Quechua Narration and the Cosmopoetics of Memory in Ch'aska Eugenia Anka Ninawaman

Ethel Barja Cuyutupa
Smith College

Les murmures de Ch'askascha/ Ch'askaschaq chhururuychan/ Los murmullos de Ch'askascha [The Little Chaska Muttering] by Eugenia Carlos Ríos, who writes under the name of Ch'aska Anka Ninawaman [morning star fire hawk eagle] was published in 2021, in a trilingual edition. Initially written in Quechua, it was translated into Spanish by Anka Ninawaman and French by Claire Lamorlette. Anka Ninawaman is a poet and fiction writer with a doctorate in Social and Cultural Anthropology who lives in France. The compound pseudonym Ch'aska Anka Ninawaman reflects the significance of the natural world in her writing. The author inspires her stories in a landscape between France and the territory of the K'ana Nation, corresponding to Ch'isikata in Espinar Province, Cuzco (Peru), where she is from.

Los murmullos story collection connects the reader to the emotions, creative struggle, and imaginative force of a transnational writing craft. How does the Quechua worldview infuse Anka Ninawaman's writing strategies? Studying Anka Ninawaman's self-translated version of *Ch'askaschaq chhururuychan* into Spanish and drawing on critical Indigenous studies, posthumanism, and postcolonial ecocritical perspectives, I argue that *Los murmullos* challenges stereotypes built upon static Indigenous attributes and disrupts uniformizing paths for collective belonging through what I term "cosmopoetics of memory." This notion names the crossing between cosmovision and poetics when the acts of reciprocity of Quechua communal bonds, implied in the collective enunciation of the narrative, mirror the strong rapport between humans and non-humans in Quechua cosmovision. Overall, *Los murmullos* provides anticolonial presentations of the Quechua artistic expression, formulates a transnational Quechua cultural horizon beyond the violence of coloniality, and affirms the value of cohesiveness that emerges from the interconnection between humans and other-than-human beings.

The notion of cosmopoetics of memory explores the dissemination of the Quechua worldview and heritage through written and oral art, including storytelling and poetry.[1] I propose to understand this concept in conversation with Critical Indigenous studies, as they operationalize: "Indigenous knowledges to develop theories, build academic infrastructure, and inform our cultural and ethical practices" (Moreton-Robinson 10). In the following study, I discuss first how Anka Ninawaman's *Los murmullos* contributes to Indigenous knowledge dissemination, materializing the convergence of its poetics and Quechua cosmovision; second, the analysis explores how Anka Ninawaman's cosmopoetics of memory

develops at a contact zone related to the Quechua notion of *chaupi*, in-between or third indefinite element (Mancosu 14), in connection with the multilingual and transnational presentation of her work; third, the study examines how *Los murmullos*' cosmopoetics of memory underscores the importance of cooperation between humans and other-than-human beings in anticolonial cultural practices.

Los Murmullos and the Cosmopoetics of Memory

Los murmullos contests stereotypes built upon static Indigenous attributes resulting from the reification of Eurocentric strategies of segregation that define Indigeneity upon the idea of deficiency and lack of change. In Arturo Arias' words: "Europeans justified colonialism by conceptualizing non-European land, peoples, and the environment as empty or underused spaces to develop and modernize, thus implying that native peoples were incapable of performing this task" (112). The alleged emptiness also questioned whether writing or artistic originality was possible in Quechua culture, overshadowing the study of Quechua literary art. Nonetheless, as Arias states, "it is a Western myth that no writing existed in the Americas before the Spaniards arrived" (110). Olmec, Maya, and Inca civilizations developed scriptural systems that were different from Eurocentric forms yet legitimate. In the *Abiayala* (America),[2] there have been continuous efforts from colonial times to the present to challenge discriminatory arguments for cultural marginalization, vindicate Indigenous knowledge production, and reconceptualize their diverse identity. Anka Ninawaman's work demonstrates how contemporary Quechua literature defies fixed Quechua cultural attributes that have been instrumentalized for its segregation, disrupting the homogeneity imposed on non-white identities in Peru. Her transnational literary activity and the wide availability of her work through translation, including her own, depict Quechua literature's mobile and expansive trajectory.[3]

I derive cosmopoetics from "a particular way of viewing the world or of understanding the universe" ("Cosmovision") and "[a] label for any formal or informal survey of the structures, devices, and norms that enable a discourse, genre, or cultural system to produce particular effects" ("Poetics"). The term is also in dialogue with the notion of "cosmopolitics" coined by Marisol de la Cadena as "relations among divergent worlds as a decolonial practice of politics" (281). The combination of these concepts will shed light on how the Quechua worldview influences Anka Ninawaman's writing strategies. I propose that her cosmopoetics is expressed through an act of remembrance that incorporates tradition into a transnational context, highlighting memory as a catalyst for creativity and an anti-colonialist perspective regarding exploitative relationships. Specifically considering with George Steiner that "we remember culturally, as we do individually, by conventions of emphasis, foreshortening and omission" (30), I understand memory, in this definition, as the survival of a rich ancestral knowledge that activates writing.

