

Mountains as actors in the Bolivian Andes: The interrelationship between politics and ritual in the Kallawayaya *ayllus*

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Figure 1: Drawing of the valley of Charazani
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Mountains as actors in the Bolivian Andes: The interrelationship between politics and ritual in the Kallawaya *ayllus*

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This essay will examine the way that a Bolivian Andean people, the Kallawayas, incorporate mountains—seen as beings with agency in their own right—into their structure of kinship and politics. The Kallawayas interpret mountains as inhabited by ancestral spirits, who are incorporated into the local political structure as authorities. This understanding of the mountains denies the Western separation of politics and nature. I follow de la Cadena (2014) in positing mountain spirits, known as machulas, and humans, known as runa, as mutually constituting one another within the socio-territorial space of the ayllu. In this space nature and politics are not divided but intertwined. However, the political organisation of the Kallawaya communities has undergone profound changes in recent decades that have affected the ritual relationship between the Kallawayas and the mountain spirits. The manner in which Kallawayas incorporate their ancestors as authorities therefore provides evidence for the propensity of ritual to reflect social structure.

This ethnographic essay explores the way in which humans and mountain beings interact politically in the Andes, drawing on fieldwork conducted with the Kallawayas, an indigenous nation in Andean Bolivia. In doing so, I take up the challenge of Peruvian anthropologist Marisol de la Cadena (2010), who invites us to take seriously the presence of “other-than-humans” as actors in politics. That mountains can participate in politics implies a conception of politics which does not accept a division between humanity as political and nature as a distinct non-political sphere, as Latour (1993) suggests is characteristic of modernity. I demonstrate that the Kallawayas’ relationship with mountain spirits is so central to their way of conducting politics that changes in the political structure of the Kallawaya communities significantly impacts on the Kallawayas’ ritual relationship with the mountains. In doing so, I build theoretically on work by political anthropologists such as Kertzner (1974) and Friedrich ([1966] 2009) who show that the interdependency of politics and ritual means that change in one can lead to alterations in the other, and Lukes (1975: 301), who suggests that political rituals reinforce and organise our collective representations of the way society functions.

The Kallawayas are divided between more than 70 separate communities—relatively autonomous from one another—in the municipalities of Charazani and Curva in the province of Bautista Saavedra in the North of the department of La Paz. What unites them is ritual veneration of the same mountains (Bastien 1985). The manner in which Kallawayas have traditionally related to the mountains on a communal basis has mirrored the political structure of Kallawaya communities. However, as I shall explain, changes in the way

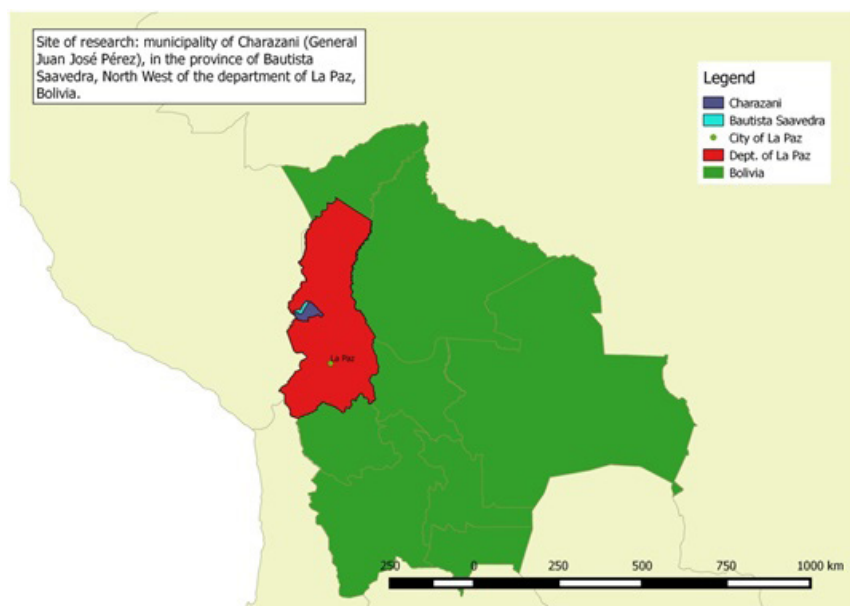


Figure 2: Site of research

that the Kallawayas relate to one another politically has led to shifts in their own ritual practice and therefore the political relationship with ancestors related to as mountain spirits. I therefore argue that the Kallawayas rituals involving mountain spirits reflect the social structure of the Kallawayas world.

