

Introduction

This book focuses on ethical disagreements about how to remedy violent labor pasts. In Bolivia the past thirty years have seen a dramatic upsurge in organized struggles and institutional reforms aimed at securing Indigenous rights to land, resources, and sovereignty. Yet even while these efforts have sought to dispense with all aspects of a deeply oppressive earlier hacienda system, Quechua farmers in the rural Bolivian province where I carried out research inhabit a milieu defined by ambiguous ownership regimes and abiding ties to Mestizo families who violently mistreated their kin. The practices that Quechua farmers, gold miners, peasant unionists, and relatives of indentured hacienda servants and Mestizo masters use to navigate this space are distinct from organized struggles for rights, but they share a concern with clarifying the terms of historical accountability: the debts and obligations attached to long-run histories of colonial dispossession and violence. This raises several key questions: How are injurious pasts redeployed by the dispossessed? What are the relational possibilities of history where land rights appear both elusive and insufficient as mechanisms of historical redress?

After Servitude offers the first ethnographic study of Indigenous land politics in Ayopaya, a center of antihacienda militancy since the 1940s.¹ It analyzes competing orientations to Bolivia's earlier hacienda system to demonstrate how they shape present-day mining and agrarian relations as well as Quechua land struggles in Ayopaya. During seventeen months of fieldwork carried out with former militants, Quechua farmers, Indigenous miners and domestic laborers, peasant unionists, and municipal officials in Ayopaya, as well as pro-Indigenous activists, agronomical volunteers, and agrarian officials in Cochabamba, I learned about the Movimiento Al Socialismo (Movement toward Socialism, MAS) Party's (2006–19) revolutionary land titling

program.² Like its Republican and colonial predecessors, the program was premised on faith in titled property as a way to clarify land use, upend unpaid labor, and thereby craft modern citizens. Committed to bureaucratic transparency, viable agricultural subsidy programs, greater gender equity in ownership, and supporting Indigenous sovereignty, especially through collective land rights, agrarian reformers with whom I worked saw land titling as foundational to a nationalist, decolonial project of political change.

The urgency of land titling within MAS's decolonial agenda followed from broader demands for resource sovereignty and Indigenous rights that accompanied nationwide protests and political organizing against neoliberal austerity measures since the 1980s, and which self-consciously drew both from mid-twentieth-century peasant struggles for land rights and from a long history of Indigenous rebellion since the early colonial period.³ From 2006 to 2019, the MAS party sought to make good on these promises through a nationwide reform program, *El Proceso de Cambio*. The program installed new gender quotas, increases in minimum wage, dramatic advances in maternal and child health, new funding for rural infrastructure and resource development, particularly hydrocarbons and gas, and revisions to Bolivia's 1996 Agrarian Reform Law. Through a revived land titling property, agrarian officials promised to improve Indigenous livelihoods, conferring stable, legally defensible land rights upon rural people whom reformers saw as especially vulnerable to land grabs and labor abuses.⁴ Members of the MAS party often cast this project as one of revolutionizing Bolivia by way of overcoming "slavery"—a term used to connote the racialized inequalities that derive from colonial labor regimes and are reproduced by neoliberal economic policies and Mestizo governance regimes.

In Ayopaya these state programs of Indigenous uplift were perceived as double-edged: Indigenous land titling promised to secure property rights but it also absorbed rural people into national bureaucracies and in many cases turned resource rights over to the Bolivian state. Collective land titling, too, retained governmental control over subterranean resources while frequently marginalizing families who, because of relatives' work as servants, had weaker land claims. Moreover, Quechua residents were also disturbed to find that this program could be manipulated by Mestizo residents to cement hierarchical ownership regimes. Their formalization in turn allowed elites to withdraw from older aid relations with former servants and workers.⁵ In response, many Ayopayans whom I met disputed the normative premises of property

not only as titled land but also as a broader orientation to the region's labor past, and to the families of former hacienda masters in particular.