The cosmopoetics of memory appears in *Los murmullos* from the beginning of the short story "Los ojos irradiantes de la cuentacuentera," where a migrant narrator, possibly in France, digs into her recollections to activate the storytelling at the crossing of reciprocity and collective narration, emphasizing a strong rapport between humans and non-humans in Quechua cosmovision. The narrator describes how, during a period of sadness and far from home, she receives a visit from Grandma Hap'achi, a mythical ancestor who resides on a hill near her birthplace, Ch'isikata, and who has encouraged her to engage in creative activities, especially knitting. In a foreign country, the narrator has no difficulties invoking Grandma Hap'achi with hot chocolate and a croissant. The narrator explains that in this way, she is reproducing a creative ritual performed by her women's predecessors: "cuando era niña mi abuela materna y mi madre se sentaban sobre cueros de oveja, amarraban de sus cinturas con fajas floreadas y gruesas los palos lisos de los tejidos y ya listas para tejer llamaban a la abuela Hap'achi con tres hojas verdes de coca" (167). The coca leaves, as presented in the tale, belong to the *k'intu* ritual that, as the anthropologist Marisol de la Cadena describes, consists in searching: "three or four of the best coca leaves, carefully straighten them out, fan them like a hand of cards, and […] blow on them" (xxiv). The *k'intu*'s purpose is to support good communication with earth-beings (animals and natural formations): "Offering *k'intu* to earth-beings [...] they were welcoming *tirakuna* [earth-beings] to participate in our conversations. And they were doing so hoping for good questions and good answers, for good remembering, and for a good relationship between us and all those involved in the conversation" (xxv). In these terms, the ritual in Anka Ninawaman's story underlines the connotation of the "muttering" of the title of her story collection. It refers to the several voices and entities that enable the storytelling, including non-humans. De la Cadena also emphasizes that the all-encompassing Quechua cosmovision comes from the notion of earth-beings (*tirakuna*): "a composite noun made of tierra, the Spanish word for 'earth,' and pluralized with the Quechua suffix kuna" (xxiii, original emphasis). These earth-beings "participate in the lives of those who call themselves runakuna, people (usually monolingual Quechua speakers)" (xxiv), and they are part of their ayllu (family) (206). Under such considerations, the cosmopoetics of memory stresses that the participation of humans and *tirakuna* is essential for the storytelling, where they become co-narrators and share their coalition's responsibility and creative spark.

In the tale, the narrator's capacity to create depends absolutely on the connections with specific Andean memories, underlined by geographical references: "El *samay* [breath of life] irradiante de la vicuña vuelve a mi corazón y me veo al pie de la laguna de sus majestades las montañas Apu-tata Qurupuna y Apu-mama Sulimana ahí estoy cantando junto a la ronda de las cantoras, mientras los sabios queman sebo de vicuña para la pareja de los nevados" (164). The effects of the *samay* on creativity stress the overlapping of poetics and cosmovision in terms of how the writing motivation comes from the interaction between the human and the *tirakuna* (earth-beings). It also underscores the notion of power

in the Andean world, as Cristóbal Campana notes: "En el pensamiento andino el poder está profundamente ligado –y tal vez derivado– de la idea del 'cómo' se mantiene o sostiene la vida, en cambio para el pensamiento cristiano, lo primero es quién dio origen a la vida y quién hizo el mundo" (Campana 18). The *samay* exceeds the writer and belongs to the life energy sustained by all life forms and the *runakuna* (Quechua people).

Moreover, the intentional stimulation of memory for storytelling within the narration establishes a subtle conversation between the reformulated *k'intu* through hot chocolate and a croissant and the French pastry called *madeleine* that was a remembrance trigger in *À la recherche du temps perdu* of Marcel Proust.[4] According to him, sensations awake powerful connections with the past through involuntary memory: "somewhere beyond the reach of the intellect, and unmistakably present in some material object (or in the sensation which such an object arouses in us)" (Benjamin 158). The subtle connection with Proust emerges from the transnational *locus* of enunciation. The comparison prompts a reflection on a contrast between what Proust understood as involuntary memory and Anka Ninawaman's narration about deliberate remembrance initiated through the *K'intu* ritual. The ritualistic nature of memory stimulation in Anka Ninawaman's story exposes a will to control memory and the need to curate the terms in which the narration will take place. Such a procedure resonates with the intentional arrangements necessary for Anka Ninawaman to open Quechua culture to a multilingual and international audience through translation and a trilingual edition of her story collection. Thus, *Los murmullos* dialogues with Mary Louise Pratt's autoethnographic text's definition as an auto-representation open to the metropolitan public and their communities (Valle Escalante 9). Anka Ninawaman purposely includes autobiographical and cultural references, helping non-Quechua readers to approach the transnational Quechua imaginary of her work.

Getting into the cosmopoetics of memory requires the formation of a special togetherness of Quechua and non-Quechua speakers informed by the Quechua pronouns ñuqanchik (inclusive we) and ñuqayku (exclusive we). The first conveys all participants of the communicative situation, including the speaker, while the latter excludes the interlocutor(s), and configures a subgroup. Anka Ninawaman explicitly marks this difference in her translation, revealing that she anticipates audiences unfamiliar with such pronoun use. The story "El linaje de los vientos," narrates the dance of the highlands' whirlwinds. They are animated beings whose classification the narrator explains referring to Quechua pronouns for "we": "A este torbellino se le dice Ronda mayor o *Nuqanchis* (nosotros la ronda del linaje del viento). Las rondas menores que se deslizan del torbellino se llaman *Nuqayku* (nosotros las hijas e hijos sin madre), es decir, nosotros los miembros de la familia nos hacemos a un lado de la ronda mayor para seguir bailando nuestro propio baile, pero sin separarnos de ella" (210, original emphasis). I interpret this clarification within the story as part of the cosmopoetics of memory, in which Quechua linguistic notions of *ñuqanchis* and *ñuqayku* describe the engagement of Quechua and non-Quechua individuals in the shared space of the narration. From

the perspective of a bicultural and bilingual narrator, the first group (*ñuqanchis*) includes readers who participate in the Quechua worldview through translation and the second group (*ñuqayku*) excludes readers who do not share the Quechua cosmovision entirely.