The Significance of the Kallawayas Mountains

I spent much of the first few months of my fieldwork following meetings of the Kallawayas Autonomy Assembly. The Kallawayas were taking advantage of constitutional changes that allowed for the creation of indigenous autonomies (*Autonomía Indígena Originario Campesinas*, or AIOCs). In December 2009, people in the municipality of Charazani had voted in favour of converting their municipality into an AIOC and, in 2012, representatives of Charazani's 68 Kallawayas communities began writing a statute designed to eventually become their constitution. At one such assembly, a new name was proposed for what would be the autonomous indigenous territory: "Isqani Qalla-Qallan of the Kallawayas Nation." Isqani and Qalla-Qallan are two mountains, sacred to the Kallawayas. The reason for the proposal was the emblematic nature of the mountains in marking out territory. Although the assembly members were largely supportive of the change of name, the move was also met with some dissent. One of the assembly members, Orlando Alvarez of the community of Khanlaya, remarked with concern that Isqani and Qalla-Qallan were sacred places, and as such had no place in an autonomy statute. Although within the meeting little was made of this comment, outside I asked Orlando what he had meant. He told me that they were powerful places, "so powerful that they could turn men into women." Orlando's worry about using the names of the mountains indicated a view of them not as an inanimate part of "nature," but as actors with agency in their own right, and a power to intervene in Kallawayas politics. The power of the mountains could have either positive or negative effects for the Kallawayas, as "simultaneously protectors and malevolent beings" (Harris 2000: 47).

Isqani and Qalla-Qallan are what the Kallawayas call *machulas* in Quechua (they also often use the Aymara word *achachila*). *Machulas* are the ancestors of the Kallawayas who are said to reside at the peaks of the mountains (Rösing 1996a: 232).¹ They are also sometimes called *lugarniyuq*, which literally means owner of the place (the Quechua possessive suffix *-yuq* is added to the Spanish word *lugar*, meaning place). As owners of the sacred places the *machulas* are conflated with the places themselves; they both "inhabit and are the places" (Astvaldsson 2006: 111). The *machulas* are "other-than-human beings" who are "more than one and less than two entities", that participate in "partially connected worlds" (de la Cadena 2010: 351). They are the mountain, but they are not just the mountain; they are the Kallawayas ancestors, but they are not only the Kallawayas ancestors. According to Gose (2006) this identification of the mountains with ancestors is of colonial rather than pre-Colombian origin. Ancestor cults collapsed during and due to the colonial extirpation of idolatries. Pre-Colombian communities had created shrines of the mummified remains of their ancestors in the spot where they were thought to have founded the community (Gose 2008: 18). As these shrines were attacked and removed it was the mountains themselves that began to take on the properties of the ancestors. The association of the ancestors with mountains may have been a literal fusion, not just in meaning, but also physically, as mummies were buried at the tops of mountains and became putrefied (Gose 2006: 31).

The Constitution of Personhood in the Kallawayas *Ayllu*

A relationship with the *machulas* is central to life in the *ayllu*, the traditional socio-territorial unit in the Andes. Although membership of an *ayllu* has been defined by being able to trace one's lineage back to a common ancestor (Gose 2006: 31; Loza 2004: 31), some anthropologists (Bastien 1985; Canessa 2012) portray kinship within the *ayllu* as 'created,' rather than 'given.' Bastien, who conducted fieldwork in the Kallawayas *ayllu* of Kaata, defines an *ayllu* in terms of people who live in the same territory and feed its shrines (1985: xxiv); which suggests that one can become a member of an *ayllu* through performance of particular practices. Canessa (2012) notes that neither *ayllu* membership, nor personhood is given at birth, but rather are conferred

¹ Kallawayas believe that after someone's death they return to visit the living for three years at All Saints on 1st November, when they are fed by living relatives. After this their souls become part of the spirits of the landscape (Bastien 1985: 178). According to Rösing (1996a: 232) there is a temporal hierarchy of the ancestors. At the top of the hills and other sacred places are the dead of time immemorial, who do not have names. These are known as the *machulas*. Younger than these ancient ancestors, and less powerful, are the fathers, grandfathers and friends, who we can still recall by name, and who also inhabit some part of the hills. Beneath them are those who have died in the last three years, whose spirit still visits their community.



