fabric of social life.’50

Andean Sacred Economy

In the midst of this context, the political and epistemological differences between the German curators and El Colectivo became more evident. Emphasizing the secondary role they had begun to play and the fact that in practical terms they had ceased being co-curators and had become a group of ‘indigenous informants,’ El Colectivo decided to turn away from the project. Nonetheless, being unconvinced


50 Ibid.
with the ‘mainstream curatorship,’ Manuel Borja-Villel, director of the Reina Sofía Museum, decided to travel to Bolivia in order to offer El Colectivo an alternative exhibition room. After internal discussions and in order to avoid being the second option at the possibility of the exhibition’s failure, El Colectivo decided to create a manuscript proposal, which subsequently became the book-catalogue Princípio Potosí Reverso (The Reverse Side of The Potosi Principle). 51 This work is no doubt a canonical contribution within the literature that seeks to provide a better understanding of the way society thinks in modernity as the new spatiality that mediates the encounter between Europe and the Americas in the fifteenth century. I understand this space-time as the configuration of the international legal order; indeed, the imposition of legal forms in America, Africa, Asia and Oceania, which ‘gave origin to a long process that culminated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and in which, for the first time, the totality of the space and the time—all cultures, peoples and territories of the planet, past and present—was organized in a great universal narrative. 52

I would describe the book-catalogue as a historical source enriched with anthropological and economic analysis, and for its aesthetic conception, as a work of art in itself. Among its multiple contributions, Andean perception of the new international legal order, which becomes real with the colonización of the Americas and its relation to the past and present of Indigenous peoples, is a key element of this work. First of all, the book contests the academic tradition that depicts history in a linear and progressive trajectory, which would suppose, in this particular case, the imposition of European legal forms without Indigenous resistance. In my view, this critique can be seen in at least two different ways in the book: On the one hand, making a remarkable introductory effort, El Colectivo has woven the book’s thread within Aymara temporality. In the Andean world, the spatial-temporal coordinates differ from chronological time, especially because there is a permanent interaction between past, present and future and thus, through this temporality, the reader of this book is asked to change the sequential path of the reading. In this setting, the idea of jurisdictional double binds displayed in the first part of this article would suppose recognizing the practical knowledge of Indigenous jurisdictions and its multiple forms of jurisprudences, which in this case, are inscribed in the Andean cosmological time.

Thus, the book is divided into three parts to be read as follows: beginning from the center of the book (taypy), the reading continues to the right side (kuny)

51 Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, ‘¿Es Posible Descolonizar y Desmercantilizar la Modernidad?’ Decolonizing the Modernity Lecture Series, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (2014).

to the back cover of the book, and lastly, the reader comes back to the center of
the book in order to read its left side (*ch’uqá*), turning the pages the other way
around. Upon finishing the reading (which would appear to be the beginning of
the book, as if you were reading in a conventional way) a Glossary of the Aymara
and Qhichwa terms will appear, as a means of highlighting the linguistic turn and
epistemological options of those responsible for its elaboration.\(^{53}\) In other words,
readers are invited to challenge their temporal experience becoming participants
of Andean jurisdictional time: starting from the middle zone of the book (the
present), a space of daily struggle, continuing to the right side (the past), when the
wisdom of ancestors is recreated, and, finally, ending where one usually begins to
read book, as a way of envisioning the future.

Rivera has shown the permanent correlation between past, present, and
future within the social life of Indigenous communities all along her work. By
exploring different techniques from sociology of the image, she has been studying
‘the relationship between looking, representation and power in relation to the
construction of indigeneity within the framework of colonial domination.’\(^{54}\) The
connection between European colonialism and Western economic development is
not in question in the particular case of the extractive process commanded by the
Spanish Empire in the Andean region—of which the silver mining in Potosí is a
prime example. This is precisely one of the central facts that the *Potosí Principle*
project made clear by exploring what the Andean baroque art could say about ‘the
cruelties of colonial and postcolonial economic activity—both as their symptom
and their witness.’\(^ {55}\) However, this fact, which set up the beginning of a new
international legal order on the threshold of the sixteenth century, also rests on a
double bind arrangement between colonial fiscal domination and Indigenous
economic resistance.