Unable to belong to a homogeneous group because the narrator and the reader do not always share the same cultural horizon, they could still configure a collective "we," a *ñuqanchis* that takes place in the reading experience in translation. Anka Ninawaman is strategic in her attempt to bridge cultures, affirming that Quechua and non-Quechua perspectives can productively converge and that movement between worlds does not prevent sharing an aesthetic experience. As a non-Quechua and yet an Andean scholar, I read that cultural openness as a generous invitation.

Encounter at the *Chaupi* Contact Zone

Juan Pedro Herraiz affirms that *Los murmullos* is not only a literary testimony of cultural resistance to Modernity's erasure of diversity but also fosters respect between the infinite voices that inhabit our world (*Les murmures* 161-62). The multivocal allusion of the title of Anka Ninawaman's collection challenges uniformizing projects in Latin America to solve the "problem" of its diversity, also known as the discourse of *mestizaje* (miscegenation). According to Juan E. de Castro, this notion was: "an early attempt at reconciling heterogeneity with commonality" (xvi) that "originated in the attempt by the Latin American colonial *criollo* (Euro-American) elites to rhetorically ground their struggle for independence from Spain and Portugal in the history of Amerindian resistance" (xiii, original emphasis). The absorption of the Indigenous identities into the undifferentiated *mestizo* subsumed Indigenous cultural expressions to controllable stereotypes. In contrast, Anka Ninawaman's cosmopoetics of memory presents Quechua artistic crafting exceeding Indigenous tokenism, underlining its vigorous plurality, as it participates in a transnational Andean cultural horizon beyond the oppressive impositions of coloniality that condemns Indigeneity to disappearance or isolation.

De la Cadena asserts that Cuzco is "a composition (perhaps a constant translation) in which the languages and practices of its worlds constantly overlap and exceed each other" (5). Specifically, Anka Ninawaman's work highlights that Quechua culture itself presents continuous modification. In linguistic terms, she "highlights change as a cultural strategy that is indispensable to survival [...] [she] positions herself against purist stances that favor a pure Incan Quechua that disregards linguistic loans" (Zevallos Aguilar, "Peruvian" 77). Regarding such consideration, Anka Ninawaman stresses that the Quechua Indigenous cultural horizon is not uniform. In Anka Ninawaman's "Wak'a: cabeza de vaca," we read:

> Cuentan que un estudiante buscando un lugar sereno para leer sus libros de filosofía penetró en la wak'a. Los ojos de la wak'a al ver al forastero resplandecieron de alegría y se dijo 'Hoy cenaremos un tierno corazón' [...] Se sentaron alrededor de la mesa, pero cuando se disponían a devorar el corazón del estudiante, los libros del muchacho empezaron a murmurar ideas extrañas […] Las wak'as siendo wak'as indomables y salvajes, quedaron hechizadas por aquellas historias que salían del libro. Desde entonces llevan año tras año filosofando. Si te acercas a la cueva Taqrara sentirás que brota al compás de las aguas cristalinas una potencia resplandeciente de murmullos ontológicos. (187)

Usually, an intrusion into a sacred natural formation (*wak'a*), as depicted in *Los murmullos,* would imply a punishment for the offender, like in "El conejo pinta" story, in which a man who trespassed at the Hatun Qucha lake during forbidden hours is transformed into an animal. However, the "Wak'a: cabeza de vaca" story underscores an expansion of epistemological worlds when the Indigenous entity embraces Western knowledge. The wak'a appreciates the book's content and engages in a "muttering" that incorporates foreign voices. In these terms, the story portrays the Quechua cosmovision as an empathic realm, able to approach and appreciate alterity: "Las wak'as siendo wak'as indomables y salvajes, quedaron hechizadas por aquellas historias que salían del libro" (187). Undermining epistemological isolation, the tale dialogues with critical Indigenous studies' radical intent, which "reflects an independence of will and the freedom and responsibility to construct knowledge beyond the ramparts of colonial taxonomies" (Hokowhitu 63). Anka Ninawaman's story reinforces the idea of Quechua imagery's openness to the flow of knowledge between cultures.

Beyond its ethnic territory, the narrative welcomes diverse worldviews, as manifested by Anka Ninawaman's multilingual presentation of *Los murmullos* in Quechua, French, and Spanish, which constitutes a politics of language that asserts the flexibility and vivacity of Quechua identity. Quechua literary expressions have always been intertwined with negotiations among languages, memories, and cultures through various forms of resistance.[5] As Alison Krögel elucidates in her study on 21st century Quechua poetry, translation is a contentious topic of conversation among contemporary writers. First, some authors are reluctant to offer their work in translation from Quechua into Spanish. Especially promoted by Pablo Landeo Muñoz since 2012, this position discards a prosthetic dependence on Spanish through the publication of bilingual editions because of a disbalanced relationship based on diglossia: "la asimetría sociolingüística, política y económica entre los hablantes del runasimi y del castellano es tan vasta que imposibilita la coexistencia de ambas lenguas (o incluso en el mismo libro)" (75). Writers such as Edwin Chillcce Canales and Olivia Reginaldo foster monolingual publications such as the *Atuqpa Chupan* journal, which aims to fortify the Quechua literacy and empower Quechua language (75). On the other hand, Krögel identifies the position in favor of translation as a multilingual project that celebrates the interaction

and confluence between Quechua and other languages, particularly relevant to contemporary artists and activists: "El poder de esta forma diglósica de crear arte yace en el hecho de que permite al público bi/multi/-lingüe y bi/ multi/ -cultural moverse libremente entre lenguas y referencias para poder así, crear su propio 'intertexto'" (155). Anka Ninawaman's story collection belongs to this second orientation that, as Krögel affirms, takes non-Quechua languages and references to reconfigure them into a new way to move around the world (156).