Figure 3: The Kallawayas Autonomy Assembly

on infants by the community and ancestral spirits at baptismal ceremonies and must be constantly maintained through the performance of particular practices, enhancing relations with others in the *ayllu*.

For the Kallawayas their relations with others in the *ayllu* define them as people. Kallawayas consider themselves to be *runa*, which translates roughly to human, but, following de la Cadena's (2014) analysis of the term, *not only* human. *Runa* are human beings who are defined through their intersubjective relationships with what de la Cadena calls *tirakuna* or "Earth beings," what my informants called "sacred places," "*achachilas*" or "*machulas*." *Runa* and *machulas* mutually constitute one another through practices which are a vital aspect of life within an *ayllu*. The recognition of the *machulas* is what Canessa (2012: 163), working in an Aymara-speaking community elsewhere in the department of La Paz, describes as distinguishing *jaqi* (*runa* in Aymara) from culturally Western Bolivians, known as *q'aras* (meaning Whites, but literally translated as peeled); the latter are also commonly known by Kallawayas as *mistis* (someone of mixed blood).

Considered as persons in their own right, the *machulas* have personalities and can express emotions just like *runa*. They can become angry, jealous, and enjoy receiving gifts. Most of all they do not like to be ignored, and may punish travellers who pass by without acknowledging them (Rösing 1996a: 151-2). For this reason, before setting out on a journey, Kallawayas always make an offering (for example, of llama fat and coca leaves) to one of the *machulas* in order that no accidents befall them on the road (Gifford and Lancaster 1988: 6; see also de la Cadena 2010: 339).

The Kallawayas make offerings to the *machulas* in shrines called *kawiltus* (a Quechua version of the Spanish word *cabildo*, meaning a public meeting). They do so through "an idiom of feeding" (Sax 2011: 37-8). Through feeding a relationship of reciprocity is created, "in which the other is obligated to give something in return" (*ibid.*: 38). That is, by receiving ritual foods, such as guinea pigs and llama foetuses, the *machulas* are indebted to whoever makes the offering (Abercrombie 1998: 349-50).² In return they might be asked for an excellent harvest for the coming year or good health and prosperity for the person making the offering. Kinship can therefore be created and maintained through feeding, which acts as an invitation to engage in reciprocal exchange. This follows an idea of kinship in which "food, not blood is the tie that binds" (Weismantel 1988: 171). Weismantel (*ibid.*) shows the act of feeding in the Ecuadorian Andes to create kinship between people who are not blood-related. Indeed, in my own fieldwork, the female head of the family I lived

² Guinea pigs, in the Andes, are considered a food to be eaten on special occasions, when one wishes to deepen or formalise a relationship with someone (Weismantel 1988: 101-131). Kallawayas also diagnose the cause of an illness by reading the insides of a guinea pig (Fernández Juárez 1997: 25).



Figure 4: The peak of Qalla Qallan, with chapel



Figure 5: The mountain of Isqani

with, in the Kallawaya community of Amarete, was referred to by others in the community as my “mother” (despite being younger than me). Similarly, it is the act of feeding through which *runa* create and maintain kinship ties with *machulas*, the ancestors of the *ayllu*.

In community meetings of Kallawaya ayllus, each of those present at the meeting is fed and watered and given copious amounts of coca. Similarly, the offerings made to the *machulas* are offerings for them to come and eat and drink, and chew coca. One particular ceremony in which offerings are made to the *machulas* is the *mesa blanca*. This is an offering which Rösing (1993: 185) describes as addressing a person’s “fundamental wellbeing,” “belonging to their body, spirit and soul, their family, house, patio, fields, livestock, relation with nature, and transpersonal beings.” Towards the end of my fieldwork, my friend Aurelio, a Kallawaya healer from the community of Lunlaya, performed a *mesa blanca* for me. This was several days after he had read my fortune in coca leaves and had suggested that I make the offering as a way of thanking the *machulas* for the positive outcome of the reading. I decided to do so, as much as a way of thanking them for my experiences during fieldwork and asking for their continued protection. Aurelio made plates (the plates were made of cotton wool) of ritual food and drink for the *machulas*. Six large plates were set out: two as offerings for my family and me, two for the Kallawaya shamans, living and dead, and two for the *machulas*. There were also two smaller plates laid out for the *ankari* (the wind messenger) who would carry the offerings to the *machulas*. This food and drink included sweets, coca, llama fat and wine, all of which we threw into a fire that had been prepared on the *kawiltu* in Aurelio’s patio.