Gregorio Condorí, for instance, dispensed with titles but also privileged existing attachments to land, earth-beings, and to former masters; a godparenting arrangement with a local parish priest allowed him to pursue an education and, later, to found a successful agroecological organization. Other Quechua farmers insisted that Mestizo elites supply money to their school-age godchildren (and the kin of parents' and grandparents' servants), that the son of the hacienda master buy a coffin for his childhood servant, and that *hacendado* heirs should adopt children and half-kin who were abandoned by their father, the master. Failure to acquiesce to these demands could have dramatic consequences for Mestizo mining bosses, fueling legal challenges and labor strikes and eliciting bankruptcy or forced retreat to the city.

For Quechua farmers and mine workers with whom I carried out this research, abiding structures of racial hierarchy in the Bolivian countryside revealed the false optimism of property: the idea that power relations had been equalized by the legal transfer of ownership. To navigate these hierarchical entrenchments, Ayopayan workers undertook actions that insisted upon wealth as an artifact of earlier racial violence that carried with it necessary debts to the people on whose labor, sweat, tears, and bloodshed those hierarchies were built. Those debts could not be left to institutional programs of resource redistribution but instead required Quechua farmers' unending vigilance in putting pressure on Mestizo elites through legal actions, labor organizing, and road blockades. In their insistence that reparation take shape as *action*—and as Mestizos' concrete responsiveness to workers and neighboring villagers—Indigenous Ayopayans contested the passivity enabled by justice as an institutional project.⁶

These demands reveal property's elusiveness as a model of restorative mastery, but they also show how such absences are creatively inhabited to pursue other pathways of historical redress. In fact, despite their overlap with state-based programs of colonial reparation and repair, the practices I describe relied upon an ethical rubric that is fundamentally at odds with the insistence on temporal and spatial alienability that underpins land titling. In insisting upon answerability to an ongoing history of racial labor violence, Quechua farmers cut through Mestizos' efforts to diffuse responsibility by evoking distant government bodies and abstract citizenship logics. This allowed for a clarity about the continued grip of racial inequalities stemming from haci-

enda servitude. Hence, Ayopayans' repurposing of inherited intimacies and obligations enabled demands for accountability from Mestizo bosses in ways that pushed back against the closures sanctioned by institutional paradigms of property. That justice might be sought through the creative reworking of inherited ties poses key challenges to normative ideals of historical rupture that guide rights-based approaches to Indigenous dispossession in twenty-first century Bolivia, and elsewhere.

KNOTTING AS THE REPURPOSING OF RUINS

For Ayopayan interlocuters and government agrarian officials alike, the nation's twentieth-century history of labor subjection remained productively open: more than a conclusive record of past events, history instead constituted an *ongoing* site of care, political struggle, and ethical claim-making. To attend to these active engagements with Ayopaya's violent labor past, *After Servitude* undertakes an ethnography of history. Subsequent chapters focus on the range of ways that Bolivians sought to address a divisive past, including through relations of informal land gifting, adoption, and the circulation of money, resources, and aid from the families of former hacienda masters to servants. I name this condition of life "after servitude"—*after* simultaneously connoting sequential ordering, pursuit, a continual following, in the style or imitation of, commemorative naming and in accordance with the nature or desires of another thing.⁷ Such practices point to the *multiple lives of after-ness*, in which intimate ties and affects emerged as crucial devices for negotiating vulnerabilities stemming from earlier colonial labor regimes.⁸ Through relations among people and to spirits, more-than-humans, and land as a site of temporal accretion, Ayopayans navigated history less as a series of epochs to be overcome but rather as a collection of cross-cutting and interwoven threads that could be cultivated in order to transform the present.