Furthermore, according to Paola Mancosu, Anka Ninawaman uses Andean Spanish, which presents traces of the Quechua language, for her self-translation to convey the cultural porosity of her work. This Spanish variant simultaneously unites, separates, and mediates between opposites (Quechua and Spanish) in conversation with the Quechua notion of *chaupi,* that as Anka Ninawaman explains: "literalmente puede traducirse como 'entre' o como 'lo que está en el medio', es decir, 'un tercer elemento, intermedio e indefinido', 'un punto de encuentro indiscernible'" (Mancosu 14). The in-between (*chaupi*) goes beyond a harmonious mid-point and underlines a coincidence of contradiction and perplexity, vindicated as part of the postcolonial Quechua experience. *Chaupi* also belongs to a textile vocabulary that marks a borderline: "the distinctive, solitary 'stripe' whose design, colours and fabric clearly differentiate it from the other ones in the Andean Jersey or blanket" (Ovando 87). It is also recognized as a favorable location. In its topographic iteration, *chaupi*: "[is] the sector of upper valleys, producing both grains and tubers […] [that] makes up an essential zone of the [Andean] archipelago. It does not impose separation but reinforces *active complementarities*. In this zone, one finds towns, built usually at an elevation of between 3,600 and 3,300 meters" (Saignes 314; my emphasis); therefore, as a third and in-between space, *chaupi* is also a fertile soil for cultural exchanges.

Likewise, the *chaupi* notion dialogues with Antonio Cornejo-Polar's concept of non-dialectic heterogeneity formulated in connection to the Andean migration: "el desplazamiento migratorio duplica (o más) el territorio del sujeto y le ofrece o lo condena a hablar desde más de un lugar. Es un discurso doble o múltiplemente situado […] de códigos que pese a ingresar en un solo rumbo discursivo no sólo no se confunden, sino que preservan en buena parte su propia autonomía" (841-42). As a Quechua migrant subject, Anka Ninawaman embraces this non-dialectic heterogeneity and celebrates the *chaupi* multilayered positionality where Quechua culture intertwines with different languages and perspectives. Considering that Indigenous ontologies should be feared primarily for the concrete political threat they pose to extractivism (Arias 116), Anka Ninawaman's work is culturally subversive. Its multifaceted Quechua expression at the *chaupi* contact zone challenges imperialistic power strategies that weaponize differences to exploit Indigenous cultures and territories. The cultural multiplicity of Anka Ninawaman's writing also underscores the historicity of the interactions between Quechua culture, other Indigenous cultures, and Western cultures, undermining misconceptions of Quechua purity or isolation.

In "Las niñas de la Pachamama" story, the Pachamama girls enchanted a group of people and took them against their will. Their relatives identified two ways to retrieve their bodies. The first was a Catholic one: after a mass and pious prayers, the community found the dead bodies of their family members by the river. The second way consisted of settling an agreement with the Pachamama girls and performing a ritual for them. Subsequently: "los desaparecidos salen de la boca de los ríos acompañados de las niñas de la Pachamama. Salen en medio de truenos y rayos cargando naranjas y plátanos […] Las niñas de la Pachamama nos envían esos regalos para ornamentar la iglesia. Ellas saben que ahí nos recogemos después de los grandes *huaycos* [landslides]" (197, original emphasis). After apparent stress on the weakness of the Catholic path to reply to the community's needs, the non-human Quechua forces send their regards to the Catholic church because it protects the Quechua people, who undeniably belong to the two worlds and have learned to negotiate sustainable conditions in between worldviews. This story highlights the *chaupi* (in-between) of cultural convergence and paradox as part of the Quechua imaginary. Another example comes from the story of quinoa, which appears as a product of dual interaction. Some birds after attending mass in heaven stole the seed from the stars, but each year they give the grains back as an offering: "Las *p'isaqas* cuando vuelven de la misa nos los retornan en nuevas semillas mucho más irradiantes. Es así como los granos se van potenciando en la tierra y en el cielo y cada vez son más hermosos y granulados" (195). The story underscores how the interaction between cultures that coexist in reciprocity could become a fruitful circumstance. From this multifocal standpoint, the title *Los murmullos* names the Quechua contemporary experience as a promising ground for cultural exchanges.

Cultural interactions and Andean migration have elicited several responses in Quechua literary history. For instance, José María Arguedas stated that the migration in the 20th century to Lima was part of a progressive disintegration of Quechua collective cohesion, and this displacement translated into a "cosmic solitude." This isolation began with European colonization, which fragmented the Inca world when the Quechua people abruptly entered servitude, stunned and harmed by the imposition of a foreign culture. The dismemberment surpassed the Quechua people's social fabric and implied the erasure of former relations with the environment: "en sus formas de expresión se percibe como el lamento de la propia naturaleza silente y terriblemente quebrada de los Andes peruanos" (16). The consequences of colonization entail dramatic changes to humans, living forms, and nature through extractivism, exploitation, and pollution. Arguedas emphasized that such cosmic atomization affected how Andean people envision the future in the 20th century: "En la gran familia, ahora no sólo dispersada, sino disgregada, cada quien se defiende como puede y el uno mira al otro como en un destino diferente" (23). However, he believed in a possible reversal of the Quechua "cosmic solitude:" "Puede surgir de este magma [de la migración], otra vez, un verdadero mundo nuevo […] nueva llama de una tradición milenaria cuya hondura no ha de ser posible llenar únicamente con cemento y lágrimas" (25). Arguedas'

belief in the power of tradition and its ability to traverse different geographies aligns with Anka Ninawaman's appreciation of Quechua language and imagery in a transnational context.