Making offerings such as this is important because it ensures the relationship between *runa* and *machulas*, and a person’s good health. The cause of ill health is often looked for in a person’s relations with others in the *ayllu*, since sickness and misfortune can be understood in the Andes in terms of how well or badly the *machulas* have been fed (Sax 2011: 8). Healing such sickness is a particular specialisation of the Kallawayas, which they are known for throughout Bolivia. When Kallawayas treat illnesses, they do so by trying to rebalance the equilibrium between spirit and body, not by treating the body of the patient in isolation, but by examining all of their relations—with their family and community, and with what Rösing calls the “transpersonal beings of the *ayllu*,” most significantly the *machulas* (Rösing 1995: 264). Kallawaya conceptions of personhood, then, are defined by the relations *runa* have with the *machulas* within the *ayllu*. As I shall examine in the next section, perceiving the *machulas* as powerful members of the *ayllu* has consequences for the manner in which the Kallawayas conduct politics.

The Kallawaya political structure involving *machula* authorities

The *machulas* are not just seen as having personalities like humans, but also as engaging in similar activities to them. One informant in the town of Charazani named Juan, the son of a prominent local healer and a trainee healer himself, told me that, just like the local peasant union, the *machulas* hold meetings between themselves and that, in parallel with the peasant union, each of the mountains holds a particular position of authority (known as a “*cargo*”) within their own similarly structured union. For example, there is a General Secretary, a Secretary of Relations, a messenger, etc. Juan told me that the human political structure was in fact a copy of the *machula* assembly. When the Kallawayas hold meetings in which they elect their leaders for the year, they replicate the meetings held by the *machulas*, who elect their own leaders by throwing rocks.

Kallawaya communities in the valley of Charazani are structured hierarchically within the national peasant union. Each has its own authorities, which change from year to year, and who elect provincial level authorities who attend departmental- and national-level meetings in La Paz, Bolivia’s *de-facto* capital. Similarly, as Aurelio explained, the *machulas* have their own hierarchical structure, with national-level leaders all the way down to the mountain which holds authority within the community. Like their human counterparts, the *machulas* do not continue as authorities indefinitely, but rather they rotate positions of authority. Although Kallawaya communities have several mountains that are significant to them, there is always one that is revered above the rest for that year and is viewed as the protector of the community. This is the *watayuq*, which literally means the “owner of the year”. The *watayuq* is fed in every community ritual over the course of the year because of the influence this mountain has over the community’s wellbeing. The *watayuq* is seen as one of the most important influences over the weather (Rösing 2003: 187, 601) and, thus, must be fed well in order to be kept in good humour, so it may provide beneficial weather to the community’s harvest. One informant, Basilio, the General Secretary of the community of Khanlaya for the year I was conducting field-

work, told me that an important reason his community makes offerings to the *watayuq* was so there would not be hail or rain.

It is significant which mountain becomes the *watayuq* because the distinctive character of each mountain can influence the production of the community during the year. The mountain of Tuwana is associated throughout the Kallawaya region with an abundance of foodstuffs, and is therefore the “*watayuq par excellence*” (Rösing 1996b: 338). It is preferred by all communities over a mountain associated with lightning, rain or hail, such as *Isqani*. Juan, my informant in the town of Charazani, told me that it is not the Kallawayas themselves that choose which mountain will be the *watayuq* for that year, but the *machulas*—the mountains themselves. Because they stand to receive the most veneration and the tastiest offerings over the coming year, the *machulas* compete vehemently for the role of *watayuq* (Rösing 2003: 527).