My analysis focuses on illuminating the messy relational knots through which Bolivian histories of sexual and labor violence are inherited, challenged, and remade.⁹ These knots are analytic devices, but they spring from people's varying efforts to direct and redirect attachments across time and space.¹⁰ For instance, Gregorio's peach orchard was dotted by the ruins of earlier hacienda buildings, with adobe and wood fragments testifying to a recent, oppressive past. However, this did not foreclose his effort to remake the place into something new, both by planting young fruit trees and by

allowing time to weather and break down the old adobe foundation. Where the old structure once stood, young eucalyptus trees slowly grew over the adobe. Here, I develop the figure of such knotting to make sense of the various ways that Quechua Ayopayans imagined but also demanded attachment, insisting that Mestizo people remain bound to and beholden by history in ways that they did not necessarily want.¹¹ These knots, unlike more common ideas of historical ruins, were not just things ordinary people found or were left with; they were a *doing* and an active binding.¹² Recalling the English language phrase “to be tied down,” knotting draws together a range of practices of historical claim-making.¹³ Using such a knot conferred local people both with possibilities for building and renewing lines of attachment and obligation across landscapes but also for critically assessing people in positions of (often racialized) economic and political power.

This book concentrates, in particular, on three such processes of knotting, which also constitute paradigms of historical redress: kinship, property, and exchange. First, I examine how Quechua groups in Ayopaya mobilized kinship as a model of authority and a relational structure for demanding accountability after violence. Practices of making kin through godparenting, adoption, and religious sponsorship offered former hacienda families a means to convert stigmatized forms of intimacy into socially valued if precarious arrangements of aid centered on the figure of a generous, devout mother. Next, I trace property as an aspirational object that is contingent on its continued enactment but also liable to failure and reinscription. This became especially clear in the range of technical, bureaucratic, relational, and physical practices by which agrarian officials sought to produce property both as a naturalized object and a future promise. Finally, I consider how kinship- and property-based understandings of historical redress intertwined to give way to a conjunctural understanding of wealth as historical accretion. By insisting that authority remain tethered to history, Ayopayans pushed back against ideals of alienability and detachment that traverse revolutionary land titling efforts and new arrangements of gold, sodalite, and antimony mining.

Ayopayans’ insistence on this binding of past and present critically reframes scholarly debates about time and the political, cutting through the tendency to narrate the lives of vulnerable people as sites of *potential* awakening and critique. Instead, the ethnographic material presented in this book demonstrates the *actualities* of claim-making that occur through the critical refashioning of inherited affective ties and labor and kinship relations.¹⁴ This is a crucial shift of analysis, especially in light of how languages of victimiza-

tion and impeded modernity have been used to deny agency and political reason to the formerly colonized.

In Bolivia late colonial debates focused on the problem of Indigenous groups' readiness for full political rights. That Indigenous populations were often victimized by Criollo agrarian and mining bosses, colonial administrators argued, was evidence that they were not yet ready to be granted citizenship. Late colonial concerns with racial hierarchy and inherited dependencies haunted twenty-first-century agrarian reform efforts. Agrarian reform officials with whom I spoke frequently cast Ayopaya as a lawless, backward place that was problematically bogged down by its labor past. While the province was a center of anticolonial revolutionary activity leading up to Bolivian Independence in 1825 and a heart of antihacienda militancy in the mid-twentieth century, many officials described Ayopaya as a place defined by earlier conditions of hacienda servitude.¹⁵ For the state to secure the uplift of Indigenous residents, such residents themselves would have to adopt more critical, mature political outlooks that appreciated that "the hacienda is past."¹⁶

Around the world, promises of a sovereign future have been used to defend extreme acts of violence against Indigenous populations, including bodily harms as well as cultural assimilation programs, denials of land rights, forced sterilizations, and the deculturation (and in some cases, deaths) of children in settler-run boarding schools.¹⁷ Despite President Evo Morales's emphasis on forging a revolutionary break from the nation's colonial and neocolonial pasts, land titling programs carried out under his government preserved this faith in property as a belated means to secure Indigenous liberty.¹⁸ The agrarian reform program that I examine reproduced aspects of racial formations defined by an insistence that Indigenous subjects be improved and integrated through their exposure to modern systems of contract law.¹⁹ This reveals rights-based ideals of emancipation through contract as belonging firmly within, rather than outside of, enduring imperial formations.²⁰ Contemporary Bolivia further clarifies how efforts at political repair rooted in this emancipatory model conjoin with ongoing projects of assimilative subject-making and possessive extractivism.²¹ Indeed, Bolivian laws conferring Indigenous recognition since the 1990s have gone hand-in-hand with juridical efforts to constrain and invalidate Indigenous claims to resources and land.²²