In this sense, *The Reverse Side of the Potosí Principle* is able to transform, on
the one hand, the course of the dominant trend in Andean colonial history, which
has depicted Indigenous economies as strongholds of primitive epochs. And, on
the other, the postcolonial readings that link the economic growth of Europe with
the colonization of the Americas, highlighting the impoverishment and decline of
the Indigenous world.\(^ {56}\) In reference to the first approach, Rivera has shown how

\(^{53}\) Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, ‘Presentation’ in Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (ed.), *Principio Potosí Reverso* (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2010) 130.


the sophisticated Incan economic system was rearranged in the course of the colonization process. Indeed, the Incan economy was based on the circulation of goods around a confederation comprised of different Indigenous communities, where Andean holy places (mainly mountains, volcanoes, and lakes) were key points of fiscal interchange and focal regions to leave offerings for the gods. It was a ‘monetary system’ in which goods and services were cherished in relation to their ritual value. Thus, in reference to the second approach, Rivera and *El Colectivo* have shown, not only the undeniable process of colonial looting that enriched a handful of European nations and impoverished millions of Indigenous peoples, but also the exuberance of Indigenous local markets organized around Andean holy places from their rearrangement in the sixteenth century until their splendor during the nineteenth century and beyond.

The double facet that the exchange of goods acquired in the daily life of the Incan empire is key to understanding the political economy after the arrival of the colonizers and, consequently, how Andean Indigenous nations resisted the imposition of the international legal order developmental model. The symbolic dimension of the places of worship of the deities (*waka’s*) is profoundly imbricated with the public service in community-driven projects (*mit’a*). Thus, it is possible to establish an interconnection between the mercantile paths of the Inca state with the *waka’s* situated across the empire. Rivera’s epistemological conception unveils a ‘sacrificial economy’ to the extent that the offerings placed in the holy places were the most precious assets both in Andean economic and cosmological terms. In this sense, the work rotation of the *mit’a* invigorates a circulatory displacement of living energy with an unquestionably political and corporative face. Some examples of this movement are, first, the circulation of goods for daily or sumptuary consumption that ‘sustained public works for irrigation, the construction of temples, bridges, roads, and fortresses as well as military incursions into hostile territories.’ And, second, the ‘production of highly valued sumptuary or symbolic goods: textiles, beverages, entheogenic preparations, all of which were offered to the *wak’a’s* or to the mummies of local ancestors as well as to the lineages of ancient lords and Inka kings.’ In the light of the double bind between colonial domination and Indigenous resistance, this ‘sacrificial economy’ can be seen as the bedrock of Andean jurisdictions—according to the Indigenous’ own ways of living—or as a sign of underdevelopment—as the World Bank usually maintains.


58 Ibid.
In this setting, the forgetting of deep Incan roots has produced a liberal history, one which depicts an Andean nineteenth century ‘of depression, economic crisis and enslavement of Indian populations, only overcome with the growth of the export economy by the end of the century.’ Nonetheless, as Rivera has explained by interpreting the pictorial work of Melchor María Mercado—the *Album de Paisajes y Tipos Humanos de Bolivia (1841-1869)* (Album of Landscapes and Human Types of Bolivia)—the Incan economy continued to show stability and strength in both its practical and cosmological domains. Thus, Mercado sketched a lively Indigenous economy with established economic routes enriched by the use of symbolic exchanges, ‘in which both men and women engage actively, taking entrepreneurial roles as dealers of maize beer, staple crops and other rural-urban trade items.’ Following the model of the first century of colonial rule, the nineteenth century was characterized by the constitution of an economic system organized around the mining centers of La Paz and Potosí. These centers are not only extractive marketplace forces but also Andean places of sacrificial economies in which the capitalist soul is tinged with Andean sacral temporalities. As Rivera has pointed out:

In depicting the idea of these “centers” [Mercado] actually draws inspiration from the ideas of centrality, power and sacredness present in the indigenous Andean world: La Paz and Potosí are shown as economic forces governed by the centrality of mountains (mount Illimani in La Paz and Sumaq Urqu in Potosí) as in the indigenous worldview, these are conceived as sacred sites of power, and one can hardly recognize La Paz and Potosí as cities, but rather, the paintings depict them as sorts of natural sanctuaries, where mountains organize the space and the social life of the inhabitants in the center of the commercial routes to which the motley traveling crews are headed.