The identity of the mountain of the year has to be discovered by the community’s shaman. He is called the *wata purichiq*. The *wata purichiq* is the one who makes the year walk and is the foremost ritualist in the community. He makes the year walk by ensuring that the community plants and harvests at the correct times and performs the appropriate agricultural rites, including feeding shrines on the *watayuq*. The *wata purichiq* discovers the identity of the *watayuq* by reading coca leaves. He drops different coca leaves in front of him, with each leaf representing a different mountain. Rösing (2003: 530) writes that he must read the leaves a minimum of three times to determine the *watayuq*, but if he is in any doubt the process can take days as he reads the coca over and over again (*ibid.*: 601). Although it is the *machulas* themselves who choose the *watayuq*, the *wata purichiq* can have an influence over which of the mountains can become *watayuq* because he chooses which of the mountains to make candidates (*ibid.*: 529). For example, according to Rösing (1996b: 338) the *wata purichiq* of the Kallawaya community of Kaata never included the mountain of Sunchuli in his readings because this mountain represents the underworld. However, Rösing (2003: 602) also claims that no ritualist would assert that there is a single person on earth who can really influence the election of the *watayuq*, because if the choice of the *machulas* is not among the leaves selected by the *wata purichiq*, then he will not be successful in looking and will have to change his selection.

When Latour advocates for the inclusion of non-humans in democratic processes, and for them to be recognised as social actors, he suggests that they are included through spokespeople, because non-humans need humans to speak on their behalf (2004: 62-77). At a superficial level, we could view the *wata purichiq* in this manner—as a spokesperson for the *machulas*. However, this suggests a view of non-humans as unable to speak for themselves. Latour’s suggestion of spokespeople (which might have valid applications for his example of scientists working with cells in laboratories) implies an understanding that non-humans cannot speak. Kohn (2013: 91) points out that the lumping together of all non-humans together in a single category, as needing spokespeople, misses a conception of non-humans as selves, that can communicate. As Kohn proposes, some non-humans, as selves in their own right, communicate in a way that is knowable to us. The communication of the *machulas* is viewed in just such a manner by Kallawayas. Rather than the *wata purichiq* speaking for the *machulas*, it was my impression that my Kallawaya informants viewed the *machulas* as speaking through him.

The foremost manner of communication in which the *machulas* communicate with *runa* is through coca leaves. The role of the *wata purichiq* is that of an expert mediator who reads the leaves. The coca leaves indicate to the *wata purichiq* the mood of the *machulas*. The *ankari*, the wind messenger of the *machulas*, brings the *wata purichiq* news from the meetings of the *machulas* by blowing the individual coca leaves this way and that as they leave his hand. If some disaster has befallen the community then the *wata purichiq* must find out through the coca which of the *machulas* they have angered and a commission must then go out with gifts to ask for forgiveness. The *machulas* are, in a sense, the moral guardians of the community; they can take offence at the behaviour of any one member of the community and punish it collectively if they receive news that displeases them (Oblitas 1963: 56-60).

Bastien (1985) portrays the person of the *wata purichiq* himself physically as a mediator between the community and the mountain as a physical entity. According to Bastien (1985: 65), when the *wata purichiq* in the Kallawaya community of Kaata ritually ate thirteen servings of food then through him the thirteen shrines on the mountain were fed. Because of his position as a spiritual mediator the *wata purichiq* must be a certain



Figure 6: Aurelio preparing the *mesa blanca* offering for the *machulas*



Figure 7: The offering burnt on the Kawiltu

type of person to take on the role. He must be the foremost ritualist and the wisest man in his community. One informant, Aurelio's brother-in-law Fidel, told me that "the *wata purichiq* is an expert who has to know everything, if you are ill he has to cure you... he has to be able to use medicinal plants, [to know how to use] everything, [different types of offerings], the amulets to transfer magical powers." Fidel gave the impression that the *wata purichiq* should be someone of an almost saintly disposition. He told me that if you are hateful, jealous, or you are not happy, then you could not be a *wata purichiq*, and that Jesus Christ was a *wata purichiq*. Fidel's description of emotional equilibrium being important in terms of a ritual expert's ability to perform his role highlights the importance among the Kallawayas of keeping negative emotions at bay for one's general wellbeing, as is the case with other Amerindians (Overing and Pasas 2000: 20). More significantly, the importance of this emotional equilibrium is demonstrated by the ritual expert's ability to act as a *wata purichiq*. In the Andes, negative emotions, particularly envy, are believed to cause illness (Abercrombie 1998: 68) and are seen as the root cause of witchcraft (Rösing 1996a: 31). The *wata purichiq* must maintain emotional equilibrium in order to cure, rather than create, illness.