Perhaps for this reason, many of the Ayopayans I met decoupled their struggles for historical redress from institutional arcs of property both as a program for redistributing land and of revived cultural identity related

to national frameworks of unified ethnicity. Alongside governmental land titling projects, Ayopayans rearticulated the flow of goods, money, labor, and aid from Mestizo elites to Indigenous families as modes of historical redress. Such practices allowed them to make claims upon one another and upon the past in situations where hierarchies remain durable, even constitutive, features of shared relational life. Perceived through the prism of these contending practices of historical claim-making, Bolivian agrarian reform measures appear both elusive but also nonabsolute as an arena for addressing the long shadow cast by earlier hacienda violence and Indigenous land dispossession.

My account attends to the moral and political trappings of property, but it also excavates the practices of historical redress that a contract-based formation of sovereignty (as self-possession and land ownership) disallows. Indigenous farmers' demands for ongoing relations with Mestizo families in Ayopaya complicate familiar paradigms of postcolonial sovereignty that insist dispossessed groups must achieve a degree of autonomy from the past, thereby reclaiming their own mastery over land, resources, and their own labor. While I found these hierarchical entanglements that defined rural life among Mestizo and Indigenous people deeply disturbing, Ayopayan interlocutors invited me to reassess the idea that such entanglements only work negatively or as constraints.²³ Against reformers' insistence that rural people leave history and one another behind, the people I came to know strove to reshape the terms of such entanglements to assert a different vision of human flourishing. Their efforts followed from an awareness of the injuries perpetrated in the name of sovereign citizenship but also from a view of lived sociality as shot through with mutual dependencies, willed and unwilled. This insistence on the binding of past to present illustrates a more capacious approach to justice beyond property, but it also raises broader questions about the obligations that history places upon us as varied, if unequal, heirs of colonial violence in other parts of the world.

KNOT 1. KINSHIP AS HISTORICAL ETHICS

Kinship is often viewed as ahistorical—as occurring outside of, and prior to, modern economic relations.²⁴ This presumption guides modern legal regimes of multicultural recognition, which frequently cast as authentic only those Indigenous relations that adhere to expectations of a continuity of kinship over time.²⁵ Although this assumption of the separation of economy from

kinship has been readily challenged by scholars in a range of disciplines, it has continued to define the ways that contemporary state officials (and many labor scholars) have come to narrate Bolivia's servitude past—namely, the hacienda system was conceived principally as a matter of economic and labor abuses that dispossessed laborers of land and agricultural fruits.²⁶ The remedy to that dispossession lay in granting Indigenous laborers secure land rights. This characterization of the problem overlooks how practices of concubinage, forced adoption, sexual violence, and honorific languages of parentage supported Ayopaya's hacienda system. Agrarian estates there have relied on forms of sexual labor and family ties that spill over neat boundaries between the domains of paid labor ("economy") and sexual relations and family ties ("kinship").

This book explores the centrality of family and sexual relations to hacienda bondage and asks what this immersion of ostensibly discrete spheres of kinship and economy means not only for understanding earlier servitude but also for contemporary efforts to seek redress for this violent past (Hartman 1997: 79; Moten 2003: 18).²⁷ My fieldwork with Quechua farmers, Mestizo bosses, rural municipal staff, and city-based agrarian officials in Cochabamba suggested that contemporary Bolivian reform efforts centered upon property as a method of historical repair also had dramatic consequences for existing evaluations of kinship, specifically of godparenting ties, adoptive relations, and practices of gift-giving and patronal aid among relatives of Mestizo masters and Indigenous servants. The occlusion of kinship from modern economy, in this instance, was not an accident so much as a matter of design: policymakers hoped that property (here in the form of titled land) would install firmer divisions around economic activity, thereby allowing rural Indigenous people to extricate themselves from labor-based and kinship dependencies rooted in earlier agrarian servitude.