In the next and last section of this article, I illustrate the meeting between Andean and European temporalities using the notion of church/wak’a. In so doing, I provide some cues about a historiographic reading that is able to consider both colonial domination and Indigenous resistance—as *El Colectivo* did in *The Reverse Side of the Potosí Principle*—by displaying Indigenous peoples’ maneuvers in the interpretation of the daily life of Andean baroque.

*On Andean History and Temporality*

The meeting of rival jurisdictions during the course of the colonization of the Americas in the sixteenth century led to the birth of a new trend in Andean

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60 Ibid.

61 Ibid, 14.
Indigenous history. This turn was characterized by the conflict between Andean and European temporalities and, subsequently, by an overlapped practice of colonial domination and Indigenous resistance. The process of Christian evangelization is a key element of this conundrum. First, because the colonization of the Americas was justified in religious terms, and second, because the production of Catholic images eloquently embodies the superposition of Andean and Western temporalities. The ideological function of images played a central role in the conflict between the Reformation and Catholicism in the sixteenth century. It can be traced through the Council of Trent (1545-1563), which ‘issued a decree detailing how the new pictures of the Counter-Reformation should be painted. In this sense, it is no coincidence that the policy of eradication of Indigenous idolatry was applied under the guidance of this council at the beginning of the seventeenth century, nor the fact that one of the main measures of the policy consisted in the construction of churches on top of Amerindian wak’as. This age, in which the administrative power of the Inca state was moved from Cusco to Potosí and the symbolic power of Catholicism translated its ideology into the images and architecture of the baroque, founded a new historical temporality in the Americas that coincides with the alignment of the international legal order.

The borderland spaces, where the meeting of Andean and European temporal coordinates took place, can be represented by the notion of church/wak’a. According to Rivera, the wak’as embodied the old Andean world whereas the Catholic churches depict the world that came from Europe. Considering that in Andean spatial-temporal coordinates the historical past of the wak’as is still alive in daily life recreation of Indigenous cosmologies and laws, the past is always a time that will come or the time that future generations are waiting for. Thus, Rivera’s reading emphasizes a dimension of Indigenous resistance: on the one hand, by remarking on the rearranging of Andean cosmologies within the colonial regime, and, as a matter of fact, the beginning of an international legal

62 In 1550, Charles V, ruler of the Spanish Empire, in conjunction with the Council of the of the Indies, convened a summit meeting in order to determine, among other questions, whether or not the ‘newly discovered’ Amerindians had a soul, and thus to be able to decide the political treatment that the natives should receive within Spain’s colonization and conquest of the Americas. The gathering of jurists, theologians, and philosophers took place in the School of San Gregorio in the city of Valladolid, where the disputatio occurred between Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490-1573) and the Dominican friar Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474-1566). See Oscar Guardiola-Rivera, What if Latin America Ruled the World, How the South will take the North into the 22 Century (Bloomsbury, 2010) 43. For a description of the Valladolid Debates and the Salamanca School history, see André A. Alvez and José M. Moreira, The Salamanca School (Bloomsbury, 2010) 86-102.

63 The Protestant Reformation came into being as a schism in Western Christianity during the sixteenth century. It was repressed by the Catholic Church through the establishment of an ecumenical council known as the Council of Trent, whose principles were tailored in the Andean region with the creation of the Third Council of Lima (1582), which was in charge of the eradication of indigenous idolatries. See Pablo de Arriaga, Escritura de Idolatría del Piric 1621 (Facsimil, 1910).

order that would be strengthened in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the colonization of Oceania and Africa; on the other hand, by raising the inherent paradoxes of the colonization of a territory that was in an economic and cultural boom—as was the case of the Inca Empire in the Andes. The implications resulting from this epistemological framework turned the Potosí principle into its reverse.

Both the German curatorial nucleus and its Potosí Principle as well as the dissident component of the exhibition and its Reverse Side agreed on the relevance of challenging the idea of an exclusively European modernity. In the case of Rivera and El Colectivo, this issue is not only about the use of pictorial languages to locate historical references, but mainly about the way in which Indigenous peoples experience time and history in their everyday life: ‘the subversions and subalternities of colonial painting in its relationship with the communities it belongs to, and their rites, their structures of relationship and knowledge which break away from Euro-centric categories.’ Borja-Villel, director of the Reina Sofía Museum, has raised some key questions, which resonate in both projects regarding this particular issue:

What would happen if we substituted for Descartes’ ‘ego cogito’ Hernan Cortes’ ‘ego conquiro’, or Kant’s concept of pure reason for what Marx termed the principle of primitive accumulation? What if, instead of starting our account of the modern age in the England of the Industrial Revolution or the France of Napoleon III, we started it in vice-royal South America?