Indeed, in recent years, there has been an acknowledgment that the Quechua migration is building up a vibrant trans-Andean space of cultural production, especially considering the 21st century Quechua authors such as Lurgio Gavilán Sánchez, Hilaria Supa Huamán, Gloria Cáceres Vargas, among others who write in Quechua and Spanish (Zevallos Aguilar 249), and who engage with topics of domestic and international migrations. Analyzing authors of Indigenous ancestry who have produced transnationally, such as José Luis Ayala and Odi Gonzales, Antonio Sandoval asserts that this Quechua writing is transforming national and international literary spaces moving them to diverse codes and languages, defying hegemonic cultural expressions (97- 100). Beyond narratives of chauvinistic instrumentalization of Indigenous identity as tokens for national branding, transnational Quechua writing exhibits its diversity and undefined edges from where its innovation grows. Specifically, Anka Ninawaman's multilingual and creative take on transcultural experiences through Quechua imagery signals her originality and asserts the openness and vitality of Quechua culture. In the story "Las coplas y el parto de los ojos irradiantes," the narrator describes a creative process filled with visions that are rich in Quechua and non-Quechua references. Throughout the story, various animals and mythological beings are invoked, including sirens, flying heads, and a fox.

> Siento que mi samay-energía alcanza el pico del volcán de la abuela Hap'achi, la siento violenta, ardiente y viva a punto de estallar. Antes de que la lava de la abuela explote en mi pecho, mi mano gira sobre las olas del mar, una tras otra. De pronto veo aparecer en medio del oleaje una infinidad de estrellas, y en medio de ellas, dos ojos penetrantes. Los miro de costado y veo que son los ojos del tío zorro, vuelvo a mirarlos de frente y caigo en cuenta de que el largo trazo que ondea en su cuello es la bufanda del niño aviador llamado "el principito." (172)

The intertextual allusion to the *Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry is particularly fascinating. This novella tells the story of a little prince traveling across various planets, interacting with different individuals, and looking for friends and the meaning of life. The fox's presence in Anka Ninawaman's story echoes its relevance as a traditional character in Quechua narration. It commonly embodies wit and deception. From a modern Andean perspective in *The Fox from Up Above and the Fox from Down Below* (1971) of Arguedas, the fox encapsulates the troubled Peruvian identity vis-à-vis the alienating effects of industrialization and extractivist capitalism in the second half of the 20th century. The symbolism of the Fox character in the *Little Prince* story potentializes these meanings. In consonance with Anka Ninawaman's *chaupi,* the fox is a metaphor for a transnational field where diverse cultures could thrive in mutual recognition. In

Saint-Exupéry's story, the Fox explains to the little prince: "If you tame me, we'll need each other. You'll be the only boy in the world for me. I'll be *the only fox* in the world for you" (57; my emphasis). Extrapolating these lines to an Indigenous cultural context, the preservation of uniqueness in the encounter with the other means the inhibition from tokenism and the respect to Quechua specificity at the common ground of the narrative.

Another moment of reflection on Quechua migration appears in the story "Las hojas de coca dan lectura a los ojos irradiantes." The narrator returns from work, and after opening a bag of coca leaves, she remembers her childhood. She performs the *K'intu* ritual and recalls how her mother used to read the coca leaves. Through their foretelling function, the leaves convey the meaning *runakuna* (Quechua people) constantly extract from their surroundings and their relationship with the *tirakuna* (earth-beings) in connection with their wellness and tragedy. At that moment, the narrator remembers her father's kidnapping:

> Recuerdo una madrugada de helada, mi madre, luego de ver que un grupo de encapuchados entraban a la casa y subían a mi padre a empujones a un carro blindado con rumbo desconocido, esparció sobre su pollera las diminutas hojitas partidas que aún le quedaban y al instante, como por arte de magia, sobre aquellas hojas quebrantadas sin forma sobresalieron dos de ellas sanas, sin heridas que juntaban sus cabezas para que alrededor de ellas marchara un grupito de pequeñas hojitas. Mi madre asentó su corazón y dejó de llorar, guardó su atadito de coca y con gestitos muy ágiles prendió el fuego. Nos dijo: 'prepárense para la escuela'. Y antes de que hubiera retirado la olla del fogón mi padre abrió la puerta y se echó a llorar. (178)

The narration engages symbolically with the years of Peru's Internal Armed Conflict (1980-2000) when mostly the Quechua population was decimated, suffering atrocities perpetrated by the State and subversive terrorist groups (The Shining Path and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement). According to Truth and Reconciliation Commission [Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación del Perú, or CVR]; the conflict left 69, 280 deaths, of which 79 percent lived in rural areas and 56 percent were peasants, in addition to 20, 329 missing people, according to the National Registry of the Department of Justice [Registro Nacional del Ministerio de Justicia] (par. 1). The allusion to this dreadful historical moment also appears in "El águila waman y el lagarto warkhantay." An eagle enters a cosmic battle with a lizard. After defeating the lizard, the eagle leaves it in Chivay village, where it multiplies: "El pueblo estaba bajo el poder de los lagartos […] Mi padre y mis tíos dejaron el pueblo de los *Warkhantay* sin voltear atrás" (213, original emphasis). The struggle is figuratively correlated with the exile that the Quechua people undertook, leaving behind their ancestral territories in rural areas during the Peruvian Armed Conflict, and with their forced relocation to urban and coastal cities like Lima. Invoking this reference, the story "Las hojas de coca dan

lectura a los ojos irradiantes" underlines the Quechua people's suffering during terror times and the importance of historical memory to expose fears and hopes under transhistorical violent circumstances. For instance, despite the dystopian reality, the story stresses that the family's strength came from their tradition, which parents passed along to teach their children to cope with transhistorical memories of violence:

> [nuestros padres] nos contaron que había una chispita llamada *Qunusqa* que dormita en el fondo de nuestro corazón y aunque muy pequeñita y lejana la *Qunusqa* nos ilumina con ese fulgorcillo capaz de jalarnos cuando la arena tornadiza de las desgracias quiere tragarnos […] [la chispita] prendió en poderosa flama para salvarnos de las fauces de la arena movediza de *aquellos caballos endemoniados sin corazón*. De aquellas hojitas arruinadas en un chispeo de luz surgieron las nuevas hojitas recompuestas, sin heridas, sin manchas, y así volvimos nosotros a recomponernos como familia, pues lo había ordenado la coca mamita. (178; my emphasis)

The Peruvian Armed Conflict brought back the worst memories to the Quechua population. In Anka Ninawaman's story, the image of the horse serves as a symbol of the long *durée* of the colonial terror associated with the Spanish invasion. The broken coca leaves also represent the fissures in the sociocultural and idiosyncratic Quechua body, fragmented by colonial domination and once again torn by contemporary violence. On the other hand, the healing of the leaves invokes a transhistorical Quechua resistance to massacre and disintegration despite the adversities and the aftermath of internal and international migration caused by the violence.

The healing of the formerly torn leaves also dialogues with the *Inkarrí* myth: distributed at separate locations, the dismembered last Inca will get together his body parts, and the fragmentation of the Inca Empire upon Spanish domination will end. According to Alberto Flores Galindo, between 1953 and 1972, anthropologists found fifteen stories about *Inkarrí* in various towns in the Peruvian Andes (22). Peter Elmore recently demonstrated that the popularized version of this myth is not entirely Quechua but a product of the intervention of anthropologists and several intellectuals in its configuration, including Efraín Morote Best and José María Arguedas. Elmore documents how Peruvian intellectuals privileged the messianic version of the *Inkarrí* myth during the second half of the 20th century to emphasize the mythic and magic nature of the cosmovision of peasants from the highlands (Elmore 17), disregarding several other variants of the myth incompatible with such version (Elmore 56). Considering the influence of academia on the *Inkarrí* motif and the complex history of its construction, it is crucial to explore the features of the contemporary Quechua hope from within. The healing of the coca leaves of Anka Ninawaman's story adds to a Quechua affirmation of wholeness and well-being that surpasses a mere consideration of hope as a utopian

orientation imposed from external factors, such as the popularization of the *Inkarrí* motif among Quechua intellectuals. Within Anka Ninawaman's stories, hope for Quechua people emphasizes the alliances between humans and non-humans. For example, her stories underscore the power of the *k'intu* ritual for triggering and enabling creative outcomes and the capacity of coca divination to affirm the future reunification of the fragmented experience produced by transhistorical violence. Therefore, in Anka Ninawaman's literary terms, futurity would depend on the prosperity of humans and non-humans co-presence and coalition.

The significant validation of ancestral knowledge for the Quechua people's future well-being appears in the story "El encanto de las sirenas," featuring Illa, described in the collection as radiant energy (170). During a drought in the Atacama region, Illa came to help but nobody understood her language and could not join her in rituals to make the rain return. Thus, the story concludes: "La nueva generación para recuperar el ojo del agua tendrá que reapropiarse del lenguaje de sus abuelos mascando las hojitas de coca y saboreando copitas de vino tinto. Recién entonces concebirán el canto de la lluvia" (188). Bonding with ancestral knowledge through language restates the need to value cultural memory and the intentional practice of Quechua traditions even in transnational spaces or including European items, like wine. In other words, the cosmopoetics of memory in Anka Ninawaman's literary work proposes that under the threat of a Quechua cultural drought, embedding ancestry in writing is an act of hope.

Imperialist Violence and Human and Non-Human Alliances

Displaying posthumanist concerns on "how relations between humans and nonhumans operate within the environments where they are assembled" (Clarke and Rossini xiv), Anka Ninawaman's stories remarkably approach how the integration between the human collective and its ecosystem in Quechua cosmovision informs the narration: "Mi mano gira en oleadas haciendo aparecer una infinidad de seres del universo-*pacha* […] Una infinidad de ojos vuelven a mirarme en una marejada de cerros empinados, de quebradas oscuras, de manantes verdes, de cielos estrellados: son los ojos de los hijos e hijas de la madre tierra" ("Los ojos irradiantes comienzan a murmurar" 175, original emphasis). This comprehensive congregation of humans and earth-beings (*tirakuna*) underlines the Quechua narrative as a twofold act of cultural and environmental restitution that challenges the postcolonial exploitive and divisive relationship between collective biomes.

According to Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin: "Postcolonial studies has come to understand environmental issues not only as central to the projects of European conquest and global domination but also as inherent in the ideologies of imperialism and racism on which those projects historically—and persistently—depend" (6). Anka Ninawaman's work offers a lucid exploration of such conflation of colonial subjugation and ecological imperialistic devastation. For instance, the story "Sullullu Wallallu" tells that in ancient times powerful twins took care of

the irrigation canals and contributed to the thriving potato agriculture of their community. However, the colonial dividing force disturbed their world:

> Pero un día llegó la discordia junto con la palabra de Dios. Sullullu aprendió a leer las buenas nuevas de la Biblia y Wallalu se aferró a la sabiduría de la Pachamama. Entre ellos el cordón umbilical se rompió. Entonces, el ojo de los canales fue invadido por malezas y como nadie los limpió se volvieron ciegos y no tardaron en secarse. Junto a ellos también desaparecieron las incontables variedades de las deliciosas papas. Esto despertó la furia del Illapa (rayo) y como castigo les lanzó un rayo refulgente. Ambos fueron calcinados, tan solo se salvó la Biblia. (184)

The survival of only the Bible, as the sole remnant of a once-thriving agricultural community after colonization, highlights the severe material consequences of the drastic European transformations in *Abiayala*'s environmental economy. According to Arias: "The Spanish invasion […] introduced material outcomes driven by the ethos of economic growth and linear, technoscientific progress that converted natural resources into global commodities" (Arias 110). The metaphorical separation and discord between Sullullu and Wallallu contrast with the interconnected forces grounded in the *chaupi* (in-between zone). Their conflict also conveys how colonial power displaced native knowledge and harmed Quechua people's mode of understanding belonging and commonality, breaking their strong connection to their environment.