The liberating connotations of modern property were first spelled out by Adam Smith, whose moral philosophy ([1776] 1977) sought natural laws of economics premised on an ostensibly universal proclivity for contractual exchange.²⁸ Utilitarianism, or a theory of exchange based on use-value, promised to displace what classical economists cast as the dead weight of tradition and its obstruction of progress.²⁹ Peasant families, community values, and an emphasis on subsistence had to be replaced by individual self-interest, economic calculus, and the search for "equilibrium" as an ostensibly natural state of the economy. This would make it possible to cast off feudal bonds and the chains of monarchic and church authority as well as religious super-

stitution. Orientations to land and resources that did not meet the criteria of utilitarian exchange were deemed “premodern,” “uncivilized,” and “savage.” The notion of self-interested exchange (as a natural proclivity that would find equilibrium outside culture, kinship, or society) operated not only as a historical accompaniment but also a key accomplice to colonial slavery and Indigenous dispossession.³⁰ Following Bhandar (2018: 30), Smith’s human (a subject imbued with a natural proclivity for self-interested exchange against the bonds of family, church, or community) here arises as a thoroughly *racialized* paragon of subjectivity.³¹

In the Andes and elsewhere these “natural” laws were deployed not just as philosophical reflections but as policy guides that facilitated and legitimated sixteenth- and seventeenth-century mercantile expansion and then imperial trade.³² Colonial jurists, building from Smith, defended Indigenous land dispossession and Black enslavement by arguing that such groups were unfamiliar with or incapable of cultivating property, thus forfeiting their rights to others who were. Spanish imperialists sought to upend precolonial traditions of kinship-based alliance and communal landholding, both through divine possession (as *dominio*) and then secularized property.³³ Colonial kinship and gender relations were constrained not only by Victorian and Catholic ideals of modesty and virtue but also by colonists’ need to secure Mestizo property institutions through gender normativity.³⁴

Blood-based definitions of kinship had long served as key mechanisms for the legal transfer of wealth in European inheritance systems (Levi-Strauss 1955). Such transfers faced new instabilities in colonial settings, where racial superiority and ownership had to be cleaved apart from the slippery intimacies of family life and domestic labor bondage.³⁵ Legal definitions of legitimate kinship (e.g., genealogical models of *limpieze de sangre* in Latin America and institutions of the Christian White family in the United States and Canada) here became crucial for colonial administrators’ efforts to police bloodlines and, with them, to secure economic privileges rooted in what they took to be the supremacy of Whiteness and the illegitimacy of Indigenous landholding (Collins 1998; TallBear 2018: 146).³⁶ In the Andes alienable landholding was first imposed when colonists constricted sprawling kinship-based networks into towns whose male heads of (nuclear) households owed the colonial state tribute, requiring new paid labor economies in agriculture and mining.³⁷ Indigenous women’s “unruly” sexualities arose as crucial sites of discipline and containment given early colonial economic and spiritual interests in securing property through languages of divine owner-

ship and racial genealogy (Burns 1999: 1–15). Later, the installing of modern kinship ties in nuclear households went hand-in-hand with the colonial production of cheap (and bonded) labor and the shoring up of racial hierarchy.³⁸

Conversely, the fragmentation of Indigenous kinship relations (which rarely ascribed to European ideals of the genealogical family)—through forced adoption, sterilization, boarding schools, and the depriving of land and membership to the Indigenous wives and children of nonreservation spouses—served as a key mechanism within colonial efforts to assimilate and deculturate Indigenous populations.³⁹ In colonial Peru (a portion of which is today Bolivia), Spanish women were called upon to raise Mestizo children whose Spanish fathers did not want them inculturated by Indian mothers (Burns 1999: 16).⁴⁰ Similarly, Indigenous children born to elite men out of wedlock were characterized as orphans or as “abandoned” in order to avoid humiliating the family. Others were reincorporated into Mestizo and Criollo families as adoptees or servants.⁴¹ These practices bear early traces of *mestizaje*, a narrative of national cultural assimilation through racial admixture.⁴² In this context, property (meaning the ownership of goods, and the sexual “conquest” of Indigenous women) was not only an outcome but also a *means* of producing Mestizo masculinity as racialized ownership and as an enduring vision of nationhood that traversed the colonial and Republican eras.⁴³