The Splintering of the Kallawaya Political Structure

Aurelio explained to me how hierarchical structures of the peasant union and the *machulas* had traditionally functioned. The Kallawaya region, corresponding roughly to the province of Bautista Saavedra in the department of La Paz, has three altitudinal levels: highlands, valley and *yungas* (semi-tropical lower-valley). Each of these altitudinal levels would have its own *watayuq*, and the presidency of the *machulas* of the whole Kallawaya region would rotate between them. A shared *watayuq* was something that unified the whole Kallawaya region. The *wata purichiqs* from around the region would meet once a year to discover through reading the coca leaves what would be the single most important *watayuq* for the Kallawayas for the coming year. However, according to Aurelio, the *wata purichiqs* had not met since around 2006, so the custom of having a single unifying *watayuq* had fallen into disuse. The reason for this can be found in changes to local political organisation around that time.

In 1953, after agrarian reform following Bolivia's 1952 revolution, a single peasant union, the *Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB), known locally as the *Única* was created, of which all of the communities of Bautista Saavedra became members at a provincial level. The *Única* remained a hegemonic political force locally until 1994 when the coca-growers in the tropical part of the province broke away to form their own federation, called FOYCAE (*Federación Originaria Yungas Carijana Agro-Ecológico*). Later, the highland communities also broke away from the *Única* to form CONAMAQ (*Confederación de Ayllus y Markas de Qullasuyu*) in 2007. This left the *Única* only representing the communities of the valley. Although there was initial animosity between the *Única* and FOYCAE at the coca-growers decision to leave the union, as most of the coca-growers were migrants from valley communities and it suited no one for there to be bad-blood between them for long, they were soon on speaking terms. However, relations have continued to be strained between the *Única* and those communities who broke away to join CONAMAQ.

I asked Aurelio whether there was any connection between the failure of the *wata purichiqs* to meet over the last few years and the break-up of the province's communities politically, having previously all been unified within the same organisation. "But of course there is!" he exclaimed. Previously, when all the communities had met together, it had been the job of the syndical authorities of the communities to convoke the council of the elders—comprised of the *wata purichiq* of the Kallawaya communities—but now this was not happening. Aurelio blamed this on two causes. Firstly, the community leaders no longer spoke with one voice, and simply did not meet together as one group any more. The manner in which the Kallawayas ritually related to their mountains had splintered to mirror the changes in the way that Kallawaya communities related to one another. This is evidence for the interrelatedness of ritual and politics—ritual relations with the mountains is, after all, are fundamental part of Kallawaya politics—and the way that ritual adapts to political changes (Friedrich [1966] 2009; Kertzner 1974).

Secondly, Aurelio believed that the community authorities have become too materialistic in their concerns in recent years. Instead of focussing on spiritual matters, they were more concerned with travelling to the city of La Paz to look for "development projects" for their community. Over the last twenty to thirty years, peasants in the Kallawaya region have engaged more in life outside the province as their ability to

travel easily to and from the city has improved (a road was built in 1983 linking many Kallawayaya communities with La Paz, and others were constructed around 1994). Political reforms have also made it possible for their communities to be legally recognised, and therefore opportunities have arisen for them to engage with national-level agencies, such as NGOs, and priorities have changed from the spiritual to the materialistic.

An additional reason why the Council of the Elders was no longer being convoked was that in many communities there simply were no longer *wata purichiqs*. I realised this when I spent carnival in the Kallawayaya community of Khanlaya and the ritual offerings were made not by the *wata purichiq*, but by the General Secretary, the union authority in the community. When I asked Orlando (the Autonomy Assembly member mentioned at the beginning of this article) about this he told me that the community had not had a *wata purichiq* for the last ten years due to “city thinking”. The majority of the people from Orlando’s community live most of the time in the city and only return for parties such as carnival. They decided when the last *wata purichiq* died that they would abolish the position entirely. However, Aurelio told me emphatically that without a *wata purichiq* there was no *ayllu*, because the life or death of the *ayllu* depends on how well the *wata purichiq* feeds the shrines (Bastien 1985: 57). The *ayllu* in this region, then, is being threatened by the “city thinking” of people who no longer live on the land and are, therefore, losing their relationship of reciprocity with the mountains of their community.

The consequence is that Kallawayas’ understanding of themselves as people is threatened on a fundamental level. The relationships in which Kallawayas are enmeshed define them as *runa*. Following de la Cadena (2010, 2014) and Kohn (2013), I understand *runa* and *machulas* as mutually constituting one another within the specific ritual arena of the *ayllu*. The interaction between *runa* and *machulas* constitutes the former as something more than human and the latter as more than mountains. A lack of attention to reciprocal practices affects the personhood of each. As another informant from the community of Khanlaya, Fernando Huanca, put it, “we have to pay them respect, because, if we forget them, they forget us.”