Westernized nation-building projects from the 19th century onwards presented modernization as acculturation and a remedy for the non-European population. In "El conejo pinta," the denial of Quechua cosmovision interrupts the cooperative relationship between humans and non-humans, as the Quechua people knew before. Gabino disobeys and enters a lake during a forbidden time: "Se sintió seguro porque tenía consigo su reloj de oro para ver la hora […] un conejo colorado le tocó de repente […] El conejo pintado no solo le robó su reloj, sino que también le quitó su *samay*, el aliento que le hacía ser runa-gente. Y tío Gabino se covirtió en el *rantín*- doble del conejo, pues no deja de comer día y noche zanahorias" (190, original emphasis). The man's transgression results in the loss of his identity. The story illustrates how "[by] assuming a natural prioritization of humans and human interests over those of other species on earth, we are both generating and repeating the racist ideologies of imperialism on a planetary scale" (Huggan and Tiffin 6). The Quechua cosmovision's incorporation of non-humans into their worldview illustrates the meaning of collective will and collective prosperity within a *chaupi* logic of complementarity. Therefore, Anka Ninawaman's narration offers alternative ways to grasp a sense of community, different from colonialist exploitative viewpoints.

As Arias states: "During the previous twelve thousand years, Indigenous peoples learned that every single element configuring their biotic environment was critical for survival" (113). From an Indigenous perspective, belonging means

assuming responsibilities and obligations of the people and space: "Belonging is about being woven into the fabric of the land and its legacies, accepting the knowledge that your future is a shared future, and that you are accountable to those around you" (Heath Justice 22). Remembering the concrete outcomes of the synergic communication between humans and earth-beings is highly relevant to the environmental crisis of our times, when from a posthuman perspective is more evident that "nature at all scales is penetrating the prior boundaries, we thought to place around the human essence" (Clarke and Rossini xiii). Some of Anka Ninawaman's short stories warn about the catastrophic interruption of the biotic interconnection, such as the story "La avecilla potencia generadora de las vacas": "La gente Antigua decía que nunca se debía coger ningún tipo de patito salvaje, son el hap'iqi-potencia generadora que agarra el *samay*- aliento de las vacas […] el hijo de los hacendados Álvares atrapó un patito de cuello rojo y entonces sus ganados desaparecieron uno a uno" (220, original emphasis). Likewise, in "El encanto de las sirenas," Anka Ninawaman underlines the pedagogical purposes of the Quechua narration related to the ecosystem's preservation: "Cuentan que un muchacho sin corazón y sin sentimientos pescaba día y noche los huevillos de las sirenas. Las *sirenayuq* decidieron castigarle" (189, original emphasis); after that, the fish continued to reproduce abundantly. Such stories restore the broken imagery of cooperation and respect between humans and earth-beings, restating the *chaupi* collaborative space and confronting the legacy of the colonialist mindset of extractivism.

Anka Ninawaman's cosmopoetics of memory bridges ancestral knowledge and the idiosyncrasy of new generations. For example, her narrative underscores how Quechua predecessors attentively observed the birds' behavior to interpret the climate conditions for the cultivation of the land, like in the story "Doña Tomasa Liqirusu": "con trinos y con bailes nos anuncian conocimientos muy antiguos. Gracias a esos saberes los *runas* también nos hacemos *yachaq*-sabios y sabias" (203, original emphasis). The knowledge coming from tradition presents the Quechua memory through a collective voice that includes nature, like in the story "Tata pillpintu": "Tata Pillpintu o abuelo mariposa pertenece al tiempo mítico de los abuelos ñawpas que vivieron en el tiempo de la luna" (201). In these terms, Anka Ninawaman's Indigenous-centered approach vindicates Indigenous epistemology: "Tata *Pillpintu* suele aparecer en la estación de la siembra de la papa. Viene para anunciarnos la variedad de papas que debemos sembrar. Se presenta súbitamente aleteando un libro abierto de par en par" (201, original emphasis). Through the allusion to a book, the narration also highlights the importance of formal instruction about the richness of Quechua culture, which resonates with Anka Ninawaman's educational path: "nosotros [ñuqayku] los niños y niñas que fuimos escogidos, corríamos detrás de las mariposas para aprender a leer el aleteo de los libros entreabiertos. Es así como muchos de nosotros se volvieron grandes lectores" (202). The combination of "nosotros" and "se volvieron," which imply a "we" (*ñuqayku*) subject connected to a "they" in the verbal conjugation, highlights that the Quechua literary task takes place at the in-between position (*chaupi*) of a

specific group of multifaceted individuals who accessed literacy and yet preserve strong connections with oral traditions.