Slippages of the purportedly separate domains of domestic and public—kinship and economy—became especially urgent matters after Republican independence, as nascent nationhood demanded that governments grant full legal rights to the formerly colonized.⁴⁴ Rights-based reforms throughout Latin America focused on reshaping domestic labor and nonconjugal sexual relations in light of a nascent ideal of the “Mestizo family.”⁴⁵ Bolivian reformers sought to root out “loose women,” prostitutes, and concubinage in general: modern citizenship was to be forged by establishing and constricting the Mestizo family within firmer boundaries, both spatial and economic.⁴⁶ Domestic labor, for instance, was cast by progressive reformers as a “feudal enclave” that blocks a nation’s progress toward democratic modernity.⁴⁷ Into the late twentieth century, emerging civilizational discourses of authentic love, individual self-fulfillment, and gender equity came to restrict the forms of Indigenous life that could be legally recognized or celebrated within liberal governance.⁴⁸

However, in the Andes relational practices guided by expectations of attachment and mutuality both across hierarchies and to places make the region paradigmatic of the limits to a modern ethos centered upon the alien-

ability of land and labor and, with it, the requisite that kinship be divided off from economy.⁴⁹ Incan arrangements of child loaning in the northern Andes often preceded material transactions and military alliances.⁵⁰ Similarly, in Incan child integration practices, *çapçi churikuna* or “sons of the community” were raised by women whose own children had died.⁵¹ Moreover, John Murra’s (1968) ethnohistorical study of the “vertical archipelago” traced the exchange of goods (grain, tubers, textiles, coca, fruit) across geographic islands of the Andes among kinship-based descent groups or *ayllus*. Colonized groups’ reliance and repurposing of exchange traditions and pre-colonial kinship ties supplied dramatic obstructions to the smooth expansion of colonial capital.⁵²

Liberalizing efforts to produce modern citizens through legal interventions in family life have been deeply contested. Alongside practices of legal petitioning and armed uprising, such contestations have taken shape in Indigenous Andeans refusals to dispense with practices of adoption, child circulation, and kinship forms that do not ascribe to nuclear ideas of spatial containment or blood-based genealogy.⁵³ Quechua ideals of *ayni* (or reciprocity) continue to shape contemporary Indigenous movements as well as legal disputes about adoption and the circulation of children. Their evocation as an ethical paradigm has opened up new routes to economic mobility as well as shaping alternate forms of dispute resolution among urban Indigenous people.⁵⁴ For instance, arrangements of material care and accountability respond to a distinctly Quechua kinship imaginary of child-rearing (*prohijamiento*) through informal adoption (Leinaweaver 2008).⁵⁵ In addition, counternationalist discourses of Aymara revivalism and anticolonial struggle often have drawn upon kinship-based ideals of racialized consanguinity: an Aymara brotherhood that can recover earlier territorial rule through kinship-based *ayllu* structures.⁵⁶ Against the masculinist bias of organized politics, Indigenous feminists in Latin America and elsewhere emphasize the desirability of kinship attachments at odds with the models of freedom elaborated both in settler governance and White feminism, which tend to focus on autonomy and individual choice.⁵⁷

The violent imposition of modern citizenship through the constricting of Indigenous relations within the shape of the Mestizo, nuclear family and the subsequent repurposing of this model as a method of colonial redress imbue non-normative kinship practices with great importance for decolonial political and ethical projects, particularly for Indigenous people.⁵⁸ In Bolivia specifically, the earlier targeting of kinship practices within mod-

ernizing reforms has politicized intimacy as a crucial site for recasting and refusing hegemonic institutions of family and property historically so central to assimilative *mestizaje*. Moreover, Indigenous peoples' elaborations of land, and attachments to place over time, coarticulate material and spiritual worlds in ways that subvert modern expectations that objects can be both absolutely possessed by, and hence also separated from, human inhabitants or from longer arcs of exchange and residence.⁵⁹ Insistence on the inalienable quality of Indigenous attachments to place (and of places as kin) has generated new forms of legal experimentation with the rights of nature, on the one hand, and the need to protect ecologies as sites of Indigenous heritage, on the other.⁶⁰

Nonetheless, in Bolivia property—as alienable land rights and self-possessed subjectivity—has remained nearly ubiquitous as a model of historical redress for earlier hacienda labor violence. Agrarian reformers employed by the MAS party shared eighteenth-century reformers' concern with modernizing the nation through the clarifying of land ownership and the narrowing of kinship relations that are not transparent to legal formations of genealogical inheritance and legitimate paternity.⁶¹ While they emerge out of a parallel history of peasant and Indigenous struggles, in twenty-first-century Bolivia collective land titling initiatives, too, replicated many of the presumptions that underlie modern property regimes. To gain state approval, Indigenous territories must align with existing municipal and regional borders and demonstrate continuities of land use despite earlier hacienda incursions.⁶² Like property, such territory must comprise a bounded, discrete unit, one at odds with practices of labor mobility and fluid land transfers. This casts in a new light the popular disaffection with land titling that I encountered in Ayopaya, as well as some Quechua farmers' abiding insistence on sustaining asymmetrical alliances and aid relations with Mestizo residents.

Throughout this book I explore how Ayopayans of diverse backgrounds summoned kinship as an idiom and a relational structure for demanding Mestizo accountability to a violent labor past and the structures of racial hierarchy it left in its wake. This occurred through the repurposing of ties established within hacienda households. During the hacienda period and after, master families adopted and raised out-of-wedlock children, acted as godparents and religious sponsors, and supplied material (and, in the case of godparenting, spiritual) assistance to servants. My conversations with adults who had been gifted to hacienda masters as children, adopted by half-siblings, or worked as longtime servants even after abolition revealed hacienda

households as defined by mutual dependencies among masters and servants. In their spanning of labor, kinship, and affective relations, these alliances implode formalist definitions of economy based on holding apart private and public, family and capital, reproduction and production.⁶³ In doing so, they also muddy Bolivian cultural revivalist projects that inherit from mid-twentieth reforms an assumption that true Andean Indigeneity—particularly the expansive highland community form or ayllu—is that which has been untouched or has survived intact despite earlier hacienda labor economies.⁶⁴

Relational ties across Mestizo and Indigenous groups in Ayopaya raise new questions about how people refashion colonial intimacies and kinship patterns not only as mystifications but also as mechanisms of historical redress.⁶⁵ Rather than only being uprooted or fractured through contract-based arrangements of law and marriage, we might ask how more expansive Indigenous kinship relations—what Kim TallBear (2019: 37) calls “making kin”—persist and can be demanded of non-Indigenous people in ways that open up new possibilities for care and accountability against settler mythologies. Attending to such improvised forms, “the critical remixing of nonconvergent tracks” (Moten 2003: 11), challenges both a theory of passive capital and the mode of subjectivity that narratives of commodification subsume, silence, and promise to resuscitate. I call this remaking the creative duration of kinship. My account strives to show that while kin-making practices among Mestizo and Indigenous subjects upheld disturbing racial hierarchies, for interlocutors they also offered a key relational structure for demanding Mestizo accountability for earlier labor and sexual violence.⁶⁶ This is the *after* as a contiguity of relational ties in which elements of those ties—including double-edged intimacies and inherited obligations—are reelaborated and thereby put to new political and ethical ends.

KNOT 2. ELUSIVE PROPERTY

The second theme that this book addresses is property, specifically its workings as a technology of colonial modernity and of postservitude justice. In the Andes and elsewhere, late colonial modernity hinged on securing a bounded sphere of ostensibly natural economic activity apart from religious traditions, kinship ties, or prescientific superstitions: the mechanism for doing so was *property*. But property is notoriously hard to define.⁶⁷ Most broadly, modern property emerged within broader efforts to topple European feudalism and

landed monarchic and ecclesiastic church hierarchies. But, as is particularly clear in John Locke's writing about tolerance, for instance, this operated less as a displacement of mastery than its reinsertion at the level of the individual.⁶⁸ In classic economic theory property came to connote both ownership but also self-mastery: the capacity to act as master over one's body, thoughts, and acts.⁶⁹

This model of self-possession paved the way for juridical notions of the willing transfer of one's sovereignty to the state. Where the proclivity for exchange in these modern terms was found lacking, such as when Indigenous Andeans cultivated multiple, dispersed agricultural islands, land and people could be claimed as the property of others.⁷⁰ Because natives did not hold private property (nor "improve" it in ways that colonists could recognize), colonizers argued, their land and labor could be rightfully appropriated.⁷¹ Hence, modern legal ideas of property promised new liberties, but they also facilitated the alienability and transfer of liberty to another subject, such as through regimes of slavery and labor servitude.⁷²

This demonstrates how colonial institutions of racialized bondage, enslavement, and subjection were mediated and enabled by logics of consent and contract.⁷³ If property historically served as a paragon of exemplary ownership over self and land, this logic of alienability also made chattel slavery defensible, sanctioned by the idea that a subject could "forfeit" his or her liberty.⁷⁴ In her work, Cheryl Harris showed how the making of slaves into property worked historically to shore up and consolidate the idea of Whiteness as property and as status—that is, entitlement to goods.⁷⁵ This challenges the tendency to collapse property with "real property," especially land.⁷⁶ Instead, it requires we pose the materiality or object life of property itself as an ethnographic and historical problem, one that requires scrutiny of the fusing together of ownership and racial subjectivity through legal stipulations of land use and improvement as well as of unevenly dispersed expectations of benefit.⁷⁷

After the abolition of slavery, governments made property the pinnacle of efforts to reverse dispossession; land rights, labor contracts, and marriage rights supplied a key legal means for the formerly enslaved to reclaim ownership and thereby become "masters" of their own bodies and labor.⁷⁸ Hence, the formerly enslaved were expected to achieve liberty and overcome subjection through the extension and refashioning of colonial logics of property and contract, rather than their dismantling.⁷⁹ In the postbellum

United States and elsewhere, a restorative model of property also grounded new disciplinary regimes organized around the requirement of self-mastery and presumptions of racialized blameworthiness.⁸⁰ This double-edged quality of property raises questions about the transformations entailed by the spread of rights-based ideals of liberty as secured by contractual exchange.⁸¹ Rather than only *giving* liberty to the formerly enslaved, processes of affording rights through labor contracts and then citizenship also imposed new ideals of political subjectivity that made other understandings of personhood and ethics unthinkable.⁸²

Property hereby arises as both poison and remedy, illness and cure. Alongside land titling and contractual labor, property also took hold as a powerful model for imagining self-sovereignty.⁸³ In some cases—for instance, in the Caribbean—this new imaginary eliminated alternatives to property that slaves had carved out of the plantation system, including their use of provision grounds that grew out of maroon traditions.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, as scholars of reparation point out, it is equally simplistic to characterize all such legal conversions of claims into rights-based languages as *only* inhibiting. In the case of reparations for slavery, property-based ideas of repayment for debt supply a crucial legal mechanism for addressing illicit land seizures and labor violence.⁸⁵ Reparation processes challenge the long-standing insistence, defining of neo/classical theories of exchange, on dividing apart economics and ethics.⁸⁶ As a framework of justice, property remains at once indispensable and insufficient.

In the Andean region in particular, private ownership arose as both a means of national progress and of colonial redress, ones at odds with precolonial and contemporary Indigenous exchange traditions.⁸⁷ Latin America was colonized predominately by Spain and Portugal, so the forms of ownership elaborated there do not follow the trappings of English common law (as they did in British colonies such as the United States, Australia, and Canada).⁸⁸ Instead, the *repartimiento* or partitioning of land in the seventeenth century implemented Spanish-style town squares constructed around churches and displaced Indigenous people from their ancestral lands. As such, the use of the term “property” may seem misplaced.⁸⁹ Spanish colonists framed their efforts instead in the language of *dominio* (dominion), or claiming possession both through demonstrated transformations to a place and through Christian conceptions of manifest destiny. *Dominio* was not just imposed—it coexisted with, and was elaborated through, conflicts with colonized groups