In the case of El Colectivo, however, history is not only a technology of knowledge and power, but also a matter of multiple appropriations and reappropriations in which Indigenous peoples are able to transform present and future through the histories of the past. It supposes a constant calibration and re-calibration of the self and the Other—of the church and the wak’a. If, on the one hand, ‘the world of ritual pilgrimages and the work turns of the mit’a in the mines or the maize fields of the Inka were transformed into a painful process to the new colonial wak’a—the Rich Mountain of Potosí’; on the other, the church/wak’a encounter amalgamated a complex relationship between colonial domination and Indigenous resistance. ‘[T]he syntax and the interpretive code that emerged from this taypi became the tool that enabled the confrontation and translation of the other, his

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68 Rivera Cusicanqui (2014).
symbols, mores, and the manners in which he exchanges both messages and commodities,’ Rivera adds.⁶⁹

In The Reverse Side of The Potosi Principle, Rivera has continued to strengthen her analysis on colonial times through the use of films and paintings, in order to reveal the official history’s political determination in the rejection and obliteration of Indigenous knowledge. This reading, however, not only considers the potential of the Andean baroque’s painting to understand the history of modernity. At the same time, Rivera points out the difference between a history hanging on an empty space, and a historic present full of the past and the future in which ‘the paintings are re-inscribed in the context of the community of devotees who worship them and dance in their honor.’⁷⁰ In the first space, ‘the capitalist circuits of art and the state’s appropriation of the communal patrimonies are nurtured by the fissures of the republican states’; while in the second one, the communities ‘insert themselves in the networks of signification that connect them to their dead ancestors, with the cycles of water, with the apachetas’⁷¹ and the celestial phenomena.⁷²

5 Conclusions
This article presented the trajectory with which anarchist sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, in conversation with Spivak, has been experiencing the epistemological and methodological possibilities of the double bind. The double bind constitutes the central analytical framework that opens the possibility of interaction with social domains that are contradictory and complementary at the same time. Thus, the article interacts with the contradictions and resonances produced in the course of three double-bound experiences.

In the first part, by examining the double bind between Indigenous and non-Indigenous jurisdictions with an ethnographic endeavor that, at its basis, pays attention to what Indigenous voices can say about lawful relations, rather than departing from what international law says or does not say about Indigenous peoples. This (international legal) anthropological approach attempts to move beyond to what ‘our society’ can say about social relations, to emphasize instead the way in which Indigenous jurisdictions function in order to resist, diversify, and adjust their bodies of knowledge, such as their jurisprudences and anthropologies, within the everyday operation of international law. In the second part, by having a

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⁶⁹ Ibid.
⁷⁰ Ibid.
⁷¹ ‘Apachetas is the Hispanicization of apachita, the place where ritual ceremonies take place, located in the highest point of the hills or the paths. There, some walkers place small stones as a sign that they have left their exhaustion.’ Rivera Cusicanqui (2010) 153.
⁷² Ibid.
conversation with Rivera about her indigeneity, I explored the double bind of a cultural identity that moves between the possibility of being simultaneously Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Lastly, in the third part, I illustrated the way in which Rivera and *El Colectivo* have transfused their daily life experience (particularly their critical involvement in the curatorial project *The Potosí Principle. How Can We Sing the Song of the Lord in a Foreign Land?) into an Andean double bind reading of the configuration of the international legal order.

It is ultimately the double bind between colonial domination and Indigenous resistance where the core of the article rests: On the one hand, by showing the darkest side of the colonial enterprise and the alignment of the international legal order, and, on the other, the creativity with which Andean Indigenous peoples succeeded in resisting the colonizers renewed impositions by turning the mestizo culture (characterized by the supremacy of the European mind-set) into a new socio-cultural trend. This becomes possible when the Indigenous ethos tinges alien culture with its spirit. In this context, Rivera has drawn attention to the proliferation of postcolonial studies as a new intellectual fashion, many of them, produced in the global north and entirely unconnected from the territories that say they are looking at. Fashions come and go but colonialism remains, Silvia has said.