Other Quechua writers like Arguedas also noted the need to appreciate the human and non-human alliance in storytelling: "en los cuentos de la Taripha los animales transmitían también la naturaleza de los hombres en su principio y su fin" (Espino Relucé 140). Indigenous literature's richness is linked to a creative activity that integrates humans, animals, and natural formations into the artistic experience. *Los murmullos* exhorts to imagine transformative futures, surpassing individual interest by underscoring a collective enunciation. Hence, Anka Ninawaman's Quechua literary work is today more necessary than ever because of the paramount importance of "the courage to imagine new ways in which human and non-human societies, understood as being ecologically connected, can be creatively transformed" (Huggan and Tiffin 215).

In Anka Ninawaman's narration, humans and earth-beings share a relationship built upon empathy, where their commonality is not incompatible with the changes introduced by Modernity and travel. For example, the story "Las coplas y el parto de los ojos irradiantes," which provides an array of visions as an outcome of a creative activity, also emphasizes the appreciation of cultural exchange: "'Veo que su señoría ahora lleva terno en lugar de poncho'. Me fijo en Ruququ, le encuentro extraño, entre roquero y antiguo, vuelvo a mirarle y siento que mi *kallpa* [fuerza] palpita en mi pecho con una potencia nunca antes sentida" (173, original emphasis). Anka Ninawaman's work exposes the resilience of Quechua heritage in a postcolonial world, underscoring the anticolonial intervention of cultural memory in contemporary storytelling in transnational contexts. Her narration celebrates the convergence of people from diverse origins and invites them to acknowledge that the force of non-humans can lift them to an extra-individual power. In other words, according to Anka Ninawaman's literary work, collective strength relies on the coalition with other bodies because we only thrive as *tirakuna* (earth-beings).

In conclusion, I demonstrated how the short story collection *Los murmullos* challenges the homogenization of Indigenous attributes, stressing the configuration of a transnational Quechua imagery through the richness of the in-between (*chaupi*) space of complementarity. I argued that Anka Ninawaman's writing creates a cosmopoetics of memory, which highlights the intersection between writing strategies (poetics) and the revival of ancestral idiosyncrasies and values (cosmovision). Her writing displays parallels between the collective involved in the storytelling and the connection between humans and earth-beings in the Quechua worldview. In other words, the acts of creative reciprocity and the relationships beyond human encounters in Anka Ninawaman's Quechua narrative illuminate an innovative approach to contemporary ecocritical issues from a transnational literary perspective, confronting the exploitative consequences of colonial legacy.

Notes

[1] "Cosmo" in the notion of "cosmopoetics" refers to worldview and not to cosmopolitanism and differs from "cosmo-poethics." According to Silvana Carotenuto the latest term discusses cosmopolitanism and ethics of hospitality that "acknowledge the space of literary creation, or generative force, as a space sans frontières" (182) and "offer critical space for the happening of new methods and creative praxes that are already culturally migrating through the globe, across the cosmos" (181). Despite its importance, globalized and cosmopolitan poetics present the risk of identity erasure in the search for achieving a planetary dimension. On the other hand, cosmopoetics of memory will zoom in on how Quechua cosmovision infuses writing strategies with ancestry in the work by Anka Ninawaman to underscore the importance of cultural memory in transnational art, especially related to the Quechua notion of *chaupi*.

[2] *Abya Yala* comes from the Guna (previously Kuna) language from San Blas, Panama, and means "land in its full maturity." It was used by the Guna people before the European invasion, and it has been disseminated in contemporary times by the Aymara scholar Takir Mamani to prevent using an imposed name for the continent. Today it is written *Abiayala* (Arias 116; Valle Escalante 16).

[3] As Martin Lienhard underlines, oral practices manifest collective memory, which is unique and unrepeatable; therefore, a verbal patrimony (47-8). Quechua's literary expression in literary analysis is more properly named "verbal art" to avoid hierarchical comparisons with written expressions (Bendezú XVII). It has also been understood as a source of Quechua ethnographic information, as it has been mostly preserved in anthropological texts (52). However, as Jean-Philippe Husson states, the Quechua narration goes beyond a mere transcription of oral traditions yet is still connected with it. Certainly, Quechua writing exhibits originality, fictionalization, and inspiration, such as "El sueño del pongo" by José María Arguedas, and the more recent short stories by Porfirio Meneses and Macedonio Villafán Broncano (Husson 442-43; Itier 40). Anka Ninawaman's writing is in conversation with this tendency and explicitly declares the imaginative crafting in her work, beyond a mere anthropological and informative nature: "¿Y tú qué esperas? Si sigues contando tus vivencias de niña nunca darás ni el primer ni el segundo trazo de tus olas de mar" (170). This is Grandma Hap'achi's appreciation, who represents the artistic impulse that brings inspiration, *samay*, understood as artistic breath in *Los murmullos.* Therefore, alongside the influence of the oral mode of narration, the first novelty introduced in Anka Ninawaman's writing is a metaliterary construction, where the narrator reflects on her creative activity and exposes her weaknesses and subject positionality. This observation is not minor considering the value that adds to Quechua narration, underlining its imaginative nature.

[4] I thank the peer-reviewers of *Chasqui Revista de Literatura y Cultura Latinoamericana e Indígena* for suggesting the connection with Proust as a point of reflection for my critical analysis.

[5] It is known that José María Arguedas' position regarding the Quechua literary language was not uniform. In 1939, he affirmed "Si hablamos el castellano puro no decimos ni del paisaje ni de nuestro mundo interior: porque el mestizo no ha logrado todavía dominar el castellano como su idioma y el keschwa es aún su medio legítimo de expresión. Pero si escribimos en Keschwa hacemos literatura condenada al olvido" (Forgues 49; Escobar 53). However, later his vision changed. John Murra maintains that the Lima that Arguedas lived in during the 1930s made him think that Quechua had no literary future, but he rectified that opinion in the 1960s ("José María Arguedas" 291-93), which evidence is his own Quechua poetry.

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