What is believed to integrate human beings as *runa* into the wider network with others are their *ajayus* (souls) (Burman 2011: 120). Aurelio told me that Kallawayas believe *runa* have two *ajuyus* and averting their loss forms the basis for Kallawayaya ceremonies. These *ajayus* are their large *ajayu*, and a smaller *ajayu* (known as *animu*). They fulfil a function of agglutinating the different parts of the body together in a sense of unity. Although the *ajayus* generally remain inside the body, either of the *ajayus* can be lost, the large *ajayu* upon a serious illness, and the smaller one from fright (Fernandez Juarez 2008: 112). According to Burman (2011: 92, 120), Aymaras see the stresses of modern life associated with the city as likely to be responsible for the loss of a person’s *ajayu* because their lifestyle breaks the connection between themselves and the spirits of their *ayllu*. This process can lead to loss of identity. A foreign spirit is then able to take its place, in the form of foreign mental, ideological or religious doctrines. For this reason, migrants in highland Bolivia often go to great lengths to maintain fields in community because what is at stake is “the very sense of who they are as human beings” (Canessa 2012: 164). However, as I have pointed out with reference to the community of Khanlaya in particular, migration has effects on ritual practices that threaten both the social relations in the *ayllu*, and the political relations between *ayllus*.

When Aurelio talked of solving the local political problems, he posited the problems in terms of illness caused by an abandonment of *ayllu* traditions and embracing capitalist modernity, which affects the very soul of Kallawayas. He calls this *sifilización* (a sickness caused by exposure to “civilisation”), and proposes a cure in terms of rituals that would unite the three unions with each other and the sacred places of the Kallawayas. According to him, the leaders of the three provincial federations were all ‘sick,’ citing the nylon clothing they wore, a desire to earn money and a loss of spirituality on their part. He suggested that representatives from the highlands come to him with llama fat and from the lowland *yungas* with coca and perform a ritual to ancestor spirits. Because healing requires a rebalancing of physical and spiritual equilibrium (Timmer 2001: 284), by bringing the political leaders together in a ritual ceremony, Aurelio proposed to rebalance political and spiritual equilibrium of the local leaders, creating solidarity between them. This suggests an understanding of the power of joint ritual in Durkheim’s ([1912]2008) terms to create solidarity between its participants, the ingredients from the three levels uniting the Kallawayas as one body.

Conclusion

A relationship with the mountains is central to belonging to a Kallawaya *ayllu*. Isqani and Qalla-Qallan seem to have been invoked by the Kallawayas in the municipality of Charazani by those seeking autonomy precisely because of their significance as sacred places in a traditional Andean territorial structure. What is more, these places are regarded by many *Kallawayas* as being political actors in their own right. It is the relationships which one has with others in the *ayllu*—including the *machulas*—which define one as a person—as *runa*. I have described how in the Kallawaya *ayllu* one becomes *runa*, and this status is maintained through reciprocal exchange, particularly of food. The identity of mountains as *machulas* is similarly maintained through the reciprocal relationship *runa* maintain with them. The identity of both within the *ayllu* depends on the maintenance of reciprocal acts.

I have shown the ritual relationship the Kallawayas have with the *machulas* to be interconnected with their political and social structure. The Kallawayas adapt their ritual practices in accordance with changes in their political and social structure because there is no divide between the political relationships of humans with one another and of humans with other-than-human beings, but these relationships are connected within the *ayllu*. This means that as the structures which unite the Kallawaya communities have fragmented, the relationships with the *machulas*, through the *watayuq*, have taken into account the current political realities in which the Kallawayas do not come together as one group. As the Kallawaya communities of the lowlands and the valley withdrew from the provincial peasant union, and the Kallawaya communities ceased to be unified within a single political organisation, so the joint ritual practice of recognition of an overarching *watayuq* has been abandoned. This supports Durkheim's [1912] (2008) analysis of ritual as creating "collective representations" of society, and Lukes (1975: 301) assertion that "the symbolism of political ritual *represents, inter alia*, particular models of political paradigms of society and how it functions." The ritual relationships of the Kallawayas with the *watayuqs* effectively function as a collective representation of the structure of Kallawaya society